



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

May Day Manifesto of The CITU, 1995

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions conveys revolutionary greetings and extends international solidarity to the working class of all countries on the occasion of the May Day, 1995.

It extends solidarity to the struggles of the workers, peasants, agricultural workers and all other layers of the working class in the third world countries, in particular, fighting against capitalist and landlord exploitations and against new imperialist offensives launched in the name of globalisation and liberalisation.

The CITU extends solidarity to the struggles of the working class in the erstwhile socialist countries who are adversely affected by the capitalist path of development as manifested by galloping unemployment, price rise and withdrawal of all social security measures earlier enjoyed by them under socialism.

The CITU extends full solidarity to the working class and the people of China, Cuba, DPRK, Vietnam and Laos who are defending socialism in a determined manner despite all impediments and threats posed by the USA and its imperialist cohorts.

May Day this year is specially significant, as it coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the Victory against Fascism, which falls on 9th May. The CITU appeals upon all unions to observe the 50th Anniversary in a befitting manner all over the country.

The CITU draws pointed attention of the working class that the new form of neo-colonial offensives launched by the imperialist countries in the name of free trade through the GATT (now the WTO), is a desperate attempt by the rich North to diggle out from the current crisis, the deepest since the great depression of the 1930s. The policy of liberalisation of economy and the so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes in the name of technological innovations have been imposed on the poor

South in a mad hunt for markets. The diabolical plan has been hatched to sustain their economy plagued by unemployment and recession, at the cost of the third world countries. The demand for inclusion of social clause in multilateral trade is a ploy to introduce a new form of protectionist barrier and impose sanctions on the exports from the third world countries and get them further marginalised in the name of free trade. The working class must draw lessons from the Mexican crisis in this respect.

On this May Day the CITU warmly congratulates the Indian working class, all the trade unions and other mass organisations for having waged a determined battle against the new economic policies imposed by the IMF-World Bank-GATT at the behest of the imperialist countries. Four countrywide strike actions in four years is an indication of the growing resistance of the Indian working class against these policies. To put a curb on the growing resistance of the organised working class, the Government has taken a move to amend the labour laws under pressure from the World Bank.

The adverse effects of these policies have affected all aspects of the Indian economy and all sections of the people. The structural adjustment programmes have resulted in rampant closures and sickness of the industries rendering tens of thousands jobless. Unemployment has grown to 38 million from 34 million within three years of these policies. The unemployment is estimated to reach the colossal figure of 94 million by 2002.

Unabated price rise of all commodities has affected all sections of the people. The public distribution system has virtually collapsed, directly affecting the poorer sections.

The systematic dismantling of the public sector, disinvestment in the profit earning units and the unhindered privatisation of all established industries

including the core sectors like power, telecom, financial sector, railways, transport and the infrastructural sectors have led to a process of de-industrialisation and subversion of indigenous technology in the country.

Even the vast unorganised sector and small and tiny sectors of the country have been opened up for penetration by the transnationals. A large number of such units have been closed down rendering thousands of workers jobless.

The condition of the peasantry continues to be accentuated due to refusal of the government to implement genuine land reforms. The number of agricultural workers is continuously rising and they are being deprived of minimum wage and other statutory protections. The GATT agreement will further hit the agricultural sector and the peasantry.

On this May Day, the CITU demands genuine land reforms and a Central legislation for the agricultural workers and calls upon all its unions to forge a fighting alliance with the peasantry and champion their cause.

The working women continue to be deprived of their specific demands and suffer from growing joblessness. The CITU calls for specific attention to their cause and mobilise them in common trade union struggles.

The students and youth are faced with a bleak future due to privatisation of education and utter lack of job opportunities as consequence of the structural adjustment programmes. The CITU calls upon the working class to support their demands and draw out joint actions demanding jobs for all and against privatisation of education.

The amendment of the Patent Act will undermine the development of the Indian Pharmaceutical industry and spiral the prices of life saving and essential drugs several times.

While the people have been exposed to the ruthless exploitation by the private monopolists and the transnationals, the country's economy is heading towards disastrous conditions. The external debt has gone upto 92 billion dollars. The debt-service ratio has touched an alarming figure of 30 per cent. The internal debt is double the amount. The total debt service ratio, external and internal, has gone upto 121.5 percent of the total revenue receipts, and is increasing progressively with each year of the new economic policies. India is thus in a debt trap and in order to repay the debts the common people are bound to be taxed recklessly.

Under the policy of liberalisation, with the

imports rising by 23.5 percent and exports by only 17.2 percent, the negative trade gap has risen to a record 181 crore dollars. The situation will worsen with the GATT agreement.

In the above background, the CITU calls upon the working class and the National Platform of Mass Organisations to further intensify united struggles against these economic policies. Only rising massive struggle can force the Government to abandon the path.

It appeals to all trade unions cutting across affiliations to further consolidate trade union unity and form a Confederation of Trade Unions to lead the struggles more effectively.

While unity of the masses and national unity is the need of the hour, the CITU expresses serious concern over the growth of the communal, secessionist and fissiparous forces in the country. The threat from the RSS-BJP-VHP to extend the Ayodhya carnage to Mathura and Varanasi and their extension of rule in the north and western regions in combination with the Shiv Sena, coupled with the extremist actions by the secessionists in Kashmir, have made the country vulnerable to imperialist games of destabilisation.

On this May Day the CITU gives the clarion call to the working class and all mass organisations to mobilise all the left, democratic, secular and patriotic forces and wage continuous struggles to safeguard the country's economic and political sovereignty and its unity and integrity.

Red Salute to May Day!

Long Live India's Unity and Integrity!

Long Live India's Independence and Sovereignty!

Down with Imperialism!

Long Live Socialism!

Workers of All Countries Unite!

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FIGHT THE POLICY OF LIBERALISATION

□ E. BALANANDAN

On the 1st of May this year, the Working Class World over will be celebrating the May Day - the Day of International Solidarity of the Working Class with increased vigor. They will be taking stock of the achievement and failures of the year that is going, and charting out their course of action for the betterment of their lives together with the people in general. Needless to say that the Trade Unions of our country too will be enthusiastically celebrating May Day upholding the revolutionary traditions of this historic Day.

While taking stock of the situation prevailing today the Working Class cannot forget the new imperialist offensives in the background of the set back suffered by the socialist system in the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe which for the time being tilted the balance of forces in favour of imperialism. They will critically look into the claim they have made that "socialism is dead and the only sustainable system for human progress is capitalism" and they are out to "build a new world order".

The experience of the last four years shows conclusively that imperialism cannot change its course of plundering the world by using the means at its disposal, the military, financial and political besides the power of ideology and that the notion of "crisis free capitalism" is an absolute pipe dream.

The first example was the Gulf War of 1991. The attack against Iraq by the United States was not only to repeal the Iraqi aggression but it was to demonstrate before the world that governments which for one reason or other run counter to the US interests will be punished. Even after three years after their defeat the inhuman blockade against Iraq is continuing in the name of the so-called UN sanctioned. The American military presence is being continued there under the cover of peace keeping in this oil rich areas of middle East. In many centres of Europe too, US military forces are deployed in the name of restoring peace and for stopping the armed conflicts going on for which also the United Nations cover is being used. Thus the military attacks against weaker nations are being continued by the US imperialism in different areas of the world in various ways.

They are using their aggressive designs against North Korea and Cuba, the two socialist

countries who are upholding their freedom of choice, to continue the socialist path of development. They threatened North Korea with military aggression against the alleged refusal of DPRK for not allowing the International Atomic Energy Agency for inspection of their nuclear installations. But since China took a firm stand against this, the US was forced to reach a compromise. Against Cuba the heinous blockade is being continued by the US in spite of resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the world wide massive opposition. Against China too various kind of pressures are being used to make them agree to the United States global designs.

The United States is also bent upon imposing unequal treaties over the weaker nations of the world. The latest is their attempt to impose Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. While the United States and the nuclear powers are having colossal amount of nuclear warheads and the US is still taking steps to strengthen their nuclear armory, they are trying to impose this unequal treaty on the world. India was all along opposing this unequal treaty and now it seems they are under pressure to agree with their proposals.

The enormous possibilities which have opened up due to development of Science and technology for the production of goods and services and for betterment of commerce and trades, which simultaneously made it possible to integrate production systems world over which has no parallel in human history. But, however, this enormous facilities opened up could not arrest the crisis in the capitalist system and it has only increased in a big way. The developed capitalist societies are going through economic crisis and severe recession which though of late it is showing some signs of recovery.

The closures of factories and reduction work force is taking place in a big way in all the developed capitalist countries. Unemployment rate has grown upto unparalleled levels. A new production system which while increasing production and productivity the number of jobs are drastically reduced which is now being called as "Jobless growth".

Claiming to get out of the present crisis in every developed capitalist countries attempts are being made by the employers and governments to curtail the wages of workers beginning with drastic re-

duction of welfare amenities. Permanency of employment is sought to be done away with in the name of "flexibility", while temporary and part time employment is being promoted with reduced wages. Casualisation, ancillarisation, contractualisation and job sharing are becoming the order of the day which in other words taking away the hard earned rights and privileges of the workers besides killing of jobs.

The government's welfare expenditure on education, health, housing, insurance etc. are being cut down in United States and other developed capitalist countries. Unemployment is on the increase, and there is lesser and lesser openings for employment. The life of younger generation is being increasingly frustrated. The number of people falling victims to poverty are also increasing in these developed societies including the United States.

The economic recovery in the developed capitalist countries are still at lower levels. The estimated growth rate of United States is 4% for the year 1994 and projection made for the year 1995 is only 2.3%. Britain and Canada will have a growth of 3% in the year 1994 and 95. Germany and France at 2% and Italy 1.5%. Though Japan is slowly overcoming recession, the growth will be negligible. However, this has no reflection in employment and rate of unemployment is highest in the developed capitalist societies after the Second World War. For the year 1994 the total unemployed in the OECD countries are 35 million and the rate of unemployment will be average 8.3%. In the G-7 countries the total unemployment is 24 million for the year 1994. This statistics do not reflect the real situation.

The developed capitalist countries are taking steps to increase their exploitation of the third world countries using the World Bank and IMF and the GATT now converted into World Trade Organisation. The enormous exploitation of the third world are reflected in the balance of trade and the ever increasing debt burden of the third world countries, leading many of them into insolvencies. The latest is reflected in the crisis of Mexico which came insolvent to pay off their debts and their total economy crashed. The United States, the main operator of Mexico came to their aid by sanctioning 50 million dollars in order to bail it out from collapse. However, this has been done by United States to save their own financial interests than saving Mexico. The total third world debt in 1993 was 177 billion dollars, which is still on the increase bringing each other countries in the debt trap. Enormous amounts are being squeezed out by the big countries especially United States,

Japan and Germany. According to the World Bank Annual report September, 1994 there was a net outflow of 731 million US dollars from all debtor countries in the first six months of 1994: The World Bank's report on Africa - March, '94 admits that twenty of the 26 countries following IMF prescription have failed to improve their economies. The rest of the six will take at least thirty years to eradicate poverty. More than 80% of total world's poor of 1.1 billion are living in the third world countries.

In spite of the fact of the enormous vistas were opened up before humanity by the all round development of Science and technology the benefit of which has been appropriated - mainly by the rich in the developed societies while unemployment, poverty and miseries are on the increase especially in the third world.

Thus the theories sought to be imposed by the capitalists that they are out to build "a new world order" through the "only sustainable system of capitalism" is again proved to be false.

The people of the erstwhile Soviet Union and the East European Socialist Countries who has been brought under the orbit of capitalism using false propaganda and foul means are now began to realise the true nature of capitalism. According to the World Bank reports Yeltsin's Russia has 54 millions or 40% of the population are living below the poverty line. Unemployment rate in Russia is above 20%. The value of the rouble has gone down to such a low of three thousand roubles per Dollar. In the case of eastern part of Germany the unemployment rate is 17% and their expectation for a better life has also been belied. People of Russia and erstwhile socialist states are slowly realising the trap they are in and are by slowly moving ahead to fight back this capitalist order. In certain States the forces of socialism have staged a come back scoring victories in the elections. The faith in socialism and socialist ideology is more today than before. Even in Yeltsin's Russia the forces of socialism are in a come back trail. Thus the claim made about the "death of socialism" is also proved to be wrong and the socialist forces are regrouping and moving forward to play this role to build a stronger socialist system.

The working class and the trade unions of the developed capitalist world are struggling to protect their employment and their living standards by launching big strike struggles and joint movements. Politically too the people of developed capitalist societies are slowly moving against the conservative rulers of their own countries. Therefore, it is the duty of the

working class today again to assert the merits of socialism, and socialist ideology and to strengthen the international solidarity of the Working Class. The trade unions of our country should strengthen their connection with international trade union organisations so as to develop coordinated struggle against the onslaught of capitalism.

In India the new economic policies which is being implemented by the Govt. from the middle of 1991 needs no detailed explanation since the trade union movement together with the democratic forces of the country was strongly opposing it, and a resistance movement led by the working class has been continuously in action though the policies could not be reversed. However, in many areas the Govt. was forced to retreat though temporarily consequent of this resistance. But, the situation is further being worsened because the Govt. is still reluctant to change the course suggested and dictated by the World Bank and IMF. Further they have joined the WTO agreeing with the conditions which are running counter to our interests. The imperialist powers are again going to use the lever of WTO to further squeeze our country's independent development.

The Indian economy has been struck in rising prices and low growth for the last three years at the rate of 2% even though the Govt. is currently claiming that a new phase of improvement has begun which do not stand critical scrutiny. The external debt has touched a colossal figure of 92 billion dollars in 1993 while the internal debt is more than double this amount. The amount of repayment has already crossed the amount of borrowing. The debt service ratio is more than 30% which virtually puts the country in a debt trap. The claim that we are having sufficient foreign exchange reserves equal to 19.5 billion dollars which in fact, in the main consists of hot money being used for speculative purposes. The balance of payment continues to be negative since our imports are continuously increasing more than that of the level of exports. So the country's economy though being boasted in a sound condition is not true.

The basic infrastructural facilities which we have built in the public sector which is the backbone of our industrial development is sought to be destroyed through the policy of privatisation allowing free entry for foreign multinational corporations in the name of globalisation and liberalisation. In certain cases the foreign multinationals are given most favoured treatment than that of the Indian big companies. This is true in the case of Electricity, oil, telecom, etc. of late under the so-called SAP restruc-

turing measures are being contemplated in the financial sector, insurance and Banking that too giving entry to the foreign multinationals in a big way. The Indian Railways are one of their target to be restructured and steps are underway for effecting the same. The privatisation of public sector has become the order of the day and that too being handed over to the private capitalists much less than the market value.

The total effect of these restructuring which is being pushed through will render lakhs and lakhs of workers surplus and sent out of employment. The industrial sickness has already crossed four lakhs depriving employment to several lakhs of people. The tiny and small scale sector too opened up to multinationals big companies and many of them are to be closed. Employment generation in the public sector and the private sector for the last three years is on the negative. Therefore, the unemployment has become a serious danger to the nation. It has crossed all the previous records. As per statistics for the period of new economic policy unemployment has increased from 34 million to 40 millions. The Planning Commission itself has estimated the unemployment figures may reach a colossal figure of 94 million by the year 2002. The rural unemployment is stated to be seventy million now. So the present number of unemployed is more than 110 million which is one fourth of the present work-force of India. With this colossal figure of unemployment and the dwindling opening for new jobs creates one of the worst calamity facing our country which nobody can ignore who loves India. The young generation of India is facing a dark future which no body can ignore.

Besides unemployment the price increase also eats away the standard of life of our people, and the poverty is going up drastically. More than fifty percent of our people are living under sub-human conditions. The off take from the public distribution system, is going down and down because of the dwindling purchasing power of the masses of the people. The expenditure reduction in education, health care, etc. is having its adverse impact on the life of our people. The neglects on land reforms further aggravate the rural economic conditions besides adversely affecting the agricultural production. Therefore, the working class of the country should further close their ranks and build stronger unity with all sections of the trade unions and cement the unity of the peasants, agricultural workers, students and youth and other sections who are interested in fighting back these policies.

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RECENT TRENDS IN TU MOVEMENT IN INDIA

□ MK Pandhe

The structural adjustment programme accepted by the Government of India has posed several new challenges before the trade union movement. The change was sudden and it took time for the trade union movement to grasp its implications.

The new economic "reforms" or the process of liberalisation as it is known in India was not evolved through discussion within the country. The Government of India had to accept a package of proposals advanced by the IMF and the World Bank as a pre-condition for loans to meet the foreign exchange crisis. The devaluation of rupee, delicensing of industries deregulation of industries, concessions given to multinational companies to penetrate deeply in Indian economy, reduction of company tax mechanism and income tax at higher levels, reduction in custom duties and withdrawal of subsidies, curtailment of public distribution system, privatisation and disinvestment of public sector undertakings and adoption of exit policy have long range impact on the trade union movement of our country.

SICKNESS AND CLOSURE

The TU movement had to confront the question of sickness and closure in a big way after the introduction of "liberalisation" According to an estimate nearly sixty lakhs jobs were lost every year due to new economic "reforms." Liberal imports with cheaper custom duty led to several Indian units facing difficulties of getting market in our own countries which led to closure of these units. The modernisation programmes launched in some advanced industries led to large surplus manpower. In public sector alone 74,000 workers were retrenched through "voluntary" Retirement Schemes. To fight against the industrial sickness and prepare viability plans to revive them became one of the major plank of TU movement. Appearing before BIFR got precedence to appearing before the Industrial Tribunals as in the early days. Amendment to SICA and reference of several public sector units to BIFR added a new dimension to the problem. On several occasions TUs had to take up the problems of industry in order to keep them running. There are many cases when TUs had accepted "sacrifice" by the workers by way of withdrawal of some concession in order to save the industry from

collapse.

The period saw trade unions and officers organisations coming together to prepare viability reports. The dividing line between them started cracking in the face of new developing situation. The period also witnessed formation of number of officers' organisations since this strata was also affected by the structural adjustment programme.

INFLATIONARY SPIRAL

The double digit inflation in the Indian economy during the last 4 years has seriously affected the living conditions of the workers. Struggle to achieve full neutralisation in rising cost of living attracted major attention of the TU movement. The agitation to remove the ceilings in the Payment of Bonus Act, enhancing the exemption limit in the Income Tax Act acquired special significance in this period.

The workers in the unorganised sector was worst hit since many do not get even the benefit of DA. The rate of unionisation in this strata began to grow and even their struggles including strike struggles showed an upward curve. Many of these units are not covered by the official statistic calculation machinery and hence the data on strike does not reflect their strike action.

The agricultural workers were severally hit and issues of the upward revision of minimum wages had to be taken up by the trade union movement all over the country.

The Central and State Government employees fought for more wages and the govt had to grant them interim relief and appointment of a Fifth Pay Commission to ameliorate the discontent among this strata.

CHANGES IN JOB PATTERN

The trade union movement had to confront with the changes in the job pattern of the working class. The loss of jobs in organised sector was only partly compensated by growth of informal sector in those units. The last 4 years experienced phenomenal rise in the contractual jobs alongwith drastic reduction of jobs of permanent and perennial nature. TUs had to confront with the managements to protect the regular jobs. Reduction of jobs of women in organised sector was an issue for which TUs had to launch struggle. In

coal mines the management encouraged replacement of women workers by male counterpart.

ATTACK ON TU RIGHTS

The IMF had been continuously pressurising the Government of India to modify the labour laws in order to attract foreign monopoly capital. Monopolies generally are averse to trade unions and direct actions by workers. Pressure was mounted on the Central Govt to bring exit policy in the statutory framework so that free closure of units could be undertaken.

Government of India repeatedly tried to introduce Industrial Relations Bill and Trade Union Bill in Parliament to further restrict the strike action by the workers and to reduce the formation of new unions. The attempts could not succeed due to the opposition of the trade union movement. However, the Government of India has not given up hope due to the pressure of the IMF.

In the name of withdrawal of Inspector Raj the statutory inspection of industrial units under various statues have been dropped in some states which seriously affected the implementation of labour and welfare laws in these units.

MOCKERY OF TRIPARTITE CONSULTATION

The Government of India by not implementing any decision of the Special Tripartite Committees, mainly created to consider protection to labour during the structural adjustment programme, has made a mockery of tripartite consultation.

Apart from holding the meetings after long intervals the Government is adopting a casual attitude towards the tripartite consultation. Most of the decisions of these committee meetings including 6 industrial committees have remained unimplemented with the result that working class was left with no protection from the official machinery from the attacks of the new policy framework.

Trade unions had to oppose this approach of the Government of India and demand a review of the implementation of the decisions taken by the Special Tripartite Committees.

Trade unions have to face a considerably difficult collective bargaining situation due to the ambivalent attitude of the Central Government. The inordinate delay in settling wages in public sector undertakings in the present round of talks is a glaring example of this.

On the top of this growing presence of criminals in the TU movement is a matter causing concerns.

The murder of Vice President of INTUC at Jamshedpur in front of Union Office and the holding of elections in Rastriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh at gun point are only two examples of this phenomenon. It may assume serious proportions if the TU movement does not unite to tackle it effectively.

The rise of communal and divisive elements in the country is also posing new challenges to the TU movement. These dangerous ideas are percolating in the working class and there is urgent need to check the phenomenon if the TU movement has to advance in India.

CONSOLIDATION OF TU UNITY

By and large all the TUs in the country have opposed the structural adjustment programme including INTUC, the TU wing belonging to the ruling party. The growing discontent among the workers has raised the demand within INTUC for severing the link between the INTUC and the ruling party. INTUC unions also had to join many struggles all over India against the new economic policies.

The formation of Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions and National Platform of Mass Organisations was a special development after the introduction of the new economic policies. 4 nationwide strikes were organised in this period which never happened in the past. The reduction of mandays lost due to strikes in this period should not mean that working class has accepted the policies. It only meant that during a period of recession the TU movement gave emphasis on other forms of struggles.

On most of the national issues TUs have been able to arrive at common understanding though differences persist in form of action.

In the struggle against privatisation and disinvestment, public sector trade unions have launched common movements AND have shown exemplary sense of unity.

The growing lockouts indicate the employers attempt to close down the units to pressurise the workers and hire them out to accept humiliating conditions. The TU movement has unitedly fought against these unfair lockouts.

The need for further organisational consolidation of TU unity is on the agenda. The CITU has proposed formation of Confederation of Indian Trade Unions as a step towards organisational unification of the TU movement in India. Without such a consolidation the TU movement will not be able to meet the challenging situation.

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MAY DAY 1995

□ SAROJ CHOWDHURI

By the time these lines appear in print, MAY DAY 1995, the day of international working class solidarity will be knocking at the door. On this solemn occasion, we pay our respectful homage to the immortal martyrs of the blood-soaked May Day of more than a century ago, the countless martyrs of the succeeding decades in all countries of the world who made the supreme sacrifice for emancipation of the working class and also send our greetings and goodwishes to all working men and women in India and across the globe.

MAY DAY 1995 arrives with greater significance in that the world observes the fiftieth anniversary of the defeat and unconditional surrender of German Nazism and Italian fascism way back in 1945 that heralded the end of Second World War in the European theatre. This spectacular victory won at enormous cost smashed the dream of fascism to conquer the whole world and enslave all nations.

MAY DAY has long transcended the demand of 8-hour working day and for more than half a century come to symbolise the struggle for social change—a tireless striving towards creation of a society without exploitation of man by man, justice and equality of opportunity and a society that guarantees to all not merely the ingredients of physical sustenance but also opens up the golden gates of mental and cultural upliftment.

MAY DAY 1995 arrives on a world that is more unjust, more unequal and more divided than at any time in the last hundred years. Though the eclipse of the much acclaimed century is only 4 years away, across the industrialised world the recovery from the longest lasting recession is erratic and bumpy, level of unemployment higher than at any time since the end of the World War II, production cutbacks and stubborn resistance to wage claims more widespread, attacks on trade union rights and cuts in social security benefits ever more fierce, women workers condemned to low wage low-technology jobs, and massive increase in part-time, contractual, temporary jobs. The mad drive for faster automatics and introduction of newer and newer chemicals have rendered workplaces more hazardous. The workers in the erstwhile socialist countries are reaping the wages of “liberation from tyranny” and integration with market economy.

MAY DAY 1995 descends on an India, tied more tightly with the apron strings of crisis-ridden imperialism than ever before and is already laden with the second highest foreign debt amongst third world countries. With the millstone of structural adjustment programme around its neck and the objective of self-reliance jettisoned, India is going deep in the quagmire of unemployment, loss of existing jobs, spreading industrial sickness, skyrocketing of prices, inflation, steady destruction of public sector, virtual cancellation of planning and poverty invading new layers of society. Not only no new rights have been created, whatever rights the working class earned through years of struggles are being assaulted, cut down and slaughtered. Foreign multinationals and Indian private capital are having their heyday.

The working class in India and the world over will celebrate MAY DAY amidst shrill voices proclaiming “end of ideology,” capitalism having proved its superiority and socialism an unworkable, idle and degrading dream. This MAY DAY will witness unceasing all-embracing efforts to fortify the hegemonistic grip over the world by US imperialism.

Despite this massive build up, the chain reaction triggered by the setbacks of socialism and the temporary inability of the international working class movement to come up to grapple with the situation and the mounting attacks on jobs, wages and rights, there are heart-warming instances in several countries of working class reassessing, regrouping and reuniting with renewed vigour. The symptoms are unmistakable. In our own India, the working class during the last one year, despite grievous wounds inflicted, have voiced powerful opposition and resistance to imperialist-inspired policies and newer sections are taking up the gauntlet. A high watermark was achieved on Sept 29 last year, not to mention the similar actions earlier.

MAY DAY 1995 comes as yet another reminder that legitimate anger is accumulating in every workplace, every working class home, every shattered family, every hamlet, in every slum in working class areas, amongst the unemployed, the deprived and dispossessed. This will assume the proportions of a tornado at the time appointed by history.

When on May 4, 1886 the protesters were fired

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FIGHT UNITEDLY FOR THE CAUSE OF WORKING WOMEN

□ VIMAL RANADIVE

The All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women, CITU sends its fraternal greetings on May day 1995 to all women and wishes success in their struggles against the discrimination in the present feudal bourgeois land lord society. May Day belongs to the working class. The women workers part and parcel of the total working class feel proud about the achievements they had at their disposal while taking stock of their weaknesses.

The All India Co-ordination Committee of working women was formed at Madras in 1979 in an all India Conference. it was indeed our fortune that Com. B.T. Ranadive president of CITY and a founder member, inaugurated the conference and guided the proceedings.

What did he say while inaugurating the conference? "The CITU had to take the decision to call a special conference because it was found that the grievances of working women were unattended the Government was indifferent, the employees were hostile and even the trade unions were not very enthusiastic about their demands. In the many strikes that the working class fought, there were very few instances when special demands of the working women were given prominence..." He further said "even in industries and occupations where they formed a sizable section were hardly represented in the leading bodies of the union..."

While reviewing the present situation of working women since last 15 years or so, we can surely say that, we, the CITU was able to take their issues against discrimination in wage, treatment, employment, creches and so on in different states and districts with the Government and concerned authorities and could achieve our demands to a certain extent, we were able to make the women conscious about their discrimination and roused to fight against it. We were able to convince the CITU union to form the subcommittees to a certain extent. Not only that, the AICCWW has become a forum of working women in our country and recognized by the government and International bodies like WFTU and ILO and so on. It was a fact that the results and gains of our movement were much more in the beginning. Almost in all the states, the state co-committees were formed by the

initiative of CITU while specific issues were taken up. The working women in state government, Central government and in many industries, conferences were held. Women were happy about it. Many times they would achieve their demands like creche equal remuneration, toilet facilities etc.

But what about Promotion?

We must admit while reviewing our work that promotion on the higher committees, or as office bearers the AICCWW and CITU is logging behind from top to bottom. Some unions did take this issue seriously like in Tamilnadu and now in Andhra, other states are still lagging behind. West Bengal already had women office bearers in the different unions. But other unions did not take it seriously. It is to be noted that even women leaders in industry are not taken for negotiations in their own industries. What is the result? The women's questions are not dealt by the union in their negotiations. In the Beedi, construction and plantations where women are in majority the percentage of women on the committees is poor nil. The agenda of working women issues does not come in the state committees of CITU.

WHAT ABOUT OUR OWN CLASS?

In Bombay conference in 1975 Com. B.T.R. referred about this specific question in the following words. After 10 years, there are some changes no doubt about the attitudes of state committees of CITU, when women workers are launching struggles every where under CITU including women in the unorganised sector when unemployment reached sky-high and women became first victims in Mines, tobacco, coir, coal etc. the central leadership has to remind seperatedly about these to the states. Already women have been retrenched from Textile and jute. tobacco companies are modernised. Women workers are thrown more and more in the unorganised sector. There is no legislation whatsoever, wages are very low. There is no maternity no working hours. Women are working in Agriculture in thousands. State minimum wages are existing, but no legislation from the centre as such. Unequal wages continue in Beedi and construction. Can we, the

CITU

vouch that we are doing our best to ameliorate the weaknesses existing in our own class? We are not taking up the work of women workers seriously and it is a fact. The bitter speeches in our committees by the members like, "the union wants to us to join the struggle, we join in mass, we are in forefront- but no further progress. We are not given chance to speak, not taken in the negotiation committees- they only take advantage of our strength". This is the position at present about our own class. Despite raising this issue on the agenda in AICCWW, very few states take up their specific problems and encourage them to come forward. Only one question can be asked here, whether without the participation of women in Beedi, construction, garment etc., can we succeed in our struggle? The answer is no.

CITU and working women

In Bombay conference Com. B.T.R. insisted that unless given a quota for women delegates, they will not be represented. because of 10% quota to each states, women were represented in bombay conference in 1974 and a special session was held of men and women delegates on these issues. in the Patna conference held in March 1994 once again the 10% quota was given. Despite that 2/3 states did not send a single women delegate.

Another aspects of this issue is women trade unionists on trade union front also must come forward to fight for their demands to bring pressure in CITU. The men and women both, being the part of this bour-

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The large sections of the big capitalists are reaping huge profits because of the new economic policies and they are also getting the people's wealth created in the public sector at nominal cost and therefore, they are all in praise for the new economic policies. They do not care for the foreign multinational penetration and imperialist domination through which India is actually being subjected to brutal pressures and arm twisting on a wide range of issues; economic, social, political and strategic. Therefore, it is becoming the burden of the working class to take up the cause of our economic and political freedom by fighting back this offensive.

To make this fight effective we have to give greatest care for developing trade union unity at plant and industrial level and at national scale. The working class must take up in a serious way the fight for the socialist ideology and socialism: and to build unity with international working class.

geiers landlord society. We together have to fight these feudal tendencies in the Trade Unions, in CITU. The central leadership should speak, take up the issues in the conferences, meetings which does not happen many times due to urgent issues coming up.

Membership poor

The membership of women of CITU is very poor, about 10-12% to the total membership of CITU. It is true that women are not employed and a big way now due to various reasons. But in fact there is no serious attempt on our parts male or female to enroll members seriously considering our influence is much more than the actual membership.

There are many political issues coming up. The present economic policies, self-reliance of our country price rise, inflation and so on. Women and working women have played a glorious role in all the struggle, strikes, courting arrest under the sponsoring committee and National Platform of mass organisation during last 2-3 years. CITU has played glorious role while uniting all the trade unions, and other organisations. "The trade union movement cannot attain its full stature unless the women's contingent plays its role in organising and leading the unions. All women's organisations should land their support and actively help the trade union movement in this struggle "(BTR). it is a well-known fact that unless women and men fight together, no movement, or any demand of the movement will be successful. let us take a pledge on May Day that we both, try to strengthen our organisation CITU and working women's movement.

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upon and killed in the Haymarket Square in Chicago and on November 11, 1987 four leaders—August Spies, George Engel, Adolph Fisher and Alberst Parsons—were hanged after a sham show of trial—little did the enemies of the working class know that out of the blood of the martyrs will grow a new force, a new camaraderie, a dream that would unite all working people and travel to each part of the globe and serve as an inexhaustible source of inspiration to end exploitation and inequality and liberate humankind. Before the hangman's noose forever silenced the voice of August Spies, he thundered: "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today." True it is! The voice of the martyrs reverberates every corner of the globe and no power on earth can silence it.

Glory to MAY DAY

Long Live MAY DAY

May Day and the Struggle Against Fascism

□ P K Ganguly

May Day this year has special significance. It coincides with the 50th Anniversary of Victory over Fascism, which falls on May 9. May Day celebrations reflect the way the workers' movement developed historically with a revolutionary spirit and ideology as given by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The victory of the great October Socialist Revolution and the fierce class battles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries vested May Day celebrations with a new content. May Day became an expression and symbol of consistent struggle not only against the State power which represented the interests of the ruling bourgeois class and international capital, but also developed into a political movement against capitalism, imperialism, fascism and war.

In keeping with the revolutionary traditions, the May Day struggles put in the agenda the struggle against fascism and militarism, which started surfacing their ugly heads in Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, etc prior to the great depressions of the 30s. The May Day struggles thus became a part of the political movement in Soviet Union, Germany and other places in Europe against fascism.

However, with the development of such political movement, May Day was sought to be utilised by the imperialists and the fascists to disarm the working class of its political significance and launch counter offensive on them. It happened in Germany under the fascist Nazi Government of Hitler.

During the great economic crisis of 1929-33, which caused mass unemployment and aggravated social conflicts, May Day celebrations took more militant forms. In the period leading upto May Day, 1929, the Communists in Germany were urging upon the people to protest against military preparations. But the right wing social democrats opposed any joint demonstration with the communists.

In 1933 the darkness of fascist dictatorship spread over Germany. In a determined bid to destroy the spirit of class consciousness, the Nazi Government changed its tactics, and to create illusion among the workers, declared the May Day 1933 as the Day of National Labour and the German Public Holiday. The trade unions led by the Social Democrats fell a prey to the fascist machinations. The May Day, 1933 was marked by a massive rally of 200,000 workers or-

ganised by the Nazi Government. Hitler in his speech himself pronounced, "Honour work and respect the worker." But the very next day, on May 2, the Nazis seized the trade union offices throughout the country, confiscated their property and funds and arrested the leaders including the Social Democrats and sent a large number of them into Concentration Camps. Within a week the trade unions were replaced by a fascist Labour Front by a Decree by Hitler.

But still in 1933 and the years thereafter, May Day continued to be observed with its revolutionary traditions by many workers in many countries. The 1934 May Day in France followed an attempted fascist coup and a general strike in which five million workers participated. Paris streets were flooded by troops and there were clashes. Helped by Hitler, fascism grew in Spain and Italy also.

It was during this time that Georgi Dimitrov after the famous Leipzig trial, became a front line leader of the Communist International. His call for the formation of a broad anti-fascist united front in the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935, gave a new turn to the struggles against fascism, which were reflected in the May Day celebrations also.

May Day, 1936 was observed in many countries following the victory of the Popular Front in Spain. The trade union unity in these countries resulted in massive May Day strikes, demonstrations and rallies. On the 1937 May Day the international solidarity of workers and other democratic forces were directed against the attempted fascist coup by Franco, which was directly helped by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Volunteers from many countries went to Spain to support the Spanish peoples struggle against Franco.

The 1938 and 1939 May Days however were subdued. Franco's dictatorship was established in Spain. Germany had annexed Austria. The Second World War started. Just as the First World War had done, the Second World War also put proletarian internationalism to serious test. This time, however, the international working class had a definite enemy—not imperialism in general, but its most aggressive and brutal creation—fascism.

But the reformist leaders of the working class went in for more and more collaboration with their

respective imperialist Governments instead of joining the united struggle against the fascist trika of Germany-Italy-Japan. Despite the clarion call given by Dimitrov for a broad united front against fascism, and the persistent efforts made by the Soviet Union for a collective security pact against the fascists, the USA, England and France on the contrary went on egging Germany to attack the Soviet Union. Their anti-communist bias blinded them against the dangerous character of fascism, which would have devoured them also. Germany attacked Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. For quite a long time during the war the working class of Europe and America failed to play the role they were destined to play as working class, without a class outlook, which rather contributed to the growth of fascism and its domination over all.

However, the banner of working class ideology and socialism was being carried forward by the Soviet Union, the German communists and the militant sections of the working class in several countries. Hundreds of thousands of the English working class and those in the countries occupied by the Nazis, observed the May day, 1942 with militant anti-fascist demonstrations and in support of the Soviet working class fighting the fascist hordes. In Germany itself the Resistance movement was gaining ground.

But all the conspiracies of Anglo-French-American imperialism were frustrated. It was the working class of Soviet Union under the leadership of the Communist Party and the indomitable Stalin, that pulled the carpet out from Hitler's feet. The victorious turn was given by the Red Army in the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943. The May Day followed this grand victory. The Soviet Union called for mobilisation of all anti-fascist forces. Huge demonstrations were held in Europe, America and other countries on May Day. In Germany the workers distributed leaflets saying that Hitler had lost the war and called upon the people to unite with the anti-fascist forces to throw out the Hitler regime. Similar demonstrations marked the 1943 May Day in Romania, Bulgaria and Italy.

With the surging victory against fascism, the 1944 May Day was observed with the Soviet working class right on the saddle, dictating terms to the fascist predators. More than three fourths of the occupied territory of the country were liberated. That evening for the first time during the war, the May Day was commemorated by gun salutes in Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Kiev, Kharkov and all other cities of the Soviet Union. Militant rallies were held in several parts of Europe in the thick of the victorious march against Hitler.

The next year saw the end of Hitler. It was an

irony fate for him that twelve years ago in 1933, when he befooled the workers with his May Day slogan and foisted fascism on them, it was on May 1, 1945 itself that the Red Flag was hoisted on the top of the Reichstag in Berlin. Hitler and his cohort Goebbels committed suicide. On May 9, 1945, the Nazi Germany signed the act of unconditional surrender. As a natural eventuality the Japanese surrender followed a few months later.

The mighty victory of the forces of socialism, peace and democracy over the forces of fascism opened a new era in the world history. The Eastern European countries made a transition to socialism. The victory of the socialist forces led to the emergence of socialist China, Vietnam, Korea and Cuba. The national liberation movements gained success in a number of Asian and African countries. India achieved its independence in the process. The correlation of class forces changed in favour of the working class and the democratic forces. Imperialism was sidelined.

However, a great deal of time has passed since the victory of over fascism. Generations have changed. The correlation of class forces that was tilted in favour of the working class, with the vicissitudes of class struggles, has been tilted back in favour of the reactionary forces. Imperialism, which was deemed to have been doomed to an inevitable down fall, could sustain itself by new forms of neo-colonial exploitations using the technological innovations. With the collapse of Soviet Union and set back to socialism, it is right on the saddle again, riding roughshods over the democratic aspirations and the sovereignties of the nations. With the resurgence of imperialism, the source of fascism, there is a resurgence of neo-fascist groups again in Germany and other countries. On this May Day and the 50th Anniversary of Victory over Fascism, the working class must note that the cause of the revolution started by Lenin and the cause for which 20 million Soviet people sacrificed their lives in the Great Patriotic War against fascism, have remained unchanged. The anniversary of the victory over fascism must remind the new generations of the working class of the past, of the generation of revolutionaries, of how to be determined and firm with regard to the revolutionary principles, of the qualities they displayed under most difficult conditions, and of how to pass on the revolutionary traditions of the working class struggles from generation to generation. The May Day, 1995 and the 50th Anniversary of Victory over Fascism must be observed throughout the country with this revolutionary spirit.

Economic Policy, Development and Social Justice

— Creeping Crisis of "Free Market"

(A revised version of The Presentation made at the workshop organised by the AITUC.)

□ KANAI BANERJEE

We are exercised over the so called New Economic Policy of the Government. We have been carrying on agitation against the policy in view of its disastrous consequences for the working class and the nation as a whole. We have successfully observed several general strikes, have mobilised other sections of population and together we have observed Bharat Bandh, held massive conventions and militant demonstrations. There are instances of successful resistance in specific cases of Govt measure in implementation of the policy. No doubt our opposition has succeeded at least in retarding the pace of implementation of NEP. But can we claim that we have succeeded in stalling altogether its implementation or to force the Govt to reverse the policy? No, we have not so far been able to develop that kind of massive struggle which might force the Govt to abandon this policy. Is it due to lack of response from the masses? Looking at the participation of workers and others in successive strikes and various other programmes it would not seem reasonable to conclude that there is real lack of response on the part of the masses. Serious review is called for before we reach any conclusion. Again, is the possibility of doubt, confusion and lack of confidence on the part of leadership can be totally ruled out? It seems some self searching on their part is in order.

No cause for diffidence

To be sure this workshop is not the place for the review or for self searching. Yet I believe that the question I have just raised will not sound quite irrelevant to my trade union colleagues. I feel it is possible, at least I do not think it entirely impossible, that some over-estimation of the potentiality of the so called free market gives rise to doubt in the minds of some, undermining the confidence in the possibility of success in our struggle. I therefore propose here to substantiate the proposition that the inherent contradictions of the so called free market are pushing it at the global plane towards the brink of catastrophic disaster. Whatever may be its position in the very short run, serious vulnerability is developing to overtake it on world scale in not very distant future and

therefore we need not allow our confidence to be undermined by any assumed invincibility of free market forces at the national or international level. While growing poverty, unemployment and inequality with all attendant social ills are sufficiently indicative of the approaching crisis, sudden alarm in a section of the free market camp itself provides strong confirmation.

Policy, Development, Justice

The free market blues of to day want us to forget history. But history does not forget. The slogan of free market is not new, it is history that this was the birth cry of capitalism: no Govt interference in economic process, let the "invisible hand" work in freedom, it will take care of growth. This was their philosophy. Policy would simply aim at ensuring uninterrupted working of market forces. This worked for quite some time. What the free market heroes want us to forget particularly is the fact that free market policy did not and could not work forever. The logic of free market itself inevitably landed the capitalist economy in crisis ultimately culminating in the great crisis of 1930s, and in order simply to survive capitalism sacrificed the so called freedom of the free market. The Govts were given a positive role in economic affairs and the world got counter cyclical policies with the goal of stable growth for full employment. It is only Govts positive role that could lift the capitalist world from the morass of crisis and state action alone could sustain growth and maintain employment. When there is world wide orchestrated campaign to sell this free market ware, can we afford to forget the lesson of history as to were does free market lead to?

During the free market phase, the idea of growth measureable in terms of National Income and per capita national income dominated. When the term development was used, it was used practically interchangeably with growth. Growth of national income invariably meant growth of profit in free market structure, growth of property for the propertied classes. What more and what else did the free market wallas

cared for. However when crisis began to break out employment became a matter of concern.

Development acquired distinctive content later in the context of planned effort to raise an economy at a low level of development to higher levels. It will perhaps not be an exaggeration to say that the idea of economic development with its present content owes its origin to Soviet Union with her socialist planning. Development became synonymous with development planning. Many colonial countries which emerged as independent countries after the second world war adopted some variety of development policy for raising the level of their economy from colonial stage to higher level. Direction of the process could not but rest with the Govt of the respective countries.

Originally development in these countries was also being measured in terms of indicators like National income and per capita income, etc. But in poor countries unemployment, poverty and inequality caused concern. In Soviet Union and partly in other Socialist countries, by developing the concept of development to its logical end could effectively solve the problem of unemployment and gross inequality. But the non-socialist countries, unable to take decisive step to eradicate vested interest and subjected to neo colonialist pressure failed to solve these problems. National income started growing but unemployment and poverty also grew. In the meantime recession in developed capitalist countries was also aggravating unemployment, poverty and inequality. These began to grow as potential threat to social stability of the capitalist world. In this background the concept of development was to be given new content. Human development, that is, development with social justice was replacing the simple concept of development.

With the collapse of socialism in the USSR and in other East European Countries, the rich countries led by the US launched a new offensive with a degree of aggressiveness not seen in recent past to solve their own problems at the cost of weaker countries of the third world, though the effort with relatively less intensity had always been there. The IMF and World Bank are the most powerful weapons in their hands. But thanks to the inherent contradictions of the system, this aggressiveness has only further aggravated the situation. Known facts about the situation that has developed, and is still developing, in the countries where the IMF-World Bank liberalisation and globalisation policies have been imposed together with the situation in the rich countries themselves are

indicative of the crisis towards which the capitalist world with its so called free market economy is heading.

Almost sudden awakening of institutions like UN, ILO and similar others to the problems of humanity, the institutions which are ardent advocates of the so-called free market policy, to the misery of million, their concern for development with social justice, all this are in the set historical pattern: When serious threat develops to the system they stand for, certain sections, some agencies and institutions from within the system come out with palliatives. One cannot fail to observe that for several years the UNDP a wing of the UN has been publishing Human Development Report, human development indices have been evolved and the document is reporting annually the situation in countries in respect of 'human development. In national arena also we hear of structural adjustment with human face. Unique in this regard is the holding of the social summit by UN, the forum which stands almost completely hijacked by the United States for using it for its purpose of World domination. A wide net work of so-called NGOs are also being developed for use in defusing explosive potential that is being generated in the world. Recently the ILO which had been, and still is, making strenuous efforts to sell the structural adjustment programme has now suddenly become alive to the plight of the world working class in the free market regimes not only in the poor countries but in the richest as well. This, if not anything else, confirm that the capitalist world is being fairly rapidly pushed to the brink of a disaster. It is the historical task of agencies like these to sound alarm before disaster overtakes the system. We should not fail to take the message. Not only the system has not grown invincible, it is developing extreme vulnerability.

Today's World in ILO's Image

In a recent ILO publication many aspects of today's reality, the impact of the liberalisation, globalisation programme, has come in sharp relief as was never seen before. "Never before have the means of producing consumer goods been so successful. Never has the number of these excluded from sharing the enjoyment of these goods and serving been so high." This statement prefaces the report an interview with Gerry Rodgers, Director of the ILO Multidisciplinary Team in Santiago-de-Chile. Perhaps the impact of accentuation of the inherent contradiction of free market could not be better expressed. The interviewer asks: "All around the world including in the

economically advanced countries, the gap between rich and poor seems to be widening. What in your opinion are the reasons for this evolution?" "One of the reasons" said Rodgers in reply, "is intensification of competition in the World Economy which tends to lead to polarisation of income. Gains from success have been growing, but there are many losers who remain enclosed from the benefits of economic growth."

"All societies have rules and institutions to control the adverse social effects of unregulated market forces. But such institutions aimed at basic standards of security and, for instance face increasing criticism on the grounds that they, it is argued, led to economic inefficiency. The increasing influence of this view...has surely contributed to increasing inequality."

Apart from the report of the interview the magazine also contains wealth of information regarding the state of the world which, though not quite new to us, nevertheless present a complete picture of the free market world rushing towards doom. It is difficult to resist the temptation for presenting the picture. Let me quote:

At the end of 1994, some 1.3 billion persons in the World were living in absolute poverty; half of them were in South Asia, a quarter in East Asia, and 16% in Africa. It is estimated that half the population in Africa lives below the poverty line.

The absolute number of poor in the world has in fact increased, as well as the differences in income. The gap between 20% of the world population at the bottom ladder and the 20% of the richest has increased from 1 to 20 in 1960 to 1 to 60 in 1990.

The most deprived populations are mostly rural. They are victims of chronic under-employment, constrained to survival activities and generally working long hours for paltry salaries. USA:

One should not be mistaken. This situation is not entirely confined to the 3rd world. Let us have a look at the richest country of the world: "Although the US economy has rebounded from the recession and unemployment rates are relatively low, jobs are precarious in nature and the average income is falling.

Upward swing in poverty continued in 1992 despite recovery. Poverty rate of blacks reached 33.3% in 1992 Hispanic rate 29.3%. In 1992 one out of five American children were poor. For children in general the rate was black 46.6%, Hispanic 39.9, white-16.9. For black children under 6, the rate reached an alarming 53.4%.

In late 1993 the rate of unemployment black was 12.9%, Hispanic - 10.6% and White-6%.

Former USSR and East Europe

We get some information about condition in Eastern Europe after demolition of socialist economy. It is worsening in the former USSR due to rising unemployment, official or hidden, and the absence of social protection system. Real rate of unemployment 5 times higher than official 2%/ one third of the employeesare hidden unemployed, victims of practices such as employment without pay long term leave production stoppages and short term work about one out of every five worker is on administrative leave..... In the industrial city of Ivanovo 40% of the workers have been laid off without severance pay. Employment in industrial sector dropped by 8% in one year and 40% of the production capacity is idle - poverty has risen alarmingly.

West Europe In 1994 in 12 European Union Countries 15% of the population living below poverty line, about five million people are home less.

World Bank special correspondent reports from Argentina :

Notwithstanding two positive features, viz, stability of currency, inflation under 4% and GDP growth 32% in 4 years, "Serious paradox is casting its shadow over what some venture to qualify as an economic "miracle"- highest unemployment level in history; May '94 10.8% of economically active population(40% of total population)

beginning of '95 - 13%

Under employment 10.2% of active population. 40% of 14 million active populations facing risk of losing their jobs or other problems. Marginalisation is on the rise and a segment of middle class traditional bastion of Argentina society becoming poor.

Nobel Laureate Perz Erquival states a veritable social polarisation is in progress. Esquival says, no lack of financial resources but concentration.

The latest ILO Publication World Employment 1995 states!

Absence of policies to help minimise social cost and maximize social and economic benefits puts at risk the potential benefits of globalisation placing them beyond the reach of millions of workers around the world.

Unemployment in most industrialised countries has reached levels not seen since 1930s and an increasing percentage of that unemployment is long

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NOTES AND COMMENTS: M K PANDHE

THE UNION LABOUR MINISTER'S DILEMMA

The Union Labour Minister P A Sangma, despite his elevation as a Minister of Cabinet, is in great dilemma. He has been giving several promises to the trade unions and the working class during the last 4 years to assuage their feelings that the economic policies pursued by the Government of India was anti-labour. But he could not implement them though he had repeated them time and again.

During all the nationwide strike actions organised by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions and National Platform of Mass Organisations he appeared on the TV and mentioned the same promises. It is on the basis of his similar assurances the INTUC withdrew strike calls twice but, as was expected the promises remained only on paper. As a matter of fact, instead of becoming a Minister of Labour he has virtually become a Minister of Promises. Take the question of amendment to the the Payment of Bonus Act. In several of his speeches he announced that the act would be amended "soon" to raise the ceilings higher. his oft-repeated word "soon" is losing fast the meaning of the word itself and it is now difficult for him to use this word in his speeches or flamboyant assurances.

P A Sangma was the chairman of the Tripartite Committee on DA for public sector undertakings. The Committee was formed in the year 1989 but the multi-slab system of DA has yet to be worked out. His frequent announcement that the next Cabinet meeting would discuss this question remained a mere verbal jargon.

On the question of Pension his pronouncements about the finalisation of the scheme has yet to cross the stage of being a mere promise. While the trade unions are critical of the scheme he has not been able to improve upon the scheme as was promised long ago. The Bill is also beset with the several difficulties and everything appears to be standstill.

The bungling on the question of Industrial Relations Bill has almost become scandalous. His promise to bring the Bill in the "next" session could not be implemented because the Bill was not based on the national level understanding partly developed during Ramanujam Committee Report. Instead arriving at an understanding at a national level he was at-

tempting to rush to implement the Exit policy through the backdoor. naturally opposition to Bill emerged and so far it could not see the light of the day. The same was the fate of the trade union amendment Bill.

Sangma's assurance to non-CITU coal was unions that the pension matter in coal industry would be settled by March 1994 but till today the issue is still where it was and acute discontent is prevailing among the 7 lakh coal miners on this issue. He once again gave promise that he would settle the matter without any delay but there is no sign of ending that delay. The non-CITU unions who believed Sangma's words at that time had to repent now. The CITU however did not agree to withdraw the strike and its stand was vindicated by a good response by the coal miners on 31st January 1994.

The assurances given by Sangma in the Special Tripartite Committee and industrywise Tripartite Committees have met with the same fate. The promise that public sector will not be starved of funds for purchase of raw materials and payment of wages remains unfulfilled in case of several units. The decision of the tripartite that the unanimous packages for revival of sick units by the management and trade unions as accepted by the Special tripartite Committee will be given automatic approval by the BIFR remained unimplemented.

The recommendation of textile tripartite on NTC mills is waiting for Cabinet approval for one year while the sickness of these units goes mounting every day.

Even the INTUC, a TU wing of the Congress Party is finding it difficult to rely on his promises. Some of their representatives of INTUC openly admit that P A Sangma is very liberal in giving promises but extremely conservative in implementing them. Some even go to the extent of saying that Sangma should stop giving new promises till he implements those he has given during the last couple of years.

The Union Labour Minister's contention is that he gave those promises on the basis of assurances given to him by the Prime Minister. But the Prime Minister is not known for keeping promises either. His ad-hocism and attempt to skirt every issue has become a common men's knowledge in the country. If Sangma has relied too much on the Prime Minister then he has himself to blame for this under-

standing.

It is reported in Pioneer(Delhi dated 20th April 1995) that the unhappy Union Labour Minister has written to the Prime Minister that his prestige was being eroded because of the Union cabinet's indifference towards meeting the demands of the workers.

The Union Labour Ministry has so far not denied the existence of such a letter. The Parliament is scheduled to commence on 24th April '95 and this matter is likely to come up for discussion.

In the letter Sangma is supposed to have written "I took the step only on the basis of your assurances and now I am at a loss to explain why nothing has been done." He also further commented, "Like the INTUC my standing also has come down."

The Labour Ministry was completely bypassed when the Ministry of Commerce appointed a committee under Subramanyam Swamy to go into the aspect of linking international trade with ILO standards. The subject matter was actually falling within the framework of the Union Labour Ministry which has already formed a Committee on ILO conventions.

In case of TU representatives to be included in the World Development Summit the Ministry of Labour's recommendations were turned down by the PM Secretariat and even the Union Labour Minister was not included in the delegation. The subject of unemployment, elimination of poverty and social development were falling within the purview of Labour Ministry. What is surprising is that this has taken place after Sangma was elevated to the post of a Cabinet Minister.

What is the root cause of this development? The Union labour Minister has to ponder over it. The root of the matter lies in the fact that the new economic policies of the government can be carried out only at the cost of the working class. The bulk of the burden of the structural adjustment programme is falling on the working class which is forced to resist these derogatory policies.

Sangma's efforts to paint a rosy picture of these policies and his talk of so called social safety net does not appeal to the workers. The official talk of implementing the economic policies with a "human face" is only an eyewash. The Union Labour Minister has giving assurances only to create a feeling that the government would protect the working class interests and not to implement. The assurances given by the Prime Minister to the Union Labour Ministry only

meant to pacify a section of the working class and try to sabotage the rising struggles against these policies.

Sangma's assurances don't take into account the desire of the government not to implement them. The Union Finance Ministry has vetoed every such assurance which created bottlenecks in implementing them.

Government of India is under great pressure from the IMF and the World Bank to attack the TU rights of the workers so that the movement against the economic policies would be suppressed. They want unbridled right for the monopoly capital to earn super profits and the Government of India has committed to work to protect their interests.

The Union Labour minister cannot escape his responsibility in non-fulfilment of his promises by pointing out the blame to the PM and FM who are no doubt primarily responsible for the debacle in the country.

The TU movement in the country must continue the struggle against the economic policies so that the promises not fulfilled so far are forced to be implemented through the organised strength of the working class in the country.

IS INTUC'S OPPOSITION TO SOCIAL CLASS IN WTO GENUINE?

Subramanya Swamy has fully exposed himself as the champion of the interests of the multinational corporations in India. As a chairman of the Committee on International Labour Standards and Trade he has openly announced recently in the press that India should accept the social clause in the WTO.

Despite united opposition to the social clause by the Indian Labour Conference and Non-aligned Labour Ministers' meeting the Government of India still continues with the idea of this commission only to please the IMF bosses. As in case of Malhotra and Narsimham Committees in the Financial sector the Government has appointed Swamy as chairman of the Commission knowing his views clearly. The Reports naturally are tutored and are meant only to bolster the IMF and the World Bank's thinking on the subject.

The statement of Subramanyam Swamy has further exposed that the Govt is not prepared to displease the IMF and the World Bank. The CITU has already demanded that the Swamy Commission should be wound up but the Govt of India is not

prepared to pay any heed to the problem.

We are surprised to note that INTUC representation on the Swamy Commission S L Passey is still sticking to his position and remaining as a member of this commission. If the INTUC does not withdraw its representative from this Commission after the statement of Swamy INTUC's credibility will be considerably brought down.

Will INTUC atleast take steps in that direction, if it wants to prove its bonafide that it is opposed to the Social Clause in trade relations?

WHITHER COAL NEGOTIATIONS?

The wage negotiations in coal industry have been delayed inordinately due to the policy of recalcitrance by the coal managements. The non-CITU unions accepted Rs 100 as interim relief to all workers despite opposition by the CITU. The CITU had to go alone for one day strike in the industry. It was only after a long-drawn struggle the managements agreed to increase interim relief to a minimum of Rs 150 and maximum of Rs 293.

Similarly on Pension the non-CITU unions are accepting Pension without managements contribution. Only HMS has recently stated that they would insist on managements contribution to the Pension fund. Though 2% of the workers wages are being deducted from 1st April 1989 the scheme has yet to be finalised. In the last meeting the CITU and HMS have stated that they would not sign the agreement without settlement on the pension scheme.

The CIL management has offered paltry package for the wage settlement. Over and above interim relief the management agreed to pay only Rs 50 per month, while the underground allowance would be raised at a minimum level from Rs 160 to 220 while the TU demanded Rs 260.

The managements have offered only Rs 2.75 per day as conveyance allowance while in steel it has been raised to Rs 5/- The night shift allowance would be only Rs 4 in coal while in steel it has been raised to Rs 10.

The CITU made it clear that it would not accept this paltry offer. Surprisingly some TUs are vacillating and accepting the paltry amount when the last settlement provided almost parity in wage rates between steel and coal industry. The gap will be much wider if the coal management's proposals are accepted by the unions.

The CIL has to recover Rs 3000 crore from the

state electricity boards and the Govt should help the industry through subsidy. If the theft of coal is checked then coal industry would save Rs 1000 crores. But the management is not moving in that direction. Recently ECL chairman took some positive steps and productivity in this sick coal company increased by 15 per cent in less than one year. However CIL is not prepared to involve the workers in improving the health of the company. On the contrary the management is involving itself in corruption and malpractices which are draining huge resources of the premier public sector undertaking. Moreover, the CIL management has not implemented welfare clauses relating to drinking water housing, medical facilities education, etc from the last wage agreements.

The coal managements cannot solve the problems of the industry by denying a decent wage rise to workers at par with other major public sector undertakings.

The All India Coal Workers Federation in its meeting held at Calcutta on 18-19 April decided to launch a countrywide struggle for achieving a good wage agreement. If all the unions join together, the task can be achieved effectively as expected by 7 lakh coal miners all over the country.

[From Page 15]

term. Developing countries with the exception of the most dynamic Asian Countries - and transition economic are even more severely affected by poverty underemployment and unemployment. An entire continent - Africa - has been marginalised. Social exclusion has become a fact of life in both rich and poor countries.

In view of the ILO "The current world employment and social situation does not provide a favourable starting point for embarking on the gigantic process of transformation.

The picture presented by ILO is itself a loud proclamation of the approaching doom of capitalist free market. If one has any doubt, the fact that hue and cry of a sort has been raised in the camp of free market itself is a confirmation of it. Even the forums of defenders of so-called free market, liberalisation and globalisation are not themselves feeling secured, they have raised an alarm. This is a sure index of vulnerability of the system sought to be brought about all over the world. There is no valid reason for lack of confidence in ultimate victory

SPECIAL TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE ENDS WITHOUT CONCLUSION

The meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee held on 10th April 1995 could not draw any conclusion due to the lack of proper preparation by the Union Labour Ministry.

Despite several issues pending before the Special Tripartite Committee the Government of India had not been convening the meetings regularly. Moreover, whatever decisions were taken in these meetings remained unimplemented with the result that workers are losing faith in the efficacy of the Special Tripartite Committee itself.

The Ministry of Labour circulated following three subjects for consideration of the meeting.

1. Working of the National Renewal Fund.
2. Amendment to the Industrial Dispute Act.
3. Sickness in the private sector.

The second subject was to be discussed in the Standing Committee meeting which the Labour Ministry had been delaying. Regarding the National Renewal Fund the nodal Ministry was the Ministry of Industry and no senior representative of that ministry was present in the meeting. During the last three years the government has spent Rs 1354 crores to retrench 75004 workers in public sector undertakings in the garb of Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

Though the scheme was meant for redeployment and retraining, bulk of the money was spent for retrenchment of workers in public sector.

During the meeting the trade unions asked how many retrained workers have been re-deployed. The Government had no answer to the question.

Regarding training also the trade unions criticised the way the responsibilities were given to some employers and managements' organisations who have not been utilising the money for actual retraining. Union Labour Minister admitted that most of the organisations have used the money for purchase of computers. In the name of Employees Assistance centre, Employee Counselling, huge amounts are being spent without any actual benefit to the workers.

All the trade unions were extremely critical of the working of the scheme and P A Sangma had to agree to convene another meeting in July next which would further review the working of the scheme. It was decided that senior representatives of the Ministry of Industry should be present in the meeting.

Regarding sickness in the private sector the debate was inconclusive. The paper prepared by the Labour Ministry has pointed out that most of the units were sick due to management deficiencies. Only 1.5 per cent of the units were reported to be sick due to periodic strikes and only 6 per cent due to labour problems. All other units were due to managerial problems and govt's failure to provide necessary infrastructure for the industry.

In non-SSI sick units 18.5 per cent were in Engineering, 6.0 per cent in electrical, 6.6 per cent in textile, 9.4 per cent in chemicals, 3.7 per cent in iron and steel industries.

Regarding the outstanding bank credit in the non-SSI sick units, 16.5 per cent was in UP, 13.6 per cent in Karnataka, 12 per cent in W Bengal, 9.5 per cent in Maharashtra, 8.3 per cent in Andhra Pradesh and 6.5 per cent in Kerala. Rest of the credits were from other states. The private sector employers' representatives tried to use dilatory tactics to avoid discussion. They wanted representatives of the State Govt to be present in the meeting.

In the end it was agreed to review the question in-depth in the subsequent meeting. The CITU representatives demanded convening an early meeting of the Committee to discuss the IISCO's modernisation programme. Chairman agreed to do so.

On behalf of CITU the meeting was attended by M K Pandhe, General Secretary and P K Ganguly, Secretary.

MAY DAY MESSAGE

The CITU has received messages from the WFTU, Zenroren(Japan), TUI, Plantation and other organisations on the occasion of May Day. The messages hailed the struggles of CITU and extended full support to struggle of the Indian working class against the new economic policies of the Government of India. The CITU has reciprocated to the messages.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

(BASE 1982 = 100)

Centre	Linking factor for Old Base			Pune	311	313	—
	Jan.95	Feb.95					
				Sholapur	302	306	5.03
				Barbil	272	277	5.00
				Rourkela	254	254	3.59
				Amritsar	268	269	5.19
				Ludhiana	269	272	—
All India	289	291	4.93	Ajmer	291	293	5.01
Gudur	282	283	4.33	Jaipur	279	281	5.17
Guntur	287	289	5.60	Coimbatore	289	291	5.35
Hyderabad	267	271	5.23	Coonor	311	311	4.80
Visakhapatnam	276	277	—	Madras	310	315	5.05
Warrangal	287	284	—	Madurai	301	299	5.27
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	262	265	4.05	Salem	305	305	—
Guwahati	291	293	—	Tiruchirapally	319	315	—
Labac-Silchar	268	259	3.96	Agra	274	275	—
Mariani-Jorhat	276	280	3.95	Ghaziabad	277	281	—
Rangapara-Tezpur	279	284	4.29	Kanpur	285	288	4.69
Jamshedpur	265	266	4.68	Saharanpur	284	286	5.06
Jharia	245	247	4.63	Varanasi	297	296	5.12
Kodarma	255	257	5.43	Asansol	268	270	4.77
Monghyr	274	276	5.29	Calcutta	288	290	4.74
Noamundi	262	269	4.58	Darjeeling	262	261	4.55
Ranchi-Hatia	275	277	—	Durgapur	297	296	—
Ahmedabad	287	291	4.78	Haldia	303	304	—
Baroda	286	286	—	Howrah	303	302	4.12
Bhavanagar	298	302	4.99	Jalpaiguri	257	262	4.16
Rajkot	284	282	—	Raniganj	258	260	4.40
Surat	300	302	—	Chandigarh	281	281	—
Faridabad	278	282	—	Delhi	308	311	4.97
Yamunanagar	277	281	5.53	Pondicherry	324	324	—
Srinagar	293	293	5.47				
Bangalore	292	295	5.66				
Belgaum	303	306	—				
Hubli-Dharwar	296	302	—	<u>Additional series of Labour Bureau</u>			
Mercara	288	290	—	Kothagudem	289	290	3.25
Alwaye	295	295	5.19	Himachal Pradesh	279	279	3.75
Mundakayam	301	298	—	Bhilwara	304	305	3.20
Quilon	306	313	—	Chindwara	292	296	2.59
Trivandrum	315	319	—	Tripura	280	279	4.37
Bhalaghat	281	279	5.24	Goa	325	327	3.40
Bhilai	256	258	3.49				
Bhopal	300	301	5.46				
Indore	297	298	5.18	Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by			
Jabalpur	303	302	6.41	multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the			
Bombay	320	324	5.12	linking factor given and rounding off the result to			
Nagpur	299	298	4.99	nearest whole number.			
Nasik	306	307	—	—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series,			

Central Legislation for Construction Workers

□ P.K. GANGULY

A national workshop was organised by the National Safety Council (W Bengal Chapter) in cooperation with the Steel Workers' Federation of India and the Construction Workers' Federation of India at CMERI Auditorium, Durgapur on April 17 and 18. The subject matter of the workshop was Central Legislation for Construction Workers.

The workshop was attended by nearly 300 delegates from the Construction Industry representing workers and leaders from all the Central Trade Unions including the INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS, independent unions from all over the country, NCC-CL, other organisations, management personnel from both public sector and private sectors, W Bengal Labour Minister, Members of Parliament, MLAs and other distinguished individuals, representative from ILO and the management from the National Safety Council. The welcome address was delivered by Y P Sharma, Managing Director of DSP. The workshop was inaugurated by the Union Labour Minister, P A Sangma. In his inaugural address, the Labour Minister said that the Government was seized with the problems of the construction workers, who constituted the largest section in the vast unorganised sector after agriculture. He expressed concern about their deplorable conditions in absence of any statutory protection from exploitation and in absence of any social security or welfare measure and due to lack of safety norms. He said that a Bill was actually introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 1988. However, as there were protests from trade unions and other organisations, as the Bill was not comprehensive, the Bill was withdrawn. He promised that a comprehensive Bill would be introduced soon, which would cover all requirements of construction labour.

The keynote address was delivered by Santi Ghataka, the Labour Minister of W Bengal. Among others who addressed the first Plenary Session were N N Framjee, Executive Director, CESC and Chairman of National Safety Council (W Bengal Chapter); N Rouben, Specialist, International Standards, ILO; A B Bardhan, General Secretary, AITUC and P K Ganguly Secretary, CITU.

The speakers unequivocally pointed to the urgent necessity of a comprehensive Central Legislation by the Government of India for the protection of

nearly 8.5 million construction workers in the vast unorganised sector who are ruthlessly exploited by the contractors and sub-contractors under a jungle rule.

Commissions:

The workshop was then divided into three Commissions, viz (1) Safety and Health, (2) Welfare Amenities, and (3) Regulation of Employment and Training.

The Safety and Health Commission was participated by 30 delegates. It was chaired by S Banerjee and A K Banerjee Debanjan Chakrabarty was the rapporteur. N Rouben of ILO participated in this Commission and briefed the international standards prescribed by the ILO in the industry. Eleven delegates spoke on the occasion. They narrated about the utter lack of any safety measures, appliances and equipments in the industry and refusal of the employers to observe them. They pointed to the necessity of educating the workers regarding safety. Accidents and death in the Construction Industry in India were the largest in the world. The contract system and the total callousness of the Government was responsible for this state of affairs.

The Commission on Welfare Amenities was presided over by Dr Ashis Kumar and inaugurated by Jibon Roy, MP and Secretary of CITU. The Commission was participated by 82 delegates. Twelve delegates participated in the discussion. N Rouben of ILO attended this Commission also for some time and briefed about the welfare and social security measures that are prescribed by the ILO. Social Security and Welfare measures were virtually unknown in this vast unorganised sector. The Tripartite Study Group constituted by the Government about a decade ago had not even submitted its report as there was objection by the employers. The workers were left exposed to the vagaries of the contractors. Speakers demanded inclusion of all social security measures like ESI, PF, Pension, etc in the industry and imposition of a cess on the employers for the welfare measures. Subichar Dey was the rapporteur in the Commission.

The third Commission on Regulation of Employment was attended by over 100 delegates and became the focal point of the Workshop. It was chaired by Subhas Bhatnagar of the National Cam-

paign Committee for Central Legislation for Construction Labour(NCC-CL). This Commission had three coordinators, viz Hannan Mollah, MP, P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU and A B Bardhan, General Secretary, AITUC. 15 delegates participated in the discussion. The discussion centred round the proposed Central Legislation. Hannan Mollah briefed about the various aspects of the Individual Members' Bill introduced by him in the Lok Sabha in 1992 and Subhas Bhatnagar briefed about the NCC-CL Bill submitted to the Committee on Petitions, Lok Sabha in 1986. P K Ganguly at the outset informed that the Government Bill which was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 1988 was withdrawn, as it was retrograde and rejected by all the Central Trade Unions. The Committee on Petitions on the submission made by the NCC-CL had also recommended to the Government for withdrawal of the Bill. The report of the Committee on Petitions was also circulated to the delegates.

It was seen that both the Bills of Hannan Mollah and NCC-CL were identical and reflected the major demands of the construction workers, which included apart from measures regarding safety, health, occupational hazards, social securities, welfare, etc., the most important provision of constitution of Tripartite Construction Boards at Central, State and District levels. The major functions of the Tripartite Construction Boards would include registration of contractors and workers, security of job by regulation of employment on rotational basis, training, minimum wages, social security and welfare measures, safety and health, dispute settlements, etc. It was also explained that all labour laws would be applicable to all categories of construction workers in various construction works and the usual conciliation machineries, both at state and central levels will be open to the workers, who would have the right to approach the Labour Courts, High Courts and the Supreme Court as required. A number of suggestions were made by the delegates to enrich the proposed Bill.

The Second Plenary Session was chaired by the Hannan Mollah. The rapporteurs and the coordinators of the three Commissions placed their reports. Malini Bhattacharya, MP concluded the session. The Session unanimously came to the conclusion that the Central Trade Unions and the NCC-CL should take immediate steps to streamline the proposed Bill incorporating the suggestions wherever necessary, with the Tripartite Construction Board as a major part of the Bill with all its functions as suggested including regulation of employment for security of job.

Action Plan:

The Plenary Session further discussed the action

plans to be implemented countrywide to put pressure on the Government to introduce the Bill forthwith. Various trade union leaders, MPs and others participated in the discussion. It was unanimously agreed that a broad based Joint Action Committee comprising of the Central Trade Unions and the NCC-CL should be formed by calling a meeting immediately to concretise the proposed legislation and chalk out a concrete action plan. It was suggested to launch movement by the Construction workers in each state, unit and on an all India level in a phase wise manner by holding demonstrations, rallies, conventions, workshops, sending telegrammes, etc, culminating in an all India Convention and rally at Delhi with the perspective of a countrywide strike by construction workers the end of the year.

The workshop concluded with a valedictory address delivered by Santi Ghatak and vote of thanks by P K Das, vice chairman of National Safety Council (W Bengal Chapter) and Secretary of the Steel Workers Federation of India.

FMRAI LAUNCHES AGITATION AGAINST AMENDMENT OF PATENT ACT

The Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Associations of India have launched agitational action against the amendment of the Indian Patent Act.

A national convention organised by FMRAI at Mavalankar Hall, New Delhi on April 10, called for the action plan mobilising all other trade unions, organisations of professionals, scientific workers, Working Group on Patent and other democratic and patriotic forces.

The Convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of C S Sharma, R S Bajpai and Amitava Guha. Amitava Guha placed the resolution. Among others who addressed the convention were D P Dubey, General Secretary of FMRAI; M K Pandhe, General Secretary and P K Ganguly, Secretary of CITU; A B Bardhan, General Secretary of AITUC; V Tiagi, Secretary of HMS; N K Shukla, Secretary of AIKS, J S Majumdar, vice president, FMRAI and General Secretary of Bihar State CITU; Dinesh Abrol of DSF and National Working Group on Patents; M A Baby, MP, Dr Ashim Bala, MP, etc.

In a meeting of the leaders of these organisations held on 12th April, it was decided that FMRAI will observe an all India day against the amendment of the Patent Act on May 22, when the symbolic effigy of the Patent Act Amendment will be burnt. Thousands of telegrammes will be sent to the Prime Minister from all organisations demanding withholding the amendment. Statewise and districtwise convention and rallies would be held. As the immediate action, a demonstration will be organised before Parliament at Delhi on 27th April, when a delegation of all the organisations and MPs will meet the Prime Minister and submit a memorandum to him. □

DECLARATION

Adopted in the Extended Meeting at New Delhi on 28-29, March, 1995

The extended meeting of Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) held at New Delhi on 28-29 March 1995 notes with grave concern the utterly negative attitude of the Government of India towards revival of sick public sector undertakings, by refusing to act as a promoter and lend necessary financial support for modernisation and re-vamping these public sector units thereby threatening to throw lakhs of workers out of employment. CPSTU also observes that in many of the sick PSUs workers are not being paid regular salary and are being subjected to immense hardship for no fault of theirs.

The CPSTU also expresses deep indignation at the policy of the Government favouring the indigenous and foreign capital against the interest of public sector industries of the country. The PSUs set up over the years to cater to the need of various government industries and departments are being made to starve for want of orders by the Central Govt. On the other hand naked favour is shown to the foreign multinational companies by granting massive reduction of import duty while imposing excessive excise duty on indigenous industries. The plea of generating competition is totally baseless because of denial of level playing field. The meeting notes with serious concern that as a direct consequence of such suicidal policy many PSUs have been forced to reduce capacity utilisation. The result has been that many public sector units which have been consistently performing excellently both in the matter of capacity utilisation and profit earning since their inception and have earned reputation in the country are dangerously poised to become sick under the onslaught of New Economic Policy.

CPSTU also condemns the nonchalant move of disinvestment of shares of profitable PSUs and frantic bid for privatisation of PSUs on the part of Govt of India in spite of all out protest by the entire trade union movement. Moreover, the CPSTU is shocked to find that the disinvested capital of the PSUs is utilised by the gov't for bridging the revenue gap and meeting the budget deficit. The best that could have been done with this disinvested capital was to plough

it back into PSUs for funding the schemes for re-vamping, modernisation, expansion, etc.

CPSTU also denounces the scandalous and dilatory tactics of the Govt of India in settling the long pending issue of slab system variable dearness allowance during full neutralisation at all levels for the PSU workers. In spite of assurances given time and again by the Labour Minister to the trade unions for early settlement of the DA issue, the matter is still hanging in uncertainty.

The progress in the wage negotiations in the PSUs is far from satisfactory mainly due to the negative attitude of the gov't towards public sector. Barring the settlements in some units large number of PSUs are awaiting final agreement. Further, the so called sick units have been deprived of interim relief and no wage negotiations are in sight.

The issue of raising the ceilings for bonus eligibility and its entitlement is also kept hanging by the gov't in spite of several commitments for early resolution. The raising of the ceiling for exemption from income tax payment as declared in 1995 budget also falls far short of expectation.

The issue of pension of public sector workers on the basis of joint contribution of both workers and the public sector management has also been bottleneck owing to negative attitude of the Central Govt. Bilateral agreement for creation of pension fund by joint contribution of workers and management in many public sector units could not be materialised. CPSTU condemns such attitude of the Govt of India.

CPSTU condemns the policy of all out hostility of the Central Govt towards PSUs and their employees. It notes with utter dismay that such situation has resulted in large scale exodus of qualified, skilled and experienced hands from public sector which would cause harm to production and productivity of PSUs.

CPSTU calls upon the trade union movement to intensify the struggle to fight back the policy of the gov't to dismantle the public sector network in favour of the private and multinational companies which would finally go against the interest of the country's self-reliant economy.

The meeting extends full support to the

demands of the PSU officers associations for early settlement of the issue of pay scales, DA and other fringe benefits through bipartite negotiations with their apex body and expresses solidarity with their struggle to achieve these demands.

CPSTU calls upon the public sector workers to prepare for long drawn struggle to defeat the evil design of the govt and to achieve the following demands:

1. Revival of sick public sector units ensuring promotership of the govt and due financial support to implement the revival schemes.

2. In respect of viable units rehabilitation schemes may be prepared by appointing expert agencies and the schemes should be finalised with due regard to the views of concerned trade unions.

3. Regular payment of wages and salaries including terminal benefits to the employees of sick units.

4. Ensuring of full capacity utilisation of the PSUs and strengthening of public sector units in core sector.

5. Immediate clearance and implementation of the long pending issues, namely slab system VDA, pension scheme raising ceilings of bonus and exemption limit of income tax payment.

6. Satisfactory conclusion of all pending wage negotiations including officers and executives without any further delay.

The meeting adopts the following programmes for campaign and agitation to culminate into massive and intensified action.

a. To observe "PUBLIC SECTOR DAY" throughout the country by PSU employees on 5th May 1995 by organising massive dharna/demonstration, including laying siege, wherever possible as has already been planned by ITI unions, Bangalore, to installations with large scale imported equipment disregarding availability of indigenously produced equipments, on that day.

b) Zonal/State/Industry level conventions to be organised jointly ensuring massive participation of the public sector workers. This has to be completed by July 1995.

c) National consultation on disinvestment of shares of PSUs and equity participation by PSU workers to be held at New delhi on 13- 14 May 1995 with participation by about 65 delegates. Delegate

fee has been fixed at Rs 100/- per delegate.

d) National convention on contract labour in public/organised sector on 10-11 June 1995 at Durgapur. Total delegates 550 ensuring maximum delegates from among contract workers. 10% of the delegates should be drawn from women workers as far as possible. Delegate fee @ Rs 50/-

e) Central dharna at New Delhi the date and details of which would be finalised in the next meeting of the CPSTU.

The first issue of CPSTU newsletter will be released on 14th July 1995 at New Delhi.

This will be a eight pages bulletin, to begin with and the price would be Rs 2/- per copy. The annual subscription has been fixed at Rs 25/- inclusive of postage.

The constituent unions must enroll maximum possible number of annual subscribers ensuring that every English knowing elected representative of the unions becomes a subscriber and send the money latest by 15th June 1995.

Sd/-
M K Pandhe
General Secretary CITU

Sd/-
H Mahadevan
Secretary, AITUC

Sd/-
V Tiagi
Secretary, HMS

Sd/-
Michael B Fernandes
Jt Convenor
Joint Action Front Bangalore

Sd/-
Nageswar Rao, Jt Convenor
Coordination Committee of Hyderabad
Public Sector Trade Unions

BOOK POST