

FORWARD TO UNITY AND STRUGGLE

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Proceedings and Documents of the
All-India Trade Union Conference
Calcutta, May 28—31, 1970

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I.

The All India Trade Union Conference

—A Review

The All-India Trade Union Conference was held in Lenin Nagar, Ranji Stadium, Calcutta on 28th, 29th and 30th May 1970 as per decision of Convention of AITUC General and State Committee members at Goa on 9th and 10th of April, 1970.

A Reception Committee was constituted by the West Bengal State Committee of AITUC including Com. Jyoti Basu as Chairman and Com. Manoranjan Roy as General Secretary.

The Reception Committee enrolled 50,000 workers as members of the Committee. Various sub-committees were formed to make elaborate preparations for the Conference. The response among the workers for the Conference was so great that though the Reception Committee gave a call for a fund of Rs. 2 lakhs the collection exceeded Rs. 3 lakhs in a short period of three weeks. Arrangements for housing delegates was made in 22 camps while free food and transport was supplied to all the delegates. The Reception Committee

prepared an exhibition depicting the major highlights of the Indian Trade Union movement. The Indian People's Theatre Association staged cultural shows for thousands of workers who assembled in outdoor stadium every evening, while leaders from several state spoke on working-class struggles in their states, and gave a brief resumes of the proceeding of the delegate-session. A volunteer Corps of 5000 was formed to discharge all responsibilities during the Conference. The People's Relief Committee, Calcutta, made adequate arrangements to give every medical assistance to delegates whenever necessary.

Com. Krishnapada Ghosh hoisted the red flag and placed wreath at the martyrs' column to mark the beginning of the Conference on 28th May, 1970. The delegates and observers then assembled in the pandal at 1 p. m.

Com. M. K. Pandhe welcomed the delegates on behalf of the participants in Goa Convention and proposed the following names as presidium of the Conference :

1) Com. Mohammed Ismail, 2) Com. Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury, (3) Com. Haridas Malakar, (4) Com. E. Balanandan, (5) Com. Bimalananda Mukherjee, (6) Com. A. Balasubramaniam, (7) Com. S. Y. Kolhatkar.

Com. Niren Ghosh seconded the proposal which was unanimously adopted by the Conference.

Com. S.Y. Kolhatkar moved resolutions on condolence and on martyrs and all participants stood in silence for two minutes to pay their homage.

Com. Jyoti Basu, Chairman, Reception Committee then delivered his Address welcoming the delegates.

Com. P. Ramamurti proposed the following names for the Credentials Committee :

1) Com. M. K. Pandhe, 2) Com. A. Nallasivan, 3) Com. Shanti Ghatak, 4) Com. Biren Roy. Com. Manoranjan Roy seconded the proposal which was adopted unanimously by the Conference.

Com. P. Ramamurti explained the salient features of his report which was earlier circulated among the delegates in

English, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu. Tamil and Malayalam languages.

The Presidium then announced that some time will be given for translating all speeches in various languages in view of the participation of a large number of non-English knowing comrades in the Conference.

The Conference then began discussion on the Report. Com. Manoranjan Roy initiated the discussion of the Report.

The Conference took some resolutions for adoption. Com Krishnapada Ghosh moved a resolution on Cambodia which was supported by Com. Bimalananda Mukherjee. It was passed unanimously.

Com. M. K. Pandhe moved a resolution on National Commission on Labour and Com. R. Umanath supported it. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Before continuing discussion on Com. Ramamurti's Report on 29th May 1970, Com. Niren Ghosh moved a resolution on Lenin's Birth Centenary which was supported by Com. Mohan Punamia and passed unanimously by the Conference.

The following Comrades then spoke on the Report :

1) Com. Ravindran (Kerala) ; 2) Com. Ramachandra Rao (Karnataka) ; 3) Com. Biren Roy (W. Bengal) ; 4) Com. N. Prasada Rao (Andhra) ; 5) Com. Parimal Moitra (W. Bengal) ; 6) Com. Saile Mangoli (W. Bengal) ; 7) Com. C. Kannan (Kerala) ; 8) Com. Ram Asrey (U. P.) ; 9) Com. Bamapada Mukherjee (W. Bengal) ; 10) Com. Gerald Pereira (Goa) ; 11) Com. O.J. Joseph (Kerala) ; 12) Com. Prem Kishan (Rajasthan) ; 13) Com. K. Ramani (Tamilnadu) ; 14) Com. Chandi Prasad (Bihar) ; 15) Com. Amal Ghosh Dastidar (Assam) ; and 16) Com. Shantaram Garud (Maharashtra).

Com. Hare Krishna Koner, General Secretary, All India Kisan Sabha greeted the Conference on behalf of his organisation.

The proceedings of the Conference on 30th May began by a resolution moved by Com. Balasubrahmaniam on "Police Action on State Government Employees at Berhampore".

Com. Haridas Malakar supported it and was adopted un-animously.

The debate on Com. Ramamurti's Report which remained inconclusive so far continued. 1) Com. Ravi Sinha (U.P.); 2) Com. Kishorilal; 3) Com. Krishnamurthy (Tamilnadu); 4) Com. S. N. Mudali (Orissa); 5) Com. Chandubhai Patel (Gujarat); 6) Com. Bimal Chatterjee (W. Bengal); 7) Com. Motilal Sharma (Madhya Pradesh); 8) Com. Hari Bhatt (Tamilnadu); 9) Com. Suresh Banerjee (Bihar); 10) Com. Mahadev Patekar (Maharashtra); 11) Com. Balaji Das (Andhra) spoke on the Report.

The Conference then passed some resolutions before Com. Ramamurti's reply to the debate.

Com. Manoranjan Roy moved a resolution on formation of a new all-India trade union Centre to be named as Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU). Com. Balanandan seconded it. The resolution was adopted among thunderous applause and shouting of slogans.

Com. Bimalananda Mukherjee moved a resolution on International working class solidarity. Com. R. Umanath supported it and was passed unanimously.

Com. Dinen Bhattacharya moved a resolution on Birla concerns which was seconded by Com. Niren Ghosh. It was passed unanimously.

Com. Bimal Chatterjee moved a resolution on Jay Engineering Workers' struggles. Com. Haridas Malakar seconded it and was adopted unanimously.

Com. Samar Mukherjee moved a resolution on West Bengal and Com. Bimalananda Mukherjee seconded it. Com. Biren Roy moved an amendment which was opposed by Com. A. Balasubrahmaniam. Com. Biren Roy did not press for a vote on his amendment. The resolution was put to vote and passed unanimously.

Com. Balanandan moved a resolution on Kerala and Com. Balachandran supported it. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Com. Gerald Pereira moved a resolution on Black Bill of

Maharashtra. Com. S. Y. Kolhatkar supported it and was passed unanimously.

Com. Kamal Sarkar moved a resolution on jute workers and Com. Md. Amin seconded it. The resolution was carried unanimously.

Com. Kolhatkar moved a resolution on communal riots which was supported by Com. Dinen Bhattacharya. It was adopted unanimously.

Com. Ramamurti then gave his reply to the debate on his Report. He agreed with some of the suggestions and agreed to modify his report. He replied to the suggestions he could not incorporate in the Report.

Com. P. Ramamurti moved a resolution on United Action of the working class. Com. Niren Ghosh supported it and was passed unanimously.

Com. Niren Ghosh moved a resolution against use of CRP in T.U. and democratic movement. Com. Suhrid Mullick Choudhury supported the resolution which was passed unanimously.

Com. Ramamurti then read out the following list of resolutions which were circulated among the delegates in English, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Tamil and Malayalam languages but could not be taken up for want of time.

- 1) On China's space feat ;
- 2) On Vietnam ;
- 3) On Laos ;
- 4) Greetings to the peoples of Pakistan ;
- 5) Solidarity with Arab peoples ;
- 6) On Cuba and Latin America ;
- 7) Protest against repression in Indonesia ;
- 8) On Recognition of G.D.R. ;
- 9) On repression ;
- 10) On Automation ;
- 11) On Third Pay Commission ;
- 12) On Working women ;
- 13) Solidarity with peasants struggles ;
- 14) On Delay in Presidential assent to the W. Bengal T.U. Bill ;
- 15) On job security in Foreign Oil Companies ;
- 16) On the proposal to close MAMC ;
- 17) On support to Railway Workers' demands ;
- 18) On Steel Workers' demands ;
- 19) On Road Transport Workers ;
- 20) On the Second Wage Board for Sugar industry ;
- 21) On demands of textile workers ;
- 22) Repression on striking workers of Neyveli Lignite mines (Tamilnadu);
- 23) On conditions of tobacco workers in Andhra ;
- 23) On anti-working

class agreement in Small Engineering industry in Bihar ; 24) On support to Hindusthan Aluminium Workers struggle ; 25) Demands of workers in film industry ; 26) Support to struggle of GEC workers ; 27) Support to demands of Rayon workers ; 28) On Enforcement of Central Industrial Security Force Act ; 29) Nationalisation of Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation ; 30) Support to demands of powerloom and processing workers.

He then proposed that the Working Committee should be authorised to finally adopt the resolution. The proposal was put to vote and was accepted unanimously.

Com. M. K. Pandhe then placed before the Conference the Report of the Credential Committee stating that, 1759 Unions having a total membership of 8,04,637 had joined the conference and sent 4264 numbers of delegates. Moreover 116 delegates and 1134 observers had been sent by fraternal unions, making the total member of participation to 5514.

Com. B. T. Ranadive summed up the conclusions of the Conference.

The Presidium then conducted the elections of the new office-bearers and the General Council members, which included Com. B. T. Ranadive as President and Com. P. Ramamurti as General Secretary.

The Conference was adjourned for some time during which period the members of the Working Committee were elected by the General Council members.

Com. P. Ramamurti read out the names of the newly elected Working Committee.

Com. P. Ramamurti then thanked the Reception Committee and the volunteers for their tireless work in making the Conference a grand success.

The Conference ended in slogans "Long Live unity of the working class" "Long live CITU", "Workers of the World Unite" ; "Inquilab Zindabad."

The open session of the Conference was held at Brigade Parade ground where nearly a million of workers participated.

Com. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU hoisted the Red Flag and presided over the meeting. The open session was addressed by Com. Manoranjan Roy, Com. Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury, Com. Bimalananda Mukherjee, Com. B. T. Ranadive, Com. P. Ramamurti, Com. Biren Roy, Com. Jyoti Basu and others.

2

Welcoming Speech of Com. Jyoti Basu

Chairman, Reception Committee

Members of the Reception Committee

I consider it a great privilege to welcome you all to this All India Trade Union Conference on behalf of the Reception Committee at "SABINA HALL".

The theme of the Conference is "Solidarity and Unity of the Great Trade Union Movement in India".

The opening of this Conference in the city of Bombay is a great honor to the workers of West Bengal and I wish to say that we are all proud to have you here.

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2.

Welcome Speech Of Com. Jyoti Basu

Chairman, Reception Committee

Comrades of the Presidium, Comrade Delegates.

I consider it a great privilege to welcome you all to this All-India Trade Union Conference on behalf of the Reception Committee at "LENIN NAGAR".

The venue of the Conference commemorating the name of the Great Lenin bears a special significance in his Birth Centenary year.

The convening of this Conference in Calcutta is a great tribute to the working class of West Bengal which has a long tradition of glorious struggles and immense sacrifices.

At this historic session we remember our departed comrades who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of the working

class. We remember also the departed comrades who spent their whole lives for trade union struggles and specially Comrade Bankim Mukherjee, a pioneer working class leader of India, whom we lost in 1962 and whose name the arch at the entrance to the Conference bears.

We have assembled here from all parts of the country to take decisions which are going to be of vital importance to the future of the trade union and working class movement in our country and the most important of these decisions will be the one for the setting up of a new All-India Trade Union Centre. Considering the multiplicity of trade union centres already existing in India the setting up of another centre may seem to be a divisive act. But, on the contrary, such a centre has now become a historical necessity as a rallying organisation for the militant working class of India. The AITUC which we all helped to build up with hard work and great sacrifices of our ordinary comrades has been transformed into an instrument of surrender to the bourgeoisie and a drag on determined militant struggles, by the revisionists who have seized its leadership and made it their special preserve by undemocratic methods of functioning and keeping out representative unions over which they have no control.

Reformist trade union leaders and trade union centres have always tried to hold the trade union movement within the confines of economic struggles. Today, the revisionist AITUC centre is following in the same foot-steps. The revisionist leaders of the AITUC have eschewed the working class standpoint and politics and can never prepare the working class either, for militant working class struggles or for the political struggle against the ruling class. Once a trade union leadership abandons this task it cannot but degenerate into an appendage of the bourgeoisie. The leadership of the AITUC daily and hourly attempts to infuse into the working people their policies of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and acceptance of their leadership.

We have been passing through a period of intense economic crisis, the worst victims of which have been the workers and

other sections of the working people. Yet no attempt has been made by the dominant revisionist leadership of the AITUC to mobilise the workers for militant struggles against the crisis and the perpetrators of the crisis. In fact, struggles have been fought despite the revisionist leadership of the AITUC.

Is it any wonder that a leadership which has given up revolutionary trade unionism and even militant economic struggles has interested in coming to anti-working class agreements with the employers behind the back of the workers? The record of the present AITUC leadership is replete with such betrayals of the workers they claim to lead.

Not only have they betrayed workers in individual establishments by such anti-worker agreements, but these leaders have also been responsible for wholesale betrayal of the working class of India by the treacherous role they have played in Government-appointed tripartite and other committees. Now the ruling classes find, the AITUC leadership co-operative and willing to do any of the dirty work they want to be done. These leaders are readily appointed to various committees where they go as representatives of the workers only to prove their loyalty to the employers and the ruling classes. From Dange's own performance in the Bonus Commission to the various leaders of his group who were appointed on the Study Groups of the National Labour Commission, it has been one unbroken chain of betrayal of the working class. His lieutenants in the Study Groups acquiesced in the whole anti-working class policy of the Government, did not oppose the anti-worker measures proposed by the employers and, in many cases, themselves put forward proposals harmful to the workers, like taking away the right to strike in certain industries etc. It was the helpful services these revisionist leaders rendered that emboldened the National Labour Commission to come out with a series of anti-working class recommendations. Now if these leaders put up a pretence of opposing these recommendations it is only to throw dust into the eyes of the workers—after having done the dirty work of satisfying the employers and the Government.

Comrades, we have always understood that the working class is not national in the bourgeois sense, that the working class is international. But it has been the effort of the revisionist leader of the AITUC to keep the working class of India away from this consciousness of internationalism. Whether it is in India's conflict with neighbouring countries or whether it is conflicts within the country between the bourgeoisie of various regions, the revisionist AITUC leaders have always striven to rally the workers behind the ruling classes or the bourgeoisie of the area to which they belong against the workers of other countries and other regions. They do not feel the necessity of educating the workers in our country against the menace from U.S. imperialism to India and the need to fight it, as well as the policies of the ruling classes which make it possible for U.S. imperialism to make more and more inroads into our economy, and political and social life.

All this is not fortuitous. As I mentioned earlier, these revisionists have abandoned the working class standpoint and political line. Their political line is one of class-collaboration, they have already accepted the leadership of the bourgeoisie. And imposing this political line on the AITUC, they have made it an appendage of the ruling classes.

But these revisionists could not do it without protests and opposition from the ordinary workers and militant sections of the trade union cadre. They revolted in various places and threatened the positions of the revisionist leaders. If democratic procedures had been allowed, the revisionist leaders would have been consumed by the wrath of the Indian workers. But they were bent upon keeping the organisation in their pockets and democracy inside the organisation became the first casualty. Wherever the workers threw out the revisionist leaders, they disaffiliated those unions and formed rival unions. In other cases, for years, they refused to hold conferences and elections for fear that they would be thrown out, forcing the militant workers to go out and form their own unions to carry on the struggle. Keeping

out of militant workers and their unions, formation of bogus paper unions, packing conferences with their yes-men—these are the practices which the revisionist leaders of the AITUC have been following to keep the organisation as their safe preserve. The report and documents that have been circulated to you give innumerable instances of all these anti-working class policies and activities of the revisionist leadership of the AITUC.

This is the situation which has forced the need for a real democratic and revolutionary trade union centre which will lead the working class into militant economic struggles and simultaneously politicalise them and prepare them for the struggle for power and rally them in support of the anti-imperialist struggles in all parts of the world.

Such a revolutionary trade union centre becomes all the more necessary if we look at the situation in the country.

It has only been a few months since the United Front Governments of Kerala and West Bengal were toppled. The working people looked at these Governments as their own Governments which could to a certain extent protect their interests against the exploiters and ensure their democratic rights. When the U. F. Governments were in office, the police were not used against them and their struggles; they won significant economic concessions. The jute, engineering, textile and other workers of West Bengal won Rs. 50 crores as annual wage-increase; above all, working people and democratic sections all over the country began to look more and more on the policies of these Governments as the genuine alternative to Congress policies.

All this was possible because the Communist Party of India (Marxist) was a major force in these two United Fronts and United Front Governments and could decisively influence the shaping and implementation of their policies. This became all the more clear when, unnerved by the growing popularity and the influence of the United Front and U.F. Governments, the ruling classes decided to topple them and certain parties of the U.F. betrayed the common people and went to the

help of the forces of reaction to overthrow the two Governments.

The subversion of these two Ministries presages a general attack on the working people and democratic forces. The demand for this attack is being raised everyday by the forces of reaction. If the Syndicate-JanaSangh-Swatantra combine is making this demand more outspokenly, the Indira Gandhi wing of the Congress is no less interested in breaking up the U.F.s., isolating the genuinely Left parties and forces, using some so-called anti-Congress parties in its own interest and launching repression on the people—all with the aim of perpetuating the present exploitative regime.

Repression is resorted to by the ruling classes because despite the tall-talk of having come out of the recession and economic crisis, the reality is that the crisis is as acute as ever, getting more and more acute day by day. Production might have picked up here and there, but that has not stopped the growing unemployment, retrenchment of those already in jobs, cut in emoluments of workers, a rising price-spiral, mass evictions of the working peasantry, growing pauperisation in the rural areas and so on.

This is inevitable because the crisis is not the product of the weakness of this or that aspect of Government policy, but is born out of the capitalist path of development which the Indian bourgeoisie has embarked on in alliance with feudalism and in collaboration with foreign imperialism. Either the crisis continues or this path must be given up—these are the alternatives. Conciliatory talks and gestures may be resorted to as a part of the manoeuvre for tactical reasons. But in reality the ruling classes will by no means give up this path and will impose heavier and heavier burdens on the common people and resort to all sorts of repression at the least sign of popular resistance.

The only way out for the working class and the oppressed people is to throw out this bankrupt path of capitalist development along with the present ruling classes who refuse to give it up. The rapid organisation of the working class and its

unification for struggle, mobilisation of its allies under its leadership to shoulder this historic responsibility—this is the crucial task which we face today to which this Conference will give its attention.

Comrades, many of you are coming with experience of big struggles fought in the recent period. You will help the delegates to understand the situation. Through your reports and deliberations we shall, I am confident, arrive at a unified understanding of our tasks. Permit me to refer you to the rich experience of the working people of West Bengal. They looked upon the U.F. regime as their own and as an instrument of struggle. They played a significant role in the formation of the Government and rout of the Congress. During the existence of the U.F. Government there was a rapid growth of trade unions and switch-over of many company unions to genuine working class unions. For the first time, despite limitation, the Government machinery was used in the interest of the workers and the police were held back from interfering with working people's movements. Thus as a result of unprecedented unity and organisation of the workers speaking various languages and the help rendered by the Government, big concessions were wrested from the employers. Where the employers refused to listen to reason, strikes had to be resorted to, sometimes for brief, sometimes for long periods, and in every case in sharp contrast to the past, Government support to the strikers who fought for legitimate demands as was assured. Not only on economic issues but on political issues as well the working class went into action on a number of occasions culminating in the mighty general strike and hartal of March 17 when defying the reformist and revisionist trade union leaders who actively and ferociously opposed the strike, the workers joined the protest action against the betrayal of the people by some parties of the United Front.

The working class movement received a tremendous boost as a result of the formation of the U.F. Government. The workers understood through their experience that there was

no place for complacency because of the existence of the U.F. Government which had only limited powers. They realised that they must take all advantage of the existence of such a Government in order to strengthen their unity and organisation for determined struggles against the vested interests and the Central Government.

The U.F. Government, in contrast to the past, developed friendly relations with the 250,000 Government employees, and teachers and conceded many of their democratic rights and economic demands and promised to further improve their conditions of life after the publication of the award of the Pay Commission which included a leader of the Government employees. The Government supported the struggle of the L.I.C. employees against automation which would have led to loss of employment and employment potential, and as a result the L.I.C. authorities agreed to remove the machine which had been brought to Calcutta for installation. Over three lakhs of Central Government employees also looked upon the U.F. Government as a champion of their rights.

The West Bengal Subsistence Allowance Bill adopted for the first time in India by the U.F. Government ensured a minimum subsistence allowance to workers during the period of suspension. The U.F. Government also approved a scheme to grant some token unemployment relief to the workers. It incorporated in a Bill the principle of ballot in determining the recognition of a union. But the Government of India has refused so far to give assent to it because such a democratic practice is alien to it. Of course, the Dange leadership of the AITUC is also opposing it though it was passed unanimously by the West Bengal Cabinet.

The mighty strike struggles of workers in textiles, the jute industry and tea plantations and long-drawn struggles of engineering workers during 1969 in West Bengal have won substantial wage-rises. The jute workers achieved an interim wage increase of Rs. 30 while the rise in textile industry was Rs. 20. The workers in the engineering industry were able to obtain wage-increments ranging from Rs. 27 to Rs. 47 per

month plus half a month's wage as bonus in addition to what was being paid earlier. The workers in tea plantations had also received a wage rise of 20 paise daily which is significant in view of the extremely low wage level prevailing in the tea gardens. It is estimated that about seven and a half lakhs workers in these four major industries in the State alone have thus been able to push the annual wage bill by more than Rs. 20 crores.

A significant feature in these strike struggles was the unity of workers from below which brought all the trade union centres together for the joint battle of the working class.

These unique struggles had their impact outside Bengal also. The militant struggles of engineering workers in Jamshedpur, Hyderabad and Ranchi were fought in the background of the West Bengal settlement in favour of the engineering workers. These struggles had further focused the attention of the entire working class on the fact that without unity and united actions no struggle would achieve success and be able to snatch concessions from the bourgeoisie.

Among other notable struggle during the last year, mention must be made of strikes in the Baranagar Jute Factory, Metal Box, Hind Motors, Dunlop Rubber and Durgapur Projects. There were series of departmental strike actions in IISCO while several plantation workers had to stop work to press for various industrial demands.

Several long-drawn struggles were launched by the workers during the recent past lasting for several months which brings into sharp focus the growing determination of the working class. In most cases successful culmination of the strikes was brought about with the help of the Government.

During this period, workers also resisted several lock-outs which lasted for months. Notable among them were lock-outs in the Guest Keen Williams, Texmaco, Agarpara Works, Oriental and Electric Engineering Company, Oriental Steel and Wire Products, Howrah, etc.

In these protracted struggles the unions in other industries expressed their solidarity which kept the morale of the

fighting workers high. Despite starvation and privations the workers maintained the fighting traditions of Bengal. It is necessary, however, to develop more solidarity so that such workers can fight more effectively and defeat the game of employers to impose long-drawn struggles with a view to tiring out the workers.

The peasantry also moved forward with equal strides. Using the United Front Government, the landless peasants took possession of 350,000 acres of vested and 'benami' land yielding a produce of 50 lakh maunds of paddy. In this struggle for land they unitedly fought against the landlords and the vested interests in the rural areas of West Bengal. There was a great awakening, not seen before and the peasants fought boldly to acquire their rights. This eventful change took a historic turn in the growing alliance between the peasants and workers. This peasant awakening equally frightened the reactionary and the vested interests and some elements within the U.F. who most desperately tried to slander the peasant movement and raised the clamour of law and order.

Since imposition of President's rule severe attacks are being made on the peasantry to snatch away the land acquired by them. The working class must play their historic role in standing by the peasants and strengthening the bond of working-class-peasant alliance to fight back the attacks of reaction. It is heartening to note that the BPTUC has been trying to rouse the workers to forge a living link with the struggling peasants.

It is, therefore, ridiculous to say that the U.F. Government had blunted the edge of class struggles. Such arguments only help reactionaries who were raising a hue and cry about the so-called unfair industrial climate in the State.

The big business houses, both Indian and foreign, who had a great stake in West Bengal were no doubt scared by these developments. Many even started talking about flight of capital from the State, and Congress leaders in the Centre were only echoing their sentiments whenever they got the opportunity to do so.

During all these struggles the BPTUC emerged as the leader of the working class and champion of trade union unity. The strength of this most powerful State unit of the AITUC has increased immensely during these struggles and its membership has now reached the half-million mark. The BPTUC is the major source of strength of the Rashtriya Sangram Samity which had organised several solidarity actions in the recent past. In co-operation with the 12th July Committee and similar other fighting mass organisations the platform of the Rashtriya Sangrm Samity was further widened resulting in the creation of formidable unity of the working class and salaried employees in West Bengal to fight against every onslaught of capital. I have no doubt that this powerful fighting unity will be further strengthened despite the revisionist attempt to sabotage it.

When the conspiracy to topple the U.F. Government was becoming clear to the working class of West Bengal, the Rashtriya Sangram Samity and the BPTUC gave a call for mighty demonstrations in protest against the conspirators. The decision to hold such demonstrations was not only criticised by the bourgeois Press but became a target of attack by Dange & Company of the AITUC who openly condemned the BPTUC and the Rashtriya Sangram Samity. However, several massive demonstrations were organised throughout the State to warn the conspirators against the U.F. Government.

The glorious success of the strike throughout West Bengal on March 17, after the conspiracy to bring down the U.F. Government materialised, has only convincingly proved that the working class is solidly rallying behind the BPTUC and its allies.

The U.F. Government's policy of police non-interference in industrial disputes met with stiff opposition from the big bourgeois Press and the Congress Party. They raised alarm over the so-called break-down of law and order in the State. Slanderous accusations were hurled at the unions conducting the strike struggles and deliberate attempts were made to provoke clashes during strikes. On several occasions employers

went to the extent of obtaining injunctions from the law courts for police protection.

When the employers and the Congress party were attacking frontally the policy of non-interference by the police in industrial disputes, some parties in the U.F. joined them in denigrating the Government. Alarmed at the upsurge of the people and deepening influence of the CPI(M), they levelled false charges against the Home department to the effect that it was being utilised to serve the party interests and yet they avoided any discussions in the U.F. as demanded by the CPI (M). The Right Communist Party and the AITUC leadership took recourse to open slanders in their journals against the Home and Labour departments but without adducing any proof.

Only those who have lost faith in the working class and the people can think that the Government machinery strengthens one's party. The Congress party despite its rule in West Bengal for over two decades could not claim the support of the majority of the workers. Such arguments are advanced only to cover up their growing isolation from the working class and the mass of people.

When the BPTUC, with such a glorious record of struggles, recommended that the AITUC session should be held in Calcutta, Dange curtly rejected the offer by saying that the majority in the BPTUC would resort to gangsterism, and the police under the U.F. Ministry would side with these alleged gangsters.

This despicable slander against the U.F. Government and the BPTUC and its valiant cadres and the militant working class of West Bengal is in keeping with the revisionist policies of the dominant leadership of the AITUC. Such slanders may gladden the hearts of big business and all the enemies of the U.F. Government but the working class of West Bengal has given a fitting rebuff to these camp-followers of the bourgeoisie by holding the session in Calcutta.

After the gross betrayal of the people of West Bengal by the Bangla Congress, Right Communists and others, and

handing over of the U.F. Government to the Congress Government at the Centre, an offensive of the vested interests, repression and violence against the people have started. But there is no doubt that the working class of West Bengal will play a worthy role in meeting the challenge and once again defeat the reactionaries and conspirators.

Comrades, I welcome you all once again on behalf of the Reception Committee and wish success to your deliberations. Workers everywhere, crushed by the burdens imposed by the exploiters, frustrated by the reformist and revisionist trade union leaders in their struggles, are looking to the decisions of this Conference to open a new glorious chapter in their movement.

**LONG LIVE THE ALL-INDIA TRADE UNION
CONFERENCE !**

LONG LIVE WORKING CLASS UNITY !

3.

Report Of Com. P. Ramamurti

Comrades,

This conference is being convened by the decision of a meeting of 150 leading trade union functionaries—members of the Working Committee and General Council and of the State Executives and Councils of the AITUC—which took place at the Harbour Town of Vasco-Da-Gama, Goa, on April 8 and 9 last. These comrades are not ordinary functionaries, but they are the leaders of unions which lead most of the militant struggles of the working class in recent years. They had faced heavy repression, privation and hardships in building the movement. After mature consideration they decided to convene this Conference, and to recommend to the delegates that a new All-India Trade Union Central Organisation be formed which will carry forward the glorious traditions

of the Indian working class—traditions of unity and united struggle.

This decision was not an an easy one. It was necessitated by the developments in the country, political and economic, and the role that the existing trade union centres, including the AITUC, had played and are playing in these developments.

I must first turn to the economic background of these developments.

The working class has been facing continuously ferocious attacks from the employers and Government. Despite increase in total production and productivity, their real wages have been continuously falling.

With regard to the productivity of workers the Report of the National Labour Commission had to admit that "production per worker has increased by about 63 per cent between 1952 and 1964" but "real earnings have remained almost static during this period."

The real wages continued to fall even after 1964. According to the statistics compiled by the Labour Ministry itself the real wage index taking 1961 as the base year came down to 80.9 in 1967. The gradual fall in the real wage standard of the working class can be easily seen from the following statistics published by the Government of India from year to year in the Indian Labour Statistics :

INDEX OF REAL WAGES

(1961—100)

1964	94.9
1965	96.8
1966	91.3
1967	80.9 (P).

The official data for the later period are not yet available. However, the continued rise in prices clearly indicate a further fall in the real wages of the workers. Facing heavy repression, they have been fighting and even when they have secured

some wage increase, spiralling prices have eroded their real wages. Retrenchment and rationalisation and automation have led to colossal growth of unemployment. The number of registered unemployed has already reached four million.

As for the peasantry, and agricultural labourers, their appalling conditions are admitted even by the Government. A document of the Home Ministry circulated in a meeting of the Chief Ministers called by the Prime Minister in December last says :

“As of now, the land reform measures have not benefited the actual tiller in all cases. There is considerable concentration of ownership. Much of the land is cultivated in small holdings by tenants and sharecroppers who lack security of tenure and who have to pay exorbitant rents. Inequalities in land holdings have persisted because of the failure to implement ceiling laws. The programmes so far implemented are still more favourable to the larger owner-farmer than to the smaller tenant-farmer. As for the sharecropper and the landless labourer, they have been, more often than not, left out in the cold. In consequence of these factors, disparities have widened, accentuating social tensions.”

Millions of artisans, such as handloom-weavers and other handicraftsmen are being thrown out of their avocation unable to face competition from the mills without any prospect of alternative employment. The remaining who ply their trade are being squeezed dry under the impact of extremely low incomes, high prices of food and raw materials and burdensome taxes.

Declining real income and high cost of living are the lot of the urban middle classes, too. With growing automation, they are thrown out of employment constantly. No wonder that middle class unemployment has grown on a colossal scale. The fact that every industry is started on the basis of collaboration with foreign monopolists, that even technical know-how is constantly imported has left no opportunities of scientific and technological research. As a result, most of our scientists, engineers and technicians find no scope for their talent and

are frustrated. Many of them are lured to the USA, Britain and West Germany, where their talents are utilised in research and technology. No wonder that the student community is in deep ferment, seeing no future before them.

Actually, however, this path of development has led the country into the morass of an economic crisis. Instead of a prosperous, industrialised country, our dependence on aid has grown year by year. Even for running the existing industries, we have to import a lot of industrial raw materials and spare parts. The foreign exchange deficit has grown year by year and hence even for maintenance imports the country has to rely on increasing foreign aid, particularly American aid.

One has only to contrast these developments with the rapid growth of the economy of countries like China and North Korea to see the bankruptcy of the capitalist path of development that our rulers have embarked upon. China was more backward in 1949 than India was in 1947 when it achieved independence. It certainly received valuable technical assistance in the initial years from the USSR, but since the relations between the two countries deteriorated, such assistance had ceased altogether. But standing on its own feet, by unleashing the creative energies and talents of its working people, China has today become a mighty power in the world. Explosion of the atom and hydrogen bombs and the latest launching of the space satellite by China have been breath-taking achievements. It has no foreign exchange crisis, but a growing foreign trade with a favourable balance of payments. It owes no debt to any foreign country.

In these conditions, it was the task of the working class movement to mount a continuous offensive against the entire path of development that our ruler have embarked upon, rally the peasants and the people and fight for an alternative path. But what did the trade union movement do?

One can understand the role of the INTUC, for it was created by the bourgeoisie with the specific purpose of weaning away the working class from the path of class struggle.

But what did the AITUC, which has inscribed on its banner the aim of Socialism, and class struggle as the means to achieve it, do ?

The dominant leadership of the AITUC joined the chorus and asked the working class to support the plans "in the interest of the nation." In one meeting of the trade union functionaries Dange specifically stated that we have to support the development of capitalism because historically there is no alternative open to the country. Of course, brave resolutions were passed against the attacks on the working class and it was asked to defend itself against attacks on its wages and living standards. But with this basic attitude of collaborating with the bourgeoisie in its plans of building capitalism in the country, even the economic struggles naturally got weakened and blunted.

No wonder that the AITUC leadership agreed to "rationalisation without tears"—of course, in national interest ! No wonder it eulogised the tripartite conferences, the Wage Boards, etc., specifically set up by the Government to blunt the edge of class struggle, as great achievements of the trade union movement ! Is there any wonder that using the pretext of the three weeks' conflict with China in November 1962, the leadership agreed—long after the withdrawal of the Chinese forces—to an indefinite industrial truce, thus eschewing even economic struggles by the working class !

At the Bombay Conference of the AITUC itself, inflated memberships of all unions controlled by the Dangeites were admitted without question. Our plea that the constitutional provision that membership would be admitted strictly as shown in the last audited return submitted to the Registrar of Trade Unions was rejected.

In the interest of trade union unity, we put up with all these, concentrating our energy in fighting the class-collaborationist line. Com. P. Ramamurti moved the resolution on "The Platform of Unity and Struggle."

The Dangeites dared not oppose the resolution and it was unanimously adopted by the Conference. But the dominant

leadership took no step to implement the platform, They did not even popularise it among the workers, let alone mobilising them behind the platform and thus sabotaged the most important resolution unanimously adopted by the All-India Session of the AITUC.

Instead, they took to the path of disrupting trade unions at the base, In many unions, they held no elections for fear of losing in the elections. Many were the anti-working class agreements they had entered into with the employers behind the back of the workers—not informing even the executives of the unions concerned. When the majority of workers found that all democratic methods were barred, and convened their own meeting and held elections, the Dangeites refused to accept them, calling them rival unions.

In many unions when they were thrown out in open elections, they immediately formed rival unions, which were given affiliation to the AITUC.

In many unions they made wholesale suspension of the branches and summarily removed office-bearers who refused to toe their line and opposed their deals with the employers. This they did even against the provisions of the constitution. When these workers had no other go but to form another union, they refused affiliation, calling them rival unions. But they had no compunction in affiliating rival unions formed by them when they were not elected in the already affiliated union.

Once again, we tried to stop this disruption and tried our best for unity. In December 1966, at a meeting of the General Council of the AITUC, Com. P Ramamurti moved a resolution which demanded the amalgamation of all rival unions on the basis of elections with proportional representation which would be supervised by both parties. The resolution further had stated that democratic functioning of unions should be guaranteed by the State and All-India Executives of the AITUC, that no agreements should be entered into by any official without the authority of the Executive Committee and in matters affecting workers, without the ratification of the General Body of the union concerned.

No democrat, no trade unionist could take exception to these principles. The AITUC itself, from 1952, had been making these proposals to all the other All-India Trade Union Centres, such as the HMS and INTUC. The dominant leadership dared not oppose the resolution and it was passed by the General Council unanimously.

But once again, as in the case of the Bombay Session resolution on the Platform of Unity and Struggle, the leadership sabotaged this unanimous resolution of the General Council—the highest body in between two sessions—in practice. Repeated efforts, made by our comrades in various State Committees, were thwarted. In a number of meetings of the General Council we pleaded for the implementation of the resolution. Our pleas fell on deaf ears.

In August 1969 we had personal talks with Dange and his group representatives in which we pleaded again for its implementation. But again there was no firm commitment. The correspondence that followed that meeting between us and the Dangeites would clearly establish that we were pressing for unity of the trade unions, and Dangeites every time evaded this crucial question. For what is the use of a facade of unity at the top level if at the base the workers are divided and their trade unions are disrupted? Such disruption harms the cause of workers, hampers united struggles against the employers' offensive and if unity were established at the base on the basis of democratic functioning and on the basis of democratic elections with proportional representation, the Dangeites would be seriously hampered in pursuing their line of class-collaboration. That would also lead to a position where they could no longer command a majority in the AITUC on the basis of their faked membership. That is why the Dange-group doggedly refused to implement this resolution.

When they decided to call the session of AITUC in January 1970, Com. P. Ramamurti wrote to Dange pleading with him that the session should go down in history as the session of unity, and urged upon him that serious talks should be held for implementing the General Council Resolution on Unity of the Trade Unions and if for any

reason, these talks should get delayed, the session itself might be postponed. Again, Dange evaded the question.

Unilaterally, and without any authority from the General Council, Dange issued a circular giving practically no time for new unions to apply for affiliation. At the Council meeting, we again urged upon them to agree to implement the General Council resolution on unity. And once this determination to unify the trade unions at the base is there, all unions that apply for affiliation should be affiliated, for when they are all going to be united at the base after the the session, why should the fighting workers be denied representation and participation in the session and in shapping its policies? Com. P. Ramamurti moved a resolution to this effect. This was also rejected by the Dangeite majority.

That was why most of the affiliated unions present here decided to boycott the Guntur Session in protest.

The session was held with great fanfare of publicity of huge membership of the affiliated unions. How bogus these claims are can be seen from the fact that there are a number of unions, whose members are supposed to be workers in some factorics. But the factories themselves have ceased to exist for years. Applications for affiliation have been rejected on the ground that a union in such faactory has already been affiliated. But no unions, other than those whose applications were rejected exist in fact. Many of the affiliated unions lost completely in the elections to the Works Committees and other statutory bodies to the nominees of unions which are denied affiliation as rival unions, and yet membership of huge majority of the workers claimed for such affiliated unions which are rejected by the mass of workers. The Girni Kamgar Union, which did not conduct a single struggle during the last few years, which cannot find a worker to defend its office when repeatedly attacked by the Shiva Sena, and which has remained closed for over a year, is given a membership of 50,000.

We had hoped that our boycott would have some effect on the Dangeites and realising the seriousness of the situation they

would agree to mend their ways. But Dange in his report to the Conference, as General Secretary, only expressed hypocritical concern about unity. He would not place before the session the proposals we have been making consistently and how they were thwarted, he dared not reveal these facts for that would shatter their pose of unity. With a view to appearing before the workers as people who desire unity, they elected all those members of the General Council and Working Committee and other office-bearers, who had boycotted the session.

Immediately after this, Com. P. Ramamurti wrote to Dange that it was not the question of the number of seats in the Council and other bodies of the AITUC that bothered us, but we were concerned with the question of unity of the unions at the base. He therefore asked Dange if he was even now prepared to implement the November 1966 resolution on unifying the split unions on the basis of democratic elections and for this purpose whether he was prepared to enter into discussions. Dange curtly replied that there was nothing to talk.

It must be stated, comrades, that in hoping that our boycott of the Guntur Session would have some corrective effect on the Dangeites, we had underestimated the depth to which they had sunk in their line of class-collaboration.

During all this time, they went on merrily with their disruption of the trade unions at the base and in utilising their majority in the General Council and Working Committee to place generally their nominees on all Government Committees and Wage Boards. Most of these so-called representatives of the working class had no compunction left in them in joining hands with the representatives of the employers and Government and taking naked anti-working class positions on crucial question affecting the working class movement such as the right to strike, and wage and other emoluments.

DANGE & Co. AS SHAMELESS COLLABORATORS

Several avowedly anti-working class agreements have been signed by Dangeite leaders behind the back of the workers all

as shameless class collaborators. It is not possible here to deal with all of them, but some of the glaring examples will be sufficient to understand the depth of their degeneration.

In Indian Oil Corporation, the Dange group and INTUC leaders signed an agreement in which, in return for some monetary concessions, they agreed to abide by Government's decision on automation, agreed to barter away a worker's right to collective bargaining by giving a final say to the management in settlement of all grievances. They have further helped the management in clearing the way for mass retrenchment and accepted onerous terms in standing orders which were worse than the notorious "model standing orders." To impose the agreement on the workers, it provided that increased wages would be given only to those workers, who give in writing that they accept the agreement. Even the Labour Department did not approve some of the clauses of this obnoxious agreement.

In Bombay, G. Sundaram, AITUC Working Committee member along with INTUC leader Raja Kulkarni accepted "re-organisation" and "early retirement scheme" which virtually paved the way for retrenchment of hundreds of oil workers. Both leaders also signed a special agreement with Burmah-Shell accepting "special release terms" for the workers who would be declared "surplus" by the management.

In Delhi textiles, the dominant leaders of AITUC along with INTUC signed an agreement in which they gave an undertaking that they would not demonstrate before the office or residence of the manager and would not resort to agitational approach during negotiations. They further gave their consent for reduction in festival holidays and agreed not to press for higher bonus than provided for by the Bonus Act.

In Tamil Nadu, in Gomathi Mills in Tirunneveli District, a work-load agreement which was found to be impracticable due to excessive load and stayed by employer himself was earlier signed by the Dangeite union. They also agreed to a wage-cut of Rs. 25 per month for forty months, in favour of

Ganapathi Mills as a condition precedent to its re-opening. The AITUC leadership further agreed to effect a cut in D.A. to the extent of 3 paise per point in the Madurai Raja Mills. In the Balaram Varma Mill, Shencottiah, they agreed to give up lay-off arrears to the tune of Rs. 750 per worker. In the same mills, even in the teeth of opposition from the INTUC and the DMK Unions, the Dangeite leadership with the help of the police and revenue officials, permitted the employer to remove yarn bales which the workers had till then successfully blocked.

In Andhra, the AITUC union were conspiring to sign an agreement with Imperial Leaf Tobacco Company which included clauses like giving up the workers' right of weekly holiday, by accepting additional payment for the work done on such holidays. The draft agreement further provided for giving up tea break of 20 minutes and accepting additional nominal payment. It also conceded the right of the management to remove any worker from service on the plea of low production after imposition of increase in workload. The comrades who opposed this obnoxious agreement, had to face disciplinary actions. Due to the opposition from the workers, the revisionists dropped some clauses of the agreement but in the end they agreed with many retrograde provisions. In Singarenni Collieries, a public sector undertaking, AITUC and INTUC leaderships by an agreement gave their consent to the retrenchment of more than 2,500 workers. The unions even undertook the responsibility of collecting signatures on the so-called voluntary retirement forms and even surpassed the Company unions in this respect. There is no wonder that this AITUC union enjoys the patronage of recognition of the management under the notorious Code of Discipline.

In West Bengal, the Dange group lent their support to the introduction of labour saving devices in Indian Oxygen by an agreement in return for some monetary concessions. As a result of the agreement, the management introduced a modern card punching and data processing machine.

The role of the AITUC representatives on the Wage Boards for Heavy Chemicals and Fertiliser Industries and for Road Transport Industry was anti-working class from A to Z. In both the wage boards, the AITUC nominees signed with the representatives of employers and the Government in denying to the workers need-based minimum standard accepted by the 15th Tripartite Agreement.

G. Sundaram who was AITUC representative on the Wage Board for Heavy Chemicals and Fertiliser Industries, joined hands with employer in excluding a large number of factories from the purview of the Wage Board. Then he conspired with them in recommending wages far lower than the existing wages in several chemical and fertiliser units and shamelessly justified employers' argument that industry had no capacity to pay need-based minimum wages. He even went to the extent of agreeing with the employers that the wages of workers in this industry should not be more than 10 percent of the total sales and virtually accepted a limit to the wage rise of workers. To curry favour with the capitalists the AITUC representatives agreed that the wage rise should not be paid immediately but should be spread over a period of five years.

K. M. Sundaram, another Dange protege on the Wage Board for Road Transport Industry accepted Rs. 125 only as the minimum wage while the workers in many States are already getting higher wage scales. The Report of this wage board had made such a mockery of the wage rise that most of the AITUC unions in Road Transport rejected it and even the AITUC leadership was forced to come out with a statement demanding higher wages than recommended by the Wage Board.

In both the Wage Boards, Dangeites have won laurels from the capitalists for the defence of the interests of the employers. The Congress Government also got the confidence that their representatives are prepared to sell out working class interests and stab them in the back.

Indrajit Gupta, who was a member of the Jute Wage Board earlier supported all the arguments of employers in

denying decent wage standard to jute workers on the plea of foreign competition, need for modernisation and national development. He opposed payment of night allowance, and cent per cent D. A., while defended employers by accepting their argument that they have no capacity to pay need-based minimum wage.

Thus the AITUC representatives on the Wage Board virtually gave up the norms laid down by the 15th Indian Labour Conference and forced the workers to accept the starvation living standard. As members of the Wage Board, AITUC nominees have proved not to be different from INTUC.

When the Central Government announced a rise in D. A. after the Central Government employees' strike in 1968, another AITUC Secretary, K. G. Srivastava, said in a special interview to 'Patriot', that for the first time, the Government employees got rise in D. A. without struggle, thus totally undermining the fact that the concessions was only a by-product of the glorious one-day strike of the Central Government employees.

The Dangeites have also helped the bourgeoisie by raising only that much demand which the bourgeoisie is ready to offer. Thus Dange demanded only Rs. 30 as wage rise to steel workers with the idea of compromising for only Rs. 15 or so. The insistence of workers to fight for more, defeated their game. Later on, they agreed to settle at Rs. 28. However, due to the pressure exerted by Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union, Durgapur, the workers could get Rs. 33—Rs. 3 more than what Dange demanded earlier. The steel workers would have got more had the leadership of central T. U. organisations stood firm during negotiations and loyal to the workers' cause.

The Asian Trade Union Seminar organised by the AITUC only highlighted the rank opportunism of Dange-group. Apart from the fact that the representatives of big business like Union Labour Minister, Regional Director, ILO, Chairman and Secretary of the National Labour Commission, the

AITUC leadership invited most reactionary ICFTU trade union leaders from Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, etc. The trade unions of Indonesia, China, North Korea, Vietnam, etc., however, did not participate. It is no wonder that the so-called Asian Seminar has no word to say about the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U. S. imperialist aggression. The Dangeites have lakhs of rupees to spend on such bogus seminars but had no funds to contribute during long-drawn strikes of workers in West Bengal, Kerala and other States.

The AITUC leadership has been giving full co-operation to the Government-sponsored workers' education scheme in which the employers' representatives also give lectures to the workers. This scheme is to all practical purposes at the mercy of the employers since they provide accommodation, they are associated with selection of trainees, and even act as examiners, before awarding certificates to workers. The syllabus of the training scheme is entirely against the workers and is productivity oriented. The scheme openly propagates class collaboration and opposed strikes while the dominant leadership of AITUC give a helping hand to the bourgeoisie in preaching these anti-working class theories at all stages.

The collaboration of AITUC with National Productivity Council is also another instance of boosting the interests of the capitalists. The AITUC also participated in a Committee on Sharing the Gains of Productivity in which the AITUC nominee along with the Secretary of National Commission on Labour appended a note advocating the need for increase in productivity but asked only for a higher share than suggested by bourgeois representatives. The AITUC representatives faithfully participated in various programmes of NPC and asked workers to increase productivity in return for a paltry rise in emoluments. The experience of productivity movement convincingly shows that the major gains of productivity have been misappropriated by the capitalists and the AITUC leadership only connived at them in this task.

The Code of Discipline is unilaterally binding on the working class while employers are free to evade all the

obligations. The Dange leadership which was a party to the Code, later on began speaking against it when the workers found that they had been bound hand and foot by the Code. However, in practice, the AITUC leadership has written no letter to the Government rejecting the Code while AITUC representatives attend all the meetings of Evaluation and Implementation Committee of the Code of Discipline. Dange's occasional outbursts against the Code therefore are meant only for the consumption of the workers while the Government is fully aware that his group is doing everything to implement the Code.

Dange's most despicable role in the Bonus Commission has immensely helped the employers in denying adequate bonus to the workers. He conceded employers demand of increasing the rate of return on Capital and reserves. He also accepted employers fictitious balance sheets as the basis of calculation of bonus and further agreed to a 4 percent minimum bonus which enabled the employers to manipulate the balance sheets so as to keep the bonus to the minimum level.

Perhaps the anti-working class role of the AITUC leadership was most glaringly seen in their performance as members of various Study Groups constituted by the National Commission on Labour. In these reports, the Dangeites joined hands with representatives of Government and employers in undermining workers' right to strike and forge weapons of new attacks on the working class.

Balachandra Menon, Vice-President of AITUC was a member of Study Group on Industrial Relations, Southern Region. Though he did not sign the Report he has nowhere denounced any formulation of the Report or appended any note of dissent. The Study Group while criticised the policy of the D.M.K. Government which in the early days of its rule was not willing to suppress the workers, stated, "The main features of Government policy which have contributed to this unfortunate state of industrial relations are (a) failure of police effectively to put down the act of violence and harassment of managerial staff, (b) constant and continu-

ous interference at the ministerial level in labour disputes.” The Study Group has further demanded open banning of strikes : “The authorities should have the right to ban a strike or lock-out even before taking for investigation the dispute which may have caused the strike or lock-out.” He, however, did not bother to oppose any of these conclusions.

Ranen Sen, another Vice-President of AITUC, took almost similar position in the Study Group for Industrial Relations, Eastern Region. He, too, like all reactionaries, demanded ban on strikes in public utility concerns. The Report says. “In the case of public utility concerns, however, the present restrictions on strikes and lock-outs should continue as otherwise the normal life of the community may be frequently dislocated or endangered by hasty actions by the parties concerned.” Strangely enough, this was on the eve of brutal repression launched by the Congress Government against the Central Government employees’ strike in September 1968 and providing for brutal punishment to the railway workers who dared to fight against their exploitation. When the T.U. movement was fighting for scrapping these draconian measure, Ranen Sen was advocating banning of strikes in name of preventing “hasty” actions.

Ranen Sen had no qualms to advocate further banning of strikes during pendency of the disputes before the Tribunals. The bourgeoisie has been consistently using this device to evade workers’ demands and prolong legal proceedings for years and tire out the workers. Yet, Ranen Sen wants to tie down the hands of workers during all these years.

Another henchman of Dange, G. Sundaram, had no word to say about the exploitation of foreign oil companies as a member of study Group on Oil Refinery and Distribution. He did not raise his finger against the callous retrenchment launched by these companies after introduction of automation and other labour saving devices. He, however, demands, “Where strike in the oil industry or any section of it exists and no solution of industrial dispute through bipartite negotiations or conciliation appears likely”, the “appropriate

Government should have the power to enforce a cooling off period between the two parties. During this period strikes, including go slow and lock-outs should be prohibited."

As a member of Study Group on Fertiliser industry, he once again joined hands with big business and advocated suppression of strike struggles. This is what the report says, "In some States, chemical fertiliser industry has been declared as a public utility service, under the Industrial Disputes Act which inter alia prohibits and penalises industrial strikes and lock outs. But in some other States it is not so. Fertiliser industry being a major essential industry vital for growing more food, it should be declared as a Public Utility Service."

Similarly, Homi Daji, and G. Sundaram have hailed the Draft Labour Code which was later on rejected by the entire T. U. movement. Homi Daji went to the extent of paying tributes to class collaborationist INTUC union at Ahmedabad and asked others to copy its model !

Other AITUC leaders like Y. D. Sharma, Sambal Chakrabarty have also demanded restrictions on strikes. Indrajit Gupta appreciated the usefulness of Wage Board machinery. Sambal Chakrabarty in Study Group Report on Iron and Steel slandered the struggles conducted by AITUC unions and praised Michael John's stooge union of Jamshedpur. Such anti-working class positions have enabled the National Commission on Labour to take most reactionary positions on various working class issues and the Chairman of the Commission was prompt in acknowledging the role of the Study Groups in helping the Commission to arrive at its conclusion. The dominant leadership of AITUC has thus endeared itself to the bourgeoisie.

It is such treachery of leadership of central T. U. organisation that has emboldened the Maharashtra Government to bring forward a Bill which imposes drastic restrictions on workers and virtually bans every strike. Recognised unions are prohibited from resorting to gherao, picketing, so-called irregular strikes which will reduce such unions into company unions. What, however, is most disgraceful is that INTUC,

AITUC, HMS representatives who were members of a Committee on Unfair Labour Practice had approved all these nefarious measures and Government claimed unanimous support of all major central T. U. organisations in the country. It is only when the working class of Maharashtra strongly resented against this conspiracy then some of these leaders have started opposing these reactionary measures.

The treachery of the dominant leadership of AITUC does not end here. Despite their class collaborationist policies, despite their attempts to sell the bourgeois policies of capitalist development as 'national plans', despite their determined efforts to lend support to the Congress party and Government on the alleged ground of imminent threat of takeover by Right Reaction, the working class went into glorious struggles against the Government's policies. By 1965-66, these struggles embraced all strata—students, middle classes and peasants. They scored a signal victory in the 1967 General Elections by defeating the Congress in a number of States constituting the majority of the population of the country and seriously undermined its hitherto huge majority in "Lok Sabha".

In Kerala and West Bengal, the advanced state of the working class and general democratic movement helped in the formation of United Front Governments, in which were found the most developed, self-sacrificing and doughty champions of the working class. In the face of the terrible anger of the masses against Congress misrule, for two decades, the group dominating the AITUC also joined these U. F. Governments.

It is true that by the end of the year, the West Bengal ministry was toppled by the machinations of the Congress party and the Central Government and by the treachery of a number of members of the Bangla Congress, but when mid-term elections were held in February 1969, the U. F. emerged stronger, with the Congress party reduced to 55 seats in a House of 280.

So long as these U. F. ministries lasted, they served the interests of the people, despite the severe constitutional limi-

tations under which they had to work, and they were serving as instruments of struggle, against the exploiting classes. They were acting as the tribune of the people fighting against the injustices done to them by the Central Government. It was with this objective that the police administration was given a new orientation of non-interference in the struggle of the working people for their demands. This inspired the working people, to organise themselves and struggle against their oppressors.

When the Central Government by an ordinance had banned the Central Government employees' strike, and when it let loose a reign of terror in Delhi and Congress Governments in Rajasthan, Punjab and other places had resorted to brutal methods, Com. E. M. S. Namboodiripad courageously refused to take action against the striking employees, despite threat of action by the Union Home Minister.

Helped by this policy, all sections of the working people in Kerala, including Government employees—above all the industrial, plantation and agricultural workers—launched struggles in order to secure their immediate demands. As a result all workers got an increase of 25 per cent in their wages ; agricultural workers got a minimum wage of Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 per day ; Government employees and teachers got benefits to the tune of Rs. 18.5 crores per annum.

The Agrarian Bill reducing the land ceiling for a family to a maximum of 12 standard acres, conferring ownership rights in home-steads to poor peasants and agricultural workers, conferring property rights on small tenants and reducing rents to one-fourth had been passed. The attempts of the leaders of other parties in the U. F. like Muslim League, and the Right Communist Party to sabotage this measure were frustrated by the mass pressure worked up by the mass organisations.

In W. Bengal, the U. F. ministry remained just for about a year. But this was an eventful year when the working people scored success after success. Helped by the police policy, the policy of no repression of the masses—the workers,

In the face of this rising tempo among the workers, inspired by the victories in West Bengal, the Government of India could not resist, the demand of the workers in the Public Sector industries as well. Wage increases have been won in the Hindustan Aeronautics, Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi, Heavy Boiler Plant in Tiruchirapalli, Neyveli Lignite Corporation, H.M.T., Hindustan Shipyard and a number of other Public Sector industries. Government had to initiate negotiations for new Wage Scales in the steel industry—both Public and Private Sectors—and pending the conclusion of the negotiations, an interim wage increase of Rs. 33 per worker was conceded.

It is natural that all this—the existence of these two U.F. Governments with their policies of protecting the working masses and serving as instruments of struggle against the bourgeois-landlord policies, and the rising wave of struggles resultant therefrom—sent a wave of panic among the capitalists and landlords who began to spread the myth that law and order had broken down. Parties with links with the vested interests in the U.F. also got panicky at these developments. They naturally were conspiring to topple these ministries. This is quite understandable.

However, they could not have succeeded, but for the part played by the Right Communist leaders, who are also in the dominant leadership of the AITUC. They, in fact, played the biggest role in this conspiracy of toppling the two U.F. ministries.

The Dangeites thus came out openly as the saviours of the bourgeoisie who was facing the growing power of the working class, and the democratic movement against the bourgeois-landlord rule.

The toppling of the ministry roused the holy anger of the working masses of West Bengal who protested by a General Strike and Bangla Bandh on March 17th, 1970. The BPTUC, and the 12th July Committee, consisting of middle class employees' organisations had given the call for the strike. Even the INTUC could not and did not come out against the protest

action. Such was the mood of the workers. But the Dangeite leaders of the AITUC, Dr. Ranen Sen, who was the President of the BPTUC, and others came out against the strike. The decision of the organisation of which he was the President did not deter him.

When the workers of even their own unions did not heed their advice not to join the strike, these people had no compunction in joining employees' goonda gangs in an attempt to break the strike. Thus they came out as scabs and strike breakers. When the complete success of the Bangla Bandh had to be conceded even by the Indian Jute Mill Association and other employers' organisations these servitors of the bourgeoisie, made statements that it was a failure which were promptly broadcasted on the AIR repeatedly.

Those who opposed the strike were the Big Business and their newspapers, the landlords and the Congress both Syndicate and Indira Gandhi wing, the Swatantra and Jana Sangh, the PSP, the Bangla Congress and all parties linked up with the vested interests. The leaders of the AITUC found themselves in this grand array of all the enemies of the working class and the toiling masses.

Is there any wonder that they have been applauded by entire bourgeois Press, by all the reactionary parties like the Jana Sangh, Swatantra, the Syndicate ?

Such is the depth of degeneracy of these people. Opportunism and economism, whose real roots are class collaboration, can mask its real face for some time in normal times, by posing for fight and securing some paltry concessions. But when the crisis for the bourgeoisie develops, and with the rising tide of mass struggles the crisis for the bourgeoisie intensifies, it can no longer mask its real face. The compelling necessity to save the bourgeoisie in crisis forces it to come out openly on the side of the bourgeoisie and take its place in the ranks of the enemies of the working class.

This is the historical experience of the labour movement all over the world, and this is what we are witnessing in India

Rs. 684 crores by the State Governments. It is further proposed to have a big dose of deficit financing to the tune of Rs. 850 crores which will just put the prices to fantastic levels. By squeezing the people in this manner the Plan proposes to inject Rs 8,980 crores into the private sector and boost the big business houses still further. The Plan does not offer any benefits to the toiling masses and thus highlights the mockery of Indira Gandhi's claims of building Socialism.

The huge rise of defence expenditure has only added to the gravity of the economic crisis. Before the India-China conflict the Defence Expenditure was Rs. 289.54 crores which shot up to Rs. 1,017.84 as per 1970-71 budget. The big business has also developed interest in high defence expenditure as it is a source of fabulous profit for them. The defence outlay during the next five years is estimated to be of the order of Rs. 6,200 crores, out of which Rs. 2,200 crores are likely to be on purchase of defence stores. Since foreign monopolies controlling the armament industry are also likely to get a part of the share in these stores they are also keen to maintain tension on India's borders.

The big business houses are minting money despite the crisis conditions in the economy. As a matter of fact, the net profit after tax of 101 giant companies studied by The Economic Times shows a rise from Rs. 1029 crores during 1967-68 to Rs. 112.33 crores during 1968-69, that is, a rise of 10 per cent in only one year. The following are some of the giant companies earning excessive profits.

INDUSPRIAL PROFITS

(Rs. in crores)

	1967-68	1968-69
1. Indian Iron	3.28	5.74
2. Dunlop Rubber	5.81	6.59
3. Phillips	4.94	5.16
4. ESSO	2.77	7.39
5. Burmah-Shell	5.28	7.39
6. Pfizer	4.22	3.59
7. Good Year	1.79	2.87

	1967-68	1968-69
8. TELCO	8.35	10.16
9. Tata Steel	11.68	12.94
10. Imperial Tobacco	6.42	7.80
11. Scindia	2.27	2.22

Despite the announcement of the new licencing policy big business houses continue to get lion's share in licences to start new industries.

The Green Revolution which is being paraded today with so much fanfare and publicity has proved to be a sheer hoax. The official statistics itself shows that per capita availability of cereals in India came down from 14.03 ounces to 13.80 during 1969. In spite of the so-called green revolution per capita availability of cereals did not change materially since 1954 when the availability was 13.65 ounces per day per head. With regard to pulses conditions are still worse. The official statistics shows that during 1951 per capita availability of pulses was 2.13 ounces, but it was only 1.64 ounces during 1969. When both the staple items in the food consumption show such a serious situation it is ridiculous to talk of green revolution.

Who are the real beneficiaries of this "green revolution?" It is better to read the opinion expressed by a person who hails from the land of dole-givers to the Government of India. Francis Frankel, U.S.A.I.D. official who visited some villages, where "green revolution" was in operation says :

"Farmers with 20 acres or more have made the the greatest absolute and relative gains, partly by mechanising farm operations to take up double multiple cropping, but also by diversifying their cropping pattern to include more commercial crops. All of these innovations have substantially increased the lead of larger farmers over small farmers."

Thus it is the landlords and the rural rich who are the real beneficiaries of the "new agricultural strategy" chalked out by the Government of India. It is only just an effort to overcome the agrarian crisis without introducing genuine land reforms. The mockery of the land reforms could be seen from the official

admission in the official publication "Towards growth with Social Justice" which states that 76 per cent of the rural households own only 19 per cent of the cropped area in the country.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Reserve Bank of India 18.4 crores of people in villages in 1960-61 had per capita expenditure of less than Rs. 18 per month. The situation has gone from bad to worse in later years. "Compared to 1960-61" the Survey admits, "we notice that nutritional deficiency in the rural area widened considerably. As compared to only 52 percent of the rural population in 1960-61, 70 per cent of the population in 1967-68 was found to be at poverty levels".

The crisis in agriculture further is creating bottlenecks in industry. The shortfall in supply of cotton and oilseeds has posed a serious threat to cotton textile and hydrogenated oil industry while the country has to spend tens of crores worth foreign exchange to import cotton and edible oil. The crisis in industry is therefore directly linked with the crisis in agriculture and no basic change in the industrial advance is possible without an agrarian revolution.

The nationalisation of banks has not resulted in any reduction in the acuteness of the crisis. It continues to be more severe since it directly arises from the capitalist path of development of economy.

A New Offensive Against Workers

A big bourgeoisie with a view to pass the burden of economic crisis on the working class, launched a ferocious offensive in all directions. After devaluation it became more pronounced and ruthless.

The working class had to face closure of several factories particularly in textile and engineering industries. Nearly 100 textile mills were closed in 1968 and despite the formation of Textile Corporation by the Government of India the number of closed units by the end of 1969 was as high as 85. In mills reopened by the Government, workers were forced to accept cut in D.A. and basic wages. The courts in U. P.

and Madhya Pradesh even justified non-payment of bonus as per Bonus Act to workers employed in mills taken over by the Government as a so called relief measure. The workers of a textile mill in Highanghat (Maharashtra) were compelled to accept Re. 1 as basic wage and another Re. 1 as D.A.

Hundreds of engineering units were closed down in West Bengal and Maharashtra. Stoppage of orders for box wagons by railways resulted in large-scale retrenchment in that industry. Several lakh of workers were laid off in these States on the plea of lack of orders and the number of workers laid off in 1967 and 1968 was higher than any year since 1960. In West Bengal, many engineering units even did not pay lay-off compensation due to workers under the law. The engineering industry in West Bengal affected the livelihood of more than 50,000 workers during 1967 and 1968 due to partial and full closure.

The drive for the intensification of work-load was in full swing. According to official statistics, the output per man-shift of miners and loaders in coal mines which was 1.49 tonne in 1965 increased to 1.82 tonne in 1960. As a result of railways drive for increase in the work-load the employment in railways has gone down from 15.41 lakhs in 1966-67 to 14.45 lakhs in 1968-69. The official rules regarding hours of work were recklessly violated by the administration which can be seen from the fact that during 1968-69 the Central Industrial Relations Machinery detected more than 84 thousand irregularities. In engineering industry the intensification of work-load was resorted through various incentive schemes and overtime work. Despite expansion of capacity in steel plants the job potential has increased only nominally due to excessive rise in work-load.

A large number of rationalisation, modernisation and automation measures were forcibly introduced by business houses resulting in killing of jobs. The drive for introducing automatic looms in textile mills and broadlooms in jute mills was in full swing. The ordinary looms which became redundant after introduction of automatic looms were sold to power-loom factories without giving any protection to handloom industry. This created serious difficulties for the weavers who virtually

became destitutes. The mechanisation process in mining is also going ahead resulting in retrenchment of several thousands of miners every year. Mechanisation is also being introduced in port and docks and shipping creating a serious threat to job security of thousands of workers.

The Government has granted licence to manufacture of a hundred computers every year to IBM monopoly which will create a firm basis for further introduction of these job-eating machines. Besides, scores of computers have been installed in both private and public sector undertakings rendering large number of persons jobless. The foreign oil monopolies have further introduced automation measures, the banks have gone ahead with mechanisation of accounting while the LIC is still conspiring to instal another computer in Calcutta. A permanent threat to job security is thus looming large.

The unemployment problem, which was already acute, is now assuming alarming proportions. In cotton textiles, the total number of workers employed came down from 8.31 lakhs in 1964 to 7.10 lakhs in 1969. Similarly, in coal mines, the number of employed workers stood at 4.15 lakhs during 1964 which continuously showed a decline till 1969 when it showed the total strength of workers at only 3.72 lakhs ! The employment of engineering workers is estimated to have gone down by about 50,000 during 1966-69 period. 80,000 "badli" workers in jute industry lost their source of livelihood during the last couple of years.

A general tendency of increase in unemployment among workers can be seen from the Employment Exchange Statistics itself. The total number of applicants on the live register was 26.22 lakhs in 1966 which increased to 34.25 lakhs by the end of 1969. The annual increase in the live register shows considerable rise as seen from the following table :

Growth Of Unemployment

Year	No. of live register (in lakhs)	Increase over previous year
1966	26.22	0.37
1967	27.40	1.18
1968	30.12	2.72
1969	34.25	4.13

Since all the unemployed persons do not register their names in Employment Exchanges it only gives a partial picture. Reserve Bank made a study of the backlog of unemployment in the country which shows that it was 9.6 million at the end of the Third Plan which has gone up to 12.6 million after the three Annual Plans.

The rise of educated unemployment has been a new feature in the recent past. Over a million of registered unemployed are educated. Even highly qualified persons find it difficult to obtain a job while according to a recent estimate by National Council of Applied Economic Research the estimated unemployment of engineers will reach a colossal figure of one lakh by 1973 !

The working class was further directly fleeced by the capitalist-landlord Government through inflation and high taxation. In the absence of provision of cent per cent neutralisation every price rise cuts into the living standard of the workers. The All-India Consumer Price Index Number for the working class taking 1949 as the base year stood at 184 in 1966. After devaluation it suddenly shot up to 209 in 1967 and further to 215 in 1968. The price index in March 1970 showed a further rise to 218.

Huge accumulation of arrears of Provident Fund contribution with the employers is also another index of further cheating of the workers. According to recent report the total arrears of P. F. contribution have now crossed Rs. 12 crores, while the number of companies whose accumulated arrears exceed Rs. one lakh is as high as 170 but the Government refused to move and take strong action against the employers. The national penalty provided in the Act is a handle used by employers.

The Report of the National Commission of Labour is an open declaration of intentions of the big business to launch further attacks on the livelihood of workers and deprive them of all the trade union rights.

The Report while expressing some lip-sympathy to workers has created a full-fledged case to impose wage freeze and

has given green signal to employers to go ahead with all measures of introducing job-saving devices. It nonchalantly advocated the total suppression of trade union rights by creating basis for stooge unions. It further imposes blanket ban on strikes with a view to ensure uninterrupted working of factories. The Industrial Relations Machinery recommended by the Commission both at the Central and State level, will be heavily loaded in favour of the capitalist class. It has, instead of granting any benefit to the working class, only supplied new weapons to the armoury of the bourgeoisie to destroy whatever trade union rights the working class has secured through struggles in the past. A determined struggle against all the anti-working class recommendations of the Commission will alone defeat the game of the bourgeoisie to curtail their right to organise.

Rising Wave Of Working Class Struggles

The working class did not take the offensive of the bourgeoisie lying down. A heroic resistance was given to these attacks and inroads in their living standards while brutal police repression failed to cow down them.

Despite the gross under-estimation of the magnitude of strike struggles, the official statistics show a remarkable upswing. The total number of industrial disputes during 1966 was 2,556 involving more than 14 lakh workers and the number of man-days lost was of the order of 138.46 lakhs. West Bengal led all other States in the total man-days lost (38 lakhs) closely followed by Maharashtra (37 lakhs). The man-day loss in Kerala amounted to 23 lakhs.

The industrial disputes in 1967 show a big jump. There were in all 2,815 disputes in which nearly 15 lakh workers were involved resulting in a total loss of 171.15 lakh man-days. The total man-days lost was the highest in Bengal (59 lakhs) followed by Kerala (23 lakhs) and Maharashtra (22 lakhs). A large number of man-day loss was recorded in engineering, textiles, coal mines, chemicals, and electricity industries.

The upswing in the strike wave continued further during 1968 also when 2,776 industrial disputes were recorded involving nearly 17 lakh workers leading to loss in man-days as high as 172,44 lakhs. Bengal accounted for the highest number of man-days loss (73 lakhs) this year also followed by Kerala (25 lakhs), Tamil Nadu (24 lakhs) and Maharashtra (17 lakhs). Industries which took major part in these struggles were engineering, cotton and jute textiles, chemical products, coal mines, road transport, water transport, port and docks and cinema establishments.

The latest annual report of the Union Labour Ministry has worked out provisional figures on industrial disputes 1969. The figures show a total loss of 168.60 lakhs which is likely to go up when the final figures are available. Bengal continued to lead this year also (98 lakhs). The number of man-days lost in Kerala and Maharashtra stood at 14 lakhs and 12 lakhs respectively.

It is clearly evident that more struggles were fought in West Bengal, and Kerala during all these years. It further underlines growing militancy of the T. U. movement in these two States.

The management several times declared lock-outs following the strikes. During 1968 in 144 strikes the management declared lockout resulting in the loss of 35 lakh man-days. In 181 cases the dispute itself began as a result of lock-out wherein about 27 lakhs man-days were lost. This also indicates the growing tendency among the managements to prolong the disputes.

The workers also had to fight back with long-drawn out struggles. The strike of Bengal Immunity workers lasted for more than four months and ultimately the management was forced to withdraw dismissal and discharge notices. Other protracted strikes were fought by workers include those in Remington Rand (5 months), Binani Metal (8 months), East India Rubber Works (5 months), and Bharat Carbon (4 months). There were also long-drawn lock-out in Guest Keen Williams, Texmaco, Agarpara Works, Oriental and Electric

Engineering Company, etc. The struggles of workers in Indian Standard Wagon and Burn & Company, Howrah, lasted for 7 months. Both these struggles alone led to a total loss of man-days as high as 12 lakhs !

In Tamil Nadu, the struggle of Western India Match Factory workers for increase in wages and D. A. continued for 4 months. The strike of 6,000 workers employed in Textile Company, Ganapathy, was also dragged on for four months.

A united struggle of Punalur Paper Mills in Kerala demanding bonus and wage rise continued for five months.

Five thousand workers of New Victoria Mills, Kanpur had to fight against retrenchment for more than 3 months.

These are only some illustrative examples where workers have shown their determination to fight long-drawn struggles.

We have already noted some major struggles of workers in West Bengal and Kerala which have pinpointed the growing desire among the workers to give a united struggle against the employers.

Among other notable struggles mention must be made of strike of firemen in Southern Railway for reduction in hours of work, Punjab and Haryana road transport workers strike for higher wages and against victimisation, Durgapur steel workers' struggle against automation and for union recognition, struggle of textile workers in Coimbatore, and Madurai against closures, and lock-outs, strike of Bokaro steel workers, struggle of Modinagar workers for dearness allowance, and and permanency, State-wide strikes of Beedi and Sugar Workers in Tamil Nadu, textile and engineering workers in Rajasthan and cashew, coir, toddy tappers and plantation workers in Kerala, series of strikes organised by Colliery Mazdoor Sabha, Raniganj, in the coal-belt and the strike of Neyveli workers.

During these strike struggles, the trade unions had to face growing repression of the bourgeois police force. Increasing use of C.R.P. in industrial dispute has been a regular feature of the repressive apparatus of the Congress Govern-

ment. Undaunted by this repression the workers continued their struggles in several places. Trade union functionaries and militant workers have become a target of gangster attacks in coal mining belt in several strike struggles conducted in protest against non-implementation of Coal Wage Board recommendations.

The glorious strike of seven and half lakh Central Government employees on September 19, 1968 had focused the attention of the country on the question of need-based minimum wages and cent per cent neutralisation in the cost of living. A peculiar feature of the strike was the firm determination of these employees despite promulgation of notorious Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance. The Government virtually treated the strike as a rebellion against the "established authority". Fifteen persons lost their precious lives in police firings while hundreds were wounded seriously. About 48,000 temporary employees received termination notices and the total number of persons arrested and prosecuted under the Ordinance crossed the ten thousand mark.

Government employees fought this repression bravely and unitedly. Government's conspiracy to impose scab unions on employees failed miserably. Ultimately, step by step, Government was forced to withdraw most of the victimisation measures.

The deep inroads in the living standard brought State Government employees in most of the States together and State-wide organisations were formed. Militant strike struggles were fought of by NGO in support of higher wages and dearness allowance at par with Central Government employees. The common demands brought them together on a national basis and all-India State Government Employees' Federation came into existence. A long-drawn struggle against victimisation was carried out by this organisation all over India. Six million Central and State Government employees were brought together for the first time on common issues when Anti-Victimisation Day was observed on August 19, 1969.

The struggle of LIC employees against automation and in support of charter of demands evoked solidarity actions all over the country. The LIC employees in Calcutta valiantly fought against the conspiracy to install a computer by the management. With the help of other sections of workers in Calcutta, they have been able to defeat it successfully so far. The Caltex employees of Calcutta resisted the game of the management to close down the office and organise sit-in demonstration for more than 700 days.

The all-India strike of bank employees against section 36 D of the the Banking Companies Act which imposed several restrictions on trade union right was a complete success.

Several State-wide strikes of primary and secondary teachers for higher salaries and dearness allowance organised during the last three years. In some places, even university teachers resorted to strike actions for higher salaries and against bureaucratism in colleges, and universities.

The seven weeks strike of the 12,000 employees of leading newspapers all over the country during the middle of 1967 was another notable action of the salaried employees. For the first time such a powerful action was organised by the newspaper employees against Press barons which made a good impact on the people. The All-India Newspaper Employees' Association which led the strike against non-implementation of the Wage Board Report for non-journalists could also get support from working journalists, in some places. Though it was a declared policy of the Government that all the unanimous recommendations of the Wage Board would be accepted, on this question the Government refused to displease the Press monopolists. Ultimately the employers had to accept the payment of 75 per cent difference between then existing wages and the Wage Board recommendations and reference of rest of 25 per-cent to adjudication.

All these and other united strike actions of State-wide or all-India character have brought into the field lakhs of salaried employees. They have built powerful functioning organisation and showed courage in facing brutal repression.

A notable feature of these struggles is that women have remained in the forefront in some of them.

FIGHT FOR A NEW POLICY

Comrades, Socialism is the declared aim of the trade union movement. We cannot go forward towards our goal if the trade union movement forgets that its main struggle is against the social system—the rule of the landlords and capitalists. It must direct its fire against the imperialists and chiefly the American imperialists who are trying to enslave our people and impose on them neo-colonial slavery, against the monopolists and landlords who control the main levers of production. The daily struggles of the working class are a part of this general struggle.

If we have devoted so much space for the class-collaborationist activities of the dominant leadership of the AITUC, it is only because it is necessary to free the working class from these ideas, so that the main struggle can be conducted effectively and successfully.

The developments in Kerala and West Bengal, after the formation of the U.F. Governments constituted a challenge to the ruling classes and created a crisis inside the ruling Congress party, which split into two wings. Fundamentally, the main difference between the two is of tactics, of how to meet this challenge.

The Syndicate wing has openly joined hands with the Jana Sangh and Swatantra and other reactionary forces and its avowed aim is to crush the democratic movement. When it comes to fighting the militant working class and democratic movement it has no compunction in joining the Indira Congress as is seen in Kerala and West Bengal.

The Indira Congress, despite all its talk of Socialism was equally determined to break up the U.F. Governments. But for its support to the disruptors the U.F. ministries could not have been broken and the Menon Ministry will not continue even for a day. It seeks to strike a better image for the Congress by measures like nationalisation of banks and some minor

concessions to a broader strata of non-monopoly capitalists and rich peasants.

But its basic policies are not changed, as seen from the last Budget. The Fourth Plan despite some trimmings and dressing up here and there, shows that it is pursuing the same path of capitalist development as during the last 22 years. Nationalisation of banks, though might make some credit facilities available to broader sections, it is not intended to attack the existing monopoly houses. The Prime Minister has declared that legitimate credit facilities for them will continue to be available.

The licence of the Goa Fertiliser Plant granted to the Birlas, to be set up in collaboration with a U. S. giant, the proposed grant of licence for another Fertiliser Plant at Mithapur to the Tatas, show that it is not intended to arrest the growth of the monopolists.

The Fourth Plan is based, as before, on dependence on foreign loans, especially from American imperialism, and on collaboration with foreign giants. Experience has shown that such collaboration and loans mean inflated capital cost of our industries from 50 to 100 per cent, and inflated cost of components and industrial raw materials. The working class and the people have to pay heavily for all this, and the living conditions are being constantly attacked.

The export promotion schemes, the scarcity of foreign exchange, are just expressions of the fact that India must sell her goods at low cost abroad in order to meet her loan obligations. For this, the working class will continue to be attacked more and more ferociously. Devaluation dictated by the Americans had raised prices in the country without raising wages. All expectations of boosting up of exports proved a mirage.

Hence even the most backward worker cannot remain indifferent to the growing American domination of our economy and through that also political domination.

The American oil companies in this country had retrenched large number of workers and the Government could do nothing.

Both the Budget and the Fourth Plan show that both the working class and the people will be fleeced through inflation, high prices and high taxation on consumer goods.

The perennial shortage of food and its high prices are the result of the land relations, under which the landlords monopolise the land. They extract a tribute of over Rs. 300 crores from the peasantry by way of usury alone. They extort hundreds of crores of rupees by way of land rent. The production raised under such onerous conditions is further garnered by the landlords, wholesalers and the speculators. This compels the workers to spend a major portion of his income for food alone leaving scarcely anything for other necessities of life. Besides, so long as the mass of rural population is living under conditions of destitution, always available as a source of cheap labour power, the wage levels in industries cannot rise. Thus the problems of trade union movement, the defence of the daily interests of the working class and the struggle against the bourgeois-landlord rule are inseparable from the struggle of the peasants and rural workers against land monopoly, for distribution of land to the tiller and decent wages to the agricultural labourer.

In recent period the struggles of poor peasants and agricultural labourers have grown in many States—West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The trade union movement must lend its fullest support and render all assistance to the fighting kisans and agricultural labourers.

The struggle of the working class, the struggle for Socialism is an international struggle, in which the workers in each country must be helped by the workers of all countries, in which the workers of all countries must defend the gains of the struggle achieved through the formation of Socialist States in one-third of the world and in which the latter must extend every help to the struggling workers in the capitalist countries. The struggle today is directed against the common enemy—American imperialism.

American imperialism has been fighting a brutal war to

subdue Vietnam for the last seven year with all the most modern weapons of destruction. And yet the brave people fight on, inflicting blow after blow, to the invaders.

Today, U.S. imperialism unmindful of the world-wide protest, and defying the the growing opposition to the war in America itself, has extended the war to Cambodia and Laos. The heroic defence by the people of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is the defence of not only their independence but of all Asia. It is this struggle that is proving to be the turning point between Socialism and imperialism on a world scale. The trade union movement will betray itself if it does not rally in its defence and the people against the American aggressors.

The Indira Government has not the courage to condemn the American aggressian and demand the unconditional withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, it has not the courage to recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam. How can it dare to do so, while it all along begs for aid from America ?

The working class and the T. U. movement must defeat this policy.

Comrades, you are aware that in recent years, the ruling class in the country, helped by organisations like the Jana Sangh and RSS had resorted to inhuman methods to divide the working class and the toiling people. One of their favourite weapons in North India is to foment Hindu-Muslim riots in which the poor of the minority Muslim community are hunted down, their huts and houses are burnt and whole families butchered. The most diabolical riot was staged in Ahmedabad in which three thousand Muslim—all belonging to the working class families—were killed and their bustees razed to the ground. And two weeks ago, the poison had spread to Bhiwandi near Bombay and other towns in Maharashtra. The communal reactionaries also organised riots in Ranchi, Indore and Bhilai and other industrial centres where a large number of Muslim workers were killed.

Apart from communal riots, linguistic chauvinism is roused to create disruption among the workers. The Shiva Sena

in Bombay, which grew with the patronage of Chavan and the Congress Ministry was used to rouse rabid chauvinism of the Maharashtrians and pogroms were conducted against the Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil working people. And now the Shiva Sena attacks Muslims. But its main attack is against the Communists and the trade unions led by them.

In contrast, when in Kerala and West Bengal, when these elements started riots, the workers themselves with the assistance of the U. F. Government, defended the Muslims, and proclaimed working class unity to be their sacred trust and defeated the riot-mongers.

The organisers of these riots pose a grave danger to the unity of the working class and unity of the toilers against their exploiters. Instead of the united working class and toiling masses facing and taking the offensive against the exploiters—the big bourgeoisie and landlords—the class itself is sought to be divided, worker pitted against worker, peasant against peasant, on the basis of religion, community and language. It is absolutely necessary for the development of the mass democratic movement that the trade unions play a foremost role in rousing the class consciousness of the workers and all toilers, so that unitedly they fight this menace.

Comrades, as already stated, there should be no illusions about the Indira Government or about the slogans of Socialism that her Congress raises from time to time.

The experience of Kerala and West Bengal has once again shown that the fundamental problems of society, problems of poverty and unemployment, of land and decent living standards and culture, cannot be solved unless the working class aided by its allies captures political power in open class combat and vanquishes the oppressors. They cannot be solved within the framework of the Constitution. Experience has amply shown that it is a Constitution to protect the rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords, whose corner-stone is the fundamental right of property holders to exploit the people. The recent judgments in the Bank Nationalisation case and

the earlier one in the Golkanath case by the Supreme Court amply confirm this.

The much vaunted democracy of the Consitution, is equally shown up for what it really is by the scant respect which the Central Government and the vested interests has shown to the verdict of the ballot box. Further, the sabotage of democracy that is carried on by the irremovable bureaucracy. Unless this Constitution goes lock, stock and barrel, unless the power of the exploiters which it enshrines is liquidated there can be no real freedom and advance for the Indian people.

It must be clearly understood the toppling of the U. F. ministries of Kerala and West Bengal is the first step in the general attack which the capitalists and landlords are planning against the workers. We have already seen the ferocious attacks launched on the workers, agricultural labourers and other toiling people in Kerala. In West Bengal, too, the offensive has begun. The coming period will see the further intensification of this offensive throughout the country.

But the offensive can be met and thrown back by the united struggle of the workers and working masses. This requires, above all, all-out efforts in building the unity of the workers. The founding of this new All-India Trade Union Centre will serve no purpose if it does not address itself to these main tasks.

Let it be remembered that the unions represented here were those that had conducted most of the struggles during the recent period. They took the initiative in approaching the mass of workers belonging to other unions, on the basis of their immediate pressing demands. and despite the obstruction of the Dangeite and other leaderships, forged unity from below and often compelled the leadership also to join in.

Towards United Struggles

It was the initiative taken by our comrades and their persistent and untiring efforts that brought about all-in unity among the jute workers tea garden workers and textile

workers in West Bengal. Ultimately, even the INTUC was brought into the united struggle.

In Kerala, we were able to build unity from below amongst plantation workers and launch an industry-wise strike.

In Tamil Nadu, the initiative taken by our comrades forged unity from below and the general strike of textile workers against closures took place.

In Madurai, we were able to bring about the unity of workers despite the opposition of other leaderships of other unions and forged strike or action committees of workers which conducted a number of strikes.

In the sugar industry, our efforts brought about industry-wide strike in which the DMK union also joined.

In Neyveli, despite the repeated clashes engineered by some DMK leaders, we were repeatedly able to bring about unity from below which compelled the DMK union also to ultimately agree and come into joint strikes.

In Rajasthan, we were able to forge unity from below and ultimately, the general strike of engineering workers of the whole State, in which we emerged as the leaders.

These are some of the examples.

In the coming period, such building of unity from below must be intensified hundred-fold.

Comrades, let us not forget that during the last many years, since the T.U. movement was being taken along the path of class collaboration, some bureaucratic tendencies have developed in some of the unions represented here. The bureaucratic tendencies must be firmly combated and the democracy in the trade unions must be every day widened.

Our concept of democracy is totally different from that of the bourgeoisie. For the bourgeoisie, democracy consists in holding elections at stipulated periods, and then the masses have nothing to do with the shaping of policies and implementation.

Trade union democracy does not consist in holding annual elections and in holding periodical meetings of the Executive

Committees. We have to draw in every worker in the running of the union, in the shaping of policies, in taking decisions and in implementing them.

For this purpose, factory committees, shift committees, and departmental committees, will have to be set up and activated. These committees alone can be in live touch with every worker, at the place of work, bring the reactions of the workers to the problems that crop up and help in proper decisions being taken by the union—decisions that will be in tune with the need and thinking of the mass of workers. Proper functioning and activation of such committee will draw greater and greater number of workers into trade union activity.

Similarly, during strikes, it is absolutely essential that broad strike committees are set up, only then it will be possible to be in continuous contact with the workers, boost up their morale and determination to struggle. That alone will enable the leadership from committing mistakes in arriving at settlements. In united strikes, such broad-based committees alone will prevent betrayal of the strike by reformist leaders, who join the strike because of the pressure of the masses, but always seek out occasion for withdrawing.

Such broad-based organs during strike struggles and during the day-to-day functioning would enable the trade union to become a live centre of discussion of working class problem and of the general movement, drawing in hundreds of workers in every factory into activity. Only when this is done, the message of unity, and united action can reach the widest mass of workers belonging to other unions, and the movement for unity from below will assume a mass character.

Comrades, as stated earlier, the setting up of this new All India Centre has become a necessity for carrying on the struggle for unity. The struggle for unity of the trade unions at the base level must continue with still greater vigour.

We stand for one union in one industry or factory. We do not want to divide trade unions on the basis of political affiliations. We seek to unite the workers in a common trade

union because the interests of the workers as against those of the employers are common and they have to unitedly carry on their struggle.

We have proposed to the leadership of the AITUC that all unions be united on the following basis :

- 1) Elections to be conducted by the joint membership of the existing unions on the basis of proportional representation ;
- 2) Democratic functioning of the unions ;
- 3) No decision or settlement to be entered into with the management with the approval of the Executive Committee and on all issues affecting all the worker without the approval of the General Body.

We reiterate these proposals to the AITUC and declare that even now we stand by them.

We appeal to the other trade union centres also, such as the HMS, UTUC, HMP, and INTUC to accept these proposals.

We have seen that in the face of the offensive on the working class, the urge for unity has grown among the mass of workers. Life itself will make the workers realise more and more the need for unity in order to defend their interests.

We have to put these proposals constantly before the workers belonging to the other unions and point out the democratic nature of these proposals. If we are able to launch a movement for unity with greater and greater number of members of our unions approaching the workers of the other unions who are their class brothers and patiently explain them, the movement will gather momentum.

This also means that we do not start rival unions everywhere in order to get them affiliated. We have to function in all mass unions, whichever centre they may be affiliated to, and carry on the struggle for trade union unity, democracy and united struggles. Only when the mass of workers find in any industry that the union leadership has become a complete obstacle to defending their interests, and are convinced that they can advance their cause by another union, we can start another union.

Comrades, every worker realises that the break up of the U. F. Governments of West Bengal and Kerala is a set-back for the working class and democratic movement. But this set-back is only temporary. Those who broke the U. F. Governments cannot defend the interests of the workers and toiling people. On the other hand, they can only assist in unleashing offensive against the toiling people. The movement for unity unleashed on the lines outlined above can and will foil the game of the enemies of the U. F. and lead to the forging of a new U. F. on stronger foundations.

Such a reborn U. F. alone will forge the weapon of mass struggle against the bourgeois-landlord regime and guarantee victory in the struggle for democracy and Socialism. The working class as the most advanced section in modern society, play the leading role in forging this invincible instrument of struggle.

With unity, and united struggle, inscribed on our banner, let us march forward from victory to victory.

Onward to unity of the working class !

Onward to the unity of the toiling people !

Onward to the solidarity of our working class and people with all peoples fighting against imperialism !

4.

Resolutions

1. CONDOLENCE

The All-India Trade Union Conference expresses its deep sorrow over the passing away of the leaders and active workers of the trade union movement who died at their posts loyally serving the working class and pays its homage to their memory.

The Conference deeply mourns the passing away of veteran trade union leaders, Comrade K. L. Narasimham, former President of the Andhra Committee and member of the Working Committee of the AITUC, and Comrade Haripada Chatterjee, former member of the General Council of the AITUC, and pays homage to their memory.

This Conference also mourns the demise of Maqdoom Mohiuddin and R. Sugathan, members of the Working Committee and General Council of the AITUC.

2. ON MARTYRS.

The All-India Trade Union Conference pays its homage to all the valiant martyrs who laid down their lives in the cause of trade union and democratic struggles during the recent past.

Scores of workers were killed in police firing during several strike struggles. Many peasants and other toilers also fell victims to police bullets while fighting for their rights. Some were tortured to death in police lock-up, but they faced the ordeal courageously.

Several finest sons of West Bengal, Kerala and other States were brutally murdered in 'goonda' attacks, by hirelings of employers, landlords and 'jotdars'. In Tamil Nadu, 44 agricultural labourers in Tanjore District were burnt alive by agents of landlords during their struggles.

The Conference takes the pledge that it would ceaselessly carry forward the cause for which all these martyrs laid down their precious lives till final victory is achieved.

3. ON LENIN BIRTH CENTENARY

This All-India Trade Union Conference pays its homage to the immortal genius of the world working class, the leader of the first proletarian revolution, the creator of the first Socialist State, Vladymir Ilyich Lenin, whose Birth Centenary has just been celebrated all over the world.

The teachings of this proletarian giant have already liberated one-third of the world from capitalist slavery and wherever the working class has followed his teachings, it has taken big strides in the struggle against exploitation.

Lenin taught the working class that mere trade union struggle would not end capitalist exploitation, that the working class with its allies had to struggle for power and establish a State of the working class after a victorious revolution, that the working class had to have its own party to succeed in this mission.

Lenin taught the working class to forge an alliance with

the peasantry and other oppressed which alone could ensure the success of the struggle for a new society.

Lenin taught the working class that its struggle for emancipation was an international struggle, the common struggle of the working class of the whole world.

Learning from Lenin, this Conference pledges to fight uncompromisingly all reformist tendencies which seek to restrict the trade union movement to the confines of economism and create all sorts of illusions among the workers.

This Conference is confident that the working class of our country will succeed in forging its fighting alliance with the peasantry and other oppressed sections and leading the struggle for power and for building Socialism in our country.

This Conference pledges that it will be its task to build a powerful trade union movement in the country which will unswervingly stand by working class internationalism. Defence of Socialist Camp, support to the heroic people of Indo-China, solidarity with all oppressed people struggling for freedom, strengthening of the bonds with the working class and all other toiling people of all countries in the common struggle against imperialism and the rule of capital—these are the international tasks which our trade union movement will always keep in the forefront.

Again, we pay our homage to the great proletarian teacher and take pledge that Lenin's teachings will always guide us in all our activities.

4. ON SOLIDARITY WITH INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS

This All-India Trade Union Conference sends its fraternal greetings to the workers and peoples of Soviet Union, People's China and other Socialist Countries who by their progress and rising prosperity, by their breath-taking advance in economy, science, culture, are demonstrating every day the superiority of the Socialist system over the crisis-ridden capitalist system.

The Conference considers that these mighty achievements of Socialism constitute the common victory of the international

movement and they must be defended by the united strength of the world working class.

This Conference sends its fraternal greetings to the workers of all countries fighting against capitalist exploitation and to the toiling people fighting against imperialist aggression and slavery. It lends its full support to the strike struggles of the workers in advanced countries, to their fight against war in Vietnam ; it wishes the working class and the people full success in their struggle against monopoly capital and imperialism.

This Conference expresses its firm determination to work for the maintenance of world peace, and to frustrate the war plans of the American imperialists. It expresses its determination to expose and fight the American plans of nuclear blackmail and its hypocritical professions to reduce nuclear armaments.

Denouncing imperialism as the source of war, supporting all national liberation wars against it, the Conference pledges relentlessly to work ceaselessly for world peace, firmly convinced that the liquidation of imperialism alone will finally free the world from the danger of war.

5. ON CHINA'S SPACE FEAT

This All-India Trade Union Conference greets the People's Republic of China on its magnificent achievement of launching its first space satellite.

Only the imperialists and the China-baiters around the world who had begun to believe their own cooked-up stories about China's backwardness, internal turmoil, etc. have been caught by surprise by this mighty space feat of the People's Republic of China.

They have now changed their refrain and begun sounding the alarm that China's proven capacity to launch inter-continental missiles is a grave threat to peace.

Ever since it made its first nuclear test in 1964, the People's Republic of China has assured that it will never be the first to use the nuclear weapon. China's space achievement holds no

threat to the freedom-loving peoples and nations of the world, the threat to them continues to come from the nuclear arsenal of the U.S. imperialists.

A country, economically and otherwise more backward than India when it liberated itself two years after India attained independence, has in the course of two decades been able to liquidate its backwardness and advance its science and industry to be able to place a satellite in space orbit. This has once again proved the superiority of the Socialist system while countries like India which have taken to the path of capitalism are enmeshed in a perpetual crisis.

Once again this Conference greets the People's Republic of China and expresses its confidence that every addition to the all-round strength of the Socialist world is a surer guarantee of more determined struggle against imperialism and for world peace.

6. ON VIETNAM

This All-India Trade Union Conference expresses its firm solidarity with the heroic people of Vietnam who have been writing one of the most glorious chapters in the history of people's struggles for national liberation against the most powerful and aggressive of world's imperialist powers, the gendarme of world imperialism—U.S. imperialism and its hired stooges.

Stirred by the noble call of the late President Ho Chi Minh to resist U.S. imperialist aggressions in Vietnam and fight for the national salvation and reunification of the country and led by the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, the people of South Vietnam, have inflicted and continue to inflict one defeat after another upon U. S. imperialism. They are foiling the U. S. imperialist conspiracy to turn the entire Vietnam into a U. S. neo-colony and a base for furtherance of its imperialist plot against the peoples of Indo-China and South-East Asia.

By their heroic resistance and immense sacrifices in their war of resistance to U. S. imperialism, the people of Vietnam

have not only demonstrated how a people, inspired by the burning desire for freedom can fight to bay an imperialist colossus like the U. S. A., they have earned the gratitude of freedom-loving, anti-imperialist people all over the world. They have roused the conscience of people all over the world, including the people of the United States, who have organised and are organising mighty movements for ending the U. S. war in Vietnam.

The people of South Vietnam fought against the U. S. 'special war' and are now foiling the most atrocious 'local war', winning new victories and causing widespread demoralisation among U. S. and puppet soldiers. The people of North Vietnam have not only gone through the ordeal of a massive war of aerial destruction but while waging a patriotic war of self-defence against U. S. imperialism at enormous sacrifice, they have successfully carried on Socialist construction and are fulfilling their obligations to their brothers in South Vietnam.

Though suffering heavy defeats, the U. S. imperialists have not given up their criminal plans of aggression against the people of Vietnam and are committing new acts of provocation while carrying on peace talks in order to confuse the people, particularly the people in the United States, who in increasing numbers are opposing the persecution of an unjust war.

This conference condemns unequivocally the U. S. imperialist policy of setting Asians against Asians under the pretext of phased withdrawal of U. S. troops or Vietnamisation of the war. It demands the immediate withdrawal of all U. S. troops and troops of its satellites, letting the people of Vietnam determine their own future without outside interference.

This Conference protests against the extremely ambiguous stand of the Government of India towards the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people, its refusal to condemn the U. S. Government openly as aggressor and to call for the ending of all U. S. acts of aggression against Vietnam.

This Conference demands that the Government of India

should raise its voice firmly against U. S. aggression in Vietnam, call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U. S. troops from South Vietnam, accord recognition to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and exchange Ambassadors with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

This Conference, fully realising that the struggle which the Vietnamese people are fighting is a struggle which immensely helps all the forces ranged against U.S. imperialism, pledges its firm support to the people of Vietnam, and calls upon the working class and people of India to bring pressure upon the Government of India to reverse its present policy and take an unambiguous anti-imperialist position.

7. ON CAMBODIA

This All-India Trade Union Conference vehemently condemns the U.S. imperialist aggression on Cambodia in naked violation of the Geneva Agreements.

For over fifteen years, U.S. imperialism, to attain its objective of world hegemony, has been trying to turn the Indo-Chinese countries into neo-colonies and military bases with a view to exploiting the Indo-Chinese peoples, suppressing the national liberation movements, pressurising the non-aligned nations of Asia and opposing the Socialist countries.

The brigandish war of aggression in South Vietnam was launched with this purpose. Now in a desperate attempt to continue the war in Vietnam and Laos, the U.S. imperialists have launched their aggression on Cambodia.

They organised, through the hated CIA, the reactionary coup of March 18, 1970, with the U.S.—paid Lon Nol-Sirik Matak clique and began sending their own and South Vietnamese puppet troops and war material to Cambodia to suppress the Khmer people who rallied to the banner of resistance to the puppet clique and the U.S. plan to transform non-aligned Cambodia into a U.S. vassal.

The anti-Vietnamese hysteria, engineered by the CIA through men on its pay-roll, the attacks on the embassies of

the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of South Vietnam, the prompt recognition granted by the U.S. Government to the usurping Lon Nol-Sirik Matak clique and the brutal massacre of Vietnamese civilians that followed—are direct results of the attempt to push through the U.S. imperialist doctrine of setting Asians against Asians.

This Conference unequivocally condemns the most inhuman atrocities being committed against the people of Cambodia on the plea of destroying 'Communist sanctuaries.'

This Conference fully supports the five-point declaration made by Samdech Norodom Sihanouk on March 23 and extends its warmest support and solidarity to the heroic struggle of the Khmer people, who, in response to the call of their Head of State, have risen throughout the country and are fighting in defence of their national independence and sovereignty. This Conference further hails the joint declaration of representatives of Democratic Republic of Vietnam, National Front of Liberation of South Vietnam, Pathet Lao and Cambodia to fight U.S. imperialism unitedly.

This Conference extends its warmest greetings to the people all over the world for the mighty and spontaneous expressions of protest against U.S. imperialism's criminal act of spreading the war further in Indo-China—specially to the students in the U.S.A., four of whom were cold-bloodedly gunned to death by Nixon's National Guardsmen.

This Conference pledges the fullest support and solidarity of the working class and people of India to the people of Cambodia in their fight against U.S. imperialist aggression. This Conference further notes that the stand taken by the Government of India on the question of Cambodia makes a mockery of all its claims of anti-colonialism and vehemently protests against the Indian Governments failure to denounce unambiguously the U.S. imperialists as aggressors in Cambodia, to withdraw recognition to the puppet Lon Nol-Strik Matak clique, and accord recognition to the Government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, which has been recognised by several Socialist and other anti-imperialist Governments.

8. ON LAOS

This All-India Trade Union Conference strongly condemns the open and continuing intervention by U. S. imperialism in Laos in what is nothing but a legitimate struggle of the people of Laos—and of Laos only—for freedom and independence which they have been waging for the last two decades and a half successively against Japanese occupation and French colonialism and currently against U. S. imperialism, and its puppet administration, headed by Souvanna Phouma.

The U. S. imperialists have been continuing their war of intervention since 1954, soon after the signing of the Geneva Agreements, and have under successive Presidents escalated it by introducing more and more American troops, Advisers, CIA personnel vast quantities of war materials and mercenary soldiers from Thailand in order to maintain a reactionary, pro-U. S. stooge Government in power and use it as an instrument for realisation of its criminal plan of crushing the popular revolution in Laos and transform the country into a U. S. neo-colony and base for aggression against countries in South-East Asia, especially against Vietnam. It is with this aim that the U. S. Government launched the special war in Laos and has gone so far as to employ B-52 strategic bombers in saturation bombing in order to destroy all resistance in the zones liberated by the People's Army of Liberation

This Conference holds U. S. imperialism as solely responsible for the present situation in Laos and strongly believes that the only solution of the problem of Laos lies in accepting and implementing the Five-point programme announced on March 6 by the Laos Patriotic Front and its President, Prince Souphanouvong, which calls for ending of the U. S. intervention in all forms in Laos, to pave the way for a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

The Conference greets the brilliant victories scored recently by the People's Army of Liberation and expresses its firm confidence in the ultimate and total victory of the Laotian people, led by the Patriotic Front in their struggle against U.S. imperialism and its henchmen.

9. GREETINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN.

Pakistan is again astir. The working class, peasants and working people, students and other democratic forces are again entering the arena of struggle for democratic rights of the people, restoration of the parliamentary system and full autonomy for East Pakistan.

It was the mighty wave of struggle which enveloped the whole of Pakistan in late 1968-early 1969 that forced dictator Ayub Khan to quit. But most of the leaders of the movement, who themselves came from the ruling classes could not lead the battle to a finish and the ruling classes launched a counter-offensive against the people and installed another military dictator in March 1969.

Under Yahya Khan's regime the lot of the people did not improve and though there has been a lot of talk about restoring the parliamentary system and giving more powers to the States, the people are being rapidly disillusioned and are getting ready to take the battle once more into the streets as they did a year ago.

This All-India Trade Union Conference greets the working class and democratic forces of Pakistan and extends full support to their struggle for their just demands.

This Conference warns the Indian workers against falling a prey to the propaganda and activities of the chauvinists and communal reaction and the machinations of the U.S. imperialists all of which seek to drive a wedge between the fighting people of the two countries and divide and disrupt the unity of the Indian toilers themselves.

10. SOLIDARITY WITH THE ARAB PEOPLES

U. S. imperialism and its stooge, the Israeli aggressor, are committing new acts of aggression almost everyday in West Asia.

Ever since they shattered the peace of West Asia by their six-day war in June 1967, the Israeli aggressor, backed by U.S. Imperialism, has been making it impossible to restore peace in the area. It has always been the aim of the reckless Israeli

leaders to extend its territory to the "historical boundaries" of 2,000 years ago and it is their refusal to return the Arab territory annexed by them through aggression which is responsible for the present West Asian situation.

This All-India Trade Union Conference unequivocally condemns the armed invasion and criminal acts perpetrated by the Israeli aggressors and their patrons, the U.S. imperialists, in the Arab land.

This Conference demands that the U.S. and British imperialists stop their aggressive machinations against the Arab peoples, that Israel be made to return the illegally occupied territory unconditionally and Palestine to the Palestinian people.

This Conference extends the solidarity of the working class of India to the Arab peoples and pledges full support to the peoples of the Arab countries in the struggle against imperialist aggression for the defence of national independence and for territorial integrity.

This Conference lends its fullest support to the Palestine Liberation forces in their armed struggle for the liberation of their country.

11. ON CUBA AND LATIN AMERICA

This All-India Trade Union Conference greets Socialist Cuba and the Cuban people who stand as the revolutionary outpost in Latin America, a monument to the invincibility of a united people fighting the biggest and most predatory of imperialist powers known to history—U. S. imperialism.

The success of the national liberation movement in Cuba and its transformation into a Socialist country, doing away with age-old backwardness and poverty and embarking on the road of all-round progress and welfare, for the masses of its people, in the teeth of desperate attempts by U.S. imperialism to subvert Socialist Cuba, continue to inspire people in Latin America fighting against oppressive regimes, which remain in power with the open or covered support of U.S. imperialism.

This Conference extends its warmest greetings to the Government and people of Cuba and wishes them a more glorious and prosperous future. This Conference further lauds the programme of the Cuban Government to attain a target of ten million ton production of sugar.

The Conference extends its firm support to the struggle of the people of a number of Latin American countries like Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela, Haiti, Dominican Republic, who are fighting to throw off the yoke of oppressive regimes and rid themselves of the direct or indirect exploitation of U.S. monopoly capitalism, which seeks to maintain pro—U.S. regimes in power.

12. PROTEST AGAINST REPRESSION IN INDONESIA.

This All India Trade Union Conference pays its homage to the leaders of the working class of Indonesia and their trade union organisation, SOBSI, who were massacred by the Indonesian fascists in 1965.

The U. S.—imperialist-backed fascist 'junta' which came to power through the CIA-organised counter-revolution in October 1965 murdered over half a million Communists, trade unionists and progressives. Tens of thousands are still languishing in prisons which are comparable to the Nazi concentration camps of Hitler.

All that the working class through its struggles and strength had gained were taken away by the fascist 'junta'. Militant trade unions have been banned, democratic rights of the workers and people have been snatched away, the foreign companies which had been nationalised have been returned to their original owners so that the foreign monopolists can continue to exploit the workers and people of Indonesia.

The Indonesian events have taught the workers everywhere once more and in a brutal fashion that the imperialists though weakened in the present-day world, are still in a position to organise such a counter-revolution and massacre as in Indonesia. This calls for ever-heightened vigilance and still mightier struggles against imperialism.

This Conference notes with admiration that the working class of Indonesia is regrouping its forces to carry on the struggle against the fascist military junta. The Conference is confident that however arduous the struggle, ultimately victory will be of the Indonesian people.

This Conference extends its warm solidarity and full support to SOBSI and other working class organisations who are conducting the struggle against the military junta.

13 ON RECOGNITION OF G. D. R.

This All-India Trade Union Conference vehemently protests against the Government of India's failure to accord recognition to the German Democratic Republic while recognising the Federal Republic of West Germany.

The Federal Republic which the Government of India recognises is a partner in the aggressive NATO military alliance and acts at the behests of U.S. imperialism in its plans for world domination. It is rearing military, revanchist, neo-fascist forces to undo the gains of Socialism in post-war Europe.

As against this, the German Democratic Republic which the Government of India refuses to recognise, is the first peace-loving German State which has honoured all the post-war agreements, liquidated the remnants of nazism and is building Socialism.

The GDR gives India and other developing countries aid which is of real benefit to the economies of the receiving countries. India's trade with the GDR as well as economic co-operation between the two countries has been steadily growing. This is in sharp contrast to the "aid" from West Germany which is directed to the exploitation of aid-receiving countries, bringing their economies under West German control and exerting political pressure on the Governments of these countries.

Much smaller countries in Asia and Africa than India have rebuffed the threats of the West German rulers and recognised the GDR. But the Government of India, surrendering to West German pressure, refuses to do so.

This Conference calls upon the Government of India to abandon this dangerous policy and give recognition forthwith to the German Democratic Republic.

14. ON KERALA

This All-India Trade Union Conference greets the working class and people of Kerala who have been heroically fighting for their demands and rights facing the most ferocious repression launched on them by the Achutha Menon Government. The Conference specially greets the State Road Transport workers of Kerala who fought a grim battle lasting a month against political victimisation undeterred by repeated police violence against them and won a substantial victory.

It greets the one million workers of the State including agricultural workers who rallied to their support through a one-day general strike.

The present Government of Kerala which came to office after betraying the pledges they gave to the working people to fight the Congress and its policies has been seeking to reverse generally the policies in favour of the common people pursued by the earlier U. F. Government.

Despite all the limitations in the present set-up, the U. F. Government was able to give a certain amount of relief and benefits to the working class and State Government employees, teachers and others. Increase in dearness allowance to Government employees and others, benefits to last-grade employees and other low-paid staff to the tune of Rs. 13·5 crores benefitting 4·75 lakh employees (including teachers in private schools, village staff and sub-clerical staff) ; Rs. nine lakhs in increased dearness allowance, etc. to State Transport employees ; enhanced emoluments to non-Muster Roll employees in the Electricity Department varying from Rs. 40 to Rs. 100 and to the PWD from Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 per month ; a one rupee increase in the daily wage over the minimum wage recommended by the Plantation Wage Board to workers in Government-owned plantations ; bonus above the minimum stipulated by the Bonus Act to workers in Government estab-

lishments—these were some of the gains made by the Government employees.

Workers and employees in the private sector also won major gains because of the U.F. Government. The increase in emoluments varying from Rs. 60 to Rs. 110 by workers of Birlas' Mavoor factory after a strike ; the increase of Rs. 1.50 in the daily wage of 2½ lakhs plantation workers by amending the Plantation Minimum Wages Act after a strike struggle of the workers ; enhancement of the minimum wages of municipal shop and hotel employees ; implementation of the Central Bidi-Cigar Act ; Amendment of the Plantation Labour Act and enactment of the Toddy-Tappers' Welfare Act ; the relief given to unemployed bidi, coir, cashew and handloom workers and the upward revision of the minimum wages of agricultural workers—these are some of the benefits which have brought relief to the working people.

The U.F. Government headed by E. M. S. Namboodiripad enacted a new land reforms measure conferring the right of ownership to homesteads on poor peasants and agricultural workers, reducing the ceiling on land holding for a family to a maximum of 12 standard acres (20 ordinary acres), conferring property rights on small tenants, reducing the rent to one-fourth and so on.

Above all, the police administration was given a new re-orientation of non-interference in the struggle of the working people for their legitimate demands. The shining instance of this policy was when Com. E. M. S. Namboodiripad as Chief and Home minister of the U. F. Government refused to take action against the Central Government employees under the Central Government's ordinance at the time of their strike.

All this invited the wrath of the vested interests and the Central Congress Government who were determined to cut short the life of the Ministry. The leaders of four constituents of the United Front and its Ministry—the Right Communist Party, the Muslim League, the I. S. P. and the R. S. P.—were equally unhappy at the developing unity of the toiling masses in the favourable situation of the existence of the

United Front and its Government. They joined hands with the Kerala Congress, the party of the most reactionary landlords, and with the support of the then united Congress, conspired against the united front, overthrew its Government and set up a new Government which began reversing all the progressive policies enunciated by the U. F. Government.

Under the new Achutha Menon Government, the police were again at the beck and call of the landlords and employers, the Government itself used the police and C. R. P. to open fire on people fighting for their demands, innumerable lathicharges were made on striking workers and agricultural workers.

Lock-up torture again became the order of the day. A number of agricultural workers and leaders and militants of the toiling people were brutally murdered by the landlords and their goonda gangs. The extremist leader, Vargese was tortured to death after his arrest

The Government itself began victimising its employees as in the State Transport out of sheer political vendetta and taking a hostile attitude to the demands and struggles of all sections of Government employees. This was the green signal for the employers in the private sector to unleash a vicious offensive against the workers and for the land-owners against the agricultural workers with the full backing of the Government and its police.

The toiling people of Kerala, specially the working class and agricultural workers, have bravely fought this terror regime and forced it to retreat to some extent at least.

Four parties constituting the Government got elected by pledging to the people that they would implement the common programme of the U.F. and fight the Congress and the vested interests. They have betrayed this pledge. They have replaced the U.F.'s common programme of serving the people with programme of serving the urban and rural vested interests. They had pledged to fight the Congress but to-day their Government exist only with the support of both the Indira Gandhi Wing and Syndicate wing of the Congress.

They pledged to fight the vested interests, but the party of the worst landlord reaction in the State, the Kerala Congress, is a partner in their coalition. The Government has no right to exist as the democratically elected representative of the people.

This Conference calls upon the working class, the toiling people and the democratic forces in Kerala to rally behind the demand for the resignation of the Achutha Menon Government and force it to quit so that a fresh election may be held in the State to determine the democratic verdict of the people.

The subversion of the United Front did mean a temporary set back to the working people but they are fast overcoming it building the unity of the toiling classes and masses. This Conference calls upon the working class of Kerala to lead and speed this process so that a mighty united front of the toiling masses will face the vested interests in the State and the bourgeois-landlord combine at the Centre.

This Conference appeals to the followers of the parties who have defected from the United Front to consider the implications of the policy of their leaders. Instead of strengthening the popular front against the Congress, these leaders have disrupted it and joined hands with the Congress against the biggest party in the former United Front. Instead of uniting the people to fight repression, they have divided the people and themselves launched repression against the common man. The sabotage of the U.F. Government in Kerala encouraged and emboldened the forces of reaction all over the country to carry forward their machination to topple the U.F. Government in West Bengal and disrupted the growing unity of democratic and prograssive forces on a national plane. The policy if allowed to go unchallenged will mean disaster for all toilers, for democratic forces and lead to the triumph of vested interests. The Conference appeals to the following of these parties to put a quick end to these policies and exert their strength for building popular unity against the vested interests, since re-assertion of the militant unity of the toiling

people in Kerala will alone administer a fitting rebuff to all the reactionary machinations.

15. ON WEST BENGAL

This Conference notes with concern that with the fall of the U. F. Ministry and the imposition of President's rule in West Bengal, a general attack on the working class, peasants and democratic forces has started. Hundreds have been arrested and warrants have been issued against thousands implicating them in various false cases. Already some lives have been lost and many seriously injured due to police firings and merciless beatings even in police lock-ups. The Central Reserve Police (C. R. P.) has been employed as in West Bengal on a large scale for the acts of brutal suppression of the democratic movement to defend the vested interests in the name of maintaining law and order.

This Conference also notes that being encouraged by these developments the big capitalists, both foreign and Indian, who were in a defensive position under U.F. regime have started their new offensives on the workers by resorting to shifting of offices from this State, closing down factories, retrenchment, lock-outs and lay-off, by delaying and desisting even from the implementation of wage committee awards and tripartite agreements by increasing workload, etc. The jotdars and mahajans with the help of the police and reactionary forces have started offensives to regain the 'benami' lands and to have hold over the harvests and by ejecting sharecroppers from land. Already a ban has been imposed on carrying lathis and similar weapons in the processions and frequent promulgation of Sec. 144 banning meetings and processions has started. Moreover, the Central Government is thinking in terms of invoking P. D. Act to suppress the movement of the people.

The working class and the democratic masses of W. Bengal have correctly realised through their own experience the redical difference between the two types of Governments and the role and significance of the U.F. Government as the instrument of their struggles against exploitation and

repression. They have no confusion regarding the real class meaning behind the bogey of "law and order" raised by the entire hired press, the ruling classes and their reactionary parties as well as some of the parties of the United Front. Despite all these false cries and slander campaign against U.F. Government and its major partner CPI(M), the working class was successful through united industry-wise struggles to snatch nearly 50 crores of rupees per annum from the employers in the form of wage rise, the peasantry was able to recover more than 3 lakh acres of benami land from the illegal possession of the jotedars and forced the hoarders to keep down the price level of food grains. Some more notable concessions and gains have been achieved by other sections of the democratic masses such as employees, teachers, students, etc. The people learnt through their own experience, that it is only the U.F. Government which defended the democratic right of the masses and prevented the police and the bureaucratic State apparatus to be used by the capitalists and landlords against them. This created new enthusiasm among the masses and unleashed the forces of struggle which resulted in these big achievements.

With the intensification and advance of the class struggles and the accentuation of the crisis inside the Congress, leading to its split, the vested interests, seized with panic changed their tactics. Fear also gripped the leaderships of Bangla Congress, revisionists and unfortunately some of the petty-bourgeois parties who were constituents of the U. F. Ministry. So they connived at the slander campaign initiated by Bangla Congress in denouncing the U. F. Ministry, as "uncivilised and barbarous" particularly making the Home Portfolio as their main target of attack. Betraying the verdict of the people the conspiracy started firstly to deprive the CPI(M) of the major portfolios, particularly Home and when it was not materialised, to form a mini-front Government like Kerala without the CPI(M) and with the co-operation of the Congress. Thanks to the working class and the democratic forces of West Bengal which boldly stood against this

conspiracy, both these devices failed. As a last resort, completely surrendering to the vested interests, Ajoy Mukherjee as Chief Minister tendered his resignation to bring about the downfall of the U. F. Government.

The Conference congratulates the working class and the heroic people of W. Bengal for the mighty protest action against this gross betrayal through a successful general strike and hartal throughout the State on March 17, 1970, despite all opposition and provocations by the conspirators, which was a unique demonstration of the solidarity of the struggling masses reaching new heights. Through these united struggles a new basis of United Front is emerging in West Bengal.

In the act of betrayal the shameful role played by the revisionists deserves special mention. In toppling the U. F. Ministry in Bengal, their role is in no way different from that in Kerala. They acted as the accomplices of Bangla Congress. But as in Kerala, they have not dared to openly advocate for mini-front with the Congress support for fear of violent reaction among the people. Their line of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and shifting of their position from anti-Congressism to anti-Communism is revealing the true character of revisionism at a time when the country is passing through the deepening economic and political crisis and when the ruling classes are placing more and more the burdens of the crisis on the working class and the common people and when the people are also coming forward more and more to resist these onslaughts.

The President's rule is in reality the rule of the Congress Government of the Centre. The Central Government in the interest of the capitalists and landlords want to continue this rule of repression as long as possible and to take away the gains of the people already achieved. That is why the demand for a fresh election to get a new popular Government in place of President's rule is being turned down by the Central Government and the leadership of so-called eight-parties combination are also afraid of a fresh poll. Their main

campaign is not against repression and President's rule but against the CPI(M) in order to divert and disrupt the united struggles against Congress mis-rule and for a popular Government.

Under these circumstances, the working class, the peasantry and the democratic people of West Bengal have been faced with the new tasks of building up powerful united mass struggles against repression, for the end of the President's rule through a new election, for the withdrawal of C. R. P. and the restoration of all democratic rights through the release of all political prisoners, for the defence of all the gains and concessions achieved during the U. F. regime, for the opening of the closed factories and benefits for the unemployed, for securing the assent of the President to the Bill passed by the U. F. Government for the recognition of Trade Unions, for the implementation of the Pay Commission Award and the Tripartite Agreement in Jute, Textile, and Tea Industries and for those progressive legislations which were proposed by the U. F. Government, for defending the right of the peasants over the lands recovered by them, for stopping evictions of the share-croppers and for their right of cultivation and two-third share of the crop, for family ceiling in place of individual ceilings on land, for free education upto Class VIII as promised by the U. F. Government and other democratic demands.

This Conference is fully confident that the working class and the people of W. Bengal will be able to defeat the offensives of the reactionary forces and the game of the disruptors and achieve victories in their struggles. As these struggles in W. Bengal have acquired an all-India significance, this Conference calls upon the working class and the democratic masses throughout India to stand in solidarity with the struggling people of W. Bengal. This Conference is conscious that it is the working class on which lies the historic responsibility to come forward as the leader and unifier of the peasants and other democratic forces for conducting these struggles and leading them to ultimate victory by ending all forms of exploitation.

This Conference appeals to the people of West Bengal and the following of the parties that have been responsible for breaking the U. F. in alliance with the Bangla Congress to realise the implications of the policy of their leaders. These leaders have split the powerful unity of the people which had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Congress and the vested interests. They have strengthened the hands of the Congress in disrupting the U. F. rule and in installing the President's rule, i.e. Congress rule in West Bengal. It is they who are enabling the Congress and the vested interests to attack a divided people and launch a reign of terror against them. The democratic forces will meet with a big disaster unless all unitedly defeat this policy and take steps to reforge the unity of the people. The Conference appeals to the rank and file of these parties to respond to its call, pressurise the leaders to end this game of disruption and join the common battle against the President's rule and for a democratic verdict of the people.

16. ON UNITED ACTION OF THE WORKING CLASS

During the last four years, the working class of India has gone through indescribable sufferings. Under the national planning of the Congress Government, which is only another name for building capitalist industry, with main reliance on and in collaboration with imperialist exploiters from abroad, the working class continued to suffer. The wage gains which it achieved through hardships and prolonged struggles were repeatedly spirited away through inflation and high prices—one of the specific weapons of “national planning.” By 1965, itself, the real wage of the working class was reduced to the pre-war starvation wage of the British days.

In the name of planning the working class and the people have been subjected to extortionate taxation—taxation some times forming 40 to 60 per cent of the price of consumer goods. The monstrous defence expenditure running into more than Rs. 1000 crores a year—a result of the reactionary policy of the Government—has piled further burden on the people.

As the national economy got into growing dependence on American loans and borrowing—the exploitation of the people and the working class increased. The American dictated devaluation of the rupee, increased prices, increased the burden of foreign debts and the working class and the common people had to pay for it through attack on their wages and standard of living. In recent years the foreign debt to imperialists has increased rapidly adding to the burden.

Now every year India must pay Rs. 375 crores to meet her foreign obligations. India must sell her goods abroad at cheaper rates to accomplish which the employers are cutting down wages and increasing work load. The American dictated devaluation further created an acute crisis in the engineering industry during the recession by raising the prices of imported machinery.

The American Oil Companies in our country have been the first to launch the automation offensive and they are intensely anti-Indian and anti-labour. The rate of profit earned by foreign monopoly capital in India is the highest in the world and proves the inhuman exploitation of Indian workers.

The dependence on the foreign monopoly capital and the logic of the capitalist path led to the recent economic crisis, entailing heavy sufferings for the working class and endangering the progress of the country.

A new offensive was launched against the workers—retrenchment, lay-offs, work-load, direct or indirect wage-cuts and loss of several gains. The rising cost of living lowered the real wage still further. The rapid rise in unemployment, the figure of registered unemployed in cities already exceeding 3.4 million—created growing uncertainty about jobs and services.

The stoppage of fresh recruitment by many industries especially the Railways, the threat of automation, designed to throw thousands doing clerical jobs, all added to the sufferings of the workers and employees.

The workers of engineering, textile, plantation, mining and other industries were the worst sufferers.

The attempts of the capitalist class and the Government to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the workers evoked dogged resistance from the working class who waged protracted strike battles extending over months. Several lasted for more than four months, reminding the working class of its tenacious battles in the period of the 1929 world economic crisis.

In many places, the workers united their ranks, brought all unions, irrespective of political affiliations and succeeded in offering united opposition. The united textile strike of Madurai and Coimbatore underlined the urgency of the urge for unity as early as in 1966.

This same urge for unity was in evidence during the 1967 general elections and 1969 mid-term elections when trade unions and workers opposed to the Congress regime joined hands with other democratic forces to defeat the Congress and won signal victories in Kerala and West Bengal.

The electoral victory of 1967 and 1969 unleashed the urge for unity further. The performance of the Kerala and West Bengal U.F. ministries in defending the interests of the workers led to a new upsurge in organisation and unity. The united strikes of jute, tea garden, and textile workers in which all unions from the INTUC to the AITUC participated, won significant victories for the workers in the period of mounting capitalist offensive. The united strength of the engineering workers of West Bengal also won them significant wage increases. These victories together with the advances in wages and salaries won by other workers and employees including State employees were rendered possible, because the unity of the workers in action was helped by the united front ministry in West Bengal. Similarly, in Kerala large concessions were won by the fighting and struggling workers helped by the United Front ministry.

The political force of popular unity helped the united trade unions to secure immediate concessions.

However, considering the all-India offensive of the employers, the working class could not muster all its force over

the country, to rebuff the employers and the Government. In other States, though the employees and workers tried to unite and resist, both the forces of trade union unity and popular unity were far too weak to meet the offensive.

In some other States, where the militant trade unions based on class struggle were weak, and the revisionist and reformist influence were strong, no initiative was taken to forge unity of all trade unions as was done in West Bengal. The leadership of the Dange group did nothing to unite the workers but did everything to sow dissensions. That is why in the big industrial centre of Bombay, despite the offensive the working class resistance was piecemeal and could be easily beaten down by the employers and the Government. The Maharashtra Congress Government in the name of running mills in distress, introduced monstrous cuts in the D.A. and yet united resistance could not be organised.

Taking advantage of this state of affairs, the Government launched merciless repression against the fighting workers, as in Jamshedpur, and elsewhere. The Railway workers are now subject to barbarous punishment, if they undertake strike in defence of their interests. And the strike of the Central Employees was brutally suppressed. New legislation is afoot after the report of the Gajendragadkar Commission to attack the right to strike and organisation. The Maharashtra Government has brought forward an atrocious bill attacking the trade union liberties under the guise of legislation for recognition of unions.

The working class has also to face the challenge of the communal and chauvinistic forces which organise riots leading to massacres of workers of minority community. These reactionary forces also rouse feelings of provincial and linguistic chauvinism ; chauvinism to create barriers between one section of workers against other as the Shiva Sena does in Bombay. The working class must protect its unity and fight reactionary forces like Jana Sangh and Shiva Sena.

The economic situation presages a further attack against the workers. The export drive and every other device to save

the tottering economy is leading to further attacks on the workers—wage cuts, increased workload, refusal to implement accepted agreements, threats of lockouts and closures are increasing. Managements of industries, banks and mercantile firms are everywhere demanding machanisation, increase in work load and automation as the price of paltry wage concession.

Simultaneously, the ruling classes have succeeded in dividing the workers ; the united front ministries and the popular forces behind them opposed to the Congress have been disrupted by the revisionists and reformists and the political strength of the movement has been weakened ; the dominant AITUC leadership like the INTUC leadership, is functioning as the unofficial wing of the Congress Government, aiding it to curb the rights of the workers and disrupt the common struggle of the working class.

In the coming months, it is all the more necessary and vital for the working class to preserve and strengthen its class unity in the daily struggle and reinforce it by political united front of all popular and democratic forces opposed to the Congress Government and its reactionary anti-people policies. Disrupted from within and confronted by a merciless offensive of the employers and the Government, the working class will have to fight an unequal and losing battle unless it reunites its ranks and rebuffs the disruptors.

This Conference therefore appeals to all workers and their organisations to unite and stand together against the growing onslaught of the capitalist offensive, against the attack of the Government on their rights. There is nothing more important and more vital for the working class than to build its own unity in factory and industry, and expand and extend it to all workers. When the workers, irrespective of their organisational attachments and political beliefs have stood together, have united for common actions, they have won despite heavy odds against them.

This Conference pledges itself to fight for the united action of the workers in all industries, for the united action of all

central trade union organisations, in the common fight. It calls upon unions in various factories and industries to come together for the defence of the common interests of the working class. In particular it calls upon all workers and trade unions to unite and fight :

1. For need-based wage and full compensation against rising cost of living ;
2. Ballot for trade union recognition ;
3. For unemployment benefits ;
4. Against retrenchment and closures ;
5. Against wage-cuts in any form ;
6. Against all repressive laws and repressive measures ;
7. For ban on automation ;
8. For better P.F. and ESI ;
9. For a united front of all democratic forces opposed to the Congress regime ;
10. Against rise in prices ;
11. For reduction in taxation and defence expenditure ;
12. For abolition of property rights ;
13. For nationalisation of companies owned by Indian monopolists ;
14. For nationalisation of concerns owned by foreign monopolists ;
15. For nationalisation of Foreign Trade ;
16. For solidarity with peasant struggles for land and moratorium on debt repayment.

The Conference is confident that the unity forged in these daily struggles will lead to united common unions embracing all workers and functioning democratically making the strength of the unions impregnable and invincible.

17. ON COMMUNAL RIOTS AND SHIVA SENA

This Conference draws the attention of the working class to the fomentation of communal riots by reactionary communal forces. These riots in which communal frenzy is roused against the Muslim minority and in which the minorities are hunted down, killed and maimed have assumed serious

proportions, threatening to disrupt the common struggle of the workers and toiling masses.

This Conference representing the working class of India denounces the perpetrators of these outrages and condemns the Congress Government for its failure to protect the life and property of the minorities against the hoodlum attacks from organisations like the R. S. S. and Jana Sangh and Shiva Sena. The ghastly riots in Ahmedabad, and recently, in Maharashtra clearly bring forth the guilt of the Congress Governments.

Notwithstanding its loud talk of secularism the Congress leadership has not only failed to create a secular atmosphere ; its practice and ideology both promote revivalism and encouraged the growth of communal sentiments in the majority community, and this in turn, strengthens the hands of communal leaders from the minority community.

This Conference offers its sympathies to all the victims of the riots which are nothing but a weapon of the exploiting classes to divide the people, to divide the ranks of the workers and disrupt their common struggle for democracy, Socialism and against exploitation. It is not fortuitous that a number of these riots took place in major industrial centres like Ranchi, Bhilai, Jamshedpur, Indore, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Bhopal.

This Conference is of the firm opinion that these murderous plans of the reactionaries can neither be fought by succumbing to minority communal leaders nor by the hypocritical talk about national unity and integration indulged in by the ruling party and the Government. The examples of Kerala and West Bengal show that the disruptors and rioters can be defeated only where the class struggle and the common democratic movement is strong ; when the toilers from all communities join the working class banner for fighting exploitation and resist the communalists as common enemies. The communal leaders who keep away the minority masses from the common struggle only aid and abet the reactionaries like Jana Sangh, R. S. S. and Shiva Sena.

This Conference further calls upon all democratic forces to wake up in time and take up the challenge of communal reaction ; a democracy which cannot do minimum justice to its minorities cannot last, it must sooner or later succumb to the fascist forces and such are the forces represented by the above reactionary organisations. The hunting of religious and political minorities constitutes the first step of the reactionaries to bring down the existing democratic set-up and establish a reactionary dictatorship. The recent slogan of Indianisation raised by Jana Sangh is an open incitement against minority communities.

This Conference congratulates the working class of West Bengal and other States who have waged a successful struggle against the murderous disruptors of working class unity and who have protected their fellow workers against murder, loot and arson. It honours the memory of those in West Bengal, Gujarat, Bihar and elsewhere who sacrificed their lives in this sacred cause and extols all those who risked life and limb to discharge their responsibility.

This Conference further warns the working class against yet another weapon of the reactionaries, to set worker against worker and disrupt its common struggle. Organisations preaching localism, linguistic chauvinism, provincialism are promoted by the capitalists and feudal elements and Congress Governments in line with the traditions of British imperialists. In Bombay, the Shiva Sena is patronised by the Chief Minister and the ruling Congress party and its activities of attacking Muslims, Kerala and Tamil workers and the Communists are connived at by the police.

In the name of solving the unemployment problem in Maharashtra, appeal is made to throw out the non-Maharashtrian workers from the State with the tacit support of the ruling Congress Government.

Thus the ranks of the workers are divided and the offensive of the capitalists to retrench workers is facilitated. The real purpose of the Shiva Sena stood revealed when it started concentrating its fire on the Communists and started supplying

strike-breakers to the employers in all big strikes in the name of giving employment to Maharashtrians; and when its activities of arson and loot were openly supported by the big business of Bombay. Organisations like Shiva Sena are open weapons of counter-revolution out to attack the Communists and advanced working class movement.

Utilising the frustration among the workers due to lack of class struggle, these organisations disrupt the unity of the workers when it is needed most to fight the battle against unemployment and starvation. They are a new weapon to divide the workers and also the unity of the country so that the vested interests can easily dominate. Behind these organisations stands the hand of the American CIA out to weaken the unity of the democratic movement and enslave the country.

The working class must accept this challenge and fighting all provocations protect its solid class unity to defeat the capitalists and reactionaries. It must realise that problems of unemployment can be solved by the united might of India's working class vanquishing the rule of the capitalists and landlords.

The Conference calls upon all trade unions, all democratic parties and organisations, all mass organisations to come together to face the challenge of organisations like Jana Sangh, R.S.S., Shiva Sena, Lachit Sena and similar organisations and defeat these counter-revolutionary forces. It pledges itself to do all in its power to unite the democratic forces for this sacred cause.

The Conference condemns the criminal failure of the Congress Governments to put down with a heavy hand the real organisers of the riots who are well-known. It further condemns their callous failure to punish the guilty police officials who aid and abet the riot-mongers in their orgy of loot, arson, murder. The Conference demands quick and severe punishment for such officials. The Conference further demands compensation and relief to the victims of the riots.

18. ON REPRESSION

This Conference condemns the brutal and barbarous repression launched by the Central and State Governments against the workers, peasants, employees and students during the course of their struggle for economic demands and democratic rights. It also condemns the class terror unleashed by the landlords against the agricultural workers resulting in the open murder of harijan agricultural workers, their women and children. It further denounces the systematic use of goonda gangs by the mine owners and other capitalists in the course of strikes to terrorise the workers. These gangs with the connivance and even the assistance of the police burn down the dwellings of the workers and carry on murderous assaults and rapine against them.

The Kilvenmani murders in Tanjore ; the murders of agricultural workers in Andhra are now followed by similar attacks in other States witnessing to the rapid growth of class terror in the villages.

Side by side the direct repression let loose by the State apparatus has increased many fold. The Central Government created a new record of terror in its dealings with the Central employees' strike when it unleashed brutal repression in Delhi against its own employees, imprisoning thousands and subjecting hundreds to lathi-charges and beatings. The police opened fire on railway workers at several places killing many, invading their colonies and brutally assaulting their women-folk. In every strike struggle the State Governments have unleashed similar brutalities against the fighting workers. In Neyveli the police under the D.M.K. ministry went on a systematic rampage killing several workers, invading working class houses and raping women and forcing them to stand naked, killing an eight-month-old infant. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharastra, and Punjab Governments have resorted to similar measures to crush the resistance of the working class.

In West Bengal, under President's rule and in Kerala under the mini-front ministry, the police are having a free

hand to arrest and beat and torture workers and peasants in police custody. In Andhra, several people arrested in connection with the Srikakulam developmenrs have been shot down in police custody.

In Kerala, hundreds of fighting agricultural workers are arrested and tortured in police custody.

Besides this, the State and Central Governments are forging new weapons to crush the workers' movement. The Central Government has already passed the Railway Amendment Act prescribing heavy punishment for striking workers. The Central Industrial Security Force Act arms the force with arbitrary powers to arrest the workers and jail them. New legislation is proposed both at the Central and State levels to attack the right to strike, the right to have independent fighting unions.

The Preventive Detention Act is being re-enacted in West Bengal to attack the people. It is widely used elsewhere to attack all democratic movements. The students, the teachers, the Government employees all are now subject to the monstrous attack on their liberties. Several students have been killed in recent agitations without any official being brought to book.

All this points out to the rapid development of a police regime in our country, in which every one's liberties will be at the mercy of the police State. This is a concerted attack on democracy launched by the reactionary vested interests to keep their domination intact, an attack whose immediate aim is to pass on further economic burdens to the people.

Neither the trade union movement nor the democratic movement can forge ahead unless this offensive is met and defeated. The Conference calls upon the working class, all trade unions, all central organisations to unitedly defend the rights of the working class and defeat the offensive. It demands withdrawal of all repressive legislation, dropping of all anti-strike measures and full liberty to trade unions, release of all those arrested in the course of the struggle and withdrawal of cases against them.

The Conference further demands the withdrawal of all cases against the fighting peasants and agricultural workers, against students, and employees who are being penalised because they dared to fight for their just demands.

It calls upon all other democratic organisations to join hands with it to forge a common fight against repression and protect the democratic liberties of all sections of the people.

19. ON NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR

The Report of the National Commission on Labour is a blue-print of the impending capitalist offensive to be launched against the working class. The Report virtually seeks to suppress all the trade union rights and paralyse the resistance of the working class to the bourgeois onslaughts.

The Report gives a burial to the norms laid down by the 15th Indian Labour Conference for fixation of need-based minimum wages. In utter repudiation of the norms laid down by the 15th Indian Labour Conference, the National Labour Commission subordinates the basic right for need-based minimum wage to industry's capacity to pay. The capacity to pay being determined by the fictitious balance sheets of the companies, the Commission's recommendation gives a veto to the employers to deny this basic need of the workers. Every wage-board has taken recourse to this hypocritical plea to refuse need-based wage to the workers. The Government also resorted to this same plea when it denied need-based wage to its employees.

The conditions of workers in the so-called sweated industries are still worse. Here the wages fixed under the Minimum Wages Act are ridiculously low and there has been no revision for years. Moreover, in case of agricultural workers, even these wages are not being paid by the employers. The trade unions have been demanding that some norms should be laid down for fixation of such wages. The Commission, however, has turned down this just demand on the ground that, "Laying down a rigid cash equivalent of statutory minimum wage,

whose coverage is essentially transitional under conditions of development, would not serve any useful purpose."

The Commission has further recommended neutralisation at 95 per cent of the rise in the cost of living, to the lowest level of wages which will only ensure perpetual fall in real wages whenever prices go up. It has thus stoutly opposed the workers' claim for cent per cent neutralisation of rise in the cost of living.

The Commission by dittoing the provisions of the Payment of Bonus Act on the ground that they "should be given a longer period of trial" has become a party to reduce the annual bonus to the minimum level.

The Commission has given a green signal to the introduction of all the job-killing devices used by the employers to augment their profits. The Report says, "Rationalisation and automation have an important role to play in the developing countries." Though it is well known that these devices have reduced the job potential the Commission wants workers to believe that they "in the process help generate employment in the long run." There is no wonder that instead of recommending ban on automation, it has only suggested "phasing" and laid down certain conditions for its introduction. Though the Commission advised more "consultation with workers' representatives," it has warned that "it should, however, be ensured that the country's technological advance is not impaired." These recommendations thus will drastically reduce the job potential of the existing industries and add vast numbers to the ranks of the unemployed.

The Commission has rejected the trade union demand for the immediate abolition of the contract labour system and absorption of these workers on factory rolls. It has recommended only "a stricter regulation of contract work" and only approved the highly inadequate bill proposed by the Central Government in this regard. Similarly, the Commission has not recommended any job security to the construction workers who are at present thrown out of job at the sweet will of the employer but is only satisfied with the suggestion

that "The possibility of introducing a decasualisation scheme should be explored."

The most retrograde and anti-working class recommendation of the Commission is the recommendation for an Industrial Relation Commission at State and Central level which will have dictatorial powers in all aspects of industrial relations. It can decide which union should be recognised and conciliate and adjudicate in all the disputes. The IRC can further have powers to prohibit strikes and can ask a union to withdraw strike after 30 days of its existence. The right to give strike notice is given only to a stooge union, recognised by the management. This virtually makes a mockery of right to strike. Though the Commission has claimed that "The IRC will be an authority independent of the executive" it will be completely in the hands of the Government and its operation will be heavily loaded against the working class.

The Commission has condemned gherao as a form of "physical coercion" and according to it "gherao" cannot be treated as a form of labour protest. It has also characterised legitimate movement of 'work-to-rule' as misconduct and unfair labour practice.

Thus, while the workers are denied by the Commission a decent living standard efforts are being made to prevent them from resorting to any form of collective action. The new Industrial Relations Machinery will only be a trap for the workers and device to protect the interests of capitalists.

The treacherous role played by the dominant leadership of the AITUC in the National Labour Commission has immensely helped the commission in formulating these recommendations. Various Dangeite AITUC representatives on the Study Groups appointed by the Commission have accepted most of these proposals in their reports and the Chairman of the Commission has acknowledged the contribution of the study Groups in enabling the Commission to come to a final decision. Dange as a member of the Commission has not denounced a single study group report though some of them

were submitted one year prior to his resignation. The recommendations of the Commission are so retrograde that even the Guntur Session of the AITUC was compelled to go on record against them. This All-India Trade Union Conference repudiates the anti-working class positions taken by various representatives of AITUC on the National Labour Commission Study Groups.

The Government of Andhra has already introduced a bill providing for the notorious Industrial Relations Commission as proposed by the National Labour Commission. It is possible that similar bills are likely to be introduced in other States on these lines. The Union Government is already discussing with various Central T.U. organisations the method of implementing the recommendations of National Labour Commission.

The All-India Trade Union Conference rejects the recommendations of the National Commission on Labour and calls upon all the unions to educate the workers on the reactionary and anti-working class character of these recommendations and mobilise them in large numbers to defeat the conspiracy of the Congress Governments, employers and a section of the Central T.U. leadership to impose these recommendations on the T.U. movement.

20. ON AUTOMATION

Introduction of electronic computer and other automation equipments as labour saving devices has posed a very big threat to job security of the employees and workers in offices and factories and drastically affected employment potential of the country. The major initiative in this sphere is taken by the Government of India and it has introduced electronic data processing equipments and computers in a number of public sector undertakings, and various Government departments in spite of organised protests of the employees and tried to justify this move holding the assurance like a carrot that no one would be retrenched as a result of such introduction. In actual practice, wherever Automation has been

introduced, promotions and recruitments have been stopped and even replacements are not made against normal depletion of staff due to superannuation.

In the private sector devastating effect of Automation is seen in most alarming proportion. In the Foreign Oil Companies thousands of employees were thrown out of employment due to Automation and Government of India did nothing to protect the employees in spite of their lofty promises other than setting up a tripartite committee and a Commission of Enquiry.

Government of India's policy that Automation will be selective, gives all the more encouragement to the employers in view of prerogative and right claimed by the Management. Moreover, the Government itself being the champion of automation, cannot contain the offensive of the private employers.

In a country like India where millions of people are unemployed, Automation is sure to lead to reduction of total wage. A glaring case is the experience of the employees of Foreign Oil Firms where hundreds of employees were retrenched due to Automation. Therefore, assurance of no retrenchment due to automation often reported by the Government of India is a myth.

Automation involves huge capital investment and naturally it will increase the domination of foreign capital over Indian economy and give more liberty to imperialist powers to dictate terms affecting us politically.

At the same time, Automation, which only big capital can undertake, will eliminate small and medium industries inflicting much greater burden on the wage earners with centralisation of economic power in a few hands and a much greater grip over political power by big capital.

Faced with growing movement against Automation the Government of India has appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Venkatraman in order to create false impression that the automation measures have been taken after careful consideration. However, the questionnaire

prepared by this commission is heavily loaded in favour of automation. The farce of forming the commission was seen clearly by the workers and salaried employees when the Government recently gave licence to manufacture 100 computers every year to IBM monopoly. Even before the findings of this Commission are out, some of the trade unions like those in Indian Oil Corporation led by INTUC and Right Communist Party have agreed to abide by the decision of the Government on the Venkatraman Committee. This acceptance of automation in disguise is only another device of stabbing the workers in the back.

This All-India Trade Union Conference, therefore, hails the countrywide struggle of the working class against Automation and congratulates the L.I.C. employees for their success in stalling introduction of an Electronic Computer in LIC's Calcutta Office.

This Conference calls upon the Indian working class to further consolidate their struggle against Automation and to intensify it with greater determination as an integral part of their struggle against unemployment and for employment security and defeat the conspiracy of big business to augment their profitability by using new technology.

21. ON THE THIRD PAY COMMISSION.

The All-India Trade Union Conference takes note of the latest decisions of the Government of India regarding the demands and movement of the Central Government employees. Having failed to disrupt the movement of the Central Government employees and faced with the pressure of democratic opposition in the country, the Government has been forced to undo most of the gross acts of victimisation inflicted on the employees and their organisation, though much is still left to be done in this direction. The Conference demands that all prosecutions be withdrawn forthwith and Status Quo Ante strike fully restored.

Having failed to defeat the movement of the employees for grant of need-based minimum wage on the basis of the accep-

ted norms of the 15th ILC as well as the demand for full neutralisation of the rising cost of living, the Government have come forward to appoint a Third Pay Commission. The composition of the Commission, the non-inclusion of the workers' representative on the Commission, the narrow way in which the terms of reference has been termed as well the non-declaration of interim relief without pre-conditions exposes the Government's intention to defeat the basic demands of the employees by manoeuvres through the mechanism of the Pay Commission.

The All-India Trade Union Conference demands of the Central Government to revise the terms of reference of the proposed Third Pay Commission in such a manner as to make it imperative on the Pay Commission to grant need-based minimum wage on the basis of 15th ILC-norms and full neutralisation of rise in cost of living to the Central Government employees and workers. This Conference also demands of the Central Government to include workers' representatives in the Commission and to grant adequate interim relief immediately.

This Conference calls upon the Central Government employees and workers throughout the country to launch country-wide united protests to force the Central Government to concede these demands. This conference further assures the Central Government employees and workers of its full support to their cause and calls upon the trade unions to make every effort for mobilising the workers in various industries to rally round the struggle of the Central Government employees by solidarity actions.

22. SOLIDARITY WITH PEASANT STRUGGLES

The All-India Trade Union Conference greets the millions of peasants who participated in several struggles for genuine land reforms, giving land to the tiller, fair price for agricultural produce, scaling down and cancellation of old debts, tax relief for poor peasants and against all evictions, mechanisation of agriculture, gangsterism of landlords, and police repression.

The glorious struggle of poor peasants and agricultural workers in West Bengal for taking over illegally occupied benami land has opened a new chapter in the peasant movement. Several peasants fell victims in murderous attacks by the agents of landlords on the eve of harvesting. However, relying on the unity of the rural poor and the U.F. Government's policy of supporting the just struggle of the peasants and restraining police from supporting the jotedars, the poor peasants and agricultural labourers were successful in distributing 3½ lakh acres of land during the U.F. regime. The Conference takes note of the preparedness of the heroic peasants of West Bengal to defend these gains at any cost, and is confident that the working class in West Bengal will extend every possible assistance to the peasants in this historic struggle which will pave a solid base for building worker-peasant alliance throughout the State.

The poor peasant and hutment dwellers all over Kerala organised struggle for the implementation of Land Reforms Act from 1st January 1970. Despite brutal repression by C.R.P. and Kerala police on the one hand and the reign of terror let loose by landlords' goondas the poor peasants and hutment dwellers successfully carried out their action and showed a democratic way of implementing land reforms remained unimplemented over two decades.

Peasants in Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Andhra, Maharashtra, Karnatak, Assam and other States have also organised several actions in support of their demands which have high-lighted the growing consciousness of peasants in the struggle for land.

The All-India Trade Union Conference calls upon the working class of India to rally behind the struggles of peasants and organise solidarity actions in support of the demands of the peasants.

23. ON WORKING WOMEN

The All-India Trade Union Conference notes with grave concern the large-scale retrenchment of working women in textile, jute and other industries. In the last 13 years,

thousands of women have been thrown out of employment under various pretexts, depriving them of their only source of livelihood. Many women workers have been thrown out from pharmaceutical concerns after their marriage.

In the present economic crisis women workers are the first victims of retrenchment. The number of women workers in textiles in Bombay came down from 35,000 in 1947 to 4,000 in 1969. The same can be said about the jute industry, which was one of the major industries employing thousands of women.

While retrenching the women workers the management put forward excuses, such as, they are incapable to cope up with the new industry, or after marriage they are not regular in their work, etc. that have no basis. The real reason for throwing them out is to evade the provisions of the Maternity Benefit Act.

Capitalism in India is exploiting women workers most severely by denying them equivalent wages as are paid to male workers. Yet many women workers have to work hard after completing their domestic responsibilities. This has adversely affected the health of women workers and in the absence of any adequate medical facilities, their misery and privations have become still worse.

This Conference also takes note of the fact that more than 40 per cent of women workers are employed as casual workers in cashew, coir, bidi and lac, agriculture, building and road construction. The work being seasonal, these women are employed on daily wages which are extremely low varying from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4. Though they are the major working force in some of these industries, the working conditions are beyond description. Since many of these concerns are not governed by the Factories Act, there are no strict working hours, no maternity benefit or provision of creche or Provident Fund Scheme.

In Tea Gardens in the North and South, women workers comprising 75 per cent of total workers, get wages only from Re. 1.84 to Rs. 2 having differentiation between men and women workers, the type of work being the same. This gross

inequality is continuing for years together. This inequality in the wages is seen generally in every concern, in mines, bidi, tobacco, lac or in agricultural work or construction work.

Even those women workers who are covered by the Factory Act are many times deprived of their maternity benefit due to their ignorance and many factories are not providing creches for the children, and even if they are provided then the number of nurses and ayahs are not sufficient, with the result the children are totally neglected.

The Conference while taking note of the increasing participation of women workers in trade union struggles calls upon the unions to pay more attention to the organisation of women workers so that they should be able to play a bigger role in the T. U. movement.

This Conference fully supports the following demands of the women workers :

1. Equal wage for equal work ;
2. Extension of the application of the Maternity Benefit Act to cover all working women and modification in the Act by providing additional leave facilities with full payment and more punishment for violation of the Act ;
3. Retrenchment of women workers should be stopped forthwith ;
4. Better creche arrangement, provision for rest rooms, lavatories, etc. for women workers ;
5. Adequate housing facilities ;
6. Provision for proper medical facilities for women workers.

23. ON USE OF CRP AGAINST TRADE UNION AND DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

The increasing use of Central Reserve Police, whenever Central Government feels the State Government's repressive apparatus is inadequate to deal with trade union and democratic movement, has been a common phenomenon in most of the States during the recent past.

The CRP is a gangster army recruited by the Union Home Ministry and is specially trained to suppress the trade union and democratic movement, wherever it develops. The increasing reliance of the Congress Government on the police force is seen from the substantial rise of police expenditure of the Central Government which increased from Rs. 19 crores in 1961-62 to Rs. 86 crores in 1969-70.

When the U. F. Ministries in West Bengal and Kerala opposed the use of the CRP in these States the Union Home Minister remained adamant and used his arbitrary powers to suppress the people's movement.

When the Namboodiripad Ministry in Kerala refused to suppress the Central Government employees' struggle during 1968 the CRP was sent there even without informing the State Government. The CRP has thus become a handle in the hands of the Congress Government to interfere in the affairs of the State Government wherever democratic Governments are formed.

The Achutha Menon Ministry in Kerala shamelessly called for help of the CRP to suppress the agricultural workers and road transport workers' State-wide struggle.

When the CRP is ruthlessly used during every people's struggle it was found totally ineffective against fascist organisations like Shiva Sena and other communal elements in the country.

The All-India Trade Union Conference strongly condemns the use of the CRP during trade union and democratic movement and demands its immediate withdrawal.

24. ON THE BLACK BILL IN MAHARASHTRA.

The All-India Trade Union Conference strongly condemns the Government of Maharashtra for introducing the most reactionary bill called Maharashtra Recognition of Trade Unions and Prevention of Unfair Labour Practices Bill. The Bill seeks to blatantly take away whatever T. U. rights the workers have won throughout all the years of struggle.

The Bill, to all practical purposes, imposes a blanket ban

on strike and attacks the fundamental right of the working class. It gives wide powers to Government officials to directly interfere in day-to-day functioning of trade unions and make them appendages of the employers. It further ensures the recognition only of company unions which work only on class collaborationist line and oppose every struggle of workers. The procedure of verification of membership will virtually deny right of recognition to all the militant unions.

The Conference expresses its indignation at the role of the AITUC, INTUC and HMS representatives who in a committee agreed to all the recommendations. The AITUC and HMS leaderships came out against the proposals only when they found the deep resentment about the Bill among the mass of workers.

The Conference while demanding immediate withdrawal of the Bill, whole heartedly supports the determined struggle carried out by the workers of Maharashtra against these obnoxious provisions of the Bill.

25. ON DELAY IN PRESIDENTIAL ASSENT TO THE WEST BENGAL T. U. BILL

Labour legislation in India does not provide for statutory obligation to recognise majority representative unions. The Trade Union Act, 1926, was not amended to this effect during 22 years of Congress rule. For a lack of statutory provisions the question of recognition of a trade union is left entirely at discretion of employers, who use their prerogative in this regard by giving recognition to minority non-representative unions which are in most cases sponsored by them. Disregarding the majority and representative union the employers come to agreement with the so-called recognised union and impose most unfair and derogatory terms on the majority of the workmen against their wishes. Agreements signed under Section 12 (3) of Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, become binding on all workmen and as a result the majority of the workmen do not find any legal protection to get rid of the unfair terms of the agreements signed by the employers

with the so-called recognised union sponsored by them. Thus lack of statutory provision on the question of union recognition is used by the employers to deprive the workers of their legitimate claims and to retard the strength of collective bargaining. The Congress Government wilfully preserved this anomaly to benefit the employers and to weaken the trade union movement as such.

At the same time, the Trade Union Act 1926, did not define "Industry" as a result of which a sizeable number of persons employed in schools, colleges, education institutes, research institutes, hospitals, solicitors' and auditors' firms are debarred from having trade union right when the Constitution of India admits right to form trade unions to all citizens as basic right. In West Bengal alone over 2 lakhs of people are involved in this sphere. Continued agitation took place for required amendment of the Act to cover these employees within the scope and ambit of the Trade Union Act, but the Congress Government preferred to remain silent in conformity with their reactionary and anti-labour policy.

The U. F. Government in West Bengal sought to rectify these gross anomalies and accordingly the Trade Union (West Bengal Amendment) Bill, 1969, was moved and adopted by the Legislative Assembly in September 1969.

This bill purported to confer the basic democratic right to the workers to express their verdict through "secret ballot" as to which union should represent them in the matter of collective bargaining with the employers and pursuant to this objective made statutory provision in the Bill for recognition of a majority representative union, i. e. compulsory recognition determined through secret ballot of workers.

The Bill also defined "Industry" and extended trade union right to persons employed in schools, colleges, educational institutions, institutions for carrying research works, hospitals, solicitors's firms and audit firms.

The Bill was forwarded to the President of India for his assent for enactment under the process of law. But the

reactionary Government at the Centre are set to scuttle this Bill by withholding President's assent to it.

If the workers are allowed to use their democratic rights conferred through this Bill, basis for united action in trade union struggles will be greatly strengthened enhancing the fighting capacity of the workers. The force thus generated will help to eliminate disruptive elements and unions sponsored by employers and put an end to employers' nefarious tactics drawing its strength from employers' prerogative to recognise a union.

It is very natural that private employers will be opposed to this Bill. For once the Bill is enacted in this State, it will have its repercussion in all other States and material condition will be created enabling the workers in all the States to achieve through struggle the right conferred through this Bill.

It is significant to note that the Central Government is equally interested to deny this basic democratic right to their own employees who number over 9 million all over India.

To suit the evil intention of the Central Government and to add comfort to the employers the Dangeites have made a line-up abandoning the principle of deciding the question of union recognition through secret ballot of workers. The Dangeites have now taken a position of recognition of all Unions irrespective of their strength discarding the principle of giving recognition to the majority representative Union decided through secret ballot of workers. AITUC have all through proclaimed its policy in support of the principle embodied in the West Bengal Bill and the Dangeite MLAs of West Bengal supported the Bill when moved for adoption. But they did not hesitate to change their policy when the Central Government came out openly against the Bill. Any organisation which supports democratic functioning in the trade unions cannot but endorse the salutary measures taken by the U.F. Government through this Bill and demand its enactment. The Dangeites have long abandoned democratic

functioning in the trade Unions and they are maintaining their domination in the AITUC through dubious methods which shows the real reason for abandoning this principle.

The working class therefore should take this issue of enforcement of the Trade Union (West Bengal Amendment) Bill, 1969 as an integral part of their struggle for democratic functioning in all the States of India so that the Central Government may be compelled to accord President's assent for its immediate enactment and similar enactment is made possible in all other States.

This All-India Trade Union Conference calls upon the working class of India to address itself to this task with all seriousness.

26. ON JOB SECURITY IN FOREIGN OIL COMPAGIES

The Foreign Oil Companies—Burmah-Shell, Esso and Caltex have drastically reduced their staff rendering thousands of employees surplus through re-organisation, introduction of contract labour, rationalisation and introduction of Electronic Computer and retrenched them in the name of so-called Voluntary Retirement. In 1956, these three foreign oil companies had in their employment 23,500 workers and clerks when their total all-India sale was 5 million tons of petroleum products. Today, their total sale is about 7.5 million tons whereas the employment strength has been reduced to about 8,000 all over India. These foreign oil monopolists further want to reduce their staff. All these measures are sought to be justified in the name of 'economy measures' necessitated on the plea of growth and expansion of Public Sector undertakings in oil industry. The reactionary policies of the Government of India and its subservience to foreign monopoly capital encouraged the oil companies to retrench thousands of employees. In spite of several assurances given by the Government nothing has been done to ensure job security to the oil employees.

The Tripartite Committee set up by the Government of India in 1965 failed to protect the employees and the Gokhale

Commission of Enquiry set up in 1967, inspite of the weighty findings, left the issue where it was.

In 1968, when hundreds of employees were retrenched by Burmah-Shell and Caltex in Calcutta during pendency of Gokhale Commission of Enquiry, Government of India did nothing to protect the employees.

The Foreign Oil Companies have a long history of exploitation in India. Even now they are taking away about Rs. 40 crores in foreign exchange for import of crude oil to be refined in their own refineries in India under the preferential terms covered in refinery arrangement. Burmah-Shell invested in their refinery in India in 1953 Rs. 29.33 crores, and made a nett profit of over Rs. 30 crores, in first eleven years of operation. So is the case with Esso and Caltex.

To further expand this loot, oil companies are set to reduce the existing staff strength of 8000 to less than half. This scheme, if not prevented, will lead the employees to greater suffering in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and various other places. Government of India have all through shown their inability to deal firmly with these foreign oil monopolists inspite of the assurances given to the employees. This dubious role of the Government of India should be thoroughly exposed and the movement of the oil employees should be intensified to initiate a campaign at the national level to curb the Foreign Oil monopolists.

The All-India Trade Union Conference demands that the foreign oil companies should be nationalised to stop their loot and to private job security to the employees. The Public Sector undertaking—I.O.C.—instead of building duplicate facilities at the cost of crores of rupees, should take over the Foreign Oil companies along with their employees.

This Conference calls upon the trade unions all over India to mobilise all their strength to build up a united struggle to achieve this demand.

27. ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MAMC

The All-India Trade Union Conference views with grave concern and strongly condemns the recent recommendation of the Public Undertakings Committee of the Parliament to wind up the Mining and Allied Machinery Corporation, Durgapur.

The Conference holds that the recommendation, if accepted and implemented by the Government of India, would immediately lead to mass unemployment of 6,400 workmen. The units under the Corporation can manufacture highly sophisticated machineries needed for many industries in our country. Possibilities are real and can be explored. Diversification of production in these plants, in order to cater to the machinery needs of various industries which are at present dependent on foreign imports, should be undertaken. In face of these prospects, recommendation to wind up the Corporation is detrimental to genuine national interests, apart from the total wastage of machinery aquired at huge cost.

This Conference therefore demands of the Government of India to reject this anti-national recommendation and announce their decision soon. The Conference warns the Government of India that any decision to the contrary will meet with grave consequences.

The Conference extends its all-out support to the MAMC workers in their detcrmination to resist the closure at all costs and calls upon all sections of workers to stand by their impending heroic fight.

28 SUPPORT TO WORKERS OF BIRLA CONCERNS

This All-India Trade Union Conference notes with grave concern at the closure of factories and offices of Birlas and considers it as a pre-planned and premeditated attack on 3,500 employees and workers working in registered offices of 114 companies and four factories, Kesoram Engineering, Air Conditioning Corporation, National Engineering (Rubber Division) and Jayshree Chemicals situated at Calcutta. This

attack is a deliberate game of Birlas to frustrate the legitimate Trade Union activities of the employees and also to subvert the work of the Commission of Enquiry into affairs of the Birlas.

The Birlas being among the biggest monopolists in India, this attack on the employees has an important bearing in the entire Trade Union movement both in West Bengal and elsewhere.

This Conference, therefore, strongly condemns this attack of the Birlas on the employees and demands of the Government to take immediate steps to re-open the closed establishments and factories and calls upon the workers all over India to build up a movement in support of the fighting workers of Birla concerns.

29. ON JAY ENGINEERING WORKERS' HEROIC STRUGGLE

This All-India Trade Union Conference Congratulates the 6,000 workers of Jay Engineering Works, Calcutta, who are carrying on heroic struggle since the last five months, demanding implementation of tripartite wage settlement concluded at the instance of the United Front Government in West Bengal in September 1969, and settlement of various other pending issues.

Jay management agreed to implement the settlement only on condition that the Union should withdraw cases, now pending before different courts and tribunals, which is completely unrelated to the tripartite engineering wage settlement. When the workers refused to accept such precondition the management gradually laid off 4200 workers in order to pressurise them.

The management's refusal to concede to the legitimate demand of D. A. of sales staff led to reference of the dispute to the Tribunal which awarded Rs. 50/- as dearness allowance to these employees. But the management refused to implement the award and went on appeal to the Supreme Court to harrass the employees and to delay the settlement.

The Jay management further suspended and charge-sheeted a number of union activists and union leaders to break the morale of the fighting employees. After toppling of the United Front Government, the Jay management is resorting to more and more victimisation and using police force to intimidate the workers.

The Jay workers, who have a glorious tradition of struggle and led a historic struggle in 1963-64 defying the D. I. R. and all repressive measures of the Government, stood united like a rock this time also in carrying forward their struggle.

They rejected the preconditions sought to be imposed by the management for implementing the agreement and preferred to undergo immense financial hardship and sufferings and selling out of their valuables for subsistence than to accept such inglorious terms.

This Conference condemns the Jay management and demands immediate implementation of the tripartite wage settlement without any precondition and settlement of other pending issues.

This Conference further condemns the present administration of West Bengal and Government of India for giving police assistance to the Jay Management to suppress the struggle of Jay workers.

This All-India Trade Union Conference hails the struggle of Jay employees and calls upon the working class to organise strong solidarity action for giving a fitting reply to the audacity of the Jay management.

30. ON SUPPORT TO RAILWAY WORKERS' DEMANDS

The All-India Trade Union Conference notes with grave concern the offensive of unprecedented nature launched by the Congress Government against the railwaymen. It refused to implement the decision of the 15th Indian Labour Conference in regard to need-based minimum wage though it was a party to the decision. It not only refused to accept the principle of linking dearness allowance with cost of living indices as recommended by the First Pay Commission, but

effected a cut in the quantum of D. A. through the Gajendra-gadkar Commission. As a result of this, there has been tremendous erosion in the real wage of the railway employees while their indebtedness has increased considerably. Taking advantage of the huge unemployment in the country, which is the result of their own bankrupt policy, the Congress Government is engaged in an attempt to force down the wage level of the employees by increasingly employing casual labour for a pittance of wages and this category of workmen, today, is the lowest paid industrial labour of the country.

On the other hand, it has been introducing several measures of mechanisation, rationalisation and automation which have not only resulted in stagnation everywhere but also has threatened the job security of thousands of railwaymen. Through introduction of giant job-killing devices like Electronic computers, Matisa or Plaza Machines, mechanised humpshunting, dieselisation and electrification, etc. thousands have been reverted and declared surplus and thousands more have stuck up at the maximum of their scales with no prospect of promotions. The workload and intensification of labour has been increased. The Government has refused to honour the provisions of the Hours of Employment Regulations by refusing to reduce duty hours. Through "Incentive Scheme" the workmen have been cheated in as much as they received 36 per cent bonus earnings after increasing productivity to the extent of 65 per cent. To reduce the number of workmen, the Government has adopted the method of premature retirement. The additional employment potentiality of the Railway, which was about fifty thousand a year, has been completely frozen causing disaster to new generation. But the sinister part of this game is that in the process, the Railway system is being made increasingly dependent on foreign aid and loans for these sophisticated machines, diesel oil, engine parts, stores, etc.

Besides, in the name of augmenting income of the railways, poorer section of trading and travelling public are being fleeced while concessions after concessions are being granted

to the monopolists and imperialists through special rates, container service, rebates and export materials, etc.

This Conference also notes with alarm the systematic curtailment of trade union rights of railwaymen. Strikes have been banned after the Government saw that Ordinances and brutal repression in 1960 and 1968 failed to brow-beat the workers into submission. Several retrograde enactments have been made to relegate the workmen to the position of slaves. They have been refusing recognition of unions like Chittaranjan Locomotive Works Labour Union, Dakshin Railway Employees' Union, South Central Railway Employees' Union etc. which enjoy popular support of the employees. The penal measures taken against the employees in 1960 and 1968 strikes have not been fully withdrawn. Moreover, victimisation for trade union activities without any opportunity of defence is continuing unabated and the arbitrary power earlier withdrawn by the Supreme Court has been re-introduced once again. The obnoxious Railway Amendment Act 1968 has virtually prohibited every trade union activity in the railway areas.

This Conference cannot but take note of the fact that when the Railwaymen should have been united to resist the all-pervading attack against their living and working conditions, the leadership of the railway trade union movement have been following a divisive policy of throwing out the militant sections out of the unions and All-India Railwaymen's Federation in order to maintain their coterie rule. In the name of uniting the recognised unions, they are slowly gravitating towards formation of company unions. The ordinary railwaymen have however, realised the gravity of the situation and have resorted militant action against these attacks. The courageous resistance to brutal police repression in Moghul Sarai and Perambur in recent times are worth special mention.

When discontent among the railway workers is mounting high the Government appointed a Third Pay Commiision but the terms of reference are framed in such a manner that the workers cannot expect any determination of need-based

minimum wages or a 2 per cent neutralisation. The Government further has not included any representative of the workers on the Commission which only betrays its intention in nominating the Pay Commission.

The Conference while congratulating the railway workers for the militant struggles they have launched assures them firm solidarity in every struggle. The Conference pays homage to railway workers who gave their lives facing police firing at Pathankot, Bikaner, Jagadhri, and other places and strongly condemns the Government for its refusal to appoint even judicial enquiries.

The All India Trade Union Conference demands immediate withdrawal of Railway (Amendment) Act, restoration of all trade union and democratic rights of the workers, the recognition of union through secret ballot and reinstatement of all workers victimised for participation in 1968 all-India strike. It calls upon the railway workers to unite for local, area-wise and sectional struggles on specific issues and fight every machination of retrenchment and victimisation. It calls upon the working class to express full support to the struggle of the railway employees in every possible way.

31. ON STEEL WORKERS' DEMANDS

The two lakh workers employed in steel plants in public and private sectors have been fighting for higher wages and better working conditions and for trade union rights since long. They have been able to hit back the attacks of the employers on several occasions and have traditions of fighting militant struggles.

The First Wage Board gave a nominal wage-rise to workers in steel industry and the discontent was mounting high among the workes when the Government was contemplating the appointment of Second Wage Board.

The movement launched by the steel workers against the appointment of the Second Wage Board and preparation for a strike action demanding higher wages forced the Government and the employers to move in the matter.

The Bipartite Committee convened by the Government last year was an attempt to side-track the move for concerted action. In this regard, the Government was helped by the leadership of INTUC, AITUC and HMS by raising a lower demand. It was only due to the firmness shown by the Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union during negotiations and efforts made by it to organise workers all over the steel industry for a strike action that the Government and the employers were forced to grant wages higher than demanded by the leadership of various all-India T.U. Centres.

The employers were forced to pay Rs. 33 to the steel workers after negotiations as interim relief though Dange earlier demanded only Rs. 30 and was ready to compromise even for Rs. 15. The experience of the negotiations clearly shows that the workers win concessions from employers only through struggles and not only through negotiations.

During negotiations for fixing the minimum wages the Dangeite leadership of the AITUC tried to isolate the militant Durgapur union with a view to carry out their class collaborationist policies but failed miserably due to the vigilance of HSEU, Durgapur.

The representatives of INTUC and AITUC in the Study Group of Iron & steel Industry sided with the employers on every aspect of industrial relations. They opposed strikes, and supported increase in the workload. This report has given a handle to the steel barons to further attack the workers. The Conference therefore strongly condemns these members of Study Group who have betrayed the workers and calls upon the trade unions in Steel industry to denounce the Study Group findings.

The public sector bureaucrats in steel industry are playing havoc with the steel plants. Corruption, nepotism, bribery is rampant in the steel plants while the normal trade union rights are sought to be suppressed by all possible means. The inefficient running of the steel plants is being utilised by the managements of IISCO and TISCO to further carry out their anti-working class policy.

The drive to intensify the work-load is in full swing in all the steel plants. Though due to expansion programme there was no large-scale retrenchment, the employment potential has not increased according to requirements. This was done through extracting more work with the help of incentive schemes and over-time payments.

The system of contract labour is still prevailing in the construction work as well as production and maintenance sections of the steel plants. These contractors evade all labour legislation and there is no security of jobs. Even where constructions is departmentally undertaken workers face retrenchment after the completion of work.

The All-India Trade Union Conference calls upon the steel workers to build up a strong movement in the steel industry by mobilising the workers of all shades of opinions on the following common demands :

1. Need-based minimum wage and cent per cent D. A.
2. Revision of the placement of worker in different categories and grades. Necessary increments when fitting workers into new grades.
3. Free transport facilities to all workers to and from work place to the residential areas.
4. One month's wages as gratuity per year of service without any per-conditions.
5. Free quarters to be provided to every worker within 3 months of joining service. If no quarters are given 25 per cent of the total wages as house rent allowance.
6. Revision of Production Bonus Scheme in favour of workers and to cover all the employees within the scheme.
7. Equal leave facilities to all workers.
8. Immediate abolition of contract labour and NMR systems and their absorption in production process in appropriate grades with continuity of service.
9. Abolition of Central Industrial Security Force.
10. Extention of education facilities and free education up-to Class VIII.

11. Extension of hospital facilities.

32. ON ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS.

The All-India Trade Union Conference takes note of several local struggles conducted by eleven and half lakh workers employed in road transport industry against starvation wages and inhuman working conditions. Despite some monetary concessions won through bitter struggles from transport operators and State Governments, the wage level of road transport workers is still far below the poverty lines.

Prior to 1961, there was no law to govern the working conditions in the industry and transport operators were free to exploit the workers mercilessly. Even after enactment of the Motor Transport Workers' Act in 1961, Government excluded small operators from the purview of the Act affecting nearly half the transport workers. This has given rise to the evil of benami owners who evade taxes and labour laws. The wage Board for Road Transport Industry had to admit, that "there exists widely the practice of registering vehicles 'benami' ; the operator really owns a number of vehicles, but transfers them in the name of his relatives keeping in his name only one vehicle with a view to avoiding payment of taxes and compliance with labour laws.

The implementation of the Act is also defective and the corrupt officials who are in charge of its implementation have been openly protecting the transport operators. Over and above that, some State Governments have callously exempted State Transport undertakings from implementing certain provisions of the Motor Transport Workers' Act such as those relating to fringe benefits to workers, the hours of work, etc. The non-implementation of labour laws is also rampant in the so called co-operative societies formed by the implementation of the Act itself is stayed by the order of the High Court for years together while the State Government failed to take any action to get the stay order vacated. Moreover, the workers in goods transport have to work 12 to 14 hours a day which is even higher in case of breakdown etc. Drivers and conduc-

tors during the course of their duty had frequently to put up with the harrassment of corrupt policemen. The officials of the Road Transport Department have also been one of the major sources of irritation of transport workers.

The Wage Boerd for Road Transport industry has awarded Rs. 125 as the minimum wage to the workers which in many States is lower than the existing wages earned by them. The Wage Board has further offered a gratuity scheme which will be denied to a worker on the plea that he participated in "violent" activity. If a worker is further held responsible for the financial loss to the employer the amount will be deducted from the gratuity payable to the workers.

This Conference strongly condemns the representatives of INTUC and Dange group of AITUC on the Wage Board who have sold out workers' intercssts and agreed to such low rate of wages. These recommendations have given a big set-back to the transport workers' all-India movememt, by throwing some crumbs at the workers whose existing wages are even below the wage board recommendations.

It therefore wholeheartedly supports the following all-India demands of the road transport workers :

1. Immediate rise of 25 per cent in the existing wages as interim relief to be followed by bipartite settlement on the entire wage structure in the road transport industry, on a regional or all-India basis.
2. Introduction of a better gratuity scheme without any pre-conditions.
3. Modification of the Motor Transport Workers' Act to provide more facilities to workers to bring all workers under the purview of the Act and severe punishment to operators for violation of the Act. Withdrawal of all exclusion sanctioned by the State Government to various Government transport undertakings.
4. End of police harrassment of road transport employees.
5. Stringent measures against benami operators including confiscation of vehicles owned by them.

6. Reduction in hours of work and spread-over period for transport workers
7. Adequate provision for shelters, rest-rooms and other facilities on out-station duties in absence of which increase in quantum of 'bhattaa' and other allowances.

This Conference calls upon the road transport workers all over the country to build a powerful unity on these common issues on regional and all-India basis so that a strong movement can be launched to win better wages and working conditions for the workers.

33. ON THE SECOND WAGE BOARD IN SUGAR INDUSTRY

The All-India Trade Union Conference is of the view that the workers in the Sugar Industry are among the sections of the working population who are most ruthlessly exploited. Despite the fact that the Sugar Industry has been earning huge profits as a result of the merciless fleecing of the workers, the cane growers and the consumers and as a consequence of the Government of India's policies of partial decontrol, the wages of the workers has remained at a very low level.

The Second Wage Board for the Sugar industry has submitted its report and recommendations after a long delay. These recommendations have not only rejected the demand need-based living wage but also suggested wage levels which are much below those in many industries. While the minimum wage of the employees in the Hindustan Machine Tools, the Heavy Engineering Corporation, the Heavy Electricals, Hindusthan Aeronautics, the Dock Board and Port Trust have been fixed around the range of Rs. 185-210/-, while even the Cement and many other workers get minimum emoluments ranging from Rs. 185/- and more, the sugar workers are being commended minimum wages of Rs. 140-150/- depending on the zone.

The wage Board has rejected the demand for full neutralisation of Dearness Allowance.

The Wage Board has further rejected the long standing

demand for payment of retaining allowance of 50 per cent for all seasonal workers including the unskilled categories, thus condemning big sections of workers to starvation and misery for 4 to 8 months in a year.

Many other recommendations of the Wage Board are highly unjust and objectionable.

Hence the conference is of the firm opinion that the recommendations of the Second Wage Board be totally rejected.

The Conference further demands that the basic demands of the sugar workers relating to wages, D. A., retaining allowance, etc. etc. be negotiated afresh and settled forthwith.

The Conference further notes that the Sugar factory owners, in many parts of the country are seeking to attack the workers by retrenchment and imposition of increased workload, on the plea of rationalisation which they claim is necessary in view of the so-called problem of "Glut in the sugar market and over-production."

The Conference calls upon the Government of India to substantially slash down the excise levies on sugar and pass on the benefits to the workers, cane growers and consumers.

The Conference calls upon the sugar industry workers throughout the country, irrespective of affiliation to unite to launch a powerful campaign to win the just demands for wage revision and to resist the impending offensive of retrenchment.

The Conference further demands the immediate nationalisation of the Sugar Industry in the whole country, in the interest of the workers, the cane growers, the consumers and the whole nation.

34. ON DEMANDS OF TEXTILE WORKERS

The All-India Trade Union Conference notes the deepening of the crisis in the textile industry, which has hit the textile workers most severely,

The employment in the industry has gone down by over a lakh due to closure of mills, closing down of shifts and further rationalisation and modernisation measures of the mill-owners during the last four years. Thousands of casual and *badli*

workers do not get enough work in a month to make their both ends meet while lay-offs have become a regular feature in the industry.

The Government has given green signal for the introduction of automatic looms and modern spinning frames which are constantly reducing the job potential of the industry. By entering into agreement with the INTUC and other company unions various managements have increased the speed of the machines to extract more work from the workers.

The Second Wage Board for the textile Industry has given a paltry wage rise and imposed a virtual wage freeze on them for a period of ten years. The workers in West Bengal have been able to win Rs. 20 more than the Wage Board recommendations through a united strike struggle. In some States, however, workers had to resort to strike actions even to get the meagre rise awarded by the Wage Board.

The Wage Board recommendations provide a dangerous clause of rationalisation, which, if implemented, will impose further heavy workload and add to the already high exploitation of workers. The trade union movement will have to firmly oppose every such move by the mill-owners and prevent them from implementing their diabolical plans.

The much advertised Textile Corporation has failed to take over sufficient number of mills and run them properly. In Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gnjarat and Madhya Pradesh and other States wages and D.A. cuts were imposed on the workers while re-opening the closed mills. Workers have been denied even the minimum bonus payable under the Bonus Act. The suppression of T.U. and democratic rights of workers is galore in all the mills.

This Conference, therefore, supports the following major common demands raised by unions in textile industry :

- (1) Need-based minimum wage and cent per cent neutralisation ;
- (2) Gratuity of one month per year of service without existing pre conditions ;

- (3) No rationalisation and modernisation, no increase in workload and no retrenchment ;
- (4) Immediate take-over of all closed units and running them without reduction in total earnings of benefits to the workers and annulment of all legislations empowering State Governments to withhold application of labour laws in mills declared to be relief undertakings ;
- (5) Heavy reduction in excise duty on cotton cloth and benefits of this reduction be passed on to the consumers by reduction in cloth prices and to the workers by increasing their wages ;
- (6) Protection to handlooms and powerlooms from unhealthy competition by the mills ;
- (7) Nationalisation of cotton textile industry without compensation as a long-term solution of the textile crisis.

This Conference calls upon the textile workers to forge a powerful unity to fight for these common demands and pave the way for common action on an all-India basis which alone will prevent the textile magnates from imposing additional burdens on the textile workers.

35. ON HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

The Conference warmly greets the employees of the Himachal Pradesh Government who went on strike from the 24th April 1970. This struggle was forced upon them by the action of the State and Central Governments, who had given solemn undertaking that if and when the Scales of pay in Punjab were revised, the same scales of pay will be applied to the Himachal Pradesh employees, went back on the undertaking and revised their scales of pay, house rent and hill allowances in a way that employees' total emoluments were actually reduced by as much as from Rs. 25 to Rs. 70 per month.

The Government sought to suppress the strike by arresting 4,000 employees, dismissing over a hundred workers and

placing many more under suspension. In many places, the police lathi-charged and tear-gassed peaceful processions and meetings injuring hundreds of employees. But still the employees fought-undaunted by this brutal repression.

The Conference congratulates these courageous State Government employees. In the face of this determination, the Central Government had to come down and issue a communique conceding their demand for applying the Revised Pay Scales of Punjab.

This Conference further sends its greetings to trade unions in the Himachal Pradesh for extending every assistance to the State Government employees in their hour of trial.

The Conference condemns the Government, which forced the strike on the employees by going back on its own undertaking and launched brutal repression.

The Conference demands that all those arrested or convicted should be released forthwith and all those dismissed and suspended must be restored to service without any break in service.

36. GREETINGS TO JUTE WORKERS

The All-India Trade Union conference conveys its warm greetings to two lakh jute workers for their magnificent general strike in August 1969 which has blazed a new trail in the history of our T. U. movement. This united strike struggle—in which all the unions in jute industry, including the INTUC and management staff participated—broke the resistance of the recalcitrant jute managements and compelled them to increase the wages of workers by Rs. 30 per month by way of interim settlement.

The profit hungry jute mill owners who are accustomed since the old British imperialist rule to thrive on inhuman exploitation of jute grower and factory workers were aided by the policy of the Congress Government since independence. The jute magnates have built up fortune out of fabulous profits earned in this industry and invested crores of rupees in

various other industries. They have amassed huge black money by speculative transactions and tax evasion. The Central Government instead of checking these malpractices, continued to give concessions after concession to the industry in the name of export promotion which is largely responsible for the ill-gotten wealth of jute mill-owners.

The united struggle of jute workers was immensely helped by the then U. F. Government which resolutely supported the workers. The police did not intervene in favour of jute bosses as was done during strikes in Congress regime. The state labour department fully supported the cause of workers and brought pressure on the mill-owners to concede just demands of the workers.

The success of the jute strike has brought into existence the most powerful organization of workers. The Bengal Chatkal Mazdur Union which played a leading role in the struggle enrolled over 94000 members during and after the strike which reflected the rising confidence among the jute workers on the path of struggle.

This conference is proud to note that this BCMU has played an important role in the struggle against revisionist AITUC leadership and has joined this historic conference.

This conference however notes that with the toppling of the UF Government the jute barons are at large to launch new offensive against the workers. In the current Central budget they got more tax concessions from the Congress Government than what they had to pay to workers as a result of strike. The split in UF has also greatly helped the jute mill owners in strengthening their resistance to workers demands. No concession was given to the jute workers after the fall of UF ministry.

This conference welcomes the constitution of the Commission of Enquiry for jute industry by the U.F. Government since such a step was long overdue in view of the prevalent malpractices in the industry and expresses its apprehensions that after toppling of the UF Government, the present reactionary Government is likely to scuttle the Commission to

protect the interests of the jute magnates. This conference calls upon the jute workers to be on guard against any such machinations if planned by vested interests.

This conference while congratulating the jute workers for their remarkable unity and strike struggle calls upon them not to rest on laurels since there is no ground for complacency. The new situation, after the fall of the UF Government, calls for more determined struggle to force the unwilling jute mill-owners to give further concessions to jute workers.

37. ON CONDITIONS OF COAL MINERS

The horrowing working condition of coal-miners is still a matter of great concern for the entire Indian Trade Union movement. With every million ton of coal produced in India, three workers lose their lives, about 30 receive serious injuries while scores of others receive minor injuries. In addition to this, health of thousands of workers is seriously affected due to inhaling of coal dust while on duty.

Despite two decades of rule the Congress Government has to remain dependent on foreign countries even for the supply of safety equipment such as electric cap lamp, bulbs and spares, which according to official experts can be easily produced in India. Despite fanfare and publicity about National Safety Weeks the mine owners have showed utter disregard to safety rules. The Government officials do not inspect mines properly and give false reports favourable to the mine-owners. Even all accidents are not recorded, and when they are recorded, there is gross under-estimation of the casualty figures.

The contribution of mine-owners to the coal mines Welfare Fund is just token and elementary needs of the workers are not met properly. Even provisions like pit head baths, sanitary latrines and clean drinking water is not available to a large number of workers. According to the figures published by Coal Mines Welfare Commissioner, out of 605 coal mines required to provide creches, 450 had provided them while out of 574 coal mines required to provide pit head baths only 301

provided them. The houses around coal mines are rightly called "improved cattle sheds."

The miners recruited under Coal-fields Recruiting Organisation (C R O) are the most exploited section of the workers. The camps of these workers are virtual jails and no service conditions exist for them. Despite several recommendations to abolish this system it still exists in many mines.

Though the Central Wage Board for Coal Mining Industry gave its recommendations in the beginning of 1967, they have not been fully implemented in several mines including some of the public sector mines. The coal miners had to go on strikes several times even to get these recommendations implemented.

A large section of colliery owners have not deposited the Provident Fund contributions amounting to crores of rupees, and the Central Government refused to take any action against the culprits. Besides the Provident Fund Department is resorting to dilatory tactics in paying the claim of workers with a view to extract bribes from them. Similarly, the Government is not taking action against delay by the management in paying the wages of workers. Nearly 3000 certificate cases are pending in Asansol Court alone since 7-8 years and the officials are obstructing the disposal of these cases and actually abetting the crime.

Manipulation of records, massive under-payments or non-payments, delay in making payments, maintenance of fictitious muster rolls, and resorting to the tactics of changing names of workers in thousands, failure to maintain attendant registers, arbitrary change of working conditions, summary dismissal of workers for trade union activities, are features in many coal mines.

The coal miners all over India had to face repeatedly gangster attacks by the mine-owners and their agents on the one hand and police on the other. In this task, the AITUC and INTUC leadership have a helping hand to them. The ghastly murder of eight active workers of Colliery Mazdur Sabha, Raniganj, at Patmohna Colliery was engineered by the gangsters of the AITUC leadership against which

79 thousand coal miners downed their tools on 12th February 1970. The INTUC goondas brutally killed Com. Ramdeo Singh in Dhanbad on 13th September 1969 to terrorise the workers in the area.

In Raniganj coal-belt nearly 150 police cases have been launched against the leading activist of Colliery Mazdur Sabha, Raniganj while 45 activists have been put behind bars. In Bihar, Com. A. K. Roy has also been detained on false charges to suppress the militant T.U. movement in Dhanbad region.

The All-India Trade Union Conference congratulates the miners who have courageously resisted the mine-owners' attack on their working and living conditions' and supports their following common demands :

1. Immediate introduction of seven hours shift without any reduction of wages,
2. Total abolition of C.R.O contract and sardar system in all mines.
3. Provision of more funds for coal miners Welfare Fund and their control through elected representatives of workers through secret ballot.
4. Strict implementation of all Mines Safety Regulations, and Stringent punishment for violation of the rules.
5. Improvement in Mines Act in favour of workers.
6. Full implementation of recommendations of Coal Mines Wage Board including those relating to gratuity, leave facilities and full payment for TB and similar diseases till recovery.
7. Improved housing facilities to all the miners.
8. Stop all police intervention in favour of mine-owners.
9. Immediate action against gangster hirelings of mine-owners,
10. Withdrawal of all false cases registered against coal miners and trade union leaders and release of all the imprisoned T. U. activists.
11. Nationalisation of coal mining industry.

The Conference calls upon the coal miners to build a unity

on an All-India basis for united action on these common demands and resist the jungle law prevailing in the coal mining belts in the country with all their might.

38. ON INTRODUCTION OF CENTRAL INDUSTRIAL SECURITY FORCE

This All-India Trade Union Conference strongly condemns the pernicious move of the Central Government to introduce the notorious Central Industrial Security Force in the name of safety and security of public sector undertakings. In practice, it is a measure to suppress the trade union activity and impose company unions over the workers.

Under the Central Industrial Security Forces Act, the authorities of public sector undertakings can use armed personnel with powers to arrest any worker without warrant and detain him for an indefinite period. The CISF is also empowered to lathi-charge and even open fire on the workers for which they are not liable to render any explanation to the State Authorities.

The Conference calls upon the working class of India to resolutely oppose the introduction of CISF and defeat the machinations of the Government to establish armed gangsterism in the public sector plants.

39. ON WORKERS IN POWERLOOM AND PROCESSING INDUSTRIES

The powerloom and processing workers all over India are experiencing a ferocious offensive of the employers who are making strenuous efforts to pass on the burdens of the economic crisis on the workers. These workers are practically living on starvation wages and have no security of service of any kind.

The All-India Trade Union Conference welcomes the growing consciousness among powerloom workers to fight for improvement in their working and living conditions. In Maharashtra, the powerloom workers are taking step to organise on a State-wide basis to launch a united struggle for

higher wages. Over two thousand workers in West Bengal employed in 35 powerloom and processing industries downed their tools on 11th May last in support of their demand for higher wages, D. A., categorisation, gratuity, etc. They also conducted united struggles against closure of some factories.

This All India Trade Union Conference while congratulating the workers for their struggle assures full support in their forthcoming struggles.

40. ON WORKERS IN FILM INDUSTRY

This All-India Trade Union Conference greets three lakh workers and technicians in film industry for their struggles for job security, introduction of minimum wage, improved working conditions, etc.

The film industry, which is controlled by the big business, has not only been a source of fabulous profits but has been systematically used by the bourgeoisie to use it as a medium to propagate bourgeois ideology and morals. The British and American film magnates have also penetrated in a big way in the market and are propagating imperialist "culture" and degenerated them to corrupt the minds of our youth.

Despite huge profitability the film magnates have even refused to implement the paltry minimum wages notified by the State Governments under the Minimum Wages Act. The recommendations of the Tripartite Committee appointed by the Government in 1968 with regard to the service conditions, gratuity, etc. has not also been implemented.

This Conference therefore calls upon the motion picture employees all over India to close up their ranks and launch a countrywide movement to force the unwilling employers to concede their just demands.

41. ON NATIONALISATION OF CALCUTTA

ELECTRIC SUPPLY CORPORATION LTD.

This All-India Trade Union Conference views with grave concern the chaotic manner the Calcutta Electric Supply

Corporation Ltd. controlled by the British Monopoly capital having a network of busines for generation and distribution of electricity over a vast area, 550 sq. miles in and around Calcutta is being run.

The aforesaid area having a network of industries bears immense importance in industrial, economic lives of this State. All the industries of the area depend on this British-owned company for their essential requirement of power. But the Company is hostile to improve the generation and distribution of electricity. One of the generating stations, has become obsolete, where 500 workers are threatened to be redundant, and the conditions of two other generating stations are deteriorating fast. The conditions of 18 Rotary sub-stations are worsening fast due to lack of proper maintenance.

Not withstanding all these the business licence of this Company has been extended for ten years from 1969 shamelessly by notorious Dharam Vira, the then Governor of the State. In doing so, he acted arbitrarily to serve the interest of foreign capital despite strong opposition and protests from various quarters, including the Union.

As a result, the Company has announced enhanced rates of charges in certain spheres for the present to fetch them an additional annual revenue of Rs. 2 crores.

This Conference protests against enhancement of rates and demands immediate nationalisation of the Company without payment of any compensation.

42. SUPPORT TO RAYON WORKER'S DEMANDS

This All-India Trade Union Conference expresses its serious concern at the harrowing working conditions prevailing in the Rayon industry. The employers in this industry have been showing utter disregard towards these conditions which have resulted in injurious effects on the health of several workers. The managements have refused to implement the recommendations of Mangekar Committee while the Government is behaving like a silent spectator and abetting the crime.

By resorting to worst type of exploitation the employers in this industry have amassed huge profits during the last decade. In spite of capacity to pay they are nonchalantly refusing adequate wage-rise to the workers. They are in a position to do so only due to the weak all-India movement of Rayon workers.

The Conference calls upon the Rayon workers to build a powerful movement on an all-India level so that the employers are forced to concede the following major demands :

1. Need-based minimum wages and cent per cent D.A.
2. Five hour working day for Viscose Rayon workers as recommended by Mungekar Committee.
3. Adequate protective arrangements from injurious gases inside the plants.

43. REPRESSION ON STRIKING WORKERS OF NEYVELI LIGNITE MINES (TAMILNADU)

The All-India Trade Union Conference strongly condemns the most brutal repression on 17,000 workers and employees of Neyveli Lignite Mines who went on strike from 2nd to 5th May in support of their long-standing grievances.

The notorious Madras police pounced upon the workers and resorted to reckless firing four times on 2nd and 3rd May, killing several workers and injuring many others. During the police atrocities after the firing thousands of cycles of workers were smashed to pieces. They entered the residential quarters of workers and brutally assaulted children and womenfolk. Several women were raped while many others were forced to stand naked at lathi point. Even some children lost their precious lives, as a result of blows received by police lathis. Utensils and other properties of workers worth lakhs of rupees were looted by these police gangsters.

This Conference strongly condemns attitude of the Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers despite these facts were brought to his notice. He refused to move in the matter which, only showed his complicity in these inhuman atrocities.

This Conference congratulates the heroic workers of

Neyveli for resisting the police brutalities heroically and demands immediate institution of open judicial inquiry and severe punishment of guilty officials.

44. ON CONDITIONS OF TOBACCO WORKERS IN ANDHRA

This All-India Trade Union Conference expressed its deep concern at the deteriorating conditions of Tobacco workers in Andhra Pradesh.

The Dangeite leadership of tobacco workers treacherously signed an agreement accepting increase in workload and onerous standing orders providing unbridled right to the management to suspend a worker upto a maximum period of 90 days on the plea of low production and alleged "misconduct."

This conference greets the twentyone thousand workers of I.L.T.D. (Tobacco Dept.) who went on one day's protest strike on 2nd April led by I.L.T.D. Workers' Federation. The AITUC leadership which signed the anti-working class agreement was also forced to join the action, seeing the deep discontent among the workers.

This Conference fully supports the demands of the ILTD workers including those relating to better service conditions, opposition to retrenchment and increase in workload and for 20 per cent bonus and calls upon the workers to carry forward their struggle till the demands are achieved.

45. ON ANTI-WORKING CLASS AGREEMENT IN SMALL ENGINEERING INDUSTRY IN BIHAR

This All-India Trade Union Conference strongly denounces the AITUC leadership for accepting in Bihar minimum wages of Rs. 100 for factories classified under Group A, Rs. 130 for Group B, and Rs. 165 for Group C, in small scale engineering units, below the then existing wage rates in several factories. The agreement signed in a State Tripartite meeting has even provided stopping of annual increments existing prior to the agreement.

This Conference calls upon the workers in Bihar to launch a State-wide united struggle to repudiate this betrayal and join together in a fight for higher wages than provided for by this Tripartite agreement.

46. ON SUPPORT TO HINDUSTAN ALUMINIUM WORKERS STRUGGLE

This All-India Trade Union Conference strongly condemns the victimisation of hundreds of workers by the Birla management of Hindusthan Aluminium Corporation, Mirzapur, in Uttar Pradesh and demands immediate reinstatement of these employees.

As a result of the refusal of the management to make workers permanent, only 3000 workers out of 7000 employed are now permanent while rest are either temporary or working under contractors.

The management has resorted to the tactics of suppression of all trade union rights. The Birlas who own the entire property around the railway lines have refused to grant permission even to hold trade union meetings near the factory premises.

This Conference congratulates the workers of Hindusthan Aluminium Corporation for their struggle against the policy of victimisation and for T.U. rights and assures them full support in their fight against Birla monopoly.

47. SUPPORT TO CALCUTTA G.E.C. WORKERS STRUGGLE

The All-India Trade Union Conference extends its resolute support to the heroic struggle of 2000 workers employed in GEC Calcutta against arbitrary closure of the factory by the management from 9th March 1970.

This closure was a deliberate act of the British monopoly concern to pressurise the workers who were fighting for a higher wage and better incentive scheme. The management which earlier accepted an incentive scheme during the United Front regime unilaterally stopped it immediately after

toppling of the U.F. Government. The Conference denounces the malpractices of the management and the Presidential administration in withdrawing the concession won by the workers during U.F. regime and calls upon the G.E.C. workers to continue their struggle till the factory is reopened and their demands are conceded in full.

48. ON FORMATION OF CITU

This Conference accepts the recommendation of the Goa Convention of the members of the General Council of the AITUC and members of State Committees and decides to form itself into a separate all-India organisation.

The name of the new organisation will be the Centre of Indian Trade Unions. Its flag will be red flag with hammer and sickle with the letters CITU inscribed on it.

This Conference provisionally adopts the Constitution circulated to the delegates, with one change—the members of the Executive Committee elected by the General Council should not exceed thirty-five ; and that the members of the General Council should be elected on the basis of one member for every five thousand members.

In view of the fact that the draft circulated is mainly based on the old AITUC Constitution, which does not provide guarantees for democratic functioning, including elections on the basis of proportional representation, it asks the Executive Committee to prepare a new draft after taking into consideration the amendments that have been sent and will be sent.

The Executive Committee shall prepare the draft in four months and place it before the General Council at the next meeting, for adoption.

5.

Concluding Speech Of Com. B. T. Ranadive

Comrades,

We are now reaching the end of our labours during this historic conference that we have held. You all represent the various trade union and industrial centres of India. You have come to Bengal where some of the biggest working class fights in recent history have been fought and you have all seen that the new T.U. Central organisation that we have launched already commands the respect and influence of lakhs of workers, who face lathi charges and police bullets, as a part of their trade union struggle.

This Conference and this new organisation have come into existence not because of a fight between two leaders, not because of a factional fight between two sections but on the

crest of one of the biggest strike waves that swept over India involving lakhs of workers. And it is they who have participated in the recent struggles, those that have experienced the repression and those that have also experienced the joy and happiness of being victorious in these struggles—it is they who are founding this new organisation, the lakhs of workers, their leaders and not this or that individual. I am asking you to remember this because after a few years, some other reformist, like Dange, might write and say that the AITUC was split by this or that person.

We are starting a new organisation, out of the very needs of the workers' struggles, out of the class struggle, to which we adhere.

You all have endorsed the proposition of the Goa Convention that it is no longer possible to work inside the AITUC dominated by the Dange leadership, for working class unity, for class struggle, for defence of the daily interests of the working class. It is not because there was a penchant for a new organisation, but because the very necessity of promoting the unity of the working class demanded that the initiative should no longer be surrendered to the Dange Group, to the reformist group in the AITUC but should be taken by the militant unions, by the workers themselves. It is out of this that the necessity for the new organisation arose.

During the course of the debate on the report of Com. P. Ramamurti, every one of you who spoke, endorsed his report and arrayed much more evidence, your own independent evidence, to show how the dominant leadership of the AITUC was either disrupting the struggle or betraying the working class and doing everything that was necessary to disrupt the unity of the working class.

That is now our common experience. It is this common experience that has brought us here together. But is that all? Is the Conference being called to deliberate on Dange & Company? Have we come here travelling hundreds of miles, have we gathered here in thousands only to declare our opinion about the dominant leadership

of the AITUC? We are concerned with something much more serious, something which is very vital for the very existence of the working class and that is the class struggle against our main enemy. It is only because the dominant leadership would not allow the All India Trade Union Congress to function as an organ of that class struggle, it is only because it would not rally behind it the entire working class to fight our main class enemies, it is only because of this that we have to part company with it and not because we have some personal quarrel with it. (Applause.)

Our comrades must remember that in India, today, we are locked in a deadly combat with our main class enemies, against the monopolists, against the big capitalists, and the Government which protects them. Com. Ramamurti mentioned what is happening in other countries, he briefly referred to the international situation. While we are carrying on the T.U. movement, we have to remember the period in which we are living in; if we do not remember the international developments and the mighty battles that are taking place all over the world our Conference will not have taught you much. You passed a resolution on Cambodia. From where did American imperialism get this courage to attack a country like Cambodia, when its military prestige lies in dust in Vietnam? Does it show the strength of American imperialism or is it not the gamble of a desperate adventurer who now being cornered from all sides, wants to gamble with his very life, with his very existence? That is the world situation, to which some reference was made by earlier speakers. We, the working class of the world, we, the toilers of the world, we, the common people of the world, are on the march, on the victorious march. This age is ours, this age is of the common people and the working class, and whatever the tribulations and trials might come, whatever bombs American imperialism might hurl against anyone, the judgement is already written on imperialism and capitalism—you are a dead society, bound to be dead in the near future; (Applause) and the working class is going to bury you.

The entire socialist world, the mighty Soviet union, People's China with its breath-taking advance, the imperishable struggle of the Vietnamese people all are the proud achievements of the world working class. A titanic struggle between socialism and imperialism is going on and we are part of this struggle. It is in this period when the whole world is in turmoil, that we are living and every struggle of ours, even in the remotest corner of India, even in the remotest factory, has to partake something of the big events that are taking place in the world. That is why today you find that every struggle has to be desperately fought. Every T. U. struggle has to be desperately fought, organised consciously if you really want to defend the daily interests of the working class. On the one hand, we have passed in the last two years through a period of tremendous onslaught against us, the type of which the present generation of workers had never seen, something which the earlier generation of the thirties, and forties, had seen. That tremendous onslaught took the form of factories closing, thousands being rendered unemployed, workers being crushed, workers being repressed, strikes extending for four and half months. In the preceding period, reformism had taught that the strike was only some kind of satyagraha like activity. Now every strike struggle has become a serious struggle. Despite this in many struggles, the working class of Bengal, the working class of Kerala, the working class of Tamilnadu, the working class of many other States came out victorious, and a peculiarity of the position in Bengal was that in the midst of the worst capitalist crisis, the working class helped by the U. F. Government which played a vital role in defending it, turned tables against the capitalist class on many issues and won signal victories as in jute, in tea and in textiles. And yet in the country as a whole the working class lost tremendously, had to put up with unemployment, closure of factories, because the revisionists failed to organise the struggle and betrayed it. To a great extent the burdens of the crisis were passed on to the workers. The Government advertise every

day, that the economic crisis is no more. The next day it says that some of the public sector factories must be closed. Unemployment goes up, economic conditions continue to deteriorate.

The economic crisis is shattering the unity of our enemies. Ten years ago, five years back, four years back, these very people stood united against us. The Congress stood united against us, against the working class, against the common man. By 1967, the Congress unity disappeared. Our workers do not know, our ordinary people do not know, it is their hands that have shaken the foundation of the Congress, it is their struggles that have shaken the foundation of the Congress and today, it stands divided. From the factories, the voice is not yet coming, my enemy is getting weaker, and weaker, and how shall I behave? But that is the position. On the one hand, attempts are being made to suppress our movement; on the other hand, the ruling class is getting weakened. At the same time, somebody else is attacking us. We are being disrupted by the reformists and revisionists. A simultaneous attack is being made on us by the Government, the capitalists and the reformist and revisionist disruptors.

It is in this context that we have to understand the tasks before our organisation. Economic crisis is intensifying, political crisis is deepening and the deepening of that crisis no longer means simply police, jail, no longer means simply lathi-charges, not even martyrdom by dying in a police firing. It often leads to stabbing by goondas in the lanes and bye-lanes of Calcutta. That is the shape of class struggles which has started in W. Bengal. It is one thing to face the police. But you return home after a good day's T.U. work, enter your lane and you are attacked from behind by a goonda of the capitalist or perhaps of one of your earlier united front parties. In Kerala the same thing is happening. When we say that the class struggle is deepening, understand that in these two States, especially in West Bengal, even in T. U. struggles, even in ordinary struggles, in any struggle, there is some murder, some stabbing, some shedding of blood.

Bloodless struggles seem to have been over, our enemies are attacking us continuously.

We have already explained why we have to start this new organisation. It is precisely because in this period, only an organisation devoted to the unity of the working class, and pledged to lead its united resistance will be able to defend its daily interests. Others will just chatter and in the end, betray. That is why to accept the domination of the Dange Group means surrendering the initiative to fight the common battle of unity to these who are out for disruption. But it is not only T.U. disruption we have seen. It is not simply lack of democratic functioning that we see. Something much deeper has happened, during the last 3-4 years, and that something you see in the complete political somersault of the people who are now in the leadership of the AITUC. During the last four years, step by step they have completed their treachery. In Bengal and Kerala, instead of joining hands with the working class and other forces, to organise a united front against the Congress party and its policies, these people have gone to the other side, breaking up the U.F. in Bengal, breaking up the U.F. in Kerala and forming a ministry in Kerala which is repressing the workers, which is repressing the peasants. This political collapse of the dominant party in the AITUC has had its repercussions and its impact on their T.U. line. Their line of trade union disruption follows from their political line which has taken them deeper and deeper into co-operation with the Indira Congress. We demanded democratic functioning, we criticised their class collaborationist policies and tried to work inside the AITUC ; but now you see the full result of these class collaborationist policies ; they have openly joined hands with the Congress Party, with the Government ; they are even supporting the anti-strike proposals and legislations. How dangerous it is in this critical period to have an organisation which is expected to lead lakhs of workers and struggle, but whose leadership betrays them into the hands of the enemy ?

In the speeches made by our comrades, no doubt much enthusiasm was shown, no doubt some comrades came and

said, this separation should have taken place three years back itself. But we require something more than mere enthusiasm to make our organisation an impregnable fortress of working class unity. Have we given up all our wrong ideas? If you play 'holi' with the revisionists, then the reformist colour is bound to stick to your clothes or on your body. All these days you have more or less been playing 'holi' with the reformists. Our criticism was more like throwing some 'gula' and nothing else. Now we have to reveal ourselves to ourselves. A unity resolution was passed at our instance at the Bombay Session of the AITUC in 1966. I will not ask how many of you have tried to practise that resolution. In that resolution we agreed that in order to unite the working class inside the AITUC, we should carry on the fight against the monopolists, against American imperialism; that resolution also contained a demand for friendly relations with People's China and they under our pressure, could not oppose a single item. What happened? We did not do much to carry it into practice, leaving the initiative to the revisionists.

We charged them with economism. We charged them saying that they were not taking the working class seriously. We said that during the course of the strike struggles and the militant struggles of the working class, they were trying to imprison the workers in the economism, they were not trying to take them forward to a greater socialist consciousness, they were not trying to take them to a greater democratic consciousness; no doubt in our advanced cadres we have overcome or are overcoming these weaknesses; but in many parts of the country—I am not saying everywhere—what are our credentials, the credentials to be a revolutionary, trade unionist? Our practice has yet to change. We have correctly understood the Dange line is a reformist and revisionist line, and have rejected it in the T.U.s., have started our organisation, but if our practice remains the same, then this becomes a non-genuine, an insincere fight, a fight which need not be started. That is why we say, the resolutions, we have passed, the resolution on international solidarity, the

resolution on threat of American imperialism to our country, the resolution for agrarian revolution, the resolution for supporting the peasantry, the resolution for the democratic front, these should become the common consciousness of the ordinary worker, these should replace the present consciousness of the ordinary worker ; they should not be stored in the consciousness of a few leaders only. This is the point that must be remembered.

We are starting a new organisation with a new line. We wish to give a new orientation to the T. U. movement. But for that all the leaders of the T.U. movement, every one of us, must change his own consciousness, must be determined to give up the old consciousness and the old practice ; then alone will we be able to carry in the concrete a correct struggle against the reformist line of all others. And what is our struggle ? We have already stated that our struggle is struggle for the unity of the working class, unity of the T.U. movement. That unity should extend to all workers. If you study the T.U. statistics of our country, you know that a major part of the working class is unorganised, it is neither in the INTUC nor with the HMS nor with the AITUC. If you take the strike struggles of 1968, 40 per cent man-days were lost in the strike struggles carried on by unions which were not affiliated to any central organisation. Understand, 40 per cent of the man-days lost in this country, recent statistics show, were carried on by unions which were not affiliated to any central organisations. During the last year or so, unions of the AITUC were responsible for conducting 47 per cent of the total strikes in India. A major part of these strikes were fought in West Bengal. And we find that the most important battles in West Bengal were fought by unions which are represented here and which are no longer with the AITUC. (Applause) This is a statistical fact which is recorded long before we decided to take our own course and have our own organisation. That is a matter of pride for us but even then a large number of strike struggles are carried on by trade unions outside any central organisation. T. U. unity, unity for resistance means every

worker whether he belongs to some organisation or not, whether he is organised or unorganised, must be rallied, on this or that issue, to join the common class struggle. And that is why we must see today that the struggle for unity, which we want, becomes the foundation stone, the foundation of our activities.

In their anger, some people might concentrate their fire on the revisionists and forget the main enemies. This will be inexcusable. It is exactly the thing that the revisionists do when they attack us. Should we do that mistake? We fight reformism, we fight revisionism, we fight every such tendency, only because our common class struggle against our main enemy is hampered. Every worker must see in us the sacred defender of his interests, the sacred defender of the unity of the working class in the struggle against the employers; they must realise that we fight the revisionists or the policies of the INTUC only because they disrupt the common struggle. Our unions if they are afraid now, of bold U.F. tactics, of bold U.F. offers to revisionist unions, reformist unions, wherever they have following, then we will fail in our efforts for unity. This is the time when the working class demands unity, this is the time when the working class on its own thinks that unless it is united, the offensive can not be met. This is the time when our organisation must jump into the fry, and tell everyone, here is the banner of unity, of common action, joint action. Let everyone who stands for unity irrespective of his organisation and affiliation join this banner, experience all policies and decide for himself the correct way. (Applause.) This is our message to the working class, not a secluded organisation to protect this or that group but at the same time, no compromise with reformist practice, no compromise with revisionist sabotage, no more cheating of the working class in the name of a false conception of unity. Working class unity, working class struggle and fight against the reformist sabotage in daily struggle—these must go together. The fight against reformist ideology and practice must be understood by the working class not as a partisan

fight between this and that party, but as a fight between a correct policy for the working class and a wrong policy for the working class. (Applause.) This is the tactics of uniting the working class and simultaneously isolating all poisonous ideologies.

You must remember also what great importance Lenin attached to the fight against reformism in the T. U. movement. He told the advanced workers in Germany, in England, in America, you will never be able to raise the question of political power of the working class unless you vanquish the reformist influence in the T. U.s and drive out the reformist leaders. To achieve it, you must have influence over the mass of workers, win their confidence. Therefore, the fight against reformist practice in the trade unions has to be combined with the growing struggle for unity in action of the working class, the two cannot be separated. If the two get separated, you are finished. The one is the complement of the other, the more you are able to organise the unity of action and struggle, the more difficult it becomes for the reformists, to cheat the working class ; the more you are able to carry on your propaganda properly against reformism and its concrete practice, the easier it becomes for you to organise joint action of the working class and face the capitalist class. You have to re-organise yourselves completely. If supposing we were to put a condition for affiliation, that only those unions will be affiliated, who at least follow their own constitution, i. e. hold their monthly meetings regularly, hold their Executive meetings regularly, do not take decisions without consulting the executive of the workers—how many unions represented here can be affiliated? Absence of democratic functioning of unions is a basic disease of the trade union movement in our country. Democratic functioning means what? In most of the unions, is it a fact or not that the ordinary worker is more of a guest in the union than the man whose fortress it is, whose house it is. Good, well-intentioned, honest, men of integrity—but some of them slowly became trade union bureaucrats, they dominate the

unions. A tendency is there to make the union a preserve of a few leaders, instead of a widespread organisation of the mass of workers. It only becomes a focal point—the workers are loyal. In strike struggles, they participate, they pay union subscription, but leave the taking of decisions to the leaders. The consciousness that we have created is such that not a single worker protests that you are functioning the union undemocratically. They think that unions are to be functioned in this manner. It is a business of the leaders to carry on the work of the unions, some times, specially, if strike is there, we will come and join. What is the difference between the reformists and ourselves if we continue unions like this? And we say, we want to unite the working class. When we say that we want to organise the resistance of the working class, we want first of all to say, that the unions of ours must become a real live thing for every workers who rallied round its banner and every worker must consider that here is my fortress, not the leaders' fortress, or the leaders' house, but the ordinary workers' house, that is there, that must be our line. (Applause.) Otherwise there is no difference between ourselves and the reformists.

Take one of the basic principles of T.U. organisation which revolutionary experience has taught us, which in the earlier years was a must for every revolutionary, on the basis of which the rank and file workers became the leaders, huge unions were founded, and huge strike struggles could be conducted. In strike struggles, the union executive is not sufficiently broad based to conduct a big strike struggle, a strike committee must be elected not only by union members but all the mass of strikers. And that must be the organ of strike. It is through this organ of strike, that the battle between the reformists and revisionists on the one hand and the revolutionaries on the other hand were fought in the thick of strike struggles, the reformist policy was completely isolated in the strike committees and the revolutionaries marched ahead. But now sometimes strikes go on for months and no strike committee is formed. It is essentially a basic

mistake, a wrong thing for which in the end we have to pay some price. Everything that revolutionary experience has taught, if you deviate from it, if you violate it, you will get some kick somewhere from the capitalists. We demand democratic functioning in the unions, in the strike, everywhere, because we want to bring the workers in the common struggle not as spectators, but as active participants, as active leaders. Then alone the grip of reformist and revisionist ideology over the T.U. movement can be broken.

Our work generally is outside the factory, constant political and T.U. work, that political work which is a part of the T.U. work, that constant work inside the factory is a rarity; it is there in some places, but it is a rarity. What does it mean? Why has the revolutionary experience of the T.U. movement everywhere insisted that for the T.U. its political and economic work, the basic thing must be the factory, alone you catch that backward non-T.U. worker, who does not even pay the T. U. dues, if you want to catch him, if you want to have U.F. with him, if you want to have the U.F. with the most backward workers, then catch him where he is—he does not attend even your factory gate meetings, he will not attend your street meetings, but because the capitalist brings him inside the factories, we should catch him there. These are the methods of U. F. with non-T.U. workers through which we have to build and forge unity. Inside the factory, there may be three unions, several unions; it is only on the factory basis that the U.F. of the workers from below is forged so that the resistance of the top leaders of the various unions crumbles down. That is why we say in the present period unless all the old methods of functioning are changed, unless agitational methods of functioning are changed, and we come to the basic prolaterian methods of functioning and working class democratic methods of functioning, you will not be able to unite the workers, you will not be able to organise common resistance. It is not only enough to have good intensions, to have good lines what is nec-

ssary is also to have the correct organisational practice, which will yield results along with the good line.

The present method of our functioning, as well as the reformist functioning come precisely from reformism. As your line is, so your functioning is. If you believe in courts, if you believe in arbitration machinery, if you believe in workers' education schemes prepared by the bourgeois-landlord Government, if you believe in representation only, then you exactly have a corresponding organisation, a few handful of leaders, all like-minded people, who will normally accept all arbitration and keep the workers at a distance. Workers may be just members of the organisation but are never consulted. The class collaborationist T. U. line of the Dange group produced a corresponding T.U. organisation, the INTUC line produced a corresponding T. U. organisation, the HMS line also produced a corresponding T. U. organisation. We, who are breaking away from it, must see that, that T. U. organisation is replaced by a genuinely democratic organisation.

Comrades have asked—what should we do about the conciliation courts and other official machinery? We have come to the conclusion that wage boards, these workers' education schemes, conciliation, arbitration, so much workers' legislation, are all devices applying the brake to the class struggle. They are not devices to help forward the working class struggles. They are devices of the ruling class to put the brake on the working class struggles. This idea, this conception, we must have, this outlook we must have. That does not mean that you will simply from tomorrow, boycott everything. But with what outlook you use them and what do you teach the workers? While utilising these, when necessary, we do not create illusions about them, but by our honest militant and correct functioning, we shall prove to the workers that these are devices to delay our struggle to cheat us; we must repose confidence only in our organisation. But the reformists and revisionists are creating illusions to side-track the struggle. Whether conciliation produces results, whether arbitration produces results, or something else produces results, or legisla-

tion produces results, it only depends on how big is your movement to beat the capitalism. If you have a big *danda*, conciliation may produce good, if you have not got it, it simply ruins you, because everything in the end is the question of the proportionate strength between the two classes at a given question of class struggle.

Then, comrades, when we are talking of the disruption of the trade union movement, we must recognise its political origin. The INTUC is based on the Congress ideology; the HMS is part of the same thing, now the Dangeites also are pushing a variant of the same ideology. That is the influence of the bourgeois ideology on the working class.

There was a time when all our comrades said, INTUC is a *dalal* union. Yes, the leaders acted as open collaborationists, there is no doubt about it, some of them took money, from the capitalists, they betrayed and still sections of workers went behind them. Why? And we were very honest, men of integrity, but they would not join us. Because INTUC at one time, even now to a great extent, represented the influence of the national ideology of the bourgeoisie over the working class, the political following of the Congress party. The workers said this particular leader was bad, but we are not going to leave the Congress. That is while fighting for unity we have to reckon with the political influence of the Congress. We have to fight patiently against this ideology. The task cannot be achieved only by trade union exposure. The membership of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union is now 94,000. One united front strike with INTUC men participating, and the barrier is broken between it and the Red Flag and a vast mass comes to you and joins your union. (Applause.) All because you understand that it is still a force, we must have united front, you do not call them *dalals*. The powerful lever of economic struggle, when you correctly applied the U. F. tactics, was able to take the workers to a great extent—not completely—but to a great extent, out of the clutches of bourgeois leaders, at least on the T. U. front and open the flood-gates for our influence.

One anti-working class agreement does not mean that they are finished, one may be finished, one particular individual may go down in the eyes of the working class, but not the organisation because some political affiliations are there. That is why the fight against reformism of the INTUC leadership as well as of the AITUC leadership and H. M. S. leadership has to be carried on concretely, taking into consideration their influence, and every time, in the fight, we must come forward as the people who work for the unity of the working class, united resistance of the working class. Ideological fight combined with every tactic which supports unity of action of the working class—that should be our line so that united resistance and united struggles go ahead. If you make any vacillation here, any mistake here, it is going to give a big jolt, a big shock to us, big set-back.

When we are talking about the politicalisation of the working class, and bringing the working class more and more to common class consciousness, there should not be a tendency to under-estimate the importance of the powerful lever of the direct economic struggle. Once again look to West Bengal. In 1967 elections, Hindi speaking jute workers did not move away from the Congress. In 1969 elections, they moved just a little. The 1969 jute strike draws all sections in common action and the barrier is broken. The powerful lever of economic struggle operated through the U. F. of several unions, broke age-old barriers, brought the workers together ; but if we sit quiet on that and do not develop it into further political consciousness, there will be a set-back. In our consistent fight for the unity of the working class, united front understanding joint actions, whatever forms are necessary, we should be prepared to adopt.

We must remember that disruption is not being threatened simply from the T. U. side. Now much more down-right rightist attacks are being made on the working class consciousness and unless the working class consciousness is solidly organised, whatever T. U. organisation is there in this country, will be endangered.

Attempts are being made to inject our working class with the poison of linguistic chauvinism. If the worker considers that the tie of his language with his capitalist is firmer than his tie of common exploitation with the worker speaking another language, then he is finished. But that is what is being taught in Bombay by the Shiva Sena. The Shiva Sena has arisen in a situation in which reformism has led to the abandonment of class struggle in the working class. Reformism, of the Dange type, reformism of the S.S.P., chauvinism of the S.S.P., linguistic chauvinism of all these parties are today really responsible for the ideological base of the Shiva Sena. Similar developments have taken place in Tamil Nadu. In Andhra, it is not even linguistic chauvinism, the issue of Telangana versus Andhra has been raised. In one union, we find one section of the workers is with those who advocate separate Telangana and others are with those who advocate united Visalandhra. Working class is divided. On what issue? Who is dividing them? The landlords. Elsewhere the Jana-Sangh attempts to organise communal riots. Ahmedabad, Ranchi, Meerut and now in Maharashtra, have shown the sinister offensive to divide the workers by attacking the Muslim workers and their lives and properties. The Jana Sangh, the Shiva Sena, and other anti-Communist organisations are precisely using this weapon to create disruption in T.U. unity so that T.U. in Bombay for long time dared not think of taking up this challenge. Only when the ordinary worker begins to fight, then alone some kind of life enters into the trade unions. The worker starts that fight because the Shiva Sena in the name of giving jobs to the Maharashtrians, starts supplying strike-breakers to the capitalists. But the rise of the Shiva Sena movement is not fortuitous. It is a planned affair to disrupt the common movement and behind it is the hand of the CIA, also. You see the Congress Governments of some States in their fight against the Communists, utilising the same weapon. The Maharashtra Government takes the help of Shiva Sena and supports it. The Congress leaders exploit the same weapon

in their struggles against each other, as happened in Ahmedabad under the Syndicate Government. In Delhi, they hold a conference for National Integration and in Bombay, they support those who foment riots. This new challenge, if it is not taken up in time, the common working class movement, the common T.U. movement will be in danger, and there will be very little left of the common T.U. movement between the linguistic chauvinists, the communal rioters and casteists, all of whom are trying to distort the consciousness of the workers. Unless we devote much attention and take concrete steps to fight this menace, our organisation itself will not be able to make much progress.

Then, finally, what I want to say is, comrades, that we have indicated in a general way in the Constitution how the working class should really step out of its T.U. economism and go ahead. What is already impressing to the working class is precisely the experience of the two U.F. Governments in Kerala and West Bengal. I am not here referring to the activities of these two Governments in defending the interests of the working class to which previous speakers have referred. What I am referring to is the political experience of the working class. What is that political experience? Yes, the U.F. Governments gave it so many concessions. What does it mean? When the working class allies itself with all other democratic forces in the country in the common cause to defeat the Congress, then it gains in economic aims tremendously. It is now perhaps a common experience in West Bengal, but not yet felt in Bombay and other States. It is now clear that if the T.U. movement does not confine itself to pure economic questions, but considers itself to be part of people's struggles against the existing regime, and makes its own contribution to it, then not only the democratic forces get strengthened, but the T. U. struggle for economic demands of the workers also gets strengthened. The simple truth that millions of people should learn is that the moment this happens, the Government attacks. But why? Because of the working class and the common

man when united increases tremendously. And here again, you see who is afraid of it? Not only the capitalists, not only the Congress parties, but also some of our erst-while colleagues like the Dange revisionists who were in the U.F. and who now betrayed the U.F., because they are also not too much confident of where exactly this mass of workers and peasants, if they really start marching forward, where exactly they will go. Their vested interests are also affected. This common political experience has to be dinned into the ears of the working class of the various States, telling the workers, this is what the democratic alliance can achieve any time provided the T.U. and the working class take initiative in releasing these forces, in championing the cause of other sections. In West Bengal, one year back, two years back, a movement started among the workers, to go and protect the crops of small peasants or bargadars or others, crops which were threatened by the landlords. It was the beginning. But everywhere else, some times the slogan is given but the consciousness is so rooted in economism that actual practice is very little. Our TUs and our organisations will commit a fatal blunder if they seek to fight their economic battles in terms of the old ideology, if they tell the workers that the economic battles can be fought in isolation from the other democratic forces, without their consciousness and active support. Class struggle is going to be so fierce that every time fierce attacks will be made, and working class alone will not be able to meet those attacks unless it has got powerful allies in the democratic forces. We have to teach this repeatedly to the workers so that they are completely armed with this outlook.

We said American imperialism was growing threatening the independence of our country. But simultaneously it was taking away the jobs of the working class. Because the crisis was accentuated by our dependence on American loans; devaluation accentuated it leading to closure of engineering factories; and the workers lost jobs. But the trade union movement was not conscious of it. Today, they say, the

export of engineering goods has gone up by 30 per cent during the last year. How? Only because this country has been compelled to quote lower prices. The profits of the capitalists has been made up either by subsidies or lower wages. Thus the people and working class have to pay for the exports. The dependence of the economy on the U. S. A. and others is accentuating the economic crisis in this country and has actually started affecting the jobs of lakhs of our workers. But if you see before you only one engineering employer, and do not see the whole social system and the dependence on America, then you teach nothing to the worker. The INTUC does not do it, the HMS does not do it, the AITUC dominant leadership rarely talks about it. This is where the working class as a class can be more vigilant about national interests, about protecting the interests of all the people of the country, of all the toilers of this country, because the first attack of this policy means loss of jobs for the working class or out in wages.

The revisionist line has brought disruption in the working class and it is our business and our duty to see that unity is restored in the ranks of the working class and that its fighting forces are organised. The struggle for unity is a serious struggle, it has to be carried on with great precision, with great confidence and in the bargain and in the process, the forces of disruption have to be isolated. Only then, our organisation can really develop the fighting strength of the working class, can be an effective organ of the struggle to defend the working class and can be an effective organ to develop its consciousness further so that it can discharge its political obligations which history has placed on it. Only then we will be able to seize initiative in the common democratic struggle to replace the bourgeois-landlord Government by a genuine people's government, and forge a durable alliance with the peasant masses and other democratic forces and march to victory against the ruling classes who exploit the people and growingly yield to imperialist pressure.

The trade union movement can never forget that Socialism and freedom from exploitation will remain words if the work-

ing class does not consciously struggle to capture power ; and that the first step towards it is to remove the present bourgeois-landlord Government by a genuine people's Government. To constantly struggle to replace the present Government, to initiate and participate in the democratic struggles in alliance with the peasantry, to support the struggles for agrarian revolution, and to fight at each step the attacks of the present Government and for this purpose to throw its full weight for effecting a united front of all democratic forces—these are the necessary tasks of the trade union movement. To the extent that it fulfils them, its way to further advance against exploitation will be cleared.

I thank you very much. (Thunderous Applause.)

6.

Report of the Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee scrutinised all the forms submitted by unions participating in the All-India Trade Union Conference. The Committee found the forms in order and delegates and observers cards have been issued according to the rules.

In all, 1759 unions have sent delegates to this Conference having a total membership of 8,04,637. The total number of delegates sent by these union is 4264 while 1134 observers are participating in this Conference. One hundred and sixteen delegates have been sent by unions who do not seek affiliation to this Conference but desire to be fraternal with it. Thus the total participation of delegates, observers and fraternal delegates in this Conference comes to 5514.

The State-wise break-up of delegates, fraternal delegates and observers is as follows :

State	No. of Unions	Membership	Delegates	Observers	Fraternal delegates	Total participants
Andhra	46	15,209	68	30	—	98
Assam	7	2,577	15	2	—	17
Bihar	20	9,959	45	4	—	49
Delhi	3	5,707	29	1	—	30
Gujarat	2	1,000	2	—	—	2
Haryana	3	400	2	—	—	2
Kerala	424	1,52,058	285	—	—	285
M. P.	17	2,538	23	10	10	43
Maharashtra	21	19,766	50	9	—	59
Mysore	31	23,864	120	—	—	120
Orissa	4	806	6	—	12	18
Punjab	15	6,170	17	—	—	17
Rajasthan	29	8,559	53	1	—	54
Tamilnadu	122	57,100	227	—	—	227
Tripura	11	2,324	16	—	—	16
U. P.	40	19,994	81	12	11	104
W. Bengal	960	4,70,702	3211	1065	83	4359
Goa	4	5,904	14	—	—	14
Grand Total	1759	8,04,637	4264	1134	116	5514

In addition to this, the Reception Committee has reported to us that about 200 unions in various States with a membership of 1,50,000 have expressed their desire to affiliate to the new organisation. However, in absence of completion of all the formalities, the Committee suggests that the question of their affiliation should be considered by the next Executive Committee. Meanwhile, these unions may be asked to complete all the formalities during this period.

The Committee is happy to note that the largest union participating in the Conference—Bengal Chatkal Mazdur Union is having a membership of 94, 769 as per latest annual returns submitted to the Registrar of Trade Unions. The second largest union participating in this Conference is Colliery Mazdur Sabha, Raniganj, with 26,930 membership. The Hindustan Steel Employees' Union comes next with a total membership of 22,701. The committee also is pleased to note the participation of women delegates from West Bengal, Mysore, Andhra, Rajasthan and Bihar.

The Committee is confident that the massive participation of unions and delegates in such a large number will pave the way for building a strong organisation of the working class as builder of united action all over the country.

Signatures of members :

May 30, 1970

- (1) M. K. Pandhe
- (2) Biren Roy
- (3) A. Nallasivan
- (4) Santi Ghatak

7

List of Office Bearers

PRESIDENT :

B. T. Ranadive

VICE PRESIDENTS :

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Md. Ismail M.P. | 2. S.Y. Kolhatkar |
| 3. E. Balanandan | 4. Suhrid Mullick
Chowdhury M.P. |
| 5. Sudhin Kumar. | |

GENERAL SECRETARY

P. Ramamurti M.P.

SECRETARIES

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. M.K. Pandhe | 2. Manoranjan Roy M.P. |
| 3. Niren Ghosh. M.P. | |

TREASURER

Kamal Sarkar

GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Andhra Pradesh

- *1. N. Prasada Rao
- *2. Parasa Satyanaraya
3. G. S. Balajidas
4. P. Laxmidas.

Assam

5. Amal Ghosh Dastidar

Bihar

- *6. Chandi Prasad
7. Nakul Guha

GOA

- *8. Gerald Pereira
- 9. George Vaz.

Kerala

- *10. C. Kannan
- *11. T. Ayyappan
- *12. C.A. Peter
- *13. O. Bharathan
- *14. K.N. Ravindranath
- *15. O.J. Joseph
- 16. K. Padmanabhan
(Cannanore)
- 17. V. Krishnadass
- 18. E.K. Menon
- 19. K. Padmanabhan
(Kozhikode)
- 20. N.K. Madhavan
- 21. K. Balachandran
- 22. Perurkada Sadasivan
- 23. R.C. Unnithan
- 24. K.M. Ahraham M.P.
- 25. K.V. Kocheriyā
- 26. K.K. Chellappan
- 27. P.K. Krishnan
- 28. P. V. Kutty
- 29. P. Kunhukannan
- 30. M.A. Karthikeyan
- 31. Azhikodan Raghavan
- 32. V.G. Bhaskaran Nair
- 33. N. Padmalochanan
- 34. K.I. Rajan
- 35. E.M. George
- 36. K.R. Gangadharan
- 37. C.K. Vasu
- 38. C.G. Damodaran

Maharashtra

- *39. Krishna Khopkar
- 40. P. C. Balan
- 41. P.K. Kurane
- 42. S.F.X. Pereira

Madhya Pradesh

- 43. Motilal Sharma
- 44. Prakash Sarkar

Mysore

- *45. S Suryanarayana
- 46. K.S. Vasana
- 47. B. Narayan
- 48. B. N. Kuttappa
- 49. P. Ramachandra Rao

Orissa

- 50. Shivaji Patnaik

Punjab

- 51. Kishorilal
- 52. Bhajan Singh

Rajasthan

- *53. Mohan Punamia
- 54. Premkishan Sharma
- 55. Poornanand Vyas

Tripura

- 56. Biren Dutta

Tamil Nadu

- *57. R. Umanath M. P.
- *58. A. Nallasivan
- *59. A. Balasubramanyam
- *60. K. Ramani M. P.
- *61. K. Anandan Nambiar
M. P.
- 62. V. Karmegham
- 63. T. Balan
- 64. S. Krishnamurthi
- 65. C. Govindarajan
- 66. J. Hemachandran
- 67. K. M. Hari Bhat

Uttar Pradesh

- *68. Ravi Sinha
- *69. Ram Asrey
- 70. Satya Narain Tiwari
- 71. K. N. Bhatt

West Bengal

- *72. Jyoti Basu
- *73. Kesto Ghosh
- *74- Samar Mukherjee
- *75 Shanti Ghatak
- *76. Bimal Chatterjee
- *77. Robin Mukherjee
- *78. Binoy Chowdhury
- *79. Robin Chatterjee
- *80. Ajit Mukherjee
- *81. Harisadhan Mitra
- *82. Dinen Bhattacharjee
- *83. Parimal Mitra
- *84. Biren Roy
- 85. Kshiti Burman
- 86. Md. Amin
- 87. Chatur Ali
- 88. Lakhindar Biswal
- 89. Sadhan Chakrabarty
- 90. Gopal Biswas
- 91. Radhika Banarjee
- 92. Sitaram Gupta
- 93. Achinta Mukherjee
- 94. Lakshmi Sen
- 95. Jnan Sen
- 96. Shanti S. Bose
- 97. Abul Hasan
- 98. Nirode Chakrabarty
- 99. Gopal Bose
- 100. Tarun Sen Gupta
- 101. Jamini Saha
- 102. Lakshman
Bhattacharjee

- 103. Ajit Chowdhury
- 104. Shanti Chatterjee
- 105. Siva Prasad
Bhattacharyya
- 106. Jagadish Das
- 107. Nagen Bag
- 108. Sunil Sen
- 109. Rajdeo Goala
- 110. Sujit Das
- 111. Jaygopal Roy
- 112. Bijoy Chakrabarty
- 113. M. A. Sayeed
- 114. Niranjan Mukherjee
- 115. Narayan Saha
- 116. Rabin Chakravarty
- 117. Sunil Basu Roy
- 118. Dilip Mazumdar
- 119. Samir Kumar Dhar
- 120. Ajit Chakrabarty
- 121. Panchu Bose
- 122. Balaram Adak
- 123. Patit Paban Pathak
- 124. Kamal Bhattacharjee
- 125. Akhoy Bhattacharjee
- 126. Biren Bose
- 127. Ananda P. Pathak
- 128. Punai Urao
- 129. Hrishi Banerjee
- 130. Biren Chakrabarty
- 131. Ramapada Banerjee
- 132. Gopal Acharya
- 133. A. Qureshi
- 134. Haridas Malakar
- 135. Sushil Ganguly
- 136. Rabin Majumdar
- 137. Juran Ganguly
- 138. Raghunath Kushari

139. Rabin Sen
140. Bamapada Mukherjee
141. Haradhan Roy
142. Jibon Roy
143. Rakhal Bhattacharjee
144. Dilip Banerjee
145. Sukhen Sarkar
146. Chittabrata Majumdar
147. Mani Dutta
148. Shibnarayan Sen Gupta
149. Ramdeo
150. Sainen Chatterjee

151. Md. Israil
152. R. N. Singh
153. Rajen Sinha
154. Harka Bahadur Rai
155. Subodh Sen
156. Subhas Bose
157. Sudhir Ghosh
158. Sunil Ranjan Ghosh

Delhi

(to be filled later)

* Members of the Executive Committee are marked in asterisk

APPENDIX

Resolution of Goa Convention

The following is the text of the resolution adopted in the Convention of the members of General Council and State Committee members of AITUC held at VASCO DA GAMA on 9th and 10th April, 1970 :

1. A Grave situation faces the militant trade union movement and all class conscious workers in the country. The AITUC, which over long years had grown as the rallying centre for all militant trade unions in the country for carrying forward the united struggles of the working class has ceased to be so due to the class collaborationist policies of the Dangeites and is serving as an instrument in their hands for splitting the trade unions and disrupting the united struggles of the workers.

2. These class collaborationist policies were marked out as the official line of the AITUC in the notorious "Two Pillar

Policy". The Government's plans of capitalist development in collaboration with foreign monopolies and with the massive aid from America and other imperialists, whose bankruptcy stands completely exposed today, were eulogised as plans for "Independent development" and the working class was asked to support the Plans. The working class was thus sought to be disarmed and prevented from playing its role of rallying the democratic forces against the danger of penetration of American imperialism on our economic, political, social and cultural life, and in the struggle against the Government's Plans and policies in the interest of monopolists and big landlords.

3. As a natural corollary to this line, the dominant leadership of the AITUC praised to the skies the tripartite conferences and committees, the wage boards and such other machinery set up by the Government to sow illusions in the working class and paraded them as big victories of the working class. Rationalisation 'without tears' was accepted in 'national interest'. The leadership gave its full co-operation to the Government's scheme of 'Productivity' and so-called 'workers' education', the so-called 'Code of Discipline', weighted against the working class, and which was used by the employers as an instrument to malign the militant working class struggles, was agreed to. And finally in 1962, Industrial Truce was accepted.

4. When the militant workers began to revolt against these fetters on their struggle and carried on their class struggle, the dominant leadership resorted to bureaucratic dictatorial methods in the trade unions. The Dangeite leaders in many unions, entered into the agreements with the management on questions of increased work-loads, rationalisation and automation, wages, bonus, etc. against the interests of the workers, and behind the backs of the Executives of the unions and the general body of the workers and thus forced them on the workers. When this met with the resistance of the workers and fearing the verdict of the workers, in many unions the Dangeites refused to hold elections and submitted fake returns.

to the authorities. When, finding that democratic functioning was totally barred, many of workers held the elections on their own initiative, the AITUC dominant leadership refused to recognise them and kept these workers and unions outside the organisation. Where elections were held and the Dangeites were defeated, they, in many cases, split away and formed rival unions and these rival unions were given affiliation to the AITUC. Hundreds of militant unions that sought affiliation were denied affiliation and thus hundreds of thousands of militant fighting workers were kept outside the pale of the AITUC.

5. Repeated efforts made by the class conscious workers and those who wanted to carry forward the line of class struggle to put an end to this disruption and unite the trade unions were frustrated by the dominant leadership. The leadership refused to implement even the principle that had long ago been accepted by the AITUC itself of unity of the trade unions on the basis of democratic elections with proportional representation and democratic decision by the workers and their elected organs of all questions affecting the workers.

6. Not content with all these, the dominant leadership inflated the membership of their unions, refused check up of membership, on the basis of any norm and affiliated bogus paper unions—all with a view to keep absolute control over the organisation.

7. With this control, it nominated its own nominees in Governmental bodies, such as Tripartite Committees, Wage Boards, Study Groups of the National Labour Commission, in which these so-called representatives of the working class joined hands with the employers and Government representatives, demanded the curtailment of the right to strike, slandered the working class action and asked for greater police intervention in workers' struggles. Dange's own role in the Bonus Commission, as a result of which the bonus then obtained by hundreds of thousands of workers has been substantially reduced, is well known.

8. Despite all these disruptive and splitting activities, the militant trade unions struggled hard to forge the unity of the workers from below and launched heroic united struggles against the determined offensive of the employers and the Government to transfer the burden of the crisis on to their shoulders. Their awakening brought into existence the U.F. Governments of West Bengal and Kerala, which served as weapons in their hands to carry forward the struggles. The general strikes of jute, tea gardens, textile workers of West Bengal and innumerable other strikes and other forms of struggles, in which they had the fullest support of the U.F. Government, compelled the employers to concede their demands, and the workers won victories unknown in recent years. Similarly the strike of 2 lakh plantation, cashewnut, and coir workers and agricultural workers won substantial wage increases, thanks to the policy of the U.F. Government of Kerala. These victories inspired the workers throughout the country and enabled them win sizeable increases in wages, in the Engineering, jute and other industries, both in the public and private sectors.

9. Precisely at such a time, when the leaders of the Bangla Congress and its Chief Minister, started slandering the working class actions and struggles and launched a campaign of vilification of the Government, the dominant leadership of the AITUC abetted and encouraged the Bangla Congress leaders. When the working class and employees marched together to smother the conspiracy to topple the Government and take away from their hands this weapon of struggle, these leaders did their utmost to prevent the rallying of these forces. When after the toppling of this Government the working class of West Bengal went to a general strike on 17th March 1970, these leaders came forward as strike-breakers. They had no compunction in joining hands with employers' Goondas in barbarous assaults and shooting down of workers as in Kesoram Rayon Mills in order to break the strike. Their activities led to the butchering of many militant workers on that single day. The unity and awakening of the workers,

however, failed their nefarious attempts and the general strike was a glorious success.

10. In Kerala, these leaders in collusion with the Congress and all reactionary parties toppled the U.F. Government and formed a mini-front Government with the support of the Congress and all reactionary parties and groups; after toppling the U.F. Government these leaders have come forward as strike-breakers in every struggle of the working class—the coir workers' strike, the road transport workers' strike and agricultural workers' struggles and supporters of the unprecedented repression let loose by the mini-front Government against the struggling workers.

11. Thanks to the class collaborationist policies of the dominant leadership, the AITUC thus has been reduced to an appendage of the ruling Congress party. It can no longer serve as a rallying centre for the militant working class, and for forging the unity of the entire class in struggle against the attack on the monopolists and their policies, if these collaborationist policies, the anti-democratic and dictatorial methods, and disruptive and splitting activities are not given up forthwith.

12. This Convention of the members of the General council and of State Councils and Committees of the AITUC is convinced that the struggle for trade union unity cannot be advanced if the unions who want to carry on the line of class struggle, unity and trade union democracy continue to remain inside the AITUC. It must be pointed out, that in the greater united struggles that took place in the last few years it was these unions which forged unity and launched struggles. They did so, by overcoming the obstruction of the dominant leadership and by forging unity of the workers from below. It is equally significant that in these centres like Bombay, where Dangeites boast of great influence, they did not launch any struggle worth the name, despite the fact that the working class faced tremendous offensive such as closures, retrenchment, bonus and wage cuts. No wonder that they offered no resistance to that anti-working class,

fascist force—the Shiva Sena—but on the other hand began to kotow it and actually supported its call for a 'Bombay Bandh' in a chauvinistic campaign.

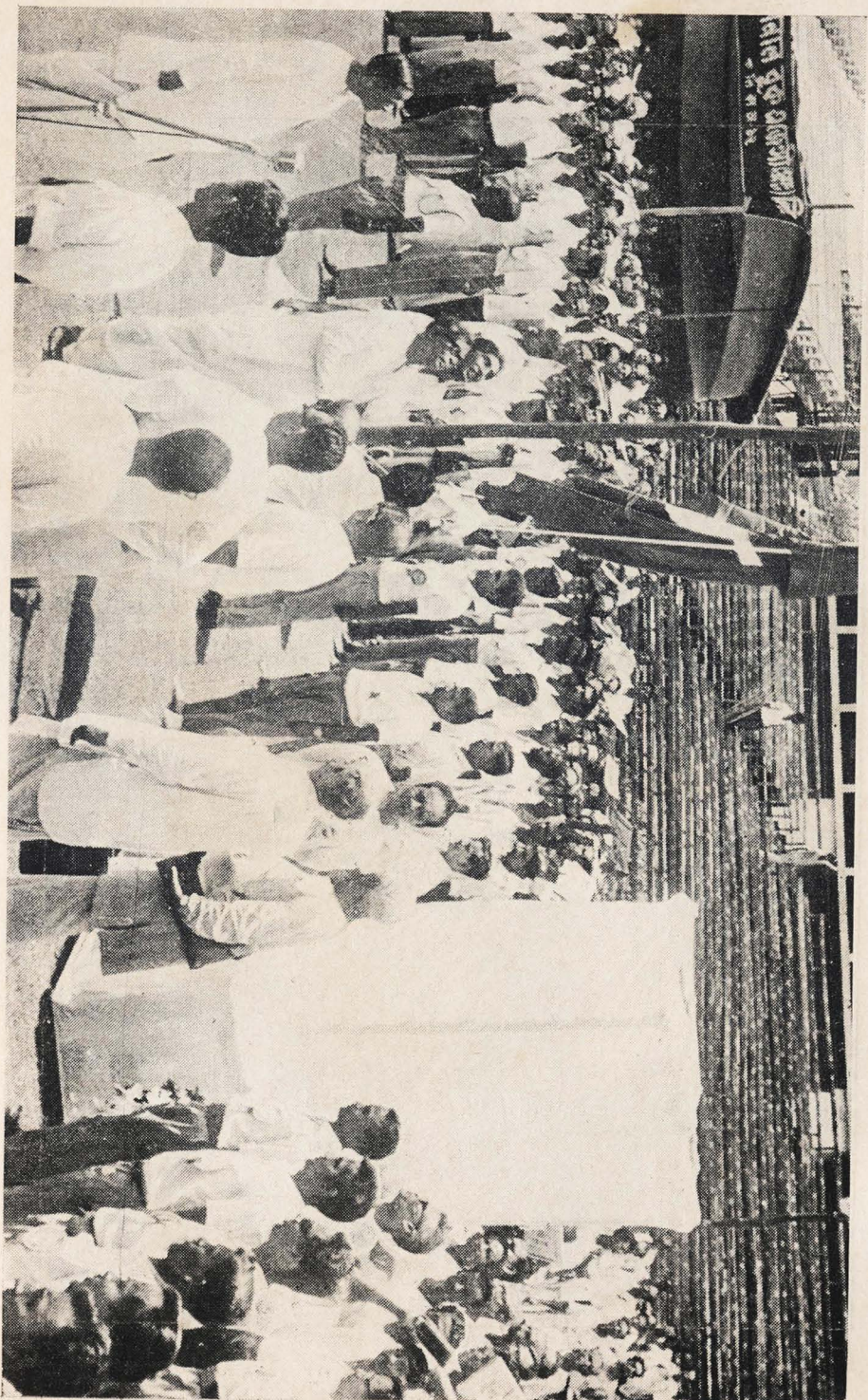
13. This Convention, therefore, is of the opinion that a new All-India Trade Union Centre should be established to carry on the struggle for unity and to rally the entire working class around consistent policies of class struggle, and for unleashing the united struggles of the workers against the offensive of the ruling class.

14. It decides to hold a Conference of the delegates of all trade unions, who are opposed to the class collaborationist and disruptive policies of the dominant leadership of the AITUC to discuss this proposal, take a final decision and chalk-out further course of action.

15. The Convention is happy to note that the BPTUC, which has stood in the forefront of the struggle against these disruptive and class collaborationist policies, which has such a proud record of leading united struggles has come forward to invite the conference in West Bengal. The Convention gladly accepts the invitation, and decides to hold the Conference on 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st May 1970.

16. It authorises the BPTUC to make all the arrangements for holding the Conference. The members of the General Council of the AITUC, who had boycotted the Guntur Session and other members who agree with this line will take all steps for the successful conduct of the Conference.

17. The Convention invites all Trade Unions, who are wedded to the policy of class struggle, who want to fight these disruptionist and collaborationist policies, to send their Delegates and take their rightful place in this great battle of the Indian working class.



Com Krishnada Chokh... ..



Com. Jyoti Basu delivering his Welcome Speech.



Com. P. Ramamurti speaking on his Report

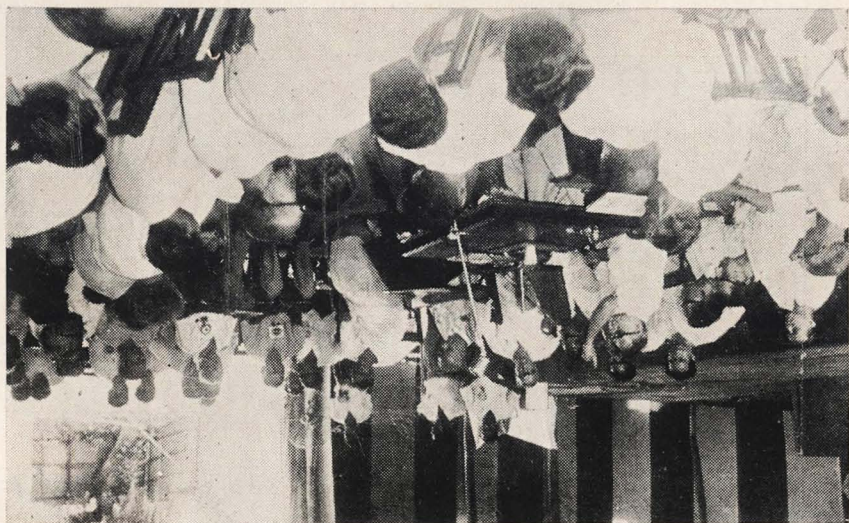


Former General Council members of AITUC finalising the draft of resolution on formation of a new TU Centre

A section of the delegates session



Com. B. T. Ranadive addressing General Council meeting of CITU

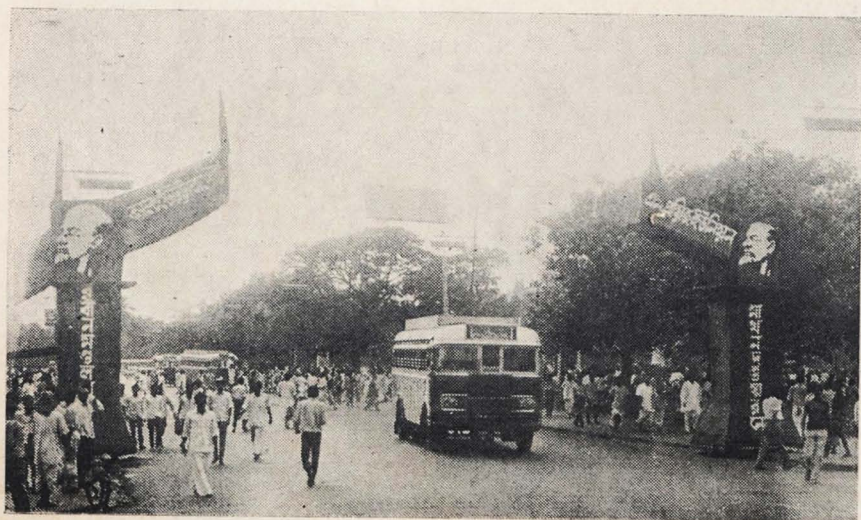




A partial view of the delegates session



Com. B. T. Ranadive, President CITU hoisting red flag in Brigade Parade Ground.



Calcutta workers erected several arches to welcome the delegates.



Tamilnadu delegates on way to Brigade Parade Ground



One of the hundreds of processions marching towards ParadeGround



One million strong rally enthusiastically welcome the decisions of the Conference.