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THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

More than 12 lakh workers strike work in Maharashtra Against Govt Pension Scheme

☐ P R Krishnan

Industrial workers and Middle-Class Employees in different parts of Maharashtra have responded to and participated in a magnificent way in the industrial strike on Monday the 11th December, 1995 by downing their tools and walking out from factories and offices in protest against the Presidential Ordinance on employees provident fund pension scheme. An estimated more than 12 lakh workers and employees have responded to the strike call disregarding the media publicity of the government. Unlike in many previous occasions the whole hearted participation of more than 30,000 workers from the city's main transport company, i.e. Bombay Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking popularly known as BEST has taken the strike to magnificent height.

What is also significant is the fact that a substantial number of those struck work on 11.12.95 comprised from AITUC and HMS affiliated unions. Another notable feature in this struggle against the pension scheme was that a large number of employees from Shiv Sena and BJP led Bharatiya Kamgar Sena and Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh also responded to the call and took part in the strike. Similar was also the case with some of the established unions having affiliations with INTUC and Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh. This was clear from the total strike in majority of the oldest cotton textile mills in Bombay like Bombay Dyeing, Century Mills, Morarjee Mills, Madhusudhan Textiles, Victoria Mills, Bharat Textiles, Prakash Cotton, Mathulye Mills, Paragoan Textiles, Kamala Mills, Saksaria Mills, Jupitor Textiles, Finally Mills and India United Mills, etc. Though the strike was partial in other textile mills in Bombay one could see that the anger against the so called pension scheme is growing amongst the rank and file of INTUC leadership. Protest against the pension scheme has also spread to the INTUC led Petroleum Workmen Federation in as much as the managing committees of the federation have come out openly and passed resolutions expressing unanimous opposition to the Presidential Ordinance.

The strike was near total in engineering, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and tyre building industries. The working class in Bombay and other industrial centres like Thane, Belapur, Aurangabad, Solapur Nasick, Kolhapur, Pune and other districts responded magnificently despite propaganda from govt machineries. Another significant feature requring mention is the participation by more and more workers and employees from independent unions in the agitation against this on-slaught. This was quite evident at every stage of the present agitation. As already reported, the call for the one day statewide industrial protest strike action was given in an unprecedented rally of blue collar workers and white collar employees held at Shivaji Park on 1st December 1995. In the process for preparation of the statewide strike numerous meetings were held in different centres in the state apart from two conventions held at Vanmali Hall in Bombay on 5th and 21st Nov 1995, the huge meeting held near the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner Office at Bandra on 14.11.95 and the unprecedented rally held at Shivaji Park on 1.12.1995.

Greeting the working class for their magnificent response for the day's strike on 11th December 1995, the state CITU General Secretary K L Bajaj expressed the hope that "the Narasimha Rao Govt will take a proper note of this massive protest action and drop the pension scheme and allow the workers to

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EDITORIAL

The New Year

At the end of a week from now, the world will welcome the New Year 1996 and will bid goodbye to the old. As the current year is just about to pass into history, it is both customary and, also useful, to take a look at the months that have merged into eternity and the portents of the coming ones.

The world observed the 50th anniversary of the defeat and unconditional surrender of fascism in the European theatre soon followed by a similar fate of Japanese fascism in Asia in 1945 that signalled the end of the most devastatingly destructive war ever fought in history. The hope and vision that this great event kindled in the minds of many about a world without wars where nations may live peacefully soon died. Korea and then Vietnam, followed by several others, localised or regional, the Gulf War and now the blood-letting in erstwhile Yugoslavia have driven nails on the coffin of that hope and have demonstrated with unrelenting regularity and unsurpassed cruelty that the causes of threat of war are not only alive but also stronger than before. The country that made the greatest sacrifices in terms of human lives, productive power and properties to inflict the most decisive defeat on the Nazi hordes lies disintegrated, drowned in gory internecine conflicts with its once strong economy in shambles.

With the experiences lying buried in the ruins of the League of Nations, the world recalled in 1995 the founding of the United Nations 50 years ago that held out a promise of new international relations of equality and respect for the right of every nation to build a social system of its choice. Not an iota of this solemn promise survives today. It collapsed when gunboat diplomacy came to be practised as legitimate, armed interventions, illegal economic sanctions, trade embargoes, wanton disregard for General Assembly resolutions flung on a helpless UN. The US arrogated to itself as international policeman to discipline others with its nails stained with the blood of Panama, Nicaragua and many others. The grossly illegitimate and universally condemned embargo on Cuba is a standing monument to this willful sabotage of values on which UN was founded. The UN and all its agencies have been hijakced by imperialism.

The people of the world recalled the horrors of atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the USA in August 1945 when the surrender of Japan was imminent. The horrendous trail of death and destruction remains as a nightmare not of the Japanese people alone but of all people around the globe. From the enormous heap of dead, crushed and mutiliated and the millions who survived the terrible blast to suffer the insufferable for the rest of their lives and the grave dangers to unborn generations, rose the demand which later found echo in the mind of every peace-loving citizen of the world: No More Hiroshima, No More Nagasaki. But in 1995, the world was laden with more nuclear weapons and the depths of the oceans had more submarines with nuclear warheads than ever before while more sophisticated nuclear weapons are being tested. Nuclear blackmail is now a part of diplomatic pressure to cow down smaller nations. The world, it seems, stepped out of so-called cold war to land in hot peace.

These three observances epitomized the unfulfilled hope, unredeemed pledge that bedevil the lives of millions and dilemma and promise before humankind.

As the year closes, the world was never more unjust, more unequal and the vicious tentacles of three imperialist-owned institutions—the World Bank, IMF and the WTO—more widespread. Imperialist machinations successfully frustrated the objectives with which the Copenhagen Social Summit was called.

In our very own India, 1995 was yet another year of more distress, hardship and misery for more millions while the upper crust had never had it so good. The country is loaded with more foreign debt, higher trade deficit, unabated industrial sickness, still higher number unemployeds, continuing stagnation in agriculture, privatisation threatening eminently successful public undertaking, foreign multinationals consolidating their strangelhold on economy and scandals involving hundreds of millions of rupees making headlines every other day. Probity in public life is considered a burden of the past. Indeed, life was never as hard and food so dear for the average Indian as in 1995.

Despite all these, however, there are several welcome signs with the promise of these blossoming into something more positively far-reaching. Anyone scanning the horizon cannot miss the emerging symptoms. Socialism, whose obituary was sung by the imperialist tycoons and their overzealous touts is bidding fare to flush back with renewed brightness, socialist forces raising heads in their previous citadels and with the working class movement being raised to new heights in massive strike action into the heartlands of imperialist power in Europe.The people, the toiling and working masses are trying to forge new bonds, establish new bonds and, differences notwithstanding, coming closer to save democracy, democratic rights and civil liberties, protect jobs and wages preserve hard-earned benefits and expose and defeat imperialist domination and uphold socialist values, working class solidarity, national sovereignty and international brotherhood.

Goodbye 1995, Welcome 1996

24.12.95

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MOUNTING OPPOSITION AGAINST PENSION SCHEME AND ORDINANCE

Protest day observed on 4th December all over

The opposition of the mass of the workers against the government's proposed pension scheme designed to impound almost half of the PF generation of the workers from 16.11.95 has been mounting every day in every corner of the country.

Maharashtra is one such state, which witnessed demonstration of one lakh workers on 14th Nov 1995 and within a fortnight, on December 1, another massive rally by the workers took place on the same city. The rally was jointly organised by CITU, UTUC, HMKP Kamgar Aghadi of Dr Datta Samant, and Phillips Employees Union, Bombay, Sarva Shramik Sangha and several independent unions. The rally had given a call for industrial strike in Maharashtra on 11th December 1995. Besides series of conventions were held all over the state on the issue. Strike was a massive success for which separate report has been carried in this issue.

In other industrial centres of the country right from Southern cities like Visakhapatnam, Madras, Tiruchirapally, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram to Jhansi, Bhopal, Hardwar in the North, also in Calcutta, Bhubaneswar, Rourkela, Bhilai, Bombay, Basik, Lucknow, Kanpur, Indore, Haryana and many others agitations against the govt pension scheme is attaining new heights. In BHEL Hardwar, workers irrespective of affiliation joined enmasse for demonstration for three consecutive days. In BHEL Jhansi, workers and officers joined hand in hand in agitating and sending post cards to Labour Minister in protest of the governmental design. In Bhopal, effigy of Pension scheme was burnt by the workers. In Lucknow, massive demonstration took place. In Visakhapatnam, Bangalore and Hyderabad mass signature campaign was organisd where workers of all unions joined enmasse. In many undertakings, the unions affiliated to other Central Trade Unions wrote to their central leaders demanding change of their stand in respect of Pension scheme.

CITU published a booklet titled 'Real Face of Pension Scheme' which was translated in all the regional languages like Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telungu, Marathi, Kannada etc. and over 2 lakh copies were already sold within a fortnight. Since demands for booklet have been pouring in CITU Centre the second edition of 10,000 copies more have been published , to meet the immediate demand besides initiative taken by various State Committees in this regard.

CITU gave a call for observing protest day on the pension issue on 4th December, 1995 all over the country, since on that day the Pension Bill was likely to come up for discussion in Parliament. The decision was taken only on 29th November, 1995 and little time was available for preparation.

But inspite of that, the day was observed in a massive way in all the parts of the country, as per reports received so far.

In Delhi, several hundreds of workers staged dharna in front of the office of Union Labour Minister defying prohibitory order. The dharna was virtually surrounded by police cordon. The dharna went on for more than four hours and was addressed by Com.Jibon Roy, MP, and Secretary, CITU, Com.S B Bharadwaj, general secretary, Delhi State Committee of CITU, Com. P K Ganguly and Com.Tapan Sen,secretaries of CITU among others. At the end the demonstrators courted arrest.

In IDPL factory at Rishikesh, workers enmasse demonstrated at the gate which was joined by workers of all the unions.

In Kanpur, several thousand workers rallied through out the city and submitted memorandum to Labour Commissioner. In ICI, Dunkan Fertilizers and other units workers enmasse struck work for three hours to join the rally.

In Bhubaneswar, demonstration was held in all the industrial units/offices and thereafter demonstrating workers rallied together in a march before Governor's office and submitted memorandum.

In Rourkela Steel city, day long dharna was staged by the workers in the steel plant entrance which was also joined by members of other unions besides CITU. Reports were received about demonstration in the mining areas of Kalta Bursua, Barbil, etc and also from Jharsugda and Balasore.

At Visakhapatnam, hundreds of telegrams were sent by all the unions from almost all the industrial units. Demonstration was held in the steel plant, HSCL, port and dock which was joined by workers from other industries as well. Massive signature campaign is going on.

Report from Tamil Nadu reveals that in all district headquarters in the state, massive demonstrations were held. Notable among these places were the industrial estates at Guindy, Ambattur, Tiruchirapally, Ranipet, Salem, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli. Workers of Cement, Magnesite, BHEL, Sipcot, Steel, Engineering etc rallied in a massive way in these demonstrations besides others. A massive rally has been planned on 11.12.1995 before the office of the PF Commissioner at Madras. Around one lakh copies of the CITU's pamphlet on Pension Scheme were sold.

As per reports received from Kerala, the protest day was observed through demonstration and dharna, etc at Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin and other centres.

In Rajasthan in almost all the industrial units, the protest day was observed on 4th December in the form of gate meetings and demonstrations.

In Haryana, as per the call given by the State CITU the workers expressed their angers and resentment against the New Pension Scheme by holding demonstrations, rallies, and gate meetings at different places in the State on 4th December. Memoranda were submitted to the district authorities demanding pension as a third retiral benefit and scrapping of the new scheme.

In Sirsa, hundreds of workers demonstrated in front of the district collector's office and later handed over a memorandum.

A massive dharna was organised in front of the district magistrates office at Hisar. The Dharna was addressed by the State CITU General Secretary Com.Satbir Singha dn other leaders. A gate meeting was also held in Haryana Concast (Hissar). A general body meeting of the workers of Hansi spinning mill was held in the workers colony which resented the govt's move to cheat the workers in the name of paying pension.\

500 copies of pension booklet in Hindi published by CITU was sold on the day at Rohtak where a big rally was held.

Reports have also been received sometimes back from Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Lucknow, Calcutta, Durgapur, Bokaro, Bhilai, Bombay, Nagpur, Jhansi, Hardwar, Guwahati etc on widespread observance of the protest day through gate meetings, demonstrations, sending telegrams, holding massive rallies, etc.

CITU urges upon the govt to sense the depth of the discontent among the mass of the workers against the pension scheme devised by it and respond with a positive approach to the just demand of thorough restructuring of the scheme to make it truly beneficial and protect the Contributory PF of the workers. The CITU calls upon the workers of all affiliations to launch still bigger resistance movement against the draconian pension scheme so that Government of India is forced not to unilaterally impose the scheme on the workers.

The CITU appeals to Members of Parliament to raise the powerful voice of millions of workers against the pension scheme.

A Global Review—

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workforce to the tune of 35 million and 36 million during the Eighth and Ninth Plan periods respectively, there will be 94 million job seekers by 2002 AD. The Government is optimistic that with the on-going structural adjustment programme, ie. privatisation drive, it will banish unemployemnt by that year. But during the decade 1981 to 1991 employment in the organised sector in India had grown from 229 lakhs to 272 lakhs. According to Economic Survey (1995), except for about 5 lakhs in the private sector, the entire employment was in the public sector only, which is now being privatised.

For giving full employment to 94 million job seekers by 2002 AD, the employment has to grow by an average of 3.64 percent per annum for the entire period. But the Labour Ministry data says that employment in the organised sector grew by 1.44 per cent in 1990-91; 1.21 percent in 1991-92 and by 0.45 percent in 1992-93, the first year of the Eighth Plan. From 1991-92, that is the first year of the new economic policies of privatisation, the contribution of the private sector in job creation has been zero to negative. So, as the organised sector is being squeezed by the structural adjustment programme, employment is also squeezed. At the same time, the unorganised sector is unable to absorb people, as it is already overcrowded. Thus to give full employment by 2000AD, it will require to create 10 million jobs every year from now.

The question arises, where are the jobs? The organised sector, the maximum job creating sector is being squeezed, the public sector, the maximum contributor of jobs is now being dismantled, and the unorganised sector is already overcrowed with half-fed and half-clad proletariats. Ofcourse, the structural adjustment progrmame has got the answer—be self-employed in the home based units and produce the products of the organised sector. The policy makers—the imperialist countries, cannot give jobs to their own people. Can their imposed policy give jobs to others countries?

The only answer is a self-reliant economy free from the fetters of IMF and World Bank,with the public sector as the leaders. The path is that of struggle to be led by the working class with jobs for all as the main demand. All other mass organisations of students, youth, women, peasantry and agricultural labour have to be mobilised focusing on this common demand, which will certainly give a boost to the struggle against the new economic policiesá □

NATIONAL PRESS ON THE PENSION SCHEME

M.K. PANDHE

The national press in India has extensively commented on the pension scheme. Most of them were strongly critical of the scheme as such. They have highlighted major shortcomings of the scheme and observed that it fails to benefit the workers in general.

Hindustan Times (25 Nov.) Editorially commented, "It is essentially a repackaging of the old scheme as the restructuring of PF and the abolition of the Employees Family Pension Scheme has been done in such a manner that it entails no expenditure on the part of either the employers or the government."

The Editorial further stated, "The biggest drawback of the scheme is that it is not optional, which constitutes an injustice to those who could expect to get much better returns by investing one half of their PF savings elsewhere. The rates of pension fixed for widows and children make it quite discriminatory, while the Rs.5000 ceiling put on the pensionable salary reduces the quantum of benefit considerably."

The Editorial sarcastically commented, "To be not a loser, a workers should have put in 40 years of service and live upto 70 years a condition not generally met." It concluded, "Devised in haste and with no proper consultation with either the trade unions or opposition parties, the PF pension scheme has been exposed to what it is -a poll bait held out to the middle class by politicians who would never be pensioned out of business of hoodwinking the masses."

Times of India, another leading national daily in its editorial (24 Nov.) entitled "Pension Pilfering" stated, "Unfortunately the pension plan which came into effect this week is severely flawed. Far from being a third retirement benefit as had originally being mooted, the scheme undermines the Provident Fund (PF) plan by diverting the money employers contribute to their employees PF.....The previous pension plan built up a huge corpus precisely because the government was note diligent in making payments to those entitled to them, especially the relatives of deceased workers. This is itself does not make one optimistic about the feasibility and fairness of the new scheme."

The Editorial continued, "These are some of the reasons why a feeling has arisen that the government is simply looting workers money under guise of providing a safety net for them. It is also unfortunate that the scheme contains provisions that blatantly discriminate against women. A widow who remarries loses her right to share of her deceased husbands pension while a widower is not subject to any such stricture. Similarly daughters who marry will not get a single paisa while married sons are unaffected. The matter should be brought to the attention of the apex court so that it may take to task for framing discriminatory laws. It is also not clear how unorganised and contract workers will be covered."

"The press-ganging of most subscribers of the PF scheme into a new pension plan is also evidence of governments lack of sincerity. If it is not convinced of the superiority of the new plan, let the facts be placed before the workers and to enrol left to them" The Editorial concluded.

The Telegraph, a leading Calcutta daily in its editorial on 20 November pointed out that "the rate of return on pension funds should keep a modicum of pace with price accelerations. None should be fooled that this is equivalent of full indexation. Especially not when the government employees are beneficiaries of official subsidies on indexed pensions".

The daily observed, "...labour deserves some compensation for the skewed burden sharing in the new scheme. For the government too a take it on leave it attitude might negate the political purpose behind the restructuring of the old financial transfer systems. The general elections and the importance of workers votes had prompted the government to be prompt about the pension scheme. If workers "helped" by the trade union propoganda deem the new plans to be crudely pro-industry the political motive will be fulfilled in the reverse. Choice has another virtue in this context. The number of workers opting for the new scheme will be a good index for the government to guage its creation, popularity."

Business standard, a financial daily from Calcutta while editorially commenting on the shortcoming of the Pension Scheme emphasised, "It is never easy for a government to satisfy labour without hunting itself and industry in financial terms. The Government took on itself the task because it wanted to curry favour with workers before a general election. But it is difficult to create something outof nothing. The trade union leaders are unlikely to convince their members about the ruling party's munificence when the government is not contributing a paisa more than it used to."

The Editorial concluded by noting, "A lot of work will have to be done to make the scheme more beneficial and meaningful so that it represents a net additionality and not a mere repackaging. At the very least, workers should be given the option to continue with the old provident fund scheme instead of becoming a part of new pension plan. Among other things, that will also show how much real support the new scheme has among its intended beneficiaries".

Indian Express in its issue dated 22 November while reviewing the scheme commented,"The Union Government has made much of the welfare aspects of the newly created Employees Pension Fund (EPF). However, the welfare provisions have provided to be blatantly discriminatory.

"A family pension is provided for widows, sons and daughters - while widows are provided pension till death or re-marriage, there is no mention of the marital status of the widower affecting family pension. Sons and daughters can avail of pension up to the age of 25 under the monthly children's pension, but the entitlement of daughters ends on marriage."

Commenting a day earlier on 21 November the same daily make the following observation on the official propoganda machinery:

"As usual, the Union Government's propoganda machinery has been sadly lacking in efficiency. The ordinance promulgating the scheme is mixed in legalistic language, the draft scheme has not been sufficiently circulated among the general public and changes from the old scheme formulated two years ago, if any, are not known,"

Perhaps Economic Times was the only journal which welcomed the scheme without much criticism (21 October). In its Editorial "The Pension payoff" it has characterised the scheme as "a step in right direction." The journal did not see the electoral angle in bringing the scheme through an ordinance. The journal did not even feel the need for a detailed prior discussion with the trade unions. Yet the journal was very unhappy about the capability of the PF organisation in handling huge funds. It stated,

"Initially, these funds will be managed in traditional fashion by the Provident Fund Commissioner. But returns are as important as security, and there is a case for increasing the level of professionalism in the area." The Editorial failed to explain how the PF organisation would do justice to the responsibility.

In contrast Hindustan Times in an earlier Editorial (19 October) in a sharp manner castigated the PF organisation in the following words.

"Already notorious for its inefficiency and indiggerent dealings, if the PF organisations are to disburse the pension, the hassles that the pensioners have to undergo to get their monthly dues can well be imagined. While the scheme falls short of what the trade unions have demanded, the element of compulsion will be widely resisted."

Rashtriya Sahara a leading Hindi daily in its Editorial on 27 November noted.

"Is it not a matter of surprise that in a poor country like India where sections of toiling masses are facing exploitation due to unemployment and under employment, the Government of India is resorting threatening tactics to enforce such a social security measure? The Union Labour Minister while speaking in the Indian Labour Conference threatened that the Government would bring the bill in Winter Session of Parliament only if the trade union would unanimously toe the Government scheme. As a matter here lies the hollowness and bad intention of the government behind this threat which anybody would rarely take seriously. Who would believe that government would dare to reverse its own decision when the populist measure was introduced by promulgating an ordinance?

The paper further observed, "Two and a half years ago the scheme was announced by the Government and the trade unions raised a hue and cry against it. The matter was then referred to the standing Committee of Ministry of labour. The Committee would have submitted its report to Parliament but before this through the backdoor (by an ordinance) it was given a legal shape. Should we call it a soft corner of the Government towards workers or a clever trick to make the workers feel obliged by taking their own money? Instead of giving a third retirement benefit the Government is taking money out of PF in this scheme.

Instead of making it optional the manner in which the Government is making it compulsory only raises the question about its real intentions? "

Perhaps the article by Shri B.Krishna Rao in Financial Express dated-28th November, which was also carried by Economic Times on 24-11-95 was the one of those very fews which supported the Govt. Pension Scheme. The article certified the Govt Scheme saying "EPS provides comprehensive social security to the member, his wife and children/ orphan....The fundamentals of the scheme per se are sound" Sri Krishna Rao happens to be the Chief Controller (Pension) and he commented while justifying diversion of employers' contribution to PF for the pension fund "the incidence of loans and withdrawals is so frequent that not a very substancial sum is left at the time of superannuation (in the Provident fund)."

Another article appearing in Financial Express on December 8 refuted the position. While commenting on the hollowness of the Govt pension scheme, which "take away so much from employees and give so little in return and call it welfare" the article titled "EPS a fraud on the working class" refuted Shri Krishna Rao's contentions as noted above saying "The Provident Fund is not a savings Bank account. Withdrawals from the PF are allowed only for specific purposes like House Building (or purchase of house) daughters' marriage, higher education of children etc. And except in case of housing, where the amount accumulated as employers' contributions are allowed to be withdrawn, other withdrawals for daughters' marriage etc. are allowed only upto a certain percentage of employees' own contribution. Thus even after availing of such loans he could be rest assured that the amount lying in his account as employers' contribution would be intact and paid to him on retirement. Now (after EPS) with the employers' contribution almost lost to him his retirement fund will be depleted. Moreover from now on, the amount available to him for housing would be drastically reduced. It must be mentioned here that Provident Fund is the only source of finance to an employee which does to put the employee under debt... It makes no sense for his funds to be taken away from him without his consent on the flimsy pretext of providing pension".

The Times to India carried an article titled "Pension Scheme or Employees Provident Fund Scam" authored by eminent Tax Consultant Shri A.N. Shanbag which pointed the Pension Scheme as an "infringement on fundamental rights of the workers orchestrated under the guise of instituting a social safety net".

Shri Shanbag was conspicuous in quoting the Supreme Court's Comment on how should the erstwhile Family Pension Scheme operate, while placing his comment on present Govt pension scheme. Supreme Court Commented on the working of Family Pension Scheme saying "Yet the inescapable test remains, viz there must be a broad correspondence between what the employees pay and what they and their families get ultimately. It cannot be that while the fund accumulates, employees and their families decay.... Both the contributions by the employees and the benefits flowing to them must be broadly commensurate."

Shri Shanbag sought to weigh the pension scheme broadly on above premise and characterised it as insidious. While sarcastically viewing governmental logic of so called improper use by the workers of their own PF money, Shri shanbag commented "The stand of the Government was that each an every worker is an idiot as far as managing his finances are concerned. When he gets a large retirement benefit he squanders it away....therefore, it becomes the duty of the big brother to force him to provide a social safety net....This step was clearly orchestrated to make deep inroad into what rightfully belonged to worker" And on making a thorough scrutiny of the various aspects of the pension scheme, Shri Shanbag expressively raised a doubt whether "Is it the Government for the people? I wonder!"

Massive Dharna against New Economic Policies

Over ten thousand workers, peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth and women staged a day-long dharna at Parliament street, New Delhi on 15th December demanding withdrawal of the anti-people new economic policies by the Government.

The call for the countrywide protest action was given by the National Platform of Mass Organisations. Similar massive demonstrations and rallies were held in all State capitals and districts in the country.

The participants came from Delhi and the adjoining areas and came in procession with banners and flags from the Jantar Mantar part and sat in the dharna before the Parliament Street Police Station, where they were stopped by the Police.

The meeting was conducted by a presidium consisting of B.D. Joshi (AITUC), P.K. Ganguly (CITU), Yogeshwar Gope (AICCTU), Sushil Bhattacharya (UTUC), R.A. Mittal (HMS), V. Patole (IFTU), R.K. Sharma (UTUC-LS) and D.D. Shastri (TUCC).

Among those who addressed the rally were A.B.Bardhan (AITUC), P.K. Ganguly (CITU), V. Tiagi (HMS), Dipankar Bhattacharya (AICCTU), V. Patole (IFTU), D.D. Shastri (TUCC), Sunil Sen Gupta (UTUC), Satyavan (UTUC-LS), Sushila Gopalan (AIDWA),

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CITU OPPOSES PENSION ORDINANCE, DEMANDS FOR RIGHT OF OPTION BY THE WORKERS TO PENSION SCHEME

In the background of mounting unrest among the mass of workers against Govt Pension Scheme all over the country manifested by strike, agitation, dharna, mass petition etc in various industrial centres, Union Labour Minister convened a meeting of all Central Trade Unions, alongwith members of Central Board of PF Trustees and some members of Parliament on 19.12.1995.

In the meeting CITU reiterated that the Govt Pension Scheme is basically funded by workers' money by way of impounding almost half of the PF generation of workers to pension fund and the scheme is not at all beneficial to workers since the rate of pension remains to be much less compared to the accumulation of what is being taken away from the workers. The Labour Minister has declared some improvements in the scheme no doubt, but the said changes/improvements do not anyway alter the basic frame-work of the scheme, meaning thereby that workers would continue to lose heavily because of the scheme. While the employers group in the meeting supported the Govt scheme, the other trade unions insisted for provision for automatic indexation of the Pension, among other issues. But Minister insisted in turn that provision of yearly review of the Scheme declared afresh by him would take care of the same, which is not at all a fact.

CITU, in addition to the suggestions for improvement made by other unions as well, insisted that since the Govt Pension Scheme has been framed on the basis of taking away the 8.33% contribution of employers to workers PF, which is the Workers money, Workers should be given the option whether they would accept the Scheme or choose the Contributory Provident Fund System. Govt should agree to such provision of option if they are so confident about the efficacy of their pension scheme. But unfortunately other trade unions present in the meeting opposed the demand for provision of option and hence the ministry could make a plea to refuse to accept the suggestion of CITU for option.

CITU reaffirms its opposition to Govt Pension Scheme in its present form, which is nothing but mere reallocation of workers own money much against the interest of the workers, without allowing option to them. It is because of CITU's opposition from the begnninig and wide spread resentment among the workers manfested in various forms, the Govt have agreed for some improvements of the scheme but those are not enough to prevent colossal loss, the workers have to face because of the imposition of the Scheme. CITU reiterates that all the sections of workers irrespective of low paid and highpaid, would lose heavily on account of the Scheme. CITU feels that united pressure of the TU Movement could make Govt agree to all the required changes and frame a truely beneficial scheme in the given situation.

Inspite of some improvements in the Scheme declared by the Labour Minister, the basic structure of the Govt Pension Scheme remains unaltered and contains several shortcomings. Rate of Pension is much less than the available interest rate on accumulated funds, and low interest rate available to Pension Corpus, inefficiency and incompetence of PF Organisation to handle the administration of the Pension Scheme, imposition of burden of Administrative expense on the pension fund and non- linkage of the pension amount with the price index are inter-alia, the other major shortcomings of the scheme even within the second-benefit framework.

CITU reiterates its demand for pension as a third retirement benefit. It appeals to all concerned to appreciate the crux of the issue and struggle unitedly so that Govt. is compelled to allow option to individual workers in respect of pension shceme and devise a truely beneficial pension scheme for all the workers in general.

Massive Dharna—

[From Page 7]

Amarjeet Kaur (NFIW), Sukomal Sen (State Govt Employees), Md. Salim (DYFI), N.K. Shukla (Kisan Sabha), J.P. Chaube (AIRF), Sri Mohan Jha (Kisan Sabha), Hanan Mollah (Agricultural Workers Union), Yelamma Reddy (Khet Mazdoor), Pinkumoni (AISF), Puspender Tiagi (SFI), etc. Earlier the Declaration of the rally was distributed among the participants. The Declaration focused at the devastating effect of the economic policies on each and every sector of economy and the people. The speakers condemned the Government for submitting to the dictates of the IMF-World Bank and going ahead with the policies ignoring the adverse effects on the people.

The declaration called for further intensification of the united struggles and appealed for the support from all democratic, secular and partriotic force, in the country to compel the Government to retrace from its path. The Declaration was adopted unanimously amidst thunderous slogans.

Ad/-	Sd/-	Sd/-
A.B. Bardhan	P.K. Ganguly	V.Tiagi
(AITUC)	(CITU)	(HMS)

8000 TEXTILE WORKERS COURT ARREST BEFORE PARLIAMENT

8000 workers of the Textile Industry courted arrest at Parliament today, on 12th December, 1995. The call for the court arrest was given by the Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers, comprising of INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS, NLO, UTUC and TUCC.

Workers from all the Textile producing states from all the three sectors of the industry, viz, organised mills (private sector, NTC and cooperative mills), handloom sector and powerloom sector came to Delhi to join the massive court arrest programme. A large number of women joined the court arrest.

The action programme was taken in pursuance of the following long pending main demands of the Textile Workers:

1. Immediate modernisation of the NTC mills to be started as per the 8-point unanimous agreement arrived at in the Special Tripartite Committee on 9.4.94.

2. Reopening of the 152 closed mills in the private sector and reabsorption of the two lakh workers rendered jobless, and convening of the Tripartite Committee in Textile Industry to discuss the sickness in the private sector.

3. Supply of Hank Yarn and other raw materials at subsidised rates and minimum wage to the Handloom Sector.

4. Minimum wage, Labour laws and social security measures in the Powerloom Sector.

5. An integrated Textile Policy, in consultation with the Central Trade Unions so as to ensure balanced development of all the three sectors.

A big joint delegation also met the Textile Minister, Shri Kamalnath and submitted a memorandum to him with the above demands. The delegation consisted of P.K. Ganguly, Gopal Bhattacharya, V.J.K. Nair (CITU); S.S. Yadav, Nirmal Ghosh (INTUC); B.D. Joshi (AITUC); V. Tiagi (HMS); V. Satam (BMS); Sunil Sengupta (UTUC). The delegation was accompanied by a number of MPs namely Jibon Roy, Ajoy Mukhopadhaya, Masudal Hussain, Tarit Topdar (All CPI-M) Pramathas Mukherjee (RSP); Mamata Banerjee (Cong-I) and Gurdas Das Gupta (CPI).

The Minister was accompanied by two officials of the Textile Ministry. After a lot of discussions, the Minister agreed to call a meeting of all the participants on 22nd December, where the Finance Minister and the Labour Minister will also be present. All the demands submitted by the JAC will be discussed in the meeting.

Later the Central Trade Union leaders and a few MPs addressed the rally and courted arrest enmasse after breaking the barricades put up by the police. Failing any concrete decisions on 22nd December, the JAC called upon the workers to further intensify the joint struggle.

Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-
Haribhau Naik (INTUC)	B.D. Joshi (AITUC)	P.K. Ganguly (CITU)	V. Tiagi (HMS)	V. Satam (BMS)	N.M. Barot (NLO)	Sunil Sen Gupta (UTUC)	D.D. Shastri (TUCC)

Workers strike in Maharashtra—

[From Page 1]

have the benefit of the present provident fund scheme untouched. "Instead, if the govt is sincere about the welfare of the working class" said Bajaj, "it should introduce a pension scheme as a 3rd retirement benefit scheme for the workers."

Other leaders who congratulated the working class for the successful strike was Dr Datta Samant of Kamgar Aghadi, Sarad Rao of HMKP, Jaywant Chawan of Sarva Shramik Sangh, Pushpa Mehta of UTUC and Kiran Mehta of Phillips Employees Union.

The successful industrial strike in Maharashtra by all means is thus a clear indication that the working class will not take the pension scheme laying down, come what may. It is therefore hoped that the leadership of the other Central TUs will reconsider their stand and join hands with CITU and other unions for wider, mightier and united struggle for pension as 3rd retirement benefit for the workers. □

Jute strike Rebuffs Canards, Wins Major Demands

☐ **Mohd Amin**

The valiant jute workers have shown once more what is the meaning of united struggle of the working class. They deserve warm congratulations from the entire trade union movement, in view of the fact that this strikes struggle was conducted under a most complicated and challenging situation.

After the strike notice was served on November 6, 1995, a section of the press raised a hue and cry that this strike was intended by the jute mill owners and the central trade unions have imposed it on the unwilling workers. Two lakh hand bills were distributed by the so called "Sangram" union in all jute mill areas. Employers also engaged a good number of paid agents to confuse the workers. But all such attempts failed and on Nov 29 from Hari Nagar to Birlapur and from Bansberia to Kanoria Jute Mill, all the 58 jute mills came to a grinding halt as a thundering blow to all mischief-mongers.

The West Bengal labour minister, Shanti Ghatak, along with his two cabinet colleagues, Patit Paban Pathak and Prabir Sengupta, made serious efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement. But the negotiations broke down at 11 pm on November 28 because of the adamant attitude of the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA) who refused to accept the proposal to increase the dearness allowance neutralisation per point from the existing Rs 1.75 to Rs 1.90, an increase of only 15 paise per point.

On December 1, the IJMA met the Chief Minister and agreed to accept the labour minister's proposal which cleared the way for a settlement following which an agreement was signed on December 2. Those very employers who were adamant prior to the strike, changed as soon as the strike commenced, making it clear that all their attempts to divide the workers had failed. The myth exploded that the employers wanted a strike.

CANARDS REBUFFED

The strike rebuffed another canard as well—that because of the existence of the Left Front Government in West Bengal for the last 18 years, the trade union movement has become stagnant and has lost its militancy. Anyone who understands the trade union movement knows very well that an indefinite strike by the industrial workers is the highest form of struggle and the workers' last resort under the capitalist system.

There was another propaganda too—that because of the industrial policy recently declared by the West Bengal government, the latter does not want any industrial strike in the state as it might have an adverse impact on the said policy. The strike gave a rebuff to this propaganda also.

On November 19, 1995, while addressing the open session of the 54th annual conference of the CITU-affiliated Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union in Reliance Maidan, Jyoti Basu had said that in case the settlement efforts by the labour minister did not succeed and the problem came to him, he would extend whatever help he could, and he kept his word during and before the strike.

As a result of all such efforts, the strike was called off only four day after it began. Thus it was the shortest indefinite strike in the history of jute industry in the state.

WORKERS LOSS AND GAIN

In short, it can be said that the strike caused the minimum possible loss for the workers with maximum possible gains under the circumstances. What they got by this strike they could not get through the last strike of 1992 which continued for 50 days. On an average, each worker lost about Rs 4000 because of the 1992 strike, and the wage rise of Rs 90 per month plus DA rise by ten paise per point for a period of three years was hardly sufficient to set aside the loss. On the contrary, this time the maximum loss of a worker will be Rs 400 on an average while the wage rise of Rs 90 and DA rise by Rs 11.85 per month will provide a total monthly benefit of Rs 142.59 per month to each worker; it will be more than Rs 5000 during the 36 months, which is the period of this agreement.

Apart from wage rise and DA each worker covered by grade and scale of pay will get three increments during the three years.

There is another balance sheet too. By this four day strike the industry has suffered a loss of production amounting to Rs 16 crore. If the employers margin of profit is estimated at ten per cent, they have lost Rs 1.6 crore while the workers have lost only Rs 80 lakh.

The main demand of 90 per cent permanent and 20 per cent special badli has been refered to an official committee which will examine all aspects of the issue. The trade unions and the employers will get an opportunity to place their points of view before the committee which will submit its report within three months. Thereafter the state government will take a decision which will be binding on both the parties. In the meantime, 10,000 workers will be made permanent and an equal number will get an opportunity to become special badli provided the unions maintain unit-wise vigilance.

The question of production and productivity has been referred to another official committee which will look into the issues involved in a time bound manner. There too the unions will get an opportunity to protect the workers' interests.

Contract labour, bhawala and zero number systems will be abolished. All legal dues to retired workers will be paid within six months from the date of the agreement.

The employment of women workers will be maintained and improved.

The state government has requested the employers to reconsdier their decision not to pay arrear bonus for 1993-94 as the matter is subjudice.

This agreement will remain in force for three years.

Now the unions have among other things, to build up a solidarity movement demanding reopening of the Meghna and Tirupati jute mills.

Unprecedented Industrial Strike in Delhi

An estimated 15 lakh industrial and contract system employees and workers in Delhi went on one day strike on 23.11.1995 in support of their 8-point Charter of Demands. The demands of the workers include: minimum wage of Rs 2500/- per month with DA @ Rs 2/- per point of price increase; restoration of DA withheld by the BJP Govt for the past price rise, regularisation of all temporary/contract workers who are on permanent or continuous jobs, stopping of all retrenchments, lockouts and closures; stop rendering lakhs of workers jobless as a result of shifting of industries from Delhi in the name of pollution; strict implementation of labour laws especially with regard to provident fund, minimum wages, DA etc, equal wages and creches for women workers and stopping of police intervention in labour matters.

The response to the one day strike jointly organised by all major central trade unions in Delhi viz. CITU, AITUC, HMS, IFTU, AICCTU, UTUC and UTUC(LS) was unprecedented. Even workers belonging to INTUC and BMS also joined the strike action and participated in the processions.

The Hotel workers of the capital led by CITU totally struck work and went in a procession and demonstrated outside the residence of Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana in support of their demands. In Shahdara industrial area, more than 80% industries were closed by the owners themselves after seeing the unity and enthusiasm amongst the working class. In Wazirpur industrial area, a huge procession of more than 3000 workers with red flags under CITU leadership took out a procession striking work totallly. The entire industrial belt in GT Karnal Road, Nirankari Colony, Rajasthan Udyog Nagar, etc observed total strike and the workers were on the roads with processions every where.

The loading and unloading activities in the entire city came to a standstill and transportation of goods was totally affected as Palladars in the city struck work totally for the day. In Mayapuri industrial area, most of the industries were closed and more than 2000 workers took out a procession with colourful banners and red flags in support of their demands under the joint leadership of various trade unions.

At the Indira Gandhi international airport, the work came to a standstill with the strike being 100% at Terminal departure, ARrival, cArgo and East west Airlines. The workers in nearby Pelicon industries also struck work, 100%. Hug processions of workers were taken out in Rama Road and Kirti Nagar industrial area. In Okhla industrial area the strike was complete and workers took out processions in all the phases, separately. In SCOPE Complex, the contract workers struck work and took out a procession.

National Consensus?

The Prime Minister and his Finance Minister never miss any opportunity to proclaim either in India or abroad that a national consensus exists in India on the new economic policy initiated in mid-1991. The consensus that the Prime Minister and Finance Minister refer to cannot be anything else than the parliamentary majority that the ruling party has manipulated to manage. This is being masqueraded as national consensus. The World Bank which has since become of economic and financial gendarme of the world and whose views the Indian government parrots, however, gives a different version. The World Bank in its annual survey, World Development Report 1995, records as under:

"India's unions continue to criticise the government's recent liberalisation efforts, despite the apparent success of many of these initiatives since 1991. The unions have organised nationwide general strikes to oppose incipient industrial restructuring measures aimed in part at increasing India's outward orientation and the reform of state enterprises. India's unions are propping the part of the economy most in need of reform." (P.81)

How can the PM or the celebrated FM manipulate above expression of their masters!

CITU Congratulates Coal Miners for massive strike on 18th December

CITU congratulates seven lakh coalminers all over the country for their magnificent response to the call for one day strike on 18th December given jointly by CITU and HMS and also supported by AITUC to protest the negative approach of the Coal Ministry and Coal India management towards just demands of the workers.

In fact all the five major unions in coal industry affiliated to CITU, AITUC, INTUC, BMS and HMS served strike notice for six days strike from 18th December 1995 onwards on a jointly prepared charter of demand. But unfortunately after the meeting with Coal Minister and Labour Minister on 14th December 1995 INTUC and BMS decided to go back from their decision to strike without achieving any of the demands. In the changed situation CITU and HMS unions called upon the coal workers to observe strike on 18th December 1995 to protest the anti-worker stance of the govt of India and Coal India authority. AITUC also declared their support to the strike call given by CITU and HMS.

CITU noted with dismay that to foil the strike Coal Ministry and Coal India management left no stone unturned to create confusion and terrorise the mass of the workers in various means. In BCCL and ECL strike was declared illegal and threat for 8 days wage-cut was given by management. But braving those intimidating tactics, the Coal miners all over the country responded by striking work in all the coal mines and centres in a massive way. In Coal India Head Quarter at Calcutta 100% workers joined the strike. In Raniganj coal belt strike was near total except in the office of ECL headquarters where strike was partial. In Eastern Coalfields Ltd as a whole except in four mines, workers enmasse joined the strike. In BCCL and CCL mines spreading mainly over the Bihar coal belt strike was more than 75%. As per reports received so far in the South Eastern Coalfields and Northern Coalfields mines more than 70% workers participated in strike, whereas in Maharashtra region of Western Coalfields strike was above 60%. Reports received from Hyderabad reveals that in Singareni collieries at Andhra Pradesh overwhelming majority of coal workers joined the strike. On the whole, around 5 lakhs of the 7 lakhs coal miners participated in the strike on 18th December 1995. In spite of the confusion created by the backing out by INTUC and BMS Unions from the strike decisions the last moment, and misinformation campaign by the electronic media regarding postponement of strike, the response of the coal miners to one day strike call on 18th December is widespread which manifest the depth of discontent among the mass of the coal miners producing coal for the nation facing most rigorous and hazardous service condition. Strike was massive inspite of opposition by the INTUC and BMS leadership and even by a section of AITUC leadership in some of the coal mines in ECL and BCCL.

CITU urges upon the Coal India management and Coal Ministry to realise the gravity of the situation and take concrete steps in ameliorating the just grievances of coal workers, and not just pronounce hollow assurances.

CITU also calls upon all the trade unions in coal industry to take note of the mounting unrest among the coal workers demonstrated by the strike action and unitedly struggle to achieve their just demands.

CITU also calls upon the coal workers to prepare for bigger action to achieve the long pending demands of the coal mine workers like pension, restructuring of basic pay for ensuring higher dearness allowance as per new formulae, against reference of BCCL to BIFR and others.

CITU CONDEMNS GOVERNMENTS REFUSAL TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR MODERNISATION OF IISCO

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

The Centre of Indian Trade Union strongly condemns the decision of the Committee of Ministers not to give the required funds for the modernisation of IISCO.

The Central Government has been delaying in taking decision about the last 6 months in the BIFR meetings despite readiness shown by the SAIL authorities to undertake modernisation provided the Govt. of India give about Rs.1100 crores for meeting part of the expenses.

The Government of West Bengal and the workers of all affiliations of IISCO agreed to contribute some amount for the purpose. However the Central Government's attitude is delaying the work of modernisation of this premier public sector undertaking.

The CITU appeals to all the trade unions in steel industry to rise in protest against this recalcitrant attitude of the Government of India and launch united movement to force the Government of India to provide necessary funds for modernisation of IISCO.

The CITU appeals to the Minister of Labour to immediately convene a meeting of Special Tripartite Committee on IISCO modernisation so that the matters can be discussed with a view to find a solution to modernise IISCO as a public sector undertaking. □

FERTILIZER WORKERS COURT ARREST BEFORE PARLIAMENT

National Convention of the workers of Fertilizer industry held on 12th December 1995 at the Constitution Club, New Delhi has called upon the workers to further intensify the on-going struggle to defeat the Govt.'s suicidal policy of increasing dependence on import of Fertilizers abandoning the path of Self-reliance. The convention has resolved to launch long drawn militant struggle to force the Government to implement the revamping scheme already approved by them (Govt.) for rehabilitating the plants of Fertilizer Corporation of India (FCI) and Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation (HFC) and to include Gorakhpur, Haldia and FP & ARD in the revamping package.

On 13th December about 15 hundred workers demonstrated before the Parliament House. These workers came from the different parts of the country representing 21 affiliated unions of Fertilzier Workers' Federation of India. Prior to marching towards Parliament House the workers assembled at the Jantar Mantar Park.

After the meeting at Jantar Mantar Park the workers took out a long procession holding high the banners and placards of demands and shouting slogan. Infront of the Parliament House Police Station the marchers broke the police cordon and courted arrest.

The Convention and the demonstration were addressed by several members of Parliament and National leaders of Central Trade Unions. Notable amongst them were Basudev Acharya, Dr. Ashok Mitra, Dipankar Mukherjee, Hanan Mulla, Tarit Topdar Mohamad Salim,M.Ps, CPI(M) and Chathuranan Misra, Jallaluddin Ansari,M.P. CPI, and Ramvilas Paswan, M.P of JD, A.B. Bardhan, General Secretary, AITUC, Jibon Roy, M.P, Secretary, CITU and leaders of the federation.

A delegation met the Minsiter for Fertilizer and Chemicals and also a memorandum was given to the Prime Minister jointly signed by several MPs from different political parties demanding his personal intervention to ensure necessary fund for implementation of the decision of the govt. itself to revive the plants of FCI and HFC.

COM.BTR'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY SEMINAR

REPORT OF COM.BTR'S 91ST BIRTH ANNIVERSARY SEMINAR WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT ISSUE ALONGWITH CELEBRATION REPORTS FROM OTHER STATES—ED

R E S O L U T I O N(ABRIDGED)

This convention organised by FERTILIZER WORKERS' FEDERATION OF INDIA (FWFI) expresses its strong resentment over the steps taken by the Central Government under its new economic policy in destroying the leading role of public sector fertilizer industry, giving up the path of self-reliance and dangerously depending on excessive import of fertilizers.

THE PIONEER PUBLIC SECTOR FERTILZIER PLANTS UNDER FERTILIZER CORPORATION OF INDIA (FCI) AND HINDUSTAN FERTILIZER CORPORATION (HFC) located in the states of ASSAM, ANDHRA PRADESH, BIHAR, ORISSA, UTTAR PRADESH AND WEST BENGAL have become sick due to unscientific grouping of technologically deficient units of erstwhile F.C.I. in 1978 under these two companies. Since then, expert committees, appointed by the Govenrment itself and amde several recommendations for technological upgradation. These were never implemented which further aggravated the sickness.

FCI, HFC and PDIL were referred to BIFR in 1992 and since then several hearings took place before BIFR. The Government took time from the BIFR in every hearing and even after expiry of long three and a half year the Government could not submit their final proposal for rehabilitation of FCI, HFC and PDIL to the BIFR. However, in the last hearing of BIFR the representative of the Ministry of Fertilizer and Chemicals have announced that the Group of Ministers have approved on 20th April '95 the rehabilitation scheme for FCI and HFC at a cost of Rs.2201.13 crores. According the Ministry on implementation of


Fertilizer workers proceeding for Court Arrest

Now the question is when the Government is spending Rs. 4,200 crores and that too in foreign exchange, in a foreign country to establish plant to produce 15 lakh tonnes of urea why should they 2refuse to invest Rs.2200 crores to revive the old plants of the country which would produce 23.2 lakh tonnes of urea per annum.

The convention strongly pretests against these suicidal fertilizer policies of the Narasimha Rao Government and demands:

the Scheme these plants together would produce 23.2 lakh tonnes of urea per annum on sustained bais.

By approving the rehabilitation scheme it has been recognised by the Government that the plants are techno-economically viable and still the Government is refusing to extend financial help (be it budgetary support or help in getting loan from the Banks/FIs) to FCI and HFC to implement the revival scheme.

The convention registers its strong protest to the Government for excluding Gorakhpur, Haldia and FP & ARD from the revival scheme.

It is shocking to note that Government is spending thousands of crores of rupees in importing fertilizer at abnormally higher price at the expense of precious foreign exchange but reluctant to extend financial help to the old public sector plants to augment indigenous production.

Further it is all the more painful that Government have granted permission to different cash-rich public sector fertilizer companies to establish fertilizer plants in foreign countries jointly with private sector but they (Govt.) are neither taking serious initiative not responding to the proposals for involvement of these public sector companies in reviving the plants of FCI and HFC.

One such joint venture project abroad is the Oman Fertilizer plant by Krishak Bharati Fertilizer Co-operative (KRIBHCO)-Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers (RCF) and Oman Oil Company (OCC)- at a cost of Rs.4,200 crores designed to produce 15 lakh tonnes of urea annually.

1) Immediate allocation of fund for implementation of the already approved revival package for FCI and HFC.

2) Inclusion of Gorakhpur, Haldia plants and Fertilizer Promotion and Agricultural Research Division in the revival scheme.

3) Perspective Planning for new grass-root level plants utilising standing infrastructure of existing plants.

4) Restoration of subsidy on phosphatic fertilizers.

5) Ban on dumping of DAP and other phosphatic fertilizers.

6) Goal of self-reliance in production of nitrogenous Fertilizers, given up by the Rao Government to be redelineated.

The Fertilizer Workers' Federation of India (FWFI) appeals to the employees of the industry to unite irrespective of affiliations for a longdrawn struggle to defeat the suicidal policy pursued by the Narasimha Rao Government. The FWFI firmly believes in its rich tradition and heritage of the fight it has been carrying out for last more than ten years to compel the government to modernise the old public sector fertilizer plants. The federation calls upon the workers to o unleash their full strength to take the fight to new height and further spread it to the entire length and breadth of the country which alone can ensure the reversal of the policy of the government and mount required pressure on the Rao Government to change its negative attitude in implementing the revival scheme and force it to release fund for the speedy execution of the scheme. □

BIHAR STATE WORKSHOP ON CHILD LABOUR

☐ J.S. MAJUMDAR

A two days Bihar state-level CITU-ILO workshop on child labour was held at Panchayat Bhavan, Patna on 13 and 14 November, 1995. 45 representatives from various unions mostly from quarries, bidi, powerlooms and handloom sectors, cottage and small scale sector industries participated.

The workshop was inaugurated by Shri A.P. Verma, Director, National Labour Institute, Noida and presided by CITU's State President Chandi Prasad. In his inaugural speech Shri Verma emphasised on awareness campaign, education, enforcement of law, rehabilitation programme and action programme. As one of the main speakers former State Labour Commissioner Vyasji emphasised on proper study of the existing realities and struggle by trade union movement because of their commitment to the cause of all exploited sections unlike some voluntary organisations, who are making lot of noise on the question of eradication of child labour, but in reality doing nothing.

As main speaker CITU's all India Secretary P.K. Ganguly explained about CITU's project on child labour in 9 selected industries, the need to organise the unorganised sector land reforms, employment generation, free compulsory schooling for children, demand for needbase wage of the workers, and concrete action plan at CITU's own initiative. He said that poverty is the root cause of child labour and struggle has be launched to remove this distortion in human society.

A theme paper was presented by J.S. Majumdar, General Secretary of Bihar State Committee of CITU. Thereafter, four groups were formed on quarries, bidi, handlooms, powerlooms, cottage and small scale sector industries who discussed on specific situation and suggested action plants. The reports were then presented in the plenary session.

The workshop concluded that poverty is the root cause of child labour. Therefore, struggle for eradication of child labour is closely is prevalent in continuation of child labour system. 95% of child labour in the selected four industries in Bihar belong to tribals, scheduled castes, muslim minorities and some backward castes. The caste system n village and cottage based production engage child labour in large number. Unemployment, absence of education and poverty force the child labour to be engaged in traditional work. It is also observed that the entire family has to work and child labour extends helping hand to total family engaged in piece-rated work. 95% are illiterate like their parents. Morbidity rate is high with lungs, eye and deficiency problems as almost being endemic. The span of productive life is limited. There is lack of social environment and sensivity to the problem of child labour.

ACTION PLANS:

The workshop decided to hold conventions on child labour in Bidi industry at Pakur, Bhagalpur, Jamui and Begusarai; of Quarry industries at pakur and Lohardaga; and of powerlooms and handloom sector at Bhagalpur and then decide future action plans.

National Workshop of Child Labour in Quarry Industry

One day's all India Workshop on Child Labour in quarries was also held at Panchayat Bhavan, Patna on 15 November, 1995. 14 representatives of Quarry Unions from Bihar, Tripura, Orissa and Kerala participated apart from 4 Bihar State Office - Bearers of CITU. P.K. Ganguly, all India Secretary of CITU inaugurated the workshop.

The theme paper was presented by K.K. Mandal, Secretary of CITU's Bihar State Committee and General Secretary of Bihar State Mines and Quarries Workers Union. Reports were placed by representatives from each state. J.S. Majumdar summed up the conclusions. Ramanika Gupta, Vice-President of Bihar State Committee of CITU presided and State President of CITU Chandi Prasad also addressed the workshop.

It was reported during discussion that in quarries in these states child labour mostly belong to tribals and muslim minorities and a small number from BCs.. Entire family is engaged generally for piece rated work. The child labour is engaged generally for earth removing, loading and unloading and breaking stones in chips. It is observed that child labour carries stones of even half of their body weight. They work in open sun and rain without any shade in the working places. It is mostly in stone quarries that child labour is engaged. In Orissa it is the migratory tribal families residing in the working places. It is the migratory tribal families residing in the working place. In Kerala except some small migratory labourer from outside the state in border districts, there is no child labour in stone quarries. Education, better earning, strong trade union and domestic movement eliminated child labour. Experience of Kerala in quarries can be the guideline, the workshop noted. The workshop suggested imposition of cess on quarry owners for child welfare measures and compulsory education at the family's working place, and to consider violation of Eradication of Child Labour Act as cognizable offence under P.C

ACTION PLAN:

It was decide to observe "Anti-Child Labour Day in Quarries" on 29 December, 1995 by holding conventions, rallies etc.

The workshop further suggested a broad-base awareness campaign, organising the quarry workers and struggle for their need-based wage and other social security measures including Public Distribution System in the industrial base itself.

Mass Rallies against NEP

Against new economic policy of the central Govt. and in response to call of National Platform of Mass Organisation, successful district-level mass meetings and rallies in most of the district head quarters in Bihar were organised on 15th September, 1995 in which more than a lakh of people participated mostly at the initiative of CITU. Bihar State Kisan Sabha, Bihar Prantiya Khetihar Mazdoor Union, SFI, DYFI, Janwadi Mahila Samity, Non-Gazetted Employees Federation, BSSR Union, BEF, Bihar, AIIEA units. Other central trade unions and mass organisations had their taken participation in some of the districts. The programme was, however, finalised in the meeting of Jan Sangathan manch Bihar.

This was followed by holding state level convention on 17 October at Patna in which about 600 delegates, mostly from above mentioned organisations participated. All others had their minimum participation.

After success of these programmes full preparation was continuing for a massive rally and mass meeting at Patna on 10th November, 1995. It was estimated that at least 50,000 people would have participated. For two months campaign was launched for this rally.

But, due to cyclone and rains the rally and mass meeting could not be held. Even though the scheduled rally and meeting were abandoned, a mass meeting was organised by CITU at Patna Jn. railway campus addressed by All India Agricultural Workers Union leader Hanan Mollah MP, CITU's all India Secretary, P.K. Ganguly, state leaders of different mass organisations.

For 15th December, it was decided to stage dharna at Patna and hold demonstrations at district headquarters.

Convention of Unorganised Sector Workers:

CITU's Bihar State Committee organised a convention on unorganised labour at Patna on 11th November, 1995. The convention was attended by 34 delegates, from 19 unions and 14 districts representing 14 industries. Cyclone affected the participation in the convention. A report was placed by State Convenor of unorganised sector co-ordination committee and Secretary of Bihar State Committee of CITU Arun Mishra. The convention was inaugurated by CITU's all India Secretary P.K. Ganguly and presided over by state CITU President Chandi Prasad. State General Secretary J.S. Majumdar also addressed the convention. The convention identified industries like Bidi, quarry, contract labour, hawkers, road transport etc. for immediate state-level initiatives.

CITU-ILO Child Labour Workshop in Rajasthan

The Rajasthan State Committee of CITU organised the State level CITU-ILO workshop on Child Labour at Muslim Musafirkhana, Jaipur on December 7 and 8. The workshop was presided over by Waqarul Ahad, Vice President of Rajasthan STate CITU and conducted by R K Swamy.

The workshop was attended by 48 leading comrades including two women from different parts of the State representing industries in the unorganised sector like Beedi, Brick-kiln, Quarries, Hotel & Resturants, Auto, Truck, Mini bus unions, Bikaner Bhunjia and Papad, Construction, etc.

The workshop was inaugurated by Dr Mahaveer Jain, Coordinator of the National Resource Centre on Child Labour in National Labour Institute. The Labour Commissioner of Rajasthan Ashok Shekhar addressed the workshop. Sumitra Chopra (AIDWA), Vikram Singh (AILU) and Prof Basudev Sharma

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ILO\UNDP WORKSHOP ON UNORGANISED SECTOR

A workshop on 'SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR THE UNORGANISED SECTOR' was held on 1st and 2nd November, 1995 at New Delhi under the auspices of ILO/UNDP.

Surprisingly the Workshop Session was crowded mainly by Government officials form various ministries and a host of NGOs and only two representatives from the trade unions were accommodated in the workshop. Ardhendu Dakshi, Vice-President, Steel Workers Federation of India and General Council member of CITU represented CITU in the Workshop and the other TU participant was Dr. Shanti Patel of HMS.

And as usual, most of the speeches particularly from the Govt. officials and employers' representatives were on the premises of dressing up the existing schemes lime ESI, EPF etc. with some ornamental changes here and there. The employers' side was vocal about further liberalisation of the existing labour legislations to bestow the unfettered right to 'hire and fire' to them, which according to them would be congenial for speedy employment generation. Novel, indeed, was their ideas!

The workshop also witnessed loud thinkings from the NGO representatives regarding pious proposals of insurance schemes, old Age pension, unemployment doles etc. to cover the workers of the entire unorganised sector. But neither the surreptitious move by the Govt of India to reduce expenditure on poverty alleviation, and other welfare measures in real terms over the years after the launching of the policy of liberalisation, nor the alarming increase in the workforce in informal sector and decrease in organised sector employment and downward slide in quality of employment, found place in their speeches.

Com. Dakshi, while representing the views of CITU on the entire issue, highlighted the grim fact of aggravating distress for the poorer strata of the society in the unorganised sector with alarming rise of population under the poverty line following the pursuit of the so called liberalisation policy of the Govt. of India. Meaningful social protection for them required re- orientation of the whole gamut of the economic policy, and this could be achieved by mere window-dressing measures as the Govt officials have been prescribing..

Furthermore, not to speak of improvement and extension of the existing welfare and social security legislation, the very aspect of implementation of the existing legislations with all its limitations, for the workers in the unorganised sector continued to remain the biggest casuality by the recalcitrant government. Alarming is the fact that the government has now been deciding to completely withdraw itself as the enforcement authority in the name of doing away with 'INSPECTOR RAJ'.

What is required at the outset a comprehensive legislation to cover all facets of social security and protection for the workers in unorganised' sector. And only by pious expectation, same cannot be achieved, Com. Dakshi explained, unless united organised struggle of workers takes up the issue vigorously.

Surprisingly some of the bureaucrats present in the workshop pleaded for discontinuance of some of the social welfare schemes on the plea of problems in their proper implementation.

As usual, nothing concrete transpired as conclusion from the workshop!

□

CITU-ILO Child—

[From Page 16]

(Kisan Sabha) also addressed the workshop.

P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU explained the approach of CITU on the issue and Ravindra Shukla, the State General Secretary placed the Theme Paper. After this there was a general discussion by the participants.

The workshop was divided into five groups on the second day according to industries. The groups discussed on a number of specific points. The reports were submitted by the group leaders, namely, Ganga Sahi, B S Rana, Ravindra Singh, R C Gupta and Abdul Majid. After the group reports, all participants took part in the concluding discussion. The participants assailed the economic policy of the government, which was responsible for growing poverty and child labour as the eventuality.

The workshop concluded that poverty, growing unemployment, price rise, lack of land reforms, etc, were the causes of child labour and struggle has to be waged for alleviation of these problems which would go a long way on the elimination of child labour.

The workshop decided to carry forward the struggle in the unorganised sector in pursuance of demands like land reforms, need based wages, poverty alleviation and employment generation programme, free and compulsory education to children, etc.

In pursuance of the demands, the workshop decided to hold district level and state level conventions in the unorganised sector focusing on the issue of child labour, strengthen the unions in the unorganised sector by increasing their membership by 20 per cent and observe 15th February as the anti child labour day in Rajasthan.

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

Centre	Aug. '95	Sep. '95	Linking factor for Old Base
All India	315	317	4.93
Gudur	321	322	4.33
Guntur	309	313	5.60
Hyderabad	286	291	5.23
Visakhapatnam	301	303	—
Warrangal	307	309	—
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	291	290	4.05
Guwahati	315	320	—
Labac-Silchar	278	278	3.96
Mariani-Jorhat	307	307	3.95
Rangapara-Tezpur	306	307	4.29
Jamshedpur	288	289	4.68
Jharia	269	270	4.63
Kodarma	273	274	5.43
Monghyr	293	297	5.29
Noamundi	291	291	4.58
Ranchi-Hatia	295	301	—
Ahmedabad	312	311	4.78
Baroda	315	319	—
Bhavanagar	335	331	4.99
Rajkot	312	303	—
Surat	333	333	—
Faridabad	306	311	—
Yamunanagar	300	300	5.53
Srinagar	310	318	5.47
Bangalore	312	312	5.66
Belgaum	341	340	—
Hubli-Dharwar	329	324	—
Mercara	314	315	—
Alwaye	316	322	5.19
Mundakayam	316	317	—
Quilon	328	339	—
Trivandrum	354	354	—
Bhalaghat	313	315	5.24
Bhilai	282	281	3.49
Bhopal	318	325	5.46
Indore	323	324	5.18
Jabalpur	318	320	6.41
Bombay	350	351	5.12
Nagpur	325	326	4.99
Nasik	337	336	—
Pune	336	343	—
Solapur	338	342	5.03
Barbil	300	298	5.00
Rourkela	281	289	3.59
Amritsar	282	288	5.19
Ludhiana	291	297	—
Ajmer	313	311	5.01
Jaipur	301	303	5.17
Coimbatore	313	311	5.35
Coonor	331	332	4.80
Madras	342	341	5.05
Madurai	327	331	5.27
Salem	328	334	—
Tiruchirapally	344	342	—
Agra	298	301	—
Ghaziabad	301	305	—
Kanpur	316	319	4.69
Saharanpur	299	298	5.06
Varanasi	317	324	5.12
Asansol	289	293	4.77
Calcutta	317	323	4.74
Darjeeling	277	278	4.55
Durgapur	316	319	—
Haldia	339	342	—
Howrah	327	334	4.12
Jalpaiguri	289	299	4.16
Raniganj	278	281	4.40
Chandigarh	301	305	—
Delhi	336	340	4.97
Pondicherry	361	361	—
Additional series of Labour Bureau			
Kothagudem	315	325	3.25
Himachal Pradesh	296	301	3.75
Bhilwara	313	316	3.20
Chindwara	321	326	2.59
Tripura	307	308	4.37
Goa	347	345	3.40

Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number. —Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series, Review.

WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1995

☐ SAROJ CHAUDHURI

The World Development Report, 1995, the annual survey by the World Bank, has come to acquire a distinct place for itself with those concerned with any as aspect of development studies today. Those who are in agreement with the Bank's policies, refer to the findings and conclusions drawn, while those opposed buttress their points by the data marshalled by the Bank's staff and embodied in the report.

Over the last one and a half decades, especially since the beginning of nineties, vast changes have been effected in the operational policies and functional thrust of the World Bank concerning the third world countries. A very large number of the Government of these countries have since embraced structural Adjustment Programme (SAP_ with all concomitants, such as, those of drastic reduction of the state's participation in operation of economy, liberalisation privatisation etc. Which are at the heart of a raging debate. The World Development REport (WDR) 1995 projects the Bam's perception.

The selection of the theme of the 1995 Report 'Workers In An Integrating World' is significant enough to point as to where the concern today lies. Despite the merit of the WDR with respect to compilation and disaggretation of massive data about almost every aspect of the working people's living and working conditions, the WDR 1995 suffer from a deep dichotomy.

It correctly underscores the paramount need for third world countries to invest in human capital-education, health, skill development, reduction and eventual elimination of discriminations against women to create conditions for realising opportunities. The need to carry out land reforms is also emphasised. Says the WDR: "In parts of East Asia where reforms put land security in the hands of small farmers, they have led to acalerated rural growth, employment and political stability". But a near universal experience of countries opting for World Bank facilities is that these are obliged to heavily cut back on the social sector to meet the stipulations. The job is divided, as it were, between the Bretton Woods twins.

WDR 1995 emphasises:"Market-based development can reduce both inequality and poverty in developing countries." The massive evidence that has accumulated and also reflected in the WDR is that market-friendly policies are hardly poor-friendly. Little wonder, the third world countries that accepted "market based development' more than a decade ago are plagved by larger size of unemployeds, falling real wages, more casualisation, greater discriminations against women and the underprivileged and expansion of overcrowded unregulated informal sector.

There are conclusions in WDR 1995 that run contrary to earlier views of the Bank and also against experience. The question of fixing minimum wage is a case i point. The WDR emphasises that "minimum wages make things worse for poor workers by raising production cost in the formal sector and reducing employment". The need for a minimum wage wither fixed by stature or otherwise is essential in all poor countries including India to save the working poor from total penury and fulfilling minimum requirements. The Indian experience does not corroborate the Bank's conclusion. Some more examples can be cited.

There are several comments on Indian Workers' struggle for better wages and against the evils that are flowing from the Fund-Bank prescribed policies are uncharitable, if not myopic. The commentary of coal workers' wage being fixed on -"Political considerations without regard to the country's economic interests and development objectives" are not founded on facts. It is also incorrect that the wages of "Coal miners have jumped noticeably in the years just before the national elections."

The only aspect where the WDR 1995 would receive appreciation is its opposition to Social Clause in trade. The sand of the Indian Trade Union movement is well known. The changes is the role of the World Bank in a changed international scenario probably explains the deviations and such panegyrics for wholly market-based economy everywhere.

Com.K M Bhadra

Com.K M Bhadra the veteran leader of rail trade union movement in India has breathed his last at his Shibpur (Howrah) residence on Sunday afternoon, 10th December 1995. He was 83. He has left behind his wife, 3 daughters, 2 sons, sons and daughters in law and grand children, and innumerable comrades who not only had respect for him but also immense love. Many imminent personalities in the trade union and democratic political movement condoled his death. Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal, recalled his long association with KM Bhadra during the course of the rail trade union movement.

A veteran freedom fighter and trade union leader K M Bhadra was born in a village in the district of Khulna now in Bangladesh. In 1937 he joined the B N Rly as an Asst Station Master. He had to go underground for quite a long time to work for organising all India railway strike in 1949. In 1956 he was dismissed from railway service under the draconian article 311(2) (C) of the Constitution, without assigning reason. Inspite of severe hardship consequent on dismissal from service he continued till his very death to work tirelessly for strengthening railway trade union. His sacrifice, his love for the comrades and the workers, his cheerful disposition and sparkling wit, endeared him to all he came in contact with, as his wide knowledge and vision and his acute power of judgement won for him a unique place among the leaders of rail trade union movement.

VIVA LA FRANCE!

The French working class has done it again! Those who thought the strong wind of so-called reforms had blown away all the possible centres of resistance have been proved wrong and the reforming warriors are obliged to eat their words. Intoxicated by the majority they obtained in the elections—the reasons need not be gone into here—the government of Prime Minister Alain Juppe took no notice of the accumulated resentment and preferred to ignore the early manifestations. The biggest-in-a-decade strike that was participated by 50 lakhs of public sector workers and the protest marches in paris and most other cities against the government's plan to impose wage freeze on these workers after 1996 was one of the early warnings of the rising storm.

Alain Juppe in a somewhat flamboyant mood announced in the National Assembly in mid-November that cutting down the deficit from the current 5 per cent to 3 per cent of GDP could no more be delayed or deferred. This was necessary to conform to criterion for France to become a part of the European currency in 1999. This entailed a new tax on everyone above the poverty line, freezing of family allowances hitherto non-taxable but becoming taxable for the first time from 1997, civil servants to be required to serve for 40 years instead of 37.5 years, as of now, to be eligible for full pension cuts in welfare allocations and freezing of wages. From the announcement of Alain Juppe it was absolutely clear that some more of such measures were contemplated each one of which would fall on poor sections, the working class, the salaried middle classes and citizens similary placed. The government needed to extricate itself from the 15 billion dollar welfare commitment within 2 years. Juppe further threatened that his government would not hesitate to amend the constitution so as to put ceilings on welfare spending and recaste the health care system whenever necessary, by decrees. The government instructed all ministries to impose cuts amounting to billions of Francs. Though the offensive was massive, it was by no means the final but was indicative of still bigger cuts that would hurt the working class, the poor, the retired, the old and others dependent on the welfare system.

The Juppe government carefully left the rich untouched. No new taxes or enhancement of rates of existing ones was contemplated. Even a semblence of effort to collect the much- needed money was not seen. The trade unions were not consulted and no effort was taken to take them into confidence.

The result was the massive all-embracing shut down. It began with the SNCF—the French railway system and steadily engulfed almost every segments of national economy. The road transport, air services, postal, telecom and municipal services, gas and electricity, banks and insurance companies, ports and docks, all public sector enterprises, hospitals and what not, one by one came to a halt to cripple France's national life. Huge traffic jams choaked all approaches to cities including capital Paris. For three straight weeks the fourth biggest economy of the world lied motionless. This massive prolonged action of workers was joined in by students and teachers who demanded more allocation for education. Even college and university teachers did not lag behind. The common demand was that the reform plan must be fold back and talked over first; those who can afford must pay.

The massive character of the strike and widespread public support even from unexpected quarters made the government shake its initial non-challenge and Juppe was obliged to talk to the trade unions. The tenacity and dogged determination of the workers brought about the change. And, however grudgingly, Juppe started giving in as some of the proposed cuts have been withdrawn, wage freeze in public enterprises shelved for now and plan of slashing welfare spending put off.

The French workers have displayed brilliant unity and unflinching determination to defeat an all-out scheme to attack wages and welfare. The attempt in all the countries of the indsutrialised West to brazenly cut deficits not by taxing the rich but at the cost of the poor has thus received the most major rebuff at the hands of the French workers. Those who thought that the disintegration of Soviet Union and retreat of soicialism in Eastern Europe, fall in trade union membership in all countries including France and the increasing unemployment had created the necessary ground to attack wages and the hard-earned welfare system must be badly shaken by the French experience. The magnificent struggle of the French workers, the sacrifices courted by them and the suffering of the other sections of population that eventually broke the adamant attitude of the government would electrify other workers in Europe and, indeed, throughout the world.

Some commentators have called this great upheavel as a new French revolution almost at the clos of 20th century. Whether it is so or not, it will send chilling shrivers along the spine of the enemies of the workers, the poor and helpless and energise newer sections into collective actions. Long Live the French Working Class.

PRIVATISATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT - A GLOBAL REVIEW

P.K. GANGULY

Privatisation is the most dramatic manifestation of the wave of the economic reforms that are sweeping the world today, says the World Employment Report, 1995 by the ILO. Over 100 million people are employed in the State enterprises, many of which are in the process of privatisation. While the employers and the capitalist policy makers are convinced of the potential gains from privatisation, the trade unions are concerned over the erosion of job security and acquired rights. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the pace of privatisation has increased dramatically over the past five years, particularly in the developing countries, with the philosophy of liebralisation, privatisation and globalisation floated by the imperialist countries and imposed in concrete from as structural adjustment progrmame.

The proceeds from sales of private enterprises in developing countries rose from about 2 billion dollars in 1990 to 20 billion dollars in 1992. In percentage, the share of the developing countries of world privatisation sales rose from 6 percent to 42 percent during the period. As a matter of policy, for the establishment of a market economy, even before actual privatisation, the Governments start freezing recruitment, reducing "surplus" labour and providing incentives (VRS) for early retirement in order to make the puffic enterprises more attractive to potential private buyers. While employment generation is always a casualty in capitalist planning, this new modus operandi imposed on the developing countries by the imperialist countries for their own sustenance is in fact generating unemployment throughout the world.

UNEMPLOYMENT ENGULFING THE OECD COUNTRIES

Unemployment, which say 20 years ago was talked of rather casually in the world, has become a social scourge in both the rich and poor countries alike. With all the tall pronouncements of development under market economy, jobless growth has become the feature of transnationalisation of the global economy. According to the ILO report, around 820 million people, or over 30 per cent of the world's labour force was unemployed in 1994. Out of this, over 35 million were in the 24-nation OECD countries and 18 million in the 15- nation EEC countries, the highest since the great depressions of the 1930s.

The following data from the OECD report 1995 shows that unemployment in the advanced capitalist countries showed a steady increase and employment generation decreased, particularly, from the time the structural adjustment programme was launched:-

UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRIALIST COUNTRIES (Per cent)

	1990	1994		1990	1994
USA	5.8	6.2	Canada	8.5	11.0
Austria	3.8	4.8	Norway	4.5	6.0
Sweeden	1.8	7.8	Switzerland	1.0	4.0
EC	9.0	12.1	Japan	2.0	3.0
UK	5.9	8.8	France	9.0	12.2
Italy	11.6	12.1	W. Germany	5.8	8.2

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION (Per cent)

	86-90	91-94		86-90	91-94
Japan	1.5	0.8	USA	1.8	1.2
Canada	2.2	0.2	EC	1.5	0.3
EFTA (Minus Finland)	0.9	-1.3 (Minus 1.3)			

(EFTA countries: Austria, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Finland)

The World Bank itself in its World Development Report, 1995 has admitted the negative effects of structural adjustment progrmame, so far as unemployment, wages of workers and creation of new jobs are concerned, despite technological innovations.

The figures shown above are according to the registered unemployed, that is full time unemployed. According to ILO's World Labour Report of 1995, the partial or part time or long term joblessness constitute majority of the workforce, but are not included in the datas. The depth of unemployment crisis in the advanced capitalist countries can be gauged from the fact that long term unemployment lasting for more than one year in America was to the tune of 11.7 percent in 1994, 42.5 percent in Britain, 57.7 percnet in Italy, 40.3 percent in Germany, 34.2 percent in France and 17.2 percent in Japan.

GROWTH OF INFORMAL SECTOR

Another manifestation of the structural adjustment progrmame and privatisation is the growth of the informal sector. The public sector is being dismantled, the private organised sector is also being squeezed, jobs rendered surplus and products are being off-loaded to the informal sector with technological innovation in this sector. This is a new modus operandi of exploitation being practised by the industrialised countries for the sustenance of capitalism. Thus, while the organised sector workers are thrown out of job and the informal sector workers are exploited through low waes, the profits of the big business spiral. To shift the burden of the capitalist crisis, this modus operandi of structural adjustment programme is now being exported to the developing countries including India under a globalised economy.

UNCTAD DEBUNKS OECD THEORY

But this is not the end of the story. The in-built crisis of capitalism is so deep, that new forms of neo-colonial exploitative measures are being applied in the name of free trade. GATT was formed in 1945 with an innocuous declaration of simply international trade under some agreed rules. But when those rules became insufficient for the sustenance of the rule makers themselves, they expanded the rules to cover new areas under the banner of Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and General Agreement on Trades and Services (GATS). Thus vast areas of material and intellectual properties of the third world countries were captured under the same diabolical philosophy of liberalization, privatisation and globalisation. While serious trade wars grew amongst the advanced capitalist countries themselves despite the formation of the new World Trade Organisation replacing GATT, they have severely marginalised the third world countries in trade, aggravating the unemployment situation in these countries.

But not content with this, as unemployment is spiralling in these countries too, they are now conspiring to impose the so- called social clause in the GATT agreement linking it with multilateral trade to enable them impose sanctions on exports from the developing countries. The specious argument is that exports from the developing countries are reducing the employment potential in the developed countries and augemending the unemployment rates there.

But the UNCTAD report of 1995 exposed the bankruptcy of this argument. Its Trade and Development Report with a deep analysis of trade from 1970 to 1993 has shown that there is little evidence to suggest that exports from the third world countries are to blame for losses of job in the OECD countries. UNCTAD's analysis covers broadly three periods, viz, 1970 to 1980, 1980 t0 1990 and 1990 to 1991. In all these three periods although exports from the developing countries to the OECD countries rose, yet the reverse, that is imports by the developing countries from the OECD countries rose further. Thus the OECD countries maintained a trade surplus constantly during the three periods. The trade surplus of-course had slightly slowed down during 1981 to 1988. But it picked up again with a boost from 1990, that is exactly from the time when the unbridled drive for privatisation and transnationalisation of the third world economy was launched. But despite the continuing trade surplus, manufacturing employment in the OECD countries fell by 8.3 million between 1970 and 1993. The percentage fall in manufacturing employment in the G-7 countries as given by UNCTAD between 1970 and 1993 is as follows:- UK: (-)45.7; France: (-)23.2; Italay : (-)18.0; Germany: (-)14.0; USA: (-)9.9, Canada : (-)3.6; Japan: (-)0.4. Thus there is no correlation between job losses in the advanced capitalist countries with the "rising" exports from the third world countries. The cause of joblessness of course is the capitalist system itself where the motive force of production is profit. Hence the drive for privatisation. With the drive for privatisation and structural adjustment progrmame, while the jobless workforce in the rich North is steadily rising, the poor South has in the process gained hundreds of millions of jobless rotting in near destitution in dingy shanty towns. The truth of jobless growth and that, technological innovations in capitalist system benefit a few but disadvantage the many, is revealing itself daily. The ILO report has also warned that together with incentives to agro-business as a result of liberalisation, the on-going process of privatisation would well undermine the survival of small farms. The upshot would be the uprooting and proletarisation of small farmers and a reduction of employment as a result of an increase in capital intensive and mechanised production.

LATIN AMERICA

In Latin America the share of sales of pubic sector enterprises rose from 6 percent in 1988 to 33 per cent in 1992, the maximum in the world privatisation sales. And the most striking result also came from Latin America's Mexico. The economy of Mexico collapsed. The entire economy was in such a mess, that datas collected by the ILO could not reflect the magnitude of unemployment properly. For Latin America as a whole, the World Employment report however has pointed out that with the spate of privatisation there was a steady fall in modern sector employment between 1980 and 1992. This had reversed the trend of the previous three decades, when steady economic growth had led to a significant expansion of employment. The percentage rise in unemployment in some Latin American countries from 1985 to 1992 are as follows:-

	1985	1990	1992
Argentina	6.1	6.9	7.5
Brazil	4.3	5.3	5.9
Nicaragua	3.2	11.1	14.0
Panama	15.7	18.0	20.0
Paraguay	7.1	8.3	9.4
Peru	42.6	73.1	75.9
Uruguay	-	7.4	9.3

AFRICA

It situation in Africa, which is being increasingly marginalised in the world economy over the past two decades, is same. Public enterprises were identified as a key contributory factor in Africa's economy. Reform of public enterprises therefore has been the most prominent element in conditions attached to lending by the World Bank, IMF and other international agencies. Over 67 pr cent of loans made during the period 1989-91 to the sub-Saharan African countries contained legal agreements for divestiture of public enterprises. More than two-thirds of the small and medium public enterprises in Ghana, Guince, Benin, Mozambique, Nigeria, etc have already been privatised.

Now the hunt is for large public enterprises and other countries like Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, Malawi and so on. The percentage of the public enterprises divested is upto 60 percent in these countries. The loss of jobs as a necessary accompaniment to such privatisation, could not be measured properly due to unreliable pay role information and unreported new hiring, states ILO. But an estimated 20 percnet of employees have lost their jobs in the process. The reduction in the workforce was done in various ways like outright closures, voluntary departure scheme (VRS in India) paying between 1650 to 3,300 dollars to each employee over a period of 30 months, freeze on recruitment, ending the guaranteed employment for graduates, reducing the retirement age, etc.

ASIA

Asia accounted for 7 percent of the global privatisation sales and 25 percent of that in the developing countries during 1988-93. The infra-structural projects accounted for 55 percent of the sales, followed by the manufacturing enterprises accounting for 30 percent. Here again, detailed and correct datas were not available, excepting a general comment by the World Employment Report that the rural sector has been badly affected. But that the following small data in percentage rise will certainly establish the correlation between privatisation and unemployment between 1985 and 1992:

		1985		1990		1992
Phillippines	-	6.1	-	8.1	-	8.6
Singapur	-	-	-	1.7	-	2.7
Srilanka	-	-	-	14.1	-	14.4
Hongkong	-	1.3	-	1.9	-	3.5

IN TRANSITIONAL ECONOMIES

In the transitional economies, that is, in the erstwhile socialist countries which have embarked upon the path of capitalist development, privatisation has been a necessary condition for building market economy. Although they still find it difficult to privatise large and established public enterprises, yet, in their craze to find El Dorado in market economy, they are privatising small enterprises, service sectors and also giving short time lease from the state, and the result is devastating except to some extent in the CIS countries and the Baltic states as will be reflected from the following figures of percentage rise in unemployment:

		1991	1993	1994 (June)
Albania	-	9.1	19.5	17.0
Bulgaria	-	11.1	16.4	13.3
Czech	-	2.6	3.5	3.1
Hungary	-	8.5	12.1	11.0
Poland	-	9.7	15.7	16.9
Romania	-	3.0	10.2	10.8
Slovakia	-	11.8	14.4	14.4
Belarus	-	-	1.4	1.8
Russia	-	0.1	1.1	2.0
Ukraine	-	0	0.3	0.4
Estonia	-	0.1	1.9	2.3
Lithuania	-	0.3	4.4	3.8

It is needless to say that unemployemnt as we have seen above is being accompanied by further aggravation of all other vices, of capitalism, that is erosion of acquired rights and social security measures, rising prices, fall in real wages and growing poverty of the common people.

THE INDIAN SITUATION

In the above background we have to briefly analyse the situation in India under Congress rule, which is following the capitalist path of development since independence. It has now trapped itself into the gloablised economy and is resorting to the structural adjustment programme with a reckless drive for privatisation. We have been making detailed analysis of the situation and the working class and other mass organisations are carrying forward the struggle against the new economic policies.

But in short, it has to be noted that while the government makes pronouncements to eradicate poverty and unemployment with each five year plan, the result is to the contrary. At the end of the first five year plan, registered unemployemnt in India was 5.3 million. Towards the end of the seventh plan, when the new economic policy was announced in 1991 under the prescriptions of the IMF, unemployment rose to about 34 million. Now with the privatisation drive and the structural adjustment progrmame, within four years in 1994-95 the unemployment figure has spiralled to nearly 40 million. It has crossed the record high figure of 35 million of the 24-nation OECD countries.

In its mad drive for privatisation, probably it has surpassed the record of any other country mentioned above. Not only the small and medium public enterprises, but it is resorting to divestiture of the large and most profit making public enterprises like the Indian Oil, ONGC, BHEL, Steel Authority, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum, National Fertlilisers, Videsh Sanchar Nigam, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam, etc. The privatisation sales have been to the tune of about Rs.18,000 crores even at throw away prices. About one-third ownership has already been transferred to private hands, both foreign and Indian. Closures and sickness have become the feature of the structural adjustment progrmame.

so far as loss of jobs are conerned, according to a study made by the International People's Tribunal in the "People Versus Global Capital", about 6.6. million jobs have been lost due to the reforms. According to ILO, 22 percent of male workers were jobless in India in 1994, and the figure is rising. Over 60 percent of them were educated job seekers. In the rural and unorganised sector it is estimated that around 80 million are unemployed, which do not find any place in the Government data.

FULL EMPLOYMENT BY 2000 AD - A FRAUD

The Planning Commission itself estimates that taking into account the back long of 23 million job seekers at the beginning of the Eighth Plan, and the growth of additional

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