

Resolutions

(We are printing hereunder the second set of resolutions adopted in the CITU Conference).

On Economic Situation

The Seventh Conference of CITU held at Calcutta from 12-17th Feb expresses deep concern at the alarming economic situation of the country and the consequent hardship imposed on the people due to the policies pursued by the Congress (I).

The spiralling inflation, adverse trade balances, continuing depreciation of the value of rupee and the acute balance of payment position, heavy external and internal debt burden and above all galloping unemployment all together prove that the plan of maintaining the economy through restructuring of industries towards elitism and exportism is preposterous. The conference notes with great distress that despite the annual growth of industrial production to be average of 7.5% and agricultural production by 4.1% throughout entire eighties, the Government at the Centre have resorted to heavy taxation and levies and also successive deficit financing which has aggravated to a colossal amount of Rs. 50,7111 crores during the said period, to which may be added another Rs. 15,000 crores at close of the year 1990-91.

The negative balance in trade, which had cumulated to Rs. 59,5444 crores between 1980-81 and 1989-90, together with increased debt service commitment which has crossed the ignominious ratio of 30% has pulled down the foreign exchange reserve to mere Rs. 2500 crores in November, 1990. The current reserve can hardly cater for 2 weeks' import. The gulf crisis has added further to the crisis of balance of payment by widening the trade gap and depleting the reserves by way of plugging considerably the remittance flow from West Asia. Internally too, the public debt is estimated to have increased from Rs. 9999 crores in 1970-71 to 1,44,563 crores in 1987-88 more than 14 times in 17 years. The interest payment of this internal debt has gone upto Rs. 12,199 crores in 1988-89 more than 60 times over 1970-71.

The conference firmly repudiates the claim of the Chandrasekhar Govt. that the IMF loan amounting to 1.8 billion dollars would help the country to tide over the present balance of payment crisis. Rather drift of the economy towards conditionalities of IMF loan and its servicing liabilities, as the previous experience dictates, would push the economy nearer to the debt trap in real effect.

The conditionalities of the IMF loan would inevitably lead to (a) further devaluation of rupee

which has already been depreciated by 88% against dollar during the eighties, (b) opening of rest of the industrial economy including trade to monopoly and multinationals, (c) withdrawal of labour protective clauses from industrial relations and enactments and wage freeze (d) privatisation of public sector industries (e) withdrawal of all poverty alleviation programmes as also statutory rationing, (f) withdrawal of all government subsidies including the agricultural subsidies.

The conference welcomes the steps taken by the former N.F. Govt. in bringing all land-reform legislations under the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. It however regrets that the National Front Govt. while in power had been unconcerned about the serious threat to Indian self-reliance and the unpatriotic role of Indian monopoly houses and to this end had formulated an industrial policy which would further contribute to the undermining self reliance of the economic structure.

The Conference condemns the U.S. threat to India under Super 301 and Special 301 of its trade regulation and also its role in the Uruguay round of GATT discussion recently held at Geneva. The Conference warns the Government of India that any element of surrender to U.S. pressure to dilute India's Patent Act adopted in 1970, allow the multinational investment in Insurance and Banking and also to withdraw subsidies on agricultural commodities would come as a serious blow to the country's self-reliance.

In view of the serious crisis of the economy the conference demands reversal of the policy of the Chandrasekhar Government of economic growth based on elitism in export and return to the policy enunciated by the 1956 industrial policy resolution with self-reliance and land reform as the basic foundations. The conference calls upon the working class and all shades of democratic opinion to raise their voice against the moves to subjugate the national economy to monopoly interests and to take up the cause of Indian self-reliance as the most important platform of mobilisation through all forms of campaign and struggles.

On Public Sector

The Seventh Conference of CITU held at Calcutta on 13-17th Feb. 1991 expresses its grave concern at the serious move towards privatisation of public sector undertakings. The Central Govt. having been pressed by the vested interests, IMF and the World Bank has diluted the leading role of public sector to such an alarming extent that the influx of multina-

tionals and the monopoly houses in core sector is appearing as a great threat to India's self-reliance. Since the Rajiv Government had initiated the private investments in core sector during Seventh Plan, floodgates have been opened for a massive campaign for privatisation on the plea of making public sector more efficient and competitive.

Further, the industrial policy of National Front has advanced substantial concessions to the vested interests both in India and abroad. In steel industry, the Govt. has raised the limit of private investment from 25,000 tonnes to 1 million tonnes and now pressure is being built up for total release. In case of special steel the OGL facility and the wide concessions to build ministeel plant in private sector have already sealed the fate of Durgapur Alloy & Salem steel plants. In power sector private investment including multinationals are allowed in power generation. The decision to allow private airlines to operate upto 90 seater aircrafts and the rider to pay less wages, will land the Indian Airlines in stiff and unhealthy competition.

Despite the BHEL having developed higher capacity to manufacture thermal and hydel power stations, it has been allotted order to the tune of only 12000 M.W. against 26000 M.W. having been offered to multinationals. Though the Govt. has deferred the privatisation of Scooters India Ltd and the Talaja Unit of BEL due to united pressure of trade union movement the Govt. has not made any investment for their revival. In NITC no capital investment has been made since the mills were taken over.

High unutilised capacities, large inventories, wasteful expenditure, failure to involve workers in improving production and performance funneling out large funds of public undertaking through off-loading of jobs to private parties and contractors, rampant corruption and gross mismanagement have resulted in big drain of public sector funds causing consequent low profitability. The appointment of Chairmans in PSUs have not always been judged on the basis of capability but by their capacity to secretly mobilise funds for the ruling party. The Central Govt. instead of rectifying these obstacles and improving the performance of public sector by ensuring full participation of workers in the management is continuing the discredited policies which are responsible for the inefficient running of the public sector.

The conference reaffirms the commitment of working class to take all positive steps for preserving the public sector's role in Indian economy. The increasing participation of officers and engineers in the anti-privatisation campaign is helping in drawing larger democratic mass which alone may create real guarantee for safeguarding the public sector and self-reliance.

This conference expresses its resentment at the unconcerned attitude of the Govt. to meet its commitment to the public sector workers on full neutralisation of DA, Pension Scheme as third retiring benefit and other economic demands. The indifference to set right the discriminatory attitude towards working women concerning their rightful demand for equal medical facilities, promotions, training and implementation of various legislations is causing dissatisfaction. Similarly, the continuance of contract system in permanent and perennial nature of job and maintenance of semi-slave relations with contract workers are another major issue which is affecting industrial relations and requires immediate attention.

The conference supports the decision of the Bangalore convention to organise nationwide campaign against the policy of privatisation and inviting monopoly houses and multinationals in core sector, through conventions and other measures which will culminate in the observance of 15th March 1991 as "Defend Public Sector and Self-reliance Day".

It is the task of the working class, specially the public sector workers to rouse the people about the vital role of public sector in advancing self-reliance and in mobilising them for its support.

It calls upon the entire working class to come forward for similar actions alongwith the public sector workers as the struggle against privatisation merges into the common struggle of the entire people, the struggle for Indian self-reliance.

On Left Front Government

The Seventh conference of CITU held on 12-17 February 1991 at Calcutta congratulates the people of Kerala for the decisive victory of the Left and Democratic Front in the recently held election for the District Council in the state. This victory together with the victory of Left Front in Municipal and Corporation elections in West Bengal embodies the clear cut ratification by the people of the glorious role of Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Kerala in the defence of common people's interest in offering a clear alternative approach to the problems faced by the country and the people. The results also prove that the people have not failed to take note of the fearless application of Left, democratic and secular policies of these two states against heavy odds and despite all discriminatory and hostile steps taken by the Cong (I) Govt at the Centre. The conference notes that the two Governments are serving as beacon lights in the country on defence of democracy, in fighting the communal forces and to safeguard the unity of the people. Despite limited powers and resources, the efforts and attempts exerted by these two Govts in defending the legitimate and urgent demands of the working people unlike other Cong(I) ruled states, demonstrated the basic difference between the approach and policies of the left polity towards

running a Government. The conference hails the Left Front Governments' firm determination in refusing to implement the anti-democratic laws which the Central Govt wanted to impose on the people.

The conference notes with high appreciation the steps taken by these two governments to democratise various institutions at various levels, to rouse people's initiative in the process of administration and to involve people's participation in these processes. The revitalisation of village panchayats through democratic elections and vesting of wide powers and resources with these elected panchayats, have made it possible to unleash initiative and participation of rural poor in the development work and improve the living condition in villages and also to ensure greater consolidation among the rural masses for further struggle.

The conference at the same time notes with concern that since the day of assumption of office by the left Front and Left Democratic Front in these two states, the forces of reaction and the ruling classes have been very active to carry on its campaign and conspiracy against these two popular governments in various forms. The basic limitation thrust the bourgeois constitution in the matter of rights and resources on these two State Govts in the face of rising prices, shortages of supply of basic essentials, power problem industrial sickness etc, are being sought to be capitalised by the ruling classes and the media to launch vilification campaign against these governments to tarnish their image. In Kerala, Cong (I) in association with other fundamentalist forces have been constantly active to dismember the LDF government. In W. Bengal, Prime Minister Chandra-shekhar is threatening and intimidating the Left Front Government and is openly inciting the Cong (I) in the state to create law and order problems.

The conference also records its appreciation of the relentless struggle of the working class and the democratic people of these two states in defence of these governments. People's funding for the construction of Bakreswar Power Plant in West Bengal is a powerful expression of their support to Left Front Govt.

The conference likes to point out in particular that the role being played by the West Bengal and Kerala Governments and also that of Tripura till its displacement, is of paramount importance to the toiling people of the country, who are in search of and struggling for an alternative to the present bourgeois-landlord policies of the ruling classes.

The conference calls upon the working class and democratic forces all over the country to extend their wholehearted support to West Bengal and Kerala Governments for the defence of the democratic rights of the people against authoritarian attacks

and to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country.

On Industrial Sickness and Closures

The Seventh Conference of CITU, held on 12-17th February 1991 at Calcutta notes with serious concern the increasing incidence of closures and sickness of industries in our country throwing millions of workers in the streets. During the span of the last five years the number of closed and sick units has risen to the tune of more than forty per cent and according to Govt source the number of sick unit reached 2,06,098 in December 1987 and had further risen to 2,41,814 till December, 1988. The entire situation reveals that industrial sickness has already attained a cancerous character. Instances are common that the industry became sick, but the owner turned richer in the process of such sickness, leaving the workers in destitution. In fact, "industrial sickness has become a profitable business in the light of various relief measures that are available", as the committee set up by Andhra Pradesh Govt put it. Besides, in many units workers are being laid off and lockouts are being imposed on the workers. There are a number of undeclared closures as well, affecting thousands of workers. The trade union movement of the country as a whole has been agitating for remedial measures to be taken by the Central Govt for revival of the closed and sick units and putting curb on closures, but the situation is getting worse every day.

The conference points out that the erroneous economic and industrial policies pursued by successive central govts like liberalised imports, opening the economy to multinationals, creating a situation of unequal competition for small and medium units, the continuous inflationary trends leading to pauperisation of the masses and shrinkage of market and government policies of production for the limited elitist market, are responsible for the growing sickness and closures. Transfer of capital and finances by employers, mismanagement and corruption are adding to this situation.

The conference notes with concern that although the workers are in no way responsible for the sickness and closures, they are made the worst victims. Taking advantage of the sufferings of the workers, the employers and financiers compel the workers to accept derogatory terms of wage-cut, withdrawal of existing benefits, retrenchment, closure of the part of the units, increase in workload etc under the plea of revival of the sick units or reopening of the closed units.

The conference denounces the Board of Industrial Finance and Reconstruction for its policy of protecting the interest of industrialists and financial institutions at the expense of the workers. BIFR stipulates conditions for the workers as dictated by

the managements, private consultants and the financial institutions. BIFR is following the same dual policy in its dealings with State and Central Governments. While it is asking State Governments to give up their claims on dues on account of sales tax, share of incom tax etc and also to reduce or write off electricity charges etc, it does not ask the Central Govt to concede any matching concession.

Affected workers have been demanding for a very long time that BIFR should set up separate benches in states like West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamilnadu etc. where the industrial sickness has become rampant, as representing their cases at Delhi is difficult and costly. But the Govt. is ignoring this demand. The relevant Act should be suitably amended to change the structure of BIFR, so that it becomes obligatory on the BIFR to supply trade unions with the copy of viability report prepared by the Board. It also should be made obligatory upon the Board to act upon the specific recommendations of the trade unions. The Board should have power to recover the cost of revival from other assets of the owners of sick units.

The conference demands that the Govt. of India should take over the sick and closed mills and run them with full participation of the workers in the management. It must intervene when attempts are being made by employers to divert funds or resort to corrupt practices. The conference demands of the Govt. of India to enact appropriate laws to punish the guilty owners and to confiscate their properties, and take suitable steps to enforce the laws.

The conference calls upon the entire trade union movement to take initiative to organise a broad based united movement, to compel the government to accept these demands and mobilise all sections of people for the reversal of government's retrograde policies.

On Centre State Relations

The Seventh Conference of the CITU reiterates its demand for giving more powers to the states ensuring full autonomy to the state governments.

Though the Constitution of India provides for a federal structure, Congress (I) government at the Centre has been persistently violating the spirit of the Constitution and trampling underfoot the limited rights of the state government, particularly of those which oppose its policies. It is to be noted that despite repeated demands made by the states, the Congress (I) governments at the centre spurned the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission recommending for more powers to the states both administrative and financial. The powers of Governors are frequently misused to suit the interest of the ruling party at the centre. State governments were dismissed despite their enjoying the support of the state legislature. In case of Tamilnadu the state government was dismissed despite the opposition by

the Governor, making a mockery of the whole concept of state autonomy.

The financial sources in the country are mainly controlled by the central government leaving little scope for the state governments to raise more resources for further development in the states. Despite recommendation of several Finance Commissions, the state governments do not get adequate share with the result that bulk of the developmental resources are left in the hands of the Central Government. The allocation of projects in different states are decided on political considerations leading to uneven development of economic growth in different states, which has given rise to regionalist tendencies adversely affecting the unity and integrity of the country.

The Left Front governments in W. Bengal and Tripura had taken concrete steps to make autonomous regions giving real powers to the backward areas. However, the Congress (I) policies have failed to develop similar autonomous regions in other areas.

Due to its authoritarian attitude and political influence, the Congress(I) Governments at the Centre always strained relations with non-Congress governments in the states. Even in Congress (I) controlled states the centre frequently imposed Chief Ministers making them virtual puppets at the hands of the centre.

The NF Govt. made positive efforts to improve the centre-state relations through constitution of Inter State Council and revitalisation of National Development Council. But the Govt. could not remain long and the break away group Govt. led by Chandra Shekhar is reverting back to the authoritarian policy at the behest of Congress (I) party. It is therefore a paramount task before the trade union and the democratic movement in India to strive for more powers to the state governments and make the concept of state autonomy meaningful which will ensure democratic advance in the country and maintain its unity and integrity.

The Seventh Conference of the CITU, therefore calls upon all its affiliated unions to vigorously campaign for more autonomy to the state governments so that centre-state relations are built up on democratic lines in the country.

On Removal Of Ceilings On Bonus

The Seventh Conference of CITU strongly demands that the outdated ceilings on annual statutory bonus be abolished immediately.

The existing Bonus ceilings of Rs. 2,500/- for eligibility and 1600/- for entitlement were fixed long ago and have become irrelevant particularly in the present inflationary spiral. A large number of workers are now earning more than Rs. 25.00/- and are, therefore denied bonus outright. It is also a

(Cont'd on page 21)

Report of Working Women's Conference

Vimal Ranadive

[We are publishing hereunder the report placed in the Working Women's Conference held at Calcutta on February 12-13, 1991 as a part of the CITU conference—Ed.]

We are happy to have our third convention of working women to be held in Calcutta, under CITU auspices from 12-13th of February 1991. We are proud that it is being held here where the Left Front Government is ruling and the movement of working women and women in general is strong and getting sympathetic support from the Left Front Government. The 6th CITU Conference held in Bombay in May, 1987 held a special session on working women and their problems which did help them and the leadership of the states and CITU to understand as to how far we have progressed with regard to taking up the problems of working women, their promotion on the higher bodies of the unions, federations or associations, and in the membership of women in the unions. It also took stock of the serious feudal tendencies still existing among the leadership of the unions which prevents the working women to come forward in the leadership or on the post of office bearers. The Bombay conference in 1987 and the report placed at the special session of working women while reviewing its work has stated that even after 7 years "we are not in a position to say today that the situation described above has changed considerably. Yes, changes are there to a certain extent. CITU unions have started paying some attention to the problems of working women, conferences of working women have been organised under CITU and other National Federations, Co-ordination Committees and other special wings under the unions have been formed in many places, composition of the executive committees where women constitute the majority is changing a bit, women are being taken on the executive committees. The most significant point is that the leadership of the union is slowly changing their feudal outlook towards these problems. But it is also a fact that the leadership of the CITU has to remind repeatedly about this to the states and district committees. Complaints from the states Co-ordination Committees to CITU centre continue to come and many times intervention has to be made" (P. 35—36 Bombay Report).

That conference also noted that after initial gains in the beginning after 1979, the 1st convention at Madras, a period of stagnation began with non-functioning of the co-ordination committees in some states. After a number of conferences held in Kerala, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Delhi, Andhra, Gujarat, etc some committees became defunct to a certain extent and some totally. It was also noted that even after a good and well attended conference in

Assansol in West Bengal years back, attended predominantly from our class of women, no marked improvement was observed.

It is still the job of the leadership from CITU to hammer and intervene time to time asking the state committees to hold the state conventions or form the women's wings or to take women on the leadership posts.

Important Role Played by Tamilnadu State CITU

But the 5th conference noted the important role played by CITU of Tamilnadu committee which took up the issue seriously and worked to implement the decisions of the Madras convention. The continuous attempts by the State CITU and the other federations or associations are being made by the Tamilnadu Committee consciously to bring the working women in the various struggles launched in the unions or federations, to promote them on the committees and have close co-ordination between the union leadership and the women's wings of the working women.

The 3 main points raised by Comrade B T R in the 1st convention and also repeatedly taken up by him in every conference were how far our State Committees were able to take up the cause of working women, taking up their specific problems, their promotion and their unionisation, etc. Not a single convention or a conference in any state of any federation or union went without his serious intervention on this question. It was because of the circular signed by him personally, about 100 women delegates could participate in the Bombay conference and also have a special session of delegates together discussing the problems of working women. The necessity of such a session was pointed out by him here male delegates in the session participate and listen to the grievances of working women.

The Background before Bombay Conference

The 2nd convention of working women was held in Delhi in April 1983 which reviewed the work since 1979. The convention was attended by about 300 delegates from a number of states. It was also noted that on the initiative of national campaign committee, "March to Parliament" held in Delhi during 1982-83 on various economic issues, the participation of women was significant. They marched shoulder to shoulder with their men folk with red flags and in uniform dress. The agricultural women too came in thousands from Andhra and other places. This shows the timely step, the CITU has taken by giving call to women on the basic demands taken up by the NCC. During this period, attempt

also were made to mobilise middle class women employees and a small meeting of 50-60 women office employees was held under the auspices of NCC and with the initiative of CITU and All India Co-ordination Committee. During this period a conference of women in Reserve Bank in Kerala was held. In Shastri Bhavan Central Govt. women employees in Madras launched a campaign for creche. Many conferences of working women were held and co-ordination committees formed such as in Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra, Gujarat, Delhi and other places. There were conference in Haryana, Rajasthan, UP, Punjab also. This shows that we took up the work seriously, but we were not able to carry it out consistently. We have to find out what are the reasons, where is the lacunae, whether state CITU were not able to continue due to lack of cadres, due to their non-seriousness on this issue, or due to not taking up the initiative on behalf of women.

Complaints by Working Women Persists

Even after 11-12 years of taking up the issue by CITU working women, women workers in industries continue to complain to us that they are not taken up on the various committees; their problems are not dealt by the leadership of the union. It appears from the reports that many of our state committees of CITU are not paying attention to this issue as they should. While some committees take them consciously like Punjab or Tamilnadu, others like Bihar or UP remain still inactive. Some others like Delhi and Maharashtra express the difficulty of non-functioning of the committees due to non-availability of cadres as per the reports. While Madhya Pradesh has formed the new committee by holding a conference of working women along with CITU, Haryana and HP are yet to do much on this question. Rajasthan after holding their conference a few years back is still not able to function the committee, they formed years back, though they have done tremendous progress on the question of Anganwadi women. The recent all India conference of Anganwadi held at Udaipur was a tremendous success with thousands of women coming from many districts in Rajasthan.

Middle Class Women Employees Take Lead

The Bombay report on the working women's problems noted the role of middle class employees in LIC, teachers, nurses and in other offices who started agitating on the question of provision of creche, toilet facilities, rest rooms, etc. The extra Developmental (ED) employees in P & T including men who are in thousands and working on daily rate basis for years are not yet made permanent. Delhi University teachers had a prolonged strike led by DUTA for their demands. Struggles on their demands were launched in Kerala, Andhra, Maharashtra etc by the NG employees, working women playing leading role. Many places their unions took lead and our state co-ordination committees supported. There were many spontaneous struggles during this period. At many places the women's conferences also were held

and wings have been formed.

Growing Political awareness among the Working Women

The participation of working women in 19th January strike in 1982 at the call of the NCC was noticed by everybody. The women in Trichi, Municipal workers in Gujrat, in LIC, Banks came out spontaneously. The same enthusiasm was seen in the March to Parliament on 23rd Nov. 1982. This also showed and noted in the convention of working women held in 1983 in Delhi. The joining of working women in the common struggles and struggle against the ruling congress party on a large scale shows their growing political awareness, expressing solidarity with the trade unions and the calls given by the Left parties.

It was also noted that the continuous propaganda on the working women's problems, their unionisation in trade unions etc. taken up by the CITU had its own effect which caught the imagination of middle class women. Mainly associations and federations guided by CITU help them to move forward.

The P & T union organised a conference of wives of the workers in Udaypur in 1983 where 300 women attended and discussed as to how they could help the struggles. Such examples were many during the period mentioned before the Bombay Conference. Middle class employees were taking up the issues such as provision of creche equal remuneration, rest rooms, transfer and so on under the unions, associations and federations.

Kanpur Conference Reiterates Decisions of Madras Conference

In the Kanpur conference of CITU held in 1983, this issue was taken up seriously by Com. P. Ramamurthy, General Secretary and Com. BTR, President who addressed the 50 women delegates and other delegates. Com BTR said in the conference "Our trade union movement has a common weakness. The trade unions by and large are indifferent to the demands of women workers."

In Kanpur the General Secretary appealed to the session to "bring women workers into working class movement..." While stressing the feudal deviations in the TU movement, Com. BTR sharply rebuked the state CITU committees, "Women workers constitute an important part of working class and all effort must be made to unite men and women workers in common struggle. If this is not done, then reactionary forces will snatch the opportunity to pit women against men in order to divide and break the unity of the class..." This was the warning given against the feminist movement. He said, "TU movement is not the preserve of men alone. To divorce working women's struggle from the general movement is a deviation, a feudal outlook..."

Com. BTR in this conference expressed his

regrets at the fact that "even today men dominate the leading posts in trade unions and this must change...."

Addressing the P & T workers in Pune, Com. BTR severely criticised the leadership for not including any demands of the women, although major section of the employees were women.

The guidance and consistent persuasion of the trade unions, or sharp criticism wherever required by Com BTR and Com. P. Ramamurthy on these lines, no doubt helped the working women all over India which created a deep impact on the working women as a whole. The middle class women employees no doubt took lead during this period.

The responsibility of drawing more women of our class in the CITU, and women under other federations, falls on state CITU and working women, the co-ordination committee and women's wings of the union and Federations.

In short, since the 1st convention of working women at Madras in 1979, we have gone ahead. The AICCWW, because of its growing influence among women workers, got recognition and invitation to attend international conference also. By this time no central trade union have seriously thought of starting the women wings of their trade unions. Some have their wings only in the name. No serious efforts have been done till now on the part of the other central trade unions as such to form wings under them.

The Present Position on the Problems of Working Women

In the background which is mentioned in both the CITU conference and in between and the work done by the co-ordination committees at various places, reviewed in Chandigarh, Dhanbad and other meetings held by the AICCWW, it appears that we have still not been able to move our state CITU committees to work on the line of the 1st convention to our satisfaction. There are of course a few exceptions, but very few.

No doubt, struggles are launched by many sections of women from our own class and also by other women employees under their leadership. In West Bengal, women collect in thousands and lakhs at the call of CITU or AIDWA; nurses in West Bengal launch struggles. In Durgapur, Ranigunj and other places women hold convention when thousands joined. In Kerala too, women in coir, cashew, plantation come in demonstrations at the call of their organisations. In Tripura under our Govt. we could gather thousands of women for meetings in short time in the absence of the co-ordination committee. The women employees in P & T, electricity, AG, Govt. employees etc. come and join at the call of CITU and their Federation. The call from the LIC conference at Jaipur in Feb. 1988 given by their

leadership in their last conference in Jaipur has been implemented in a large number of the office. Central and State Govt. women employees have their own conferences with their unions. Most of these associations and federations have formed their women's wings as per the information including West Bengal. Most of the journals run by these organisations given news of the struggles of working women regularly.

We should take note of some conferences here. Divisional conferences in LIC were held in Tamilnadu with the initiative of the women LIC employees, alongwith the union leadership. The electricity women in Tamilnadu have shown what they can do to help their conferences by way of campaign in other offices, collection of money, sending invitations on their own for other offices, having common platform and so on in Tamilnadu and Kerala.

It is to be noted by us that P & T in Calicut observed a day on 7th May 1988 with a mobilisation of 500 women, all men and women employees observed a Working Women Demands Day for all by wearing special badges. This was observed by all male and female workers expressing solidarity with female members.

A huge rally was held in West Bengal on 10th April 1988 with the participation of all sections of women from coal, nurses, mines, LIC, banks, college, school teachers, etc. A large section of Muslim women too joined perhaps from beedi. The high political consciousness in West Bengal among women and the capacity to organise at the call of CITU was noted by everybody in Bengal and outside.

All India Anganwadi Federation Formed

The recent conference of Anganwadi under CITU in Udaypur on 5-6th January, 1991 is a significant step in the working women's movement. Com. BTR had inaugurated the 1st convention in Delhi in 1989 April. The extreme exploitation of rural and tribal women who are treated as 'social workers' and given an honorarium of Rs 250/- pm and Rs. 110/- only for worker and helper respectively shows the extent of their exploitation. Unfortunately the delegates came from 8 states only while 1st convention was attended by 14 states in Delhi. But the rally and inauguration was splendid with thousands of women from Rajasthan attending both the rally and inauguration. The federation is now formed with a constitution and an all India committee has been elected.

I would like to inform you about the formation of a joint Sangharsh Samathi of 4 different organisations in Anganwadi existing in In which chalked out programme of action besides our own independent programme.

The Anganwadi womens strength lies in the main in the Hindi speaking states and the response is great from here. In Rajasthan, we have our organisation in almost all districts. The report of the Anganwadi

organisation is circulated among the AICCWW.

Working Women under Public Sector

A new chapter was opened in the working women's movement, by the 1st conference, at Bangalore on 28th December, 1990, under public sector. Women in mines, Coal, nurses, air hostesses and many other joined in the conference for the first time under the initiative of CITU. The speech made by Asha Mulgoakar, General Secretary of the Air Hostesses Association was significant in the sense the blatant, and unimaginable discrimination against them by Air India management was brought out in her speech sharply. They are campaigning under their union against the discrimination of the retiring age of 58 for both, men and women. The air hostesses had to retire at the age of 35 which has now been extended to 45, provided they undergo medical examinations which the male steward need not. These women are now preparing for dharna. They made petitions to the Speaker, collected signatures, met the MPs and members of the NCC etc.

Already functioning of the State Co-ordination committees has been discussed earlier. Many State Committees are not functioning due to many reasons. They have to come from districts spending money. I was told by many women that they are not given money to attend the all India committee or state committees. There is no good attendance in the AICCWW meetings. Many times, therefore meetings are held alongwith other all India programmes like AIDWA or council meeting. Women have other difficulties as well as women. If the State Committees function well, the AICCWW work also will improve. In the last meeting, we have taken up some programme, but no report have been received except a few. The members here should discuss their problems so that our trade union leaders will be aware about them and help them to bring them forward to leadership.

Comrades, the members of the AICCWW are changed often after the conferences take place and new members are elected. The present list is from the 2nd convention and contain many names which were earlier there. This changes in the midst and its non-communication to the centre creates problems. Therefore it is suggested, this convention should finalise the quota for each, state and the names with full addresses be given before they leave for their destination.

But What About our own Class ?

In Bombay conference of CITU, while addressing Comrade B. T. Ranadive said "CITU called upon the unions to give up its neglect of working women and fight against the discriminatory practices and attacks. A co-ordination committee was elected to ensure that working women's interests are protected, State Committees and unions were also asked so that there is a constant watch on the practices and activities of the unions. But the progress was extremely

slow. Though some state committees like Tamilnadu did take significant steps in the direction, the major part of the CITU committees either ignored the problems or made some cosmetic changes in their practices. It was, therefore, decided to involve the entire conference of CITU in the discussion".....the report revealed the step-motherly treatment given by the trade union leadership to working women and their problems. It also showed how the attitude led to ineffective participation of women in the activities of the trade unions and their failure to occupy important positions in the unions..." Comrade B.T. Ranadive noted "Lastly, all should note that the problem of working women is a part of the struggle of the working class against the capitalist society and just a question which concern women alone... What is the basis of this incorrect attitude? It is nothing but underestimation of woman and her work..."

During the last 10-12 years, there are some changes no doubt about the attitudes of state committees of CITU towards this issue. But when middle class women employees are coming forward to form the wings of their unions and federations, when the women workers are launching struggles everywhere under CITU including women in the unorganised sector, when unemployment reached sky high and women became the first victims in mines, tobacco, coir, coal, etc. the central leadership has to remind repeatedly about this to the.

Comrades, from the major states like West Bengal and Kerala complaints about this continue to come.

If the working women is a part of the total working class movement, without which no struggles will be successful on an all India basis, we have to consider as to how far we have been able to achieve our objective. We must accept that we have not been able to do much to bring women workers and other sections in the CITU, under their wings or promoted them on the committees, who have launched struggles side by side with the total working class on the common demands. In the conferences attended by the CITU leadership, many women workers have approached us, particularly me, to inform and complain about this situation.

Despite the decision, the state wise co-ordination committees are not formed in the conferences. Serious attempts are not made to approach women workers by taking up their problems, to persuade them to stand and speak in the conferences and take them on the committees. Those states where the work of organising women workers began during the period 1980-82 onwards by holding conferences etc. now stands still. The working women's question, their problems, etc. is not placed on the agenda even in the meetings of State CITU except when conferences are held. After the conference of working women is over, there is no persistent efforts to take it ahead and to utilise the enthusiasm created among women.

There are good number of women workers and

very militant in mines in Orissa and beedi in M.P., and garment etc. in Maharashtra, women in small scale industries in Delhi and Rajasthan, but no proper attempts have been made to approach them by CITU or our women comrades. The Kerala State Committee very recently has made efforts to bring all the sections including the women in industries together, chalked out district wise programmes etc. The women in coir, cashew, plantation also attended. The co-ordination between middle class women employees like LIC, electricity, NGOs and others too was there, with the formation of co-ordination committees statewide. Perhaps, it was because of our influence and Left Front Government it was possible. It may not be possible in other states, and therefore, different methods have to be adopted.

What are the Difficulties ?

The difficulties mentioned by the CITU and the co-ordination committees of ours is the question of cadres specially to work among the working women. The weaker states like M.P. Delhi etc. have expressed this difficulty many times. It may be true to certain extent. Despite the fact of the cadre question, we would like to know how far the CITU has taken up this issue seriously and years, why there is no formation of state committees in Andhra, or Rajasthan or Maharashtra or Delhi.

There was very good discussion on the question in Kanpur General Council in 1990 as to why the co-ordination committee of West Bengal does not function. The report from Kerala of the last convention of working women, a mention of which has been already been made, when narrated, comrades from West Bengal enquired how it can be possible to bring all section of women in the co-ordination committee. It was a genuine question. The other comrades also expressed that many comrades feel that co-ordination committee is a parallel organisation to AIDWA. Some others asked what is the necessity of separate wings when CITU takes up the problems of working women. In general West Bengal CITU seems to be not enthusiastic about the functioning of the committee. Considering a large section of working women under CITU, their participation and politicisation in almost all struggles, women in other states do inquire about West Bengal and its position. Secondly, should we say that there are no problems for working women at large now in West Bengal, so the necessity of women's wings is no more there ? Unequal remuneration still exists, creche provision is yet to be implemented, unequal treatment in mines, coal continues and are bound to be there since our country is under the capitalist feudal rule. The questions are solved in a better way because of the existence of Left Front Government. The better conditions of Anganwadi workers in West Bengal is one of the many examples of the gains and benefits because of the existence of the Left Front Government. We are sure, the comrades in CITU will discuss this question.

Since the formation of the AICCWW another

question is raised about the utility of the co-ordination committee when AIDWA is already working in every state, and why there should be another organisation of women ? These are genuine questions no doubt. The AIDWA is a mass organisation of women, working women including. The women's wings are formed to fight the specific problems of working women which are neglected by the trade unions under the present existing society. Both the AIDWA and women's wings or co-ordination committee should hold each other, the work is complementary to each other and will strengthen both. This confusion about the specific roles of co-ordination committee and AIDWA was there in the beginning. Now many state CITU committees are clear on this point. Very recently Tripura CITU State Committee held a Conference of working women. It will be proper to state what Com BTR has said in the co-ordination committee meeting at Chandigarh held on 30.11.87 on this question.

“Our progress is slow. Not that some people are trying to put it off. Even among our leaders, the old ideas still prevail. Few comrades attend meeting because, the thinking is not serious enough on this issue. Some work is going on in Kerala, position is improving. The situation in Bengal is not good, and there is need to move faster. Yes, the women in Anganwadi's are the lowest section of working women. They are rural women and they must be organised. **There is no need of conflict between AIDWA and co-ordination committee of working women, We organise working women as workers and they must be a part of trade union movement. AIDWA sees women as women, citizen and workers. It won't be correct to organise Harijan workers as Harijans, the same way women workers being organised only as women is not correct. If trade unions are lazy then sometimes AIDWA takes initiative. But Working women must be organised in their class organisation, which can take them forward, working women's fight is against capitalism and urgent and trade union leaders should take it up...**”

I am sure, this statement should remove all the misunderstanding or confusion if there is any with regard to the roles of co-ordination committees and AIDWA.

If the division of cadre is done, since many states face this problem and priorities are fixed, then perhaps we will be able to solve the question in a better way. In many states we have educated comrades, they would help by coming forward to work for co-ordination committees. Secondly, unless the main cadre is available from those sections of working women, the work is still difficult. The better work is done where women comrades have come up to organise their own women as in electricity in Tamilnadu or comrades from NGO. Then the outsider comrades can do the rest of work.

Thirdly it is our experience that women workers who are illiterate no doubt, but are class conscious, make good speeches, take leadership of

the struggles, are not developed by the CITU leadership. The leaders later on express surprise for their daring to speak in the open meetings, or when they defend their union and struggle with all their might forgetting all the house work or children. This quality of women workers, if developed, our movement will develop quickly. The illiteracy should not come in the way of developing our cadre.

Women too Must Come Forward

Fourthly, women workers and working women also have the feudal tendencies as all are the product of the same society. They are shy to speak, feel inferior to male, many do not attend the meetings call by the unions, unions also fix the meetings according to their conveniences, not of women. If they are sent as delegates, to the meetings, make them to express on the demands etc they will prepare in the next meeting. Here, the question comes of sending women delegates. CITU has to give quota for women. In fact, women workers should give their names which does not generally happen. The attitude of male comrades should change in the house or in the union. It should be comradely and helpful to our female comrades so that they can share the responsibility of the work of the union.

Promotion and Membership of the Trade Unions :

The Bombay conference, the CITU had tried to tackle the problem of promotion of women on the higher committees on the basis of the questionnaire issued. This time too CITU has issued the circular on how many committee members, delegates, office bearers etc. have been elected in the conferences, on the basis of which we can see how far we have progressed from the last conference.

In Bombay report, some statistics from Kerala and W. Bengal have been given and is found, where we had more women members in unions like cashew and others, only 1 or 2 members were on the committee. The picture was not much different in Bengal at that time. This time, as per the reports received more women members are taken in the council, on the working committee. Still office bearers will be very much less. The last conference of Bombay we have noted, out of 2446 delegates, there were 134 women, out of 376 council members, there were 20 women, and out of 107 working committee members women's strength was 5 and only 3 out of the 36 office bearers were women. This is the record of the last conference. The figures of the women on the committees elected in the conferences etc if arrive in time from the states, we will be able to see, exactly how far we have progressed.

Union Membership

The CITU has prepared a chart of annual returns as on 31.12.90 separating figures of men and women membership.

Year	Total Membership	Women Membership
1987	16,79,684	2,06,482
1988	19,16,095	2,64,195
1989	21,07,357	2,39,704

As per the chart, membership of women is better in Karnataka (13909), in Kerala (136909), West Bengal (41566), Andhra Pradesh (9631), Tamilnadu (7272), Bihar (3684). All others are in low figures.

The figures given above shows that in 1988 we had 2,64,195 women membership while 1989 we have 2,39,704. This is the position in 1989 as per the returns. This comes to 10% as such of the number of membership under CITU. Here, our members of the Co-ordination committee must play their role in enrolment of women membership. There are thousands of women in Public Sector, construction, beedi and plantation. But the male leaders, in general enrol the membership. This work can be possibly done by women also on the committee.

The Functioning of AICCCWW and State Co-ordination Committees

The Functioning of the AICCCWW during last 1—2 years is not as it should be. The work is increased, representations, the bringing out two journals, writing, issuing circulars etc continues somehow. The working women are coming forward, launching struggles under CITU or independently, these are to be attended to, conferences are being organised on their problems. Issues are many and letters for representation, on discrimination on various types, like transfers, molestation, unequal remuneration, hostels and so on continue to arrive. There is a large scope to extend the work if help from some comrades is available at the centre.

The V P Singh Government called for a seminar on "Women in Trade Unions" where we—CITU—was invited. The document presented by the Union Labour Minister contained many quotations from Bombay CITU conference document in support of government views. Letters from various countries for conferences were addressed to us. There is a demand from foreign countries for our journal. The role of AICCCWW is acknowledged by WFTU, TUI, WIDF and other socialist countries and also in our country.

Problems of Working Women

There are a number of problems for working women and they are increasing daily. The strength of the working women is being reduced day by day. Very few women are now employed in jute, textile, tobacco, mines etc. The new technology introduced in these industries made women workers the first victims. Now there are very few women in textile mills except in Bombay and Ahmedabad. Data processing machines are now being introduced in the offices slowly and women typists, clerical staff etc are being made redundant. Women are being thrown out from organised sector to the unorganised. The

tables given at the end will show the exact positions of the employment of women. The second problem and that too very urgent is the provision of creche near their residences or near the workplaces. This provision under the Factory Act, Mines Act, etc is not implemented. The question of Equal Remuneration is still hanging at many places like Beedi, construction, agriculture and plantation etc despite the passing of the Act in 1976.

According to the document presented by the Union Labour Minister of the National Front Government in the conference on "Participation of Trade Unions in Promoting Collective Bargaining For Women" on 20.9.1990, the data given there too shows the worsening position of women in the organised industries. It said ".....the number of women job seekers in employment exchanges rose from 11.25 lakhs in 1975 to 35.63 lakhs in 1988 (actually the figure of job seekers is 56 lakhs). But the placement of women has shown a declining trend from 7.27 lakhs in 1975 to 4.67 lakhs in 1988. The document also says "90 per cent of the total female work force operated within the unorganised sector." Many data also have been given in the document about displacements of women workers on a large scale due to technological changes. The document mentioned about more women going for casual, part-time, contract and homebased work, while some percentage of women in the organised sector and under public sector has grown.

Many other issues concerning women are coming now to CITU. Legislations concerning women are not implemented in general. But the question of promotion linked with transfers creates difficulties for women since the question of education of children is involved. The policy guidelines by the Central Government on this issue has decided that "as far as possible, the transfer should be nearby, so that the family life should not be disturbed". Many times these guidelines are not implemented and transfers are taking place all of a sudden and to far off places.

The maternity leave is now granted for one child only at many places which is also against the Maternity Benefits Act. The leave of 45 days is now not sanctioned for miscarriages or abortion in many offices. There should be special arrangement for conveyance for women going to the offices and for returning. The women workers in factories, small scale industries, etc. are not getting minimum wages. Nor is there any legislation for agricultural women or women unorganised sector. The minimum wages must be given to these women under the present economic crisis and high inflation.

There are many more issues of the working women which needs immediate attention. A charter of demands is presented at the end of the report. The data available on the number of creches provided, position of maternity benefits under different legislations etc. are attached at the end of the report.

The Voice of the Working Women & Kamkaji Mahila

The position of both is not very happy, financially and with regard to the sale. V.W.W. is printed about 1200 copies and Kamkaji Mahila also about the same. The response for V.W.W. sale is not so well. Because of increase in the printing and other costs, we had to increase the price to Rs. 2.00 of both. Where organised efforts have been made, the sale increases. The English bulletin has marginal sale only among the English speaking, While Kamkaji Mahila also will be for Hindi region. The quality, material, reports etc can be improved with our common efforts. Now a days, many reports do come, foreign material also is coming from abroad. We can issue the bulletins in much better conditions if help is given from comrades.

Comrades, before I conclude I would like to say a few words. The task of working women, their problems, and their promotion on the higher committees etc has been taken since 1979. The women workers are the part and parcel of the total working class movement. Unless they are drawn consciously into the working class movement, on each issue, the total movement remains weak. They are to be brought ultimately into the main struggle of the democratic movement to fight against the capitalist rule, so that they can be emancipated from the exploitation they are facing under the present rule.

The present political situation is very grave. Communal forces are challenging the secular and democratic forces. Working women too have to play their role under the guidance of their unions. The Gulf crisis, and the war has created a situation which is bound to affect us. We will be asked to tighten our belt, prices are bound to increase. Under such difficult situation, we have to work.

Under the present political situation which is fluctuating rapidly, working women are faced with many problems. They are victimised, unemployment is growing, legislation of equal remuneration and provision of creche, minimum wages for the women and men are not implemented. Women in organised sector are thrown into unorganised with no legislation of any kind to protect them. The schemes for employment generation of the past and present Government is not very helpful but on the contrary taking them back home. Self-employment instead of 'right to work' and employment is not promised to each person in the society. The questions about the position of women in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are raised. Whatever be the mistakes or deviations were committed by the socialist countries, we firmly believe in socialism under which women and the common people will be finally emancipated from the capitalist system. Under such conditions we have to work under CITU and in other federations or associations where women constitute a large number.

An important point to remember is women are

launching many struggles under their unions or federations. Their economic conditions are worsening due to economic crisis, inflation, and now due to war in 'gulf'. This is certainly going to affect them and they are bound to come forward to launch struggles on a large scale.

Com. B.T.R., the late President has given inspiration to all the women. expressing his thoughtful views on every occasion. The women's movement and working women are very much in debt, and the loss of Comrade B.T.R. is a heavy blow for all of us. We can only lessen his debt by doing the work which is unfinished by building strong working women's movement under CITU while strengthening the common movement of the total Working Class in the united movement.

Charter of Demands

The first charter of demands was adopted in Madras convention in 1979. During this period of 10-12 years, some changes are necessary as per the need of our demands of working women. Therefore, some discussion among our AICCW members is necessary. I am placing the tentative demands for working women for discussion which should be adopted by our committee and then circulate it for our members.

1. Right to work and its inclusion in the Constitution of India as a fundamental right.

2. Ban retrenchment of working women in any form and maintain the strength of women working at the 1948 level in industries and establishments. Create more opportunities for women by opening service avenues, as a matter of policy in all the places. No retrenchment due to introduction of new technology in the industry.

3. Unemployment benefit to those who have been retrenched and those on the employment register.

4. Eight hours work a day for all working women including the women in the unorganised and agricultural sector throughout the year.

5. Equal wage and opportunity for working women in all spheres. There should not be discrimination in retiring age of men and women in public and private sector.

6. No discrimination in promotion, training treatment towards working women. No dismissal on the plea of marriage and having more than one children.

7. Maternity leave with full pay for four months in all industries and establishments, irrespective of any size, as per the choice of mothers, including women in the unorganised sector and agricultural sector.

8. Payment of all medical expenses for predelivery and post delivery period with minimum of Rs. 1000/-.

9. The leave for miscarriage and abortion assured with the money sanctioned.

10. Strict implementation of legislation concerning working women, and punishment of fine and prison sentence to the offenders.

11. Minimum wages in states prescribed by the Government be paid to all including women in Anganwadi, and in unorganised sector.

12. Strict implementation of provision of creche near the offices or establishment of working women in rural and urban areas. Working women be given time to feed their babies. The creches should be provided with nurses, ayas, toilets, clothes and proper maintenance.

13. Hostels for working women, and adequate quota of finance be allotted by the Central Government.

14. The employers should be prevented to employ women in the night shift in mills or in small engineering factories.

15. Women be provided with gloves covers for eyes etc. against any health hazards in the industries such a mines, beedi, coal, tobacco, fisheries, match, etc.

16. Ensure security from the sexual harassment by the officers at work places.

17. Training be given free of cost with stipend.

18. Provision for a minimum one member of working women in the industries where they constitute a large number on the worker committee on a compulsory basis.

19. The hours of work for nurses and the nurse-bed ratio should be as per the ILO standards.

20. The government committees be appointed for implementation of legislation concerning women where representative from trade unions be taken up, regular meetings of the committees be held.

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reality that in many industries there is hardly any worker who earns less than Rs. 1600/- which will mean that none of them will be entitled to the payment of full amount that should have accrued to them. It is against this context that the trade union movement have been demanding the abolition of such meaningless ceilings which act as instrument for depriving large number of workers of their due statutory bonus. This conference calls upon the working class to wage a ceaseless united battle so that the demand is achieved.

On Reservation

This 7th conference of CITU held at Calcutta from 12th to 17th Feb. 1991 welcomes the decision of the N. F. Govt. to extend reservation to Other Backward Classes in Central Services as per the Mandal Commission recommendations. The Conference is deeply disturbed at the large scale violence that erupted in opposition to reservation resulting in massive destruction of public property along with the spate of self immolation by the youth of both sexes. A great emotional divide has been created in the country between the people of backward communities and others by the violent resistance triggered off by obscurantist and reactionary forces at a time when the unity and integrity of the nation has already suffered serious setback in the hands of communal and other divisive forces. This conference calls upon all sections of people and the working class to take a sober approach to the question of reservation for the OBCs.

The conference reiterates the CITU's stand on the question of reservation that social justice demands providing of special opportunities for education, economic and cultural growth for the backward castes. In a society dominated by upper castes in the rigid frame work of caste system prevailing for centuries, the sections of people have remained backward in all the above aspects. It is for the upliftment of these historically backward sections of society that provision was made in the Constitution for reservation for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes as also other socially and educationally backward classes. While reservation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, were granted at the all India level, reservation for other backward classes was granted only by several states, which did not cover recruitment to central services. The N. F. Govt. decision to introduce reservation to the extent of 27% of jobs for the other backward classes all over the country would overcome this lacuna. It was a measure which would go some way in giving some relief to backward classes. The CITU therefore, welcomed the decision with the stipulation that within the frame work of reservation for the castes who represent the other backward classes, economic criteria should also be introduced to ensure that the benefit may reach out to those members of the castes who really deserve it.

The Conference is, however, clearly of the view that reservation by itself is not capable of achieving

the end. Uplift of the backward classes is inseparably linked with radical land reform which can free the exploitation and oppression of landlords, money lenders and other rural vested interests. Nor can reservation alone solve the acute problem of unemployment even among the backward classes so long as the economic policies of the Govt. continue to cause drastic shrinkage of employment potential of the country arising out of the capitalist path of development. For effective uplift of the backward classes and solution of employment problem facing the backward classes and others, together with reservation, it is necessary to develop mighty struggle for radical agrarian reform and for change of the whole gamut of the economic policies pursued by successive bourgeois-landlord governments which cause shrinkage of employment opportunities.

This conference expresses deep sorrow for the young lives lost during the course of anti-reservation agitation through self immolation or otherwise. While the anxiety of the youth about their future employment is understandable there is no doubt that the issue of reservation for the OBCs was exploited by the divisive political forces like the BJP and its allies as well as the opportunist attitude of Congress(I) which is responsible for the tragic developments, although they had supported it outwardly. The Conference however notes that such development could be avoided had the N.F. Government proceeded to implement the recommendations after thorough discussion with all political parties.

This conference congratulates the working class of the country that it could preserve its class unity in the emotionally surcharged atmosphere.

This conference calls upon the unions and the working class in general to actively work for restoring unity among all sections of population on the basis of recognition of the need for effective measures for removing inequality historically imposed on vast sections of our population.

On Industrial Relations Law

The Seventh Conference of the CITU held on 12-17 February 1991 at Calcutta denounces the Cong(I) backed Janata Dal(S) Government at the Centre for its refusal to continue the process initiated by the NF Govt. to amend the Industrial Disputes Act and Trade Unions Act. Although the Bipartite Committee made some unanimous recommendations like coverage of all workmen irrespective of the nature of their employment under the new industrial relations law, safeguarding against the impact of modernisation, etc., yet it recommended the constitution of an extraneous Industrial Relations Commission with wide powers to oversee the trade union functions from registration to recognition, collective bargaining rights and the right to strike, which went against the basic trade union rights of the workers.

This conference endorses the note of dissent submitted to the bipartite committee jointly by CITU, AITUC, TUCC and UTUC(LS), as reflective of the interests of the working class of the country.

These organisations have rejected the constitution of Industrial Relations Commission and the grievance procedure suggested under IRC. - Provision of 14 days strike notice and strike ballot with 2/3rd majority would render a legal strike impossible. The dissenting note rejected the concept of treating lock out and strike at par, while demanding full right to strike as part of collective bargaining, had suggested prohibition of lock-out as a right of the employer.

The conference regrets to note that on the major reactionary provisions like constitution of the Industrial Relations Commission, grievances machinery, management's claim to lock-out as a right and on basic rights of working class to strike etc., the INTUC had favoured the employers with the support of BMS and HMS.

On the question of recognition of trade unions and the constitution of a collective bargaining system, while overwhelming majority of the trade unions opined for secret ballot, the INTUC favoured the obnoxious check-off system for the same. The conference calls upon these organisations to reconsider their positions and join the mainstream of the TU movement, upholding the basic rights of the working class.

This conference demands of the Government of India to finalise the new Industrial Relations Law, on the basis of the consensus recommendations and in line with the recommendations contained in the note of dissent submitted by CITU, AITUC, TUCC and UTUC(LS).

On Secret Ballot

The Seventh Conference of CITU held on 12-17 February, 1991 at Calcutta draws the attention of the Government of India to the fact that absence of the recognition of the right of the workers to elect their representatives of their own choice at the negotiating table continues to disturb industrial relations in the country.

The demand for recognition of the unions through secret ballot has been pending since independence. In course of time, it became the demand of the entire trade union movement, barring the INTUC.

In the seminar held on 8th and 9th January, 1990, on workers' participation in the management, in which representatives of all central trade unions including INTUC, employers' organisations, and of the Government, participated, recognition of workers' representatives by secret ballot was evolved as the consensus.

The Conference points out that if the NF Govern-

ment had continued, legislation for recognition by secret ballot would have been passed by now. The Conference notes with concern the ominous silence of the Chandrashekhar Government on this issue.

The Conference demands of the Government of India to carry out this tripartite commitment by immediately enacting a legislation for recognition of unions by secret ballot.

The Conference calls upon all unions irrespective of affiliations to come forward to initiate a joint movement to compel the Government of India to carry out this commitment.

On New Technology

This 7th Conference of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions held at Calcutta from 12th to 17th February 1991 takes note of the unprecedented advancement of technology in the advanced capitalist countries which places at the disposal of mankind the potentiality of immense expansion of production of commodities for wider and fuller satisfaction of human wants, if properly used. Far from being opposed to technological advancement the working class rejoices at the prospect of satisfaction of the needs of entire humanity offered by it. But in the capitalist world today the fruits of technological advance is cornered by multinationals and monopolies, by a small affluent section of society while the working class stand to lose their job, since advanced technology enables machines to take over huge volumes of skilled and unskilled job. This means huge profit for employers and more widespread unemployment and more acute poverty for the working class and common man. The working class does not fight against adoption of new technology, it only fight against such use of it that enables the grabbing of the benefit of scientific and technological revolution by a handful at the expense of the millions of common people, it fights for dissemination of the benefit to all, for the benefit of national economy.

This conference notes with concern that the technology policy which is being pursued by the successive governments at the centre provides for a drive for indiscriminate adoption of modern technology, labour saving processes and devices, regardless of huge surplus labour and an army of unemployed growing at an alarming rate in the country. Reckless drive for advanced technology is bound to be detrimental to India's labour surplus national economy by contributing to further aggravation of unemployment problem. The conference is of confirmed view that new technology should be introduced only in appropriate cases and with adequate measures to ensure maintenance of employment through expansion of production, reduction of working hours and others means.

This conference notes with serious concern that the weakness of the industrial policy of the successive govts at the centre is fully exploited by the IMF

and World Bank, by US imperialism and the multinationals to further their own interest to the detriment of India's national economy and its self reliance. The multinationals which constitute the source from which modern technology is secured in India charge exorbitant price for the supply of technology, almost always supply lower grade technology which become outmoded in their country instead of transferring the best they possess and use in their country, most often they refuse to part with the entire know-how so as to keep us perpetually dependent on them, in running the technology secured from them, or for the same purpose force us to acquire spare components from them, thus laying technology trap for holding developing economies like ours in their grip. Moreover, they supply equipments which are not suitable in Indian conditions and even dump such technology as is not required by us.

The conference further notes with concern that our technology policy is predominantly import oriented, leading to neglect of any serious effort for development of indigenous technology in which our scientists and technologists have amply proved their talent. The imperialist countries and multinationals are grabbing our talents and weakening our intellectual base for technological self reliance.

This conference also notes that the employers while introducing new technology resulting in displacement of workers associated with the old processes, do not care for their proper training for enabling them to be actually absorbed in the new process. In consequence the workers so displaced face economic and often emotional crisis.

The conference demands :

—reversal of present technology policy pursued by the govt. of India.

—A new technology policy, suited to the needs and interests of the national economy, working class and of the people, coupled with a plan for expansion of capacity and production, and reduction of working hours, is evolved in consultation with the trade unions.

—The conference demands that workers' consent, shall be a must, whenever introduction of new technology is contemplated and effective training for proper absorption of displaced workers, if any, must be ensured.

—The conference demands of the Government of India that substantial financial allocation, and special efforts be made for development of indigenous technology to ensure economic self reliance, and effective resistance to pressure blackmail, and conditionalities of the multinational companies.

The conference while calling upon the workers to unitedly resist the adverse consequences of government of India's present policy on their jobs and working conditions and also take initiative to build up an extensive movement of workers and other sections of toilers for an alternative and correct policy of application of technology in our country.

Demonstration before USIS, Calcutta

CITU Calcutta District Committee had organised a massive protest sit-in demonstration in front of USIS (New building) against barbarous attack of U.S. imperialism at Middle East on 25.2.91. The workers had participated in large numbers with great enthusiasm, as the scheduled sit-in demonstration was scheduled at 11 am to 7 pm on the day, the workers' organised rally from all sides poured in and the place was completely filled-up much before the time and the place soon became jam-packed.

Com. Luxmi Sen, Working Committee member, CITU All India committee inaugurated the proceedings of the day and Com. Raghunath Kusari, General Secretary, Calcutta District proposed a resolution condemning the barbarous attack let loose by U.S. imperialism on Iraq, it was seconded by veteran T.U. leader Com. Haridas Malakar and other T.U. leaders viz. Com. Bijoy Bhattacharjee, Ashim Banerjee, Gargi Mukherjee, Rampunit Thakur, Vijay Tewari, Khokon Majumdar, Niranjana Chatterjee also spoke on this occasion. Revolutionary songs and recitations highlighted the day's proceedings.

Com. Chittabrata Majumdar, Secretary CITU State Committee urged the workers to take pledge to fight against U.S. imperialism. Later in the day and till 5 pm big protest rallies continued to join the demonstrations.

The rally was presided by Com. Rajdeo Goala, President, Calcutta District Committee of CITU. He thanked the workers for participation and concluded the day's proceedings after adopting the resolution unanimously.

Massive Peace Rally

The West Bengal Left Front organised a massive rally for peace at Calcutta on March 13. Several lakhs of workers, peasants, students, youth women and common people joined the rally from various parts of the State. Innumerable processions converged at the Brigade Parade Ground, where the rally was addressed by Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of W. Bengal and other left front and CITU leaders. The rally denounced the US imperialists for their barbarous war against Iraq. It condemned the Chandrasekhar Government for its flouting the non-aligned foreign policy by allowing refuelling of US war planes and called upon the workers to wage continuous struggle for peace against the war mongering US imperialists.

General Council List CORRIGENDUM

In the list of General Council members published in the Seventh Conference Special March, 1991 issue of the Working Class the name of K. Shankar of Karnataka has been printed twice in the 4th and 5th numbers by mistake. In the 5th number it should be V. Sukumar. The mistake is regretted—Ed.