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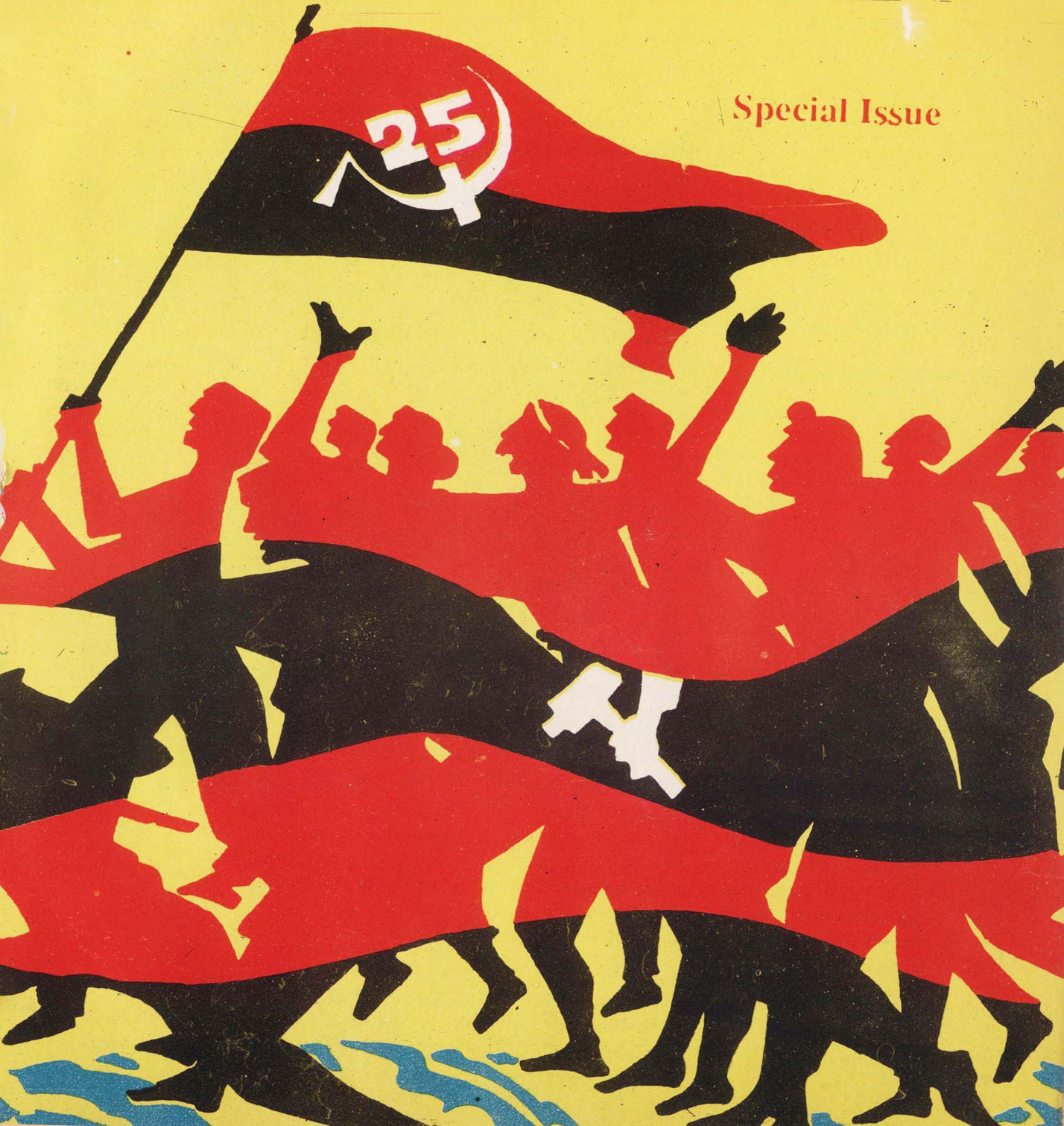
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THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITY

Special Issue



PANCHAYAT

has given her a new life



Panchayat System in West Bengal means decentralisation of administration in the grassroot level. The Government of West Bengal has laid special emphasis on Land Reforms. Land Reforms measures are being successfully implemented in West Bengal through the active cooperation of Panchayats. This emphasis on Land Reforms is essentially a productive move which aims at bringing new life and buoyancy for the vast untapped human potential of

the people living in the countryside. Major breakthroughs have been achieved in agricultural production with the help of elected local bodies - the Panchayats.

Today, agriculture serves as a springboard for industrial growth in the state. The Panchayat system symbolises a new life for the rural people.

**GOVERNMENT OF
WEST BENGAL**

The Telecom Strike

The indefinite strike launched by the 4.5 lakh telecom employees in the country from 19th June has created a furore among the monopoly bourgeois press. Never before during the last four years of struggles by the trade unions and other mass organisations against the new economic policies, the press had come out so openly against the strike actions. But on the telecom strike they have unleashed a venom which have exposed their avowed anti-trade union bias. The editorials in the big press have further laid bare the character of monopoly capital, their craze to tie up with the giant multinational corporations in the Telecom industry, whose objective is to ravage this vital sector of the Indian economy and subvert its self-reliance and national sovereignty.

The tirade launched by the big press is obviously under pressures from the giant MNCs. They have brazenly come out against the strike stating that trade unions cannot intervene in the policymaking of the nation. They can utmost demand for better service and working conditions. What an audacity? This exactly we ask the trade unions—to intervene in the national policies in the interest of the entire nation instead of bogging down to economic demands only. This exactly is the motto of the continuing struggle against the entire gamut of the new economic policies to safeguard the country's self-reliance and economic sovereignty. The monopolists can dictate the economic policies of the country so long as they remain as the ruling classes. But their attempts to dictate the trade union policies deserve the strongest condemnation from the trade union movement which cannot allow them to take the nation ransom.

And what is the role of the Government? In tune with the imperialist-sponsored economic policies, it has stood as a watch dog to protect the interests of the MNCs with a whipping hand against the striking employees. Instead of being a Government of the people, for the people and by the people, it is acting as a government of the monopolists, for the monopolists and by the monopolists—both Indian and foreign, rather more foreign than Indian.

It has to be noted that privatisation is the most dramatic manifestation of the economic reforms under the current wave of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. This privatisation in essence means unbridled entry of the giant multinationals in all sectors of our economy—most essentially in the core sectors which are vital for the growth of a self-reliant economy. After India became free from the fetters of British imperialism, these vital sectors were reserved for and developed under the public sector as per the

Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 to contain the thrust of imperialism into the national economy of the newly liberated country. All these sectors did develop to the extent of international standards. The telecom sector is certainly one such sector which has developed to such an extent, catering to the needs of the Indian people, and it is so important for the security of the nation.

But the drive for liberalisation has made the Government so crazy for the multinationals, that it has totally erased its anti-imperialist traditions and has become so blind to the national interests that it is playing fraud to the people by projecting that the public sector, or even the national sector can no longer cater to the needs of the people. Hence, the wheels of history have to be reversed and India has to be dragged to the pre-independence days and brought under the economic dominance of the imperialist countries through their tentacles—the multinationals.

Thrown off-guard by the united strike, the Government and the monopoly press have started singing the same off-repeated tune that privatisation and transnationalisation of the telecom sector will open up the avenue for more employment. What an outdated armament to hoodwink the trade unions! The Indian trade union movement is already rich with the experience of the new economic policies that instead of employment generation, they are generating unemployment, being aggravated by closures. In the Telecom industry particularly, first of all, it is only the USA, UK and Canada, which have taken recourse to privatisation to some extent, while all other advanced capitalist countries like Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, etc have still retained the service in the State Sector. In USA, UK and Canada already thousands of employees have been rendered jobless due to only this partial privatisation, which is the natural eventuality.

It is in this background the telecom employees and the three federations, viz NFTE, FNTD and BTEF deserve warmest congratulations from all trade unions, other mass organisations and democratic and patriotic sections of the people for their dogged unity and the determination to force the Government to retrace for its anti-national path of handing over the basic telecom sector to the multinationals. The strike will give a boost to all other industrial federations and the entire Indian working class to further consolidate the trade union unity and intensify the struggle against the disastrous economic policies till they are withdrawn in the interest of the nation. □

CITU SUPPORTS TELECOM STRIKE

Centre of Indian Trade Unions extends its whole hearted support to the joint decision of the Telecom Unions to go in for continuous strike from 19th June to oppose the move for privatisation of Telecom network by the Govt of India.

CITU notes with concern the overzealous move of the Govt of India to practically handover the country's telecom system to the multinational companies, which is not only detrimental to the self-reliance of the country, but also undermines security and sovereignty of the country.

In most of the countries even in the advanced world, the telecom system is still being controlled by the respective governments. It is ridiculous that Govt of India is now succumbing to the pressure from the multinational companies from those advanced countries for privatising the profit earning department to them.

CITU also notes that privatisation/transnationalisation of country's telecome service would also lead to severe underutilisation of the capacity and consequent sickness and closure of various public sector units set up for producing telecom equipments and systems.

CITU congratulates telecome workers and employees and their unions/federation for their frontline role in opposing such dangerous move of govt of India through strike action and assures them of all out support in their struggle.

CITU also condemns the Vindictive action taken by the govt of India in declaring the strike illegal and in advising the different state govts to take action under ESMA to ban the telecom strike. CITU believes, the telecome workers would go ahead in their struggle braving such vindictive action of the government.

CITU calls upon all its units all over the country to take active role in supporting and making the telecom strike a total success.

Central Trade Unions Support Telecom Strike

The INTUC, CITU, AITUC, BMS and HMS have issued the following joint statement in support of the strike by the Telecom employees:-

We the representatives of INTUC, CITU, AITUC, BMS and HMS congratulate the 4.5 lakh Telecom employees of the country for their strike action launched against privatisation of the basic telecom services.

The strike call jointly given by the three federations in the industry, viz NFTE, FNTD and BTEF is fully justified, because it is in protest against giving away this vital sector to the Multinational Corporations by undermining the national sector and dismantling the public sector. The tenders called for by the Government to provide basic telecom services by private parties require the bidder to have an experience of service of minimum 5 lakh lines, which no Indian company has got. This pitch has been obviously queerred in order to bring in the giant MNCs in Telecom with or without collaboration of Indian partner.

Handing over this vital sector to foreign companies will pose a threat to national security. Moreover, the tariffs will be increased substantially making the telephone out of reach of the common people. With privatisation there will also be loss of jobs in thousands.

We strongly deplore the imposition of ESMA against the justified protest action by the employees and calling the army to man the telecom services and thus intimidate the striking employees.

As per reports, the strike is total all over the country. We demand of the Government to retrace from the anti-national path.

Sd/-
S N Rao
(INTUC)

Sd/-
P K Ganguly
(CITU)

Sd/-
A B Bardhan
(AITUC)

Sd/-
V Tiagi
(HMS)

Sd/-
R K Bhakt
(BMS)

THE MASS ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT STRIKING TELECOM WORKERS

The meeting of the national Platform of Mass Organisations held in New Delhi on 19th June, 1995 warmly congratulated the telecom employees all over India for their successful indefinite strike to oppose the Central Government's policy to privatise the telecommunications and to allow free entry for multi-national companies to control the telecom sector in India.

The meeting appealed to trade unions and all other mass organisations of agricultural workers, peasants, women, students, youth and cultural groups

(Cont'd On page 13)

Prepare for Next Phase of Actions against NEP

P K Ganguly

The General Council meeting of the CITU held at Howrah from May 31 to June 2, 1995 called upon the State Committees, District Committees and the unions to make preparations for the next phase of intensified united actions against the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government.

The main resolution of the Council meeting on the struggle against the economic policies placed at the end of discussions by K N Ravindranath and seconded by N Prasadarao, welcomed the decision of the National Platform of Mass Organisations to convene a national convention at Delhi in the middle of July and declare the next phase of countrywide action programme against the NEP. The resolution appealed to all trade unions and other mass organisations to further strengthen the unity already achieved and mobilise millions of people in the country and the democratic, secular and patriotic forces in the new wave of determined struggle, so that the IMF-World Bank conspiracy to subjugate India's economic independence is given a powerful rebuff through militant mass actions.

25th Anniversary of the CITU

The General Council meeting was a significant event as it coincided with the 25th anniversary of the formation of the CITU. The Council meeting was preceded by a massive meeting at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Calcutta on 30th May, the foundation day of the CITU. The mammoth gathering at the Indoor Stadium was addressed by E Balanandan, President; M K Pandhe, General Secretary; Jyoti Basu, Vice President and Chief Minister of West Bengal, and Niren Ghosh, Secretary of CITU. The speakers recalled the formation of the CITU which heralded the birth of the class organisation committed to class struggle by the working class in the path of establishment of a socialist State. They called for further development of united struggle embracing ever broader sections of the working class and consolidate the trade union unity by the formation of a confederation, which is bound to further the united struggles against the anti-people policies of the Government. Referring to the new situation where neo-colonial offensives have been launched by imperialism making the working class as the special target, the speakers called upon the workers to assert their right to strike and intervene in the national issues in the interest of the people. The meeting was also greeted by A B

Bardhan of AITUC and Ashok Ghosh of UTUC.

Presidential Address:

The Council meeting started on 31st May after hoisting of the red flag by E Balanandan, President and placing of wreaths at the martyrs' memorial.

In his presidential address Balanandan recalled the objective of the formation of the CITU and briefed the struggles launched during the last twenty five years to develop independent actions and united struggles to confront the anti-working class and anti-people policies of the Government.

Speaking on the imperialist offensives, he pointed to the 35 years of economic blockade imposed by the USA on Cuba and called for liberal contribution to help Cuba which was fighting against the US offensive in a determined manner to safeguard socialism there. He referred to the offensives launched against DPRK and China also by the USA.

He further drew attention to the deepening crisis in the advanced capitalist countries which were plagued by growing unemployment, reduced GDP and reduced employment generation. He placed data from OECD to substantiate the facts. To wriggle out from their crisis, he said, they were trying to shift their burdens to the Third World countries putting them into debt traps. At the same time there was an intensification of trade wars amongst them in the hunt for markets.

Pointing to the effect of liberalisation and globalisation in India Balanandan referred to the structural adjustment programme, which resulted in closures and sickness of industries, dismantling of the public sector, galloping unemployment and spiralling prices of all commodities. The unbridled embarkment on the path of privatisation and free entry of the multi-nationals in all sectors of the Indian economy had led to a process of deindustrialisation in the country, he said. Even the most vital sectors of the economy like power, telecommunication, the financial sector, defence sector, airlines sector, etc alongwith the small scale and tiny sectors were being given away to the MNCs.

Continuing with the national scene, he drew attention to the alarming situation created by the communal and fissiparous forces in the country. He referred to the burning of the Charar-e- Sharieff in Kashmir and the threat posed by the BJP-Shiv Sena, who had formed Governments in Gujarat and Mahar-

ashtra. He called upon the members to gear up the organisation so as to meet the demands of the situation and concentrate on developing mass united struggles to safeguard the sovereignty of the country and force the Government to withdraw the economic policies and also to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country by defeating the nefarious designs of the communal and divisive forces.

General Secretary's Report:

M K Pandhe placed the General Secretary's report. The report at length dealt with the international and national situation and the organisational tasks. In the national situation, Pandhe briefed the struggles launched by the CITU against the economic policies, developing into broad united struggles under the banner of the National Platform involving all other trade unions and mass organisations, including the countrywide strike actions. He self-critically analysed the struggles and called for overcoming all weaknesses. He made particular reference to the historic 5th April rally before Parliament, the countrywide protest week observed from August 3 to 9, the all India rail roko programme, the Civil Disobedience programme by the left parties and the 29th September strike. He further briefed the development of united struggle by the public sector workers against privatisation and the united strike against the privatisation of IISCO involving the INTUC and BMS. The report further referred to the united struggle developed by the CITU in the Textile industry drawing in the INTUC, BMS and NLO, and the progress made by the CITU in the unorganised sector. The report also highlighted the growing international relations of the CITU, cooperation with ILO and CTUC and the project on elimination of Child Labour undertaken by the CITU on a national scale in cooperation with the ILO.

The report particularly laid stress on organisation and self-critically analysed the implementation of the organisational tasks as laid down in the Report on Organisation prepared by the CITU. Pandhe emphasised for increase in membership to 30 lakhs by the end of the year, development of the Hindi belt and democratic functioning at all levels of the organisation.

He further emphasised on trade union unity and called for campaign for the formation of a Confederation. The report also briefed about the new industrial policy of West Bengal and extended support to it. It further drew attention to the danger from the communal forces and called for determined struggle against them.

Referring to the achievements made by the CITU during the last 25 years, Pandhe called for further intensification of the united struggles to squarely meet the new challenges thrown by the

NEP.

The Treasurer's report was placed by Saroj Chowdhury. Two other reports, viz on Sickness and Privatisation were placed by S Debroye and Tapan Sen respectively. A report on BTR Trust Fund was placed by Ranjit Basu.

Discussion on the Reports:

Thirty comrades participated in the General Secretary's report and seventeen comrades participated in the reports on sickness and privatisation. The presidential address and the General Secretary's report had already set the direction of the deliberations towards carrying forward the struggles against the NEP. Members narrated their experiences in the field on the effects of the structural adjustment programme in the industries. They referred to the closures and the forced VRS being imposed on the workers under threat of liquidation of the units. They expressed serious concern over the loss of secured jobs in tens of thousands due to closures and sickness by the structural adjustment programme, which accentuated the unemployment situation in the country, which had already reached alarming heights. They referred to sickness of the PSUs, being deliberately caused by stoppage of working capital and raw materials. They narrated their experiences of the BIFR, which refused to accept even the unanimous revival schemes prepared jointly by all the unions and the managements. They pointed to the disinvestment measures undertaken in the profit making PSUs and sale of shares at throw away prices to private parties. They referred to the stubborn refusal of PSU managements in revision of wages. They assailed the Central Government for its refusal to settle the long pending issues of bonus, pension and DA slabs. They also referred to the rampant corruption at the top level of managements and the government.

The members further narrated their experiences of the growing attacks on even the elementary forms of trade union activities. They reported about their struggles in different units and on the problem of developing united struggles due to non-cooperation of certain trade unions.

On the question of privatisation, particularly, members assailed the policy of the Government. Serious concern was expressed by the members regarding the privatisation of the core sectors like telecom, power, financial sector, airlines, etc, and expressed their determination to fight the scourge.

They further laid stress on the unorganised sector and explained how the organised sector was being squeezed and products were off loaded into the unorganised sector and the homebased industries where workers were fleeced. Members representing the unorganised sector pointed to the growing clo-

tures and joblessness in this sector also and the appalling conditions of the workers, mostly the working women. A jungle rule was prevailing in this sector due to absence of any criterion-based minimum wage, any labour laws or social security measures. While wages were below poverty line, price rise of all commodities particularly hit the workers in this sector, they pointed out.

Members made many valuable suggestions to enrich all the three reports, viz, the General Secretary's report and the reports on sickness and privatisation, lending appropriate directions to them. Closures, sickness, privatisation and dismantling of the public sector and self-reliant economy alongwith unemployment and price rise were the major thrusts of the discussions by the members. They expressed their determination for further intensification of the struggle and demonstrated their preparedness for the same.

While deliberating their experience on the structural adjustment programme, they also narrated their experience about the communal forces. Members from Maharashtra, Gujarat and the northern states including UP made special reference to the question and briefed about their struggles against these divisive forces.

They further expressed their resolve to further consolidate trade union unity and carry it forward overcoming all obstacles for the ultimate formation of a Confederation. They welcomed the decision of the National Platform to convene a national convention and suggested for intensified action programme including countrywide strike action.

Regarding organisation also, the members made valuable contributions and expressed their resolve to gear it up in all its facets to be able to face the new challenges. The three reports were adopted with amendments suggested after reply by M K Pandhe.

Another resolution on celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the CITU was placed by R Umanath and seconded by Niren Ghosh. The meeting authorised the Secretariat to finalise several other resolutions submitted by the Resolution Committee, which would be deemed to have been adopted by the General Council, viz, Supporting the 24th June strike at Delhi and UP of the Unorganised and Engineering Sector; Supporting the strike on 20th June by FMRAI against the amendment of the Indian Patent Act; on Bonus; Solidarity with the Peasants' struggles; On the recent Blast in Haryana Cracker factory; On Unity; and on the Financial Sector.

The meeting was greeted by Sundaram of AIEA, D P Dubey of FMRAI and R Ramanathan of ACEU, who were specially invited in the meeting.

In the BTR Trust Fund Rajasthan donated Rs 2 lakhs, W Bengal Rs 8 lakhs and 25,000 and Karnataka donated Rs 17,000. For the Cuban Solidarity

Fund, the States were allotted quotas to be deposited by 19th December, 1995.

Decisions

1. The meeting endorsed the decision of the National Platform of Mass Organisations to convene a national convention at Delhi in the middle of July, from where the next phase of countrywide action programme against the NEP would be declared.

2. The meeting suggested that the proposed all India joint convention on sickness, closures and privatisation should be held at Delhi in the first week of September. The CITU should approach other Central Trade Unions including the INTUC for this purpose.

3. The CITU will observe 5th July as the All India Day on the issue of Bonus, DA and Pension.

4. The meeting proposed to hold a joint convention on Fisheries to be held at Cochine in November, 1995.

5. The meeting endorsed the decision of the Secretariat to observe the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the CITU all over the country for three months starting from 30th May, 1995 in the following manner:

a) During these three months demonstrations and rallies should be held highlighting the achievements of the CITU.

b) To organise seminars, workshop, symposia and TU classes highlighting trade union unity and the concept of a Confederation, and also recognition of trade unions by secret ballot.

c) Intensive campaign to increase membership of CITU unions on a massive scale, payment of affiliation fees to the Centre and levies to the States.

d) Campaign to increase sale and circulation of

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NATIONAL CONVENTION AT DELHI ON 15TH JULY AGAINST THE ECONOMIC POLICIES

The National Platform of Mass Organisations in its meeting held on 19th June decided to hold a National Convention at Mavalankar Hall, New Delhi on 15th July, 1995 to declare the next phase of countrywide action programme against the new economic policies of the government. The Convention will focus on the pressing issues like price rise, unemployment, privatisation, sickness and closures, dismantling of the public sector, communalism, corruption, etc.

About 1000 delegates from all over India from all the states will participate in the convention.

Resolution on Struggle Against the New Economic Policies of the Government of India

This General Council meeting of the CITU held at Howrah from May 31 to June 2, 1995 expresses grave concern over the deteriorating living conditions of the Indian people and the working class as a result of the economic policies of the Government of India being pursued since the last four years.

The series of concessions given to the multinational companies and foreign capital have resulted in further tightening of their grip over the Indian economy. The GATT agreement signed by the Government goes against national interest. This has adversely affected self-reliant growth of Indian economy and undermined the sovereignty of the country. The amendment of the Indian Patent Act in pursuance of the GATT agreement is one of the most treacherous steps taken by the Government. The dictates of the IMF, World Bank and WTO have come home to roost.

The entire gamut of the policies of liberalisation has resulted in unbridled spiralling of prices of all commodities, hitting hard the common people and the rural population in particular. The virtual collapse of the public distribution system and the lack of land reforms have added to the miseries of the common people and the poor peasantry. The policies have increased the number of people below poverty line enormously, contrary to the claims of the Government.

The drastic reduction in import duties and higher excise duties on Indian goods have adversely affected the Indian industries. This has added to the industrial sickness threatening the very existence of these units. Following the Government's policy of winding up the sick units, the BIFR is taking a hostile attitude towards the viability proposals prepared by the unions and the Officer's Associations, declaring liquidation of the units. This along with the closures being resorted to in pursuance of the structural adjustment programme, is throwing away tens of thousands of workers from secured jobs.

The economic and industrial policies instead of creating employment potential, are generating unemployment which has increased from 3.4 crores to nearly 5 crores during the last four years of the policies. Closures and sickness of the established units have further aggravated the unemployment situation in the country. Unemployment in the rural sector has become more alarming during the period, which has come to nearly 8 crores.

Dismantling of the public sector through disinvestment and sale of the PSU shares at throw away prices to private parties is going on in full swing undermining the self-reliant economy of the country, leading to a process of deindustrialisation. Privatisa-

tion and throwing open to the multinationals even the most vital sectors of economy like the telecom, power, financial sector, airlines, defence, etc is being resorted to without any let or hindrance bringing the entire national economy to peril.

Liberalisation and the reckless drive for privatisation lifting all controls or accountability to the people have resulted in rampant corruption upto top level of the government. The high officials and ministers involved in a number of scandals that rocked the country, continue to indulge in corruption with impunity.

The deregulation has led to further accentuating the uneven development of the regions, giving rise to the communal and fissiparous forces threatening the unity and integrity of the country.

The General Council warmly congratulates the working class and all other mass organisations for their continuous struggle against these IMF-dictated economic policies to safeguard the country's sovereignty. The four countrywide strikes and militant rallies during the period demonstrated their determination to carry forward the united struggles till the policies are withdrawn. The struggles have obviously found support among ever wider sections of the people, because the policies have adversely affected each and every section of them. The coming together of the trade unions and organisations of the peasantry, agricultural workers, students, youth, women, intellectuals and other professionals under the National Platform of Mass Organisations is a spectacular development of people's unity in the country against these anti-national policies creating tremendous potentialities for further broad mass actions.

This General Council welcomes the decision of the National Platform of Mass Organisations to convene a National Convention at Delhi in the middle of July to declare the next phase of mass actions against the economic policies. The CITU is of the firm opinion that only by developing such mass actions these retrograde policies can be squarely defeated. The CITU calls upon all the State and District committees and the unions to take initiatives and make preparations at the regional and local levels to further intensify the struggles and carry out the action programmes to be declared by the National Convention.

The CITU appeals to all trade unions and other mass organisations to further strengthen the unity already achieved and mobilise millions of people in the country and all democratic, secular and patriotic forces in the new wave of determined struggle, so that the IMF-World Bank conspiracy to subjugate India's economic independence is given a powerful rebuff through militant mass actions.

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Presidential Address

E. Balanandan

Dear Comrade,

After our 8th Conference in March last year at Patna many of our important leaders who were holding high positions in CITU and responsible for strengthening the organisation have passed away, besides several of our cadres. Com. S.Y. Kolhatkar, Com. Robin Sen, Com. Kshiti Burman, Com. Imbichi Bava, Com. T.M. Mohammed, Com. Bijoy Modak and Com. Nirmal Roy were among them. Let me pay our homage in their cherished memory and pledge ourselves to continue the path they have shown to us to develop the CITU further by holding its revolutionary traditions.

We have had our 8th All India Conference from 3rd to 7th March, 1994 at Patna. There we had discussed elaborately our tasks and several decisions were taken. The commission reports adopted by the Conference was the most important documents which gave us new guidelines for multifarious activities. After the Conference we had our Working Committee meeting in New Delhi from 27th to 29th of July which after taking stock of the development after the Patna Conference, mainly discussed the action programme to be taken up immediately against the economic policies of the government. The proposal for another All India strike came for discussion in this Committee and directed all our units to get prepared to make the action a great success together with other issues. Finally we had the general strike on 29th of September 1994 which was of the biggest working class actions against the NEP.

The Birth of CITU

Now we are again meeting in our General Council at Calcutta that too amidst the Silver Jubilee celebration of our organisation. Therefore, it is only natural that we should have an over-view of the work done for the last 25 years by the CITU which I do not wish to do here but a proper appraisal of the work done, our achievements and failures is to be summarised for the education of the working class. That will be done by the Secretariat. However, one can safely say that the decisions we took to come out of the AITUC and

to form a new organisation, the CITU has been undoubtedly proved correct from the experience of the last 25 years. I must tell you that the decision to break from AITUC has been taken with reluctance, and after carefully weighing the whole situation.

When difference developed in the AITUC on policies and organisational practices, a resolution was moved by Comrade P. Ramamurthi in the AITUC Conference at Bombay in December, 1966 which was accepted by the Conference. In this resolution it was said that for achieving unity and for the amalgamation of unions, the election to the union leading bodies should be conducted on the basis of proportionate representation besides ensuring democratic functioning. No agreement should be signed by the trade union leaders without getting Though the Conference accepted the proposal, the AITUC leaders holding dominant position did not care to implement it but went on disrupting the trade unions in many places on political grounds. Therefore, the situation got worsened. This policy of splitting the trade unions and not fighting for the economic and political interests of the working class made AITUC ineffective. The class collaborationist policies pursued by the AITUC made them tailing behind the government's policies. Therefore we have had to walk out from the AITUC Working Committee held in December, 1979 protesting against the non implementation of the 1966 resolution. Also we had to boycott the 26th session of the AITUC which was held at Guntur since they have denied affiliation for large number of massive unions. In this circumstance we were forced to think in terms of organising a new trade union centre. Those comrades who walked out of the AITUC Working Committee, entrusted comrade P. Ramamurthy to call a convention of those General Council members and State Committee members of AITUC who have boycotted the Guntur session of the AITUC. A Convention was held in Goa on 9th and 10th of April, 1970. This Convention decided to have a Conference of trade unions in Calcutta from 27th to 30th of May, 1970. This All India Conference of trade unions held in Calcutta decided to form the Centre of

Indian Trade Unions.

Without going into details I can safely say that the decisions taken at Calcutta to organise a new Central Trade Union Organisation, a fighting organisation of the working class which will uphold the class interests of the Indian working class. Our experience as I told you have proved that the CITU became the foremost fighting organisation of the Indian working class — a unifying force of the trade union movements of the country consistently organising and leading big struggles unitedly in order to protect the interests of the working class. Therefore while looking back everyone of us the cadres and leaders of the CITU can safely claim that the decisions taken by us at Calcutta in 1970 were absolutely correct.

CUBA

Before proceeding further let us raise our voice of protest against the blockade which is being continued by the United States against Socialist Cuba. In spite of the United Nations resolutions and the world-wide public opinion the US is trying to further intensify the blockade by passing a new law in order to prevent the other countries from interacting with Cuba.

Due to the collapse of Socialism in the Soviet Union and East European countries, the Cubans have lost sizeable quantum of their trade and commerce and large chunk of their imports. Now due to the blockade by the US, Cuba cannot continue free trade and commerce with many countries of the world. Thus the people of Cuba are subjected to inhuman sufferings. They are facing shortage of essential supplies including food. The people of Cuba are trying to get over this difficulty with the developing support from the various people of the world. In spite of all the difficulties they are holding the banner of Socialism high by declaring Socialism or death. Com. Fidel Castro who went to Copenhagen for the recent social summit, while addressing a gathering there, said the following among other things which is noteworthy:

“Cuba, criminally blockaded because it does not sharing the views of its the powerful northern neighbour, which lost 70% of its imports with the disappearance of the socialist camp and the Soviet Union, has not closed a single school, hospital, home for the aged, or Kindergarten. In spite of being a poor country we have today the highest number, per capita of teachers, doctors, art and sport instructors, among all the countries of the world. Our infantile mortality rate is less than 10

per every thousand child born alive: there are no illiterates, and life expectancy reaches 75 years.”

As indicated above the Cuban people needs help from every country for overcoming the blockade and the difficulties they are facing. India was helping them to a certain extent and now the National Committee for Solidarity with Cuba has requested for funds to be collected for sending a consignment of detergents to Cuba for which our trade unions are asked to contribute minimum of Rs. 10 lakhs.

I hope you might have already received the appeal issued by the CITU for rushing contribution to this fund. I request you the comrades to see that the funds are collected immediately and sent to National Cuban Solidarity Organisation. This is part of our fight against imperialism and part of our resolve to help the Socialist system in Cuba. We have to give the maximum contribution within the minimum time frame. Since it is urgent we cannot wait for the wage day. Let us salute the heroic people of Cuba.

THE WORLD ECONOMY

Comrades,

Let us have a look on the world economy. The capitalist production system under the so-called slogan of market economy is facing an all round crisis. From the following data from OECD, which show that during the period 1990-94, i.e., particularly from the time the structural adjustment programme under the banner of globalisation was launched, general recession gripped the whole of Europe, USA and other advanced capitalist countries. GDP was reduced, unemployment increased and employment generation was reduced in each country:

	Unemployment in Industrialist Countries (per cent)	
	1990	1994
USA	5.8	6.2
Canada	8.5	11.0
Austria	3.8	4.8
Norway	4.5	6.0
Sweden	1.8	7.8
Switzerland	1.0	4.0
EC	9.0	12.1
Japan	2.0	3.0
UK	5.9	8.8
France	9.0	12.2
Italy	11.6	12.1
W. Germany	5.8	8.2

Belgium	9.0	13.0
Denmark	9.5	12.2
Netherland	8.0	10.0
Luxumburg	1.8	2.8
Greece	7.0	11.0
Spain	17.0	24.0
Portugal	4.0	7.0
Finland	3.5	18.0

GDP Industrialised Countries (per cent)

	86-90	91-94
Japan	4.2	4.0
USA	2.4	2.1
Canada	3.0	2.6
EC	3.2	1.8
EFTA (minus Finland)	2.2	0.8

Employment Generation (per cent)

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

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

These figures are self-illustrative. I do not wish to go into the question of attendant decrease in employment and alarming increase of poverty. However one thing is clear that the enormous possibilities which have opened up due to the development of science and technology for the production of goods and services could not ensure prosperous life for the people in general within the capitalist frame work. Instead all kind of contradictions and conflicts are on the increase.

The problem of marginalisation of the least developed countries and the growing international inequality as a result of globalisation is an emerging area of concern. The concern is felt in the industrialised countries also over the job destroying effects of imports from and relocation of production to the developing countries. It is argued that imports from low-waged economies destroy job both directly through displacement of production, and indirectly through labour saving technical change that is induced. Rapid spread of new technologies is destroying significant number of jobs. The diffusion of western technology to low wage economies is also accompanied by growing concern in the industrialised North, that low wage producers will have an

unbearable competitive advantage and also have negative effects on labour standards. Such concerns have fuelled protectionist measures in the industrialised countries.

The developed capitalist countries are taking steps to increase their exploitation of the third world countries using the World Bank and IMF and the GATT now converted into World Trade Organisation. The enormous exploitation of the third world are reflected in the balance of trade and the ever increasing debt burden of the third world countries, leading many of them into insolvencies. The latest is reflected in the crisis of Mexico which came insolvent to pay off their debts and their total economy crashed.

The total third world debt in 1993 was 177 billion dollars, which is still on the increase bringing each other countries in the debt trap. Enormous amounts are being squeezed out by the big countries especially United States, Japan and Germany. According to the World Bank Annual Report September 1994, there was a net outflow of 731 million US dollars from all debtor countries in the first six months of 1994. The World Bank's report on Africa - March, 1994 admits that twenty of the 26 countries following IMF prescription have failed to improve their economies. The rest of the six will take at least thirty years to eradicate poverty.

The World Bank/IMF and the World Trade Organisations are supposed to help the so called globalisation process. Now we know are working at cross purposes in favour of the powerful countries especially the most powerful military and economic power of the world United States. In spite of the WTO came into being trade wars are on the increase. Latest is the serious conflicts now, developed between Japan and United States with regard to car industry. The US wants the Japanese car show rooms to sell American cars and Japanese car makers to buy more American parts to build their car. The American dictates are being opposed by Japan. Now they are threatening retaliatory measures against Japan. They do not care for WTO or sovereignty of Japan.

Therefore it is clear from the above the so-called globalisation and liberalisation are being managed in such a way to protect the interest of developed capitalist countries and stronger nations. It is not necessary to elaborate this further. The effect of globalisation and liberalisation under imperialist pressures are known to us and we were forced to launch big struggles against the same.

IMPERIALIST OFFENSIVE

The American imperialism is also using pressure and blackmail against the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Korea. They brazenly interfere in the internal affairs of Korea in the name of nuclear safety. The US wanted the demolition of the nuclear power facility in Peoples' Democratic Republic of Korea. The US even threatened military action against Korea with the sanction of UN but it could not be carried through by the strong objection from China. However, even now they are putting pressure on Korea for making them agree to the American dictates which are stubbornly being resisted by the Korean government and the people. Thus the second socialist country Korea is also under attack by the US.

By various means the US is trying to bring pressure on China to make them agree to US designs about which China is conscious and they are capable of resisting it.

The latest in the series is that the US is threatening Iran with Trade and Economic Relations Embargo and sanctions against US and foreign companies which trades with that country. Already orders are issued by Clinton administration declaring the American oil companies from collaborating with Iran on oil exploration and buying their oil. Threat of military action is also made on the alleged ground that Iran has occupied many islands in gulf areas for which US has offered protection.

The immediate provocation was that Russia and Iran has come to understanding for nuclear power equipment, and transfer of technology. Russian did not yield to US pressure to cancel this agreement. Recent visit of Iranian President to India is not to the liking of United States. Their threat to the countries cooperation with Iran is also applicable to us too.

Attack against the Working Class

We know that as part of the so-called policy of liberalisation the working class world over especially in the developed capitalist countries under serious attack. Permanency of jobs are becoming a casualty; scaling down of welfare amenities not only by the employers but also by the governments. The expenditure on education, health, insurance etc are being cut down in many countries including the United States. Of late a new offensive has been started by the Japanese employers. The life long employment system they had is being broken. Instead of time rate wage system, production based wage system is being introduced. Needless to say that it is a crude attempt of wage reduction, besides the employment

is drastically being reduced.

In the case of United States in many industries wage reduction is imposed on the workers. In the case of Airline workers they were able to introduce double wage system. About half of the pilots and cabin crew including stewards, they have imposed 'B' class wages, that is a serious cut in their wages.

In Germany and some other European countries another type of attack is started. The pension system is being privatised. Instead of pension being paid by the state. This step is being taken to introduce Private Revision Schemes. Workers will be contributing to this private schemes and they will manage the total pension funds. The funds which is being accumulated will be in the private hands which they can use for their own business purposes. This is being introduced now in France, Germany, Italy and many other smaller countries of Europe.

Comrades, I do not wish to go further elaboration on the world scene. It is evident from the above that the system of capitalism is crisis-ridden and it can never build a crisis free society. In the name of overcoming the crisis the working class singled at for attack. The weaker nations are being subjected to inhuman exploitation using economic, political and military levers by imperialist powers. Therefore the answer can be only one that the fight against the system is to be carried on effectively mustering of all our strength. The fight against imperialism has utmost importance.

Comrades, since our General Secretary has gone in detail on the national situation I do not wish to go beyond drawing your attention on certain issues.

KASHMIR:

On the early hours of may 11, 1995, the 535 years old Shrine of Sufi Saint Sheikh Noorudhin Noorani (Sharar-e- Sharief) was gutted. This Shrine built to honour the memory of Sheikh Noorudhin Noorani was notionly a place of worship for Muslims but also for all communities including Hindus, for the whole of Kashmiri people and for many in other parts of India and outside.

The torching of Shrarar-e-Sharief was just like the occupation of Harmandhir Sahéb by the Bhindranwala gangs and like the demolition of Babri Masjid by Sangh Parivar and all were part of the same game, i.e. to destroy the unity and integrity of the country. BhindranWala gang could finally succeed to bring under his control the sacred Shrine of Amritsar, because of the compromising policy of the Congress (I) Government with communalism, the demolition of

Babri Masjid was made possible because of the Same policy. In the case of Sharar-e-Sharief too was due to the enept handling of the extrimits by the Kashmiri administration and the Govt at the Centre resulted in its distruction. The heinous attempt of the miscreants in this case too was for poisoning the minds of the Muslims not only in India but also abraid that in India the place of worship for the muslims are not safe. Thus the militants get the support of international fundamentalists and also from the Muslim population of the country. This is a serious development which can only be compared with the demolition of Babri Masjid. In spite of the governments bungling, it is the duty of the patriotic people - to see that it is not made use of for the development of communal conflagration in the country.

The handling the Kashmir situation, the Govt. of India has miserably failed. They are even now thinking in terms of that this of issue can be settled through military and administrative means which the experience of so many years has proved wrong. There must be a political settlement - through which the Kashmiri people should get more autonomy to handle their own affairs while remaining in the Union of India. Without which talk of Election etc. are bogus.

Developing Communal Danger

In the case of Babri Masjid too the Govt. of India is still refusing to take proper steps. The Supreme Court declined to give its opinion for the reference made by the Govt. under Section 142 of the Constitution, On the issue of Babri Masjid, since the government refused to commit that their decision will be implemented. The home Minister reacting on the judgment publicly declared that the only way out for finding a solution to the Babri Masjid question is to refer the issue to the Supreme Court under section 138(2). But the Govt. did not take any step till date in this direction. While the Sangh Parivar is again on the offensive saying that they are going to proceed with their plan to demolish 3,000 mosques including the ones in Mathura and Kashi.

Recently, at Udayanagar in Dewar district of Madhya Pradesh Sadhvi Ritambara RSS leader had made a declaration that "no cristian will be allowed to live there" -in case a single Hindu is converted to Cristian faith. The Cristians in this area was organising protest against the killing of a nun allegedly by the RSS gangs, Mis. Rithambara warning came in this context.

The situation is further being worsened after the victory of Shiv Sena-BJP combine in Maharashtra. In

Bombay city in the name of sending out Bangaladeshi infiltrators the Muslim population is being threatened and their life is being made miserable by the Shiv Sena gangs.

Thus the unity and integrity of the country based on secular foundation is under serious strain. Besides the casteists forces are also developing in a big way in the country. Not only Political parties are being organised in the name of Scheduled Castes and backward classes upper castes etc.etc.- but also trade union too are being organised on caste basis.

The very unity of the working class is facing danger. Therefore, I need not stress the importance of fighting against this danger of relegious fundamentalism castism and communalism. Naturally the CITU should take the lead in this fight.

Compromising Sovereignty

We know that the countries unity and integrity is being endangered as the result of the govt's policies and the polices being pursued in the reactionay Political forces in this country. The Economic Policies being persued by of the govt is anti people and also antinational since it compromises our economic and political freedom in many many ways. I do not wish to the details since it is dealt at length in the General Secretaries report.

The Foreign multinational corporations an being given a red carpet welcome, in matter of trade and commerce and also in to the basic sectors of our economy where, we have achieved - world standards and earned a competitive edge over the global players. The precise thrust of the - World Bank IMF policy is to impose their hegemony in these sectors - either by the so called 'participation' or by destroying it altogether, so as to put us in perpetual dependency. This is being done in the Energy sector oil- Coal and Electricity - The basic capital goods sectors, Iron and steel and Heavy Engineering Etc. The telecom Sector Banking and Insurance are being thrown open to them.

The Big Capitalists, of the country are all in praise to these policies - since they are able reap huge profits and they are able to garner the people wealth created in the public sector at throw prices. However - a few among them too are finding it difficult to support many of these policies.

The ever increasing Price Rice- Corruptions at high places, the all time high debt burden, alarmighly increasing unemployment - closures and sickness etc. are of prime concern for the people and the working class.

Yet another area of concern is about the latest stance of the government, in the defence sector. In the name of Co-operation with US, the independent development of our defence potential is being seahd down. Which is an pardonable crime. Recently on January 12th Mr. Mallikarjun our Minister of State for Defence signed a note with Mr. William Perry the US Defence Secretary on Defence co-operation. The attempts of US was to include India too in their global defence net work, which of course will be under their hegemony. The so called "agreed note on defense relations between USA and India" - Says that Defence Co-operation will cover Civilian Co-operation and "Defence Production and Reserves".

We know what the US has done to us in the matter of supply of cryogenic engine to our sattelite projects from Russia. Under US pressure Russia went back from contract and refused to supply us the engine and we had to go forward with our own.

In the matter of Development of Low combat air craft (LCA) though there was agreement on technical Co-operation the US did precious little and we on our own have completed the job and it is to be rolled out by the End of the year. It was reported that the government was slowing down our missiles programmes under US Pressure - which the Prime Minister had to "deny" in the Parliament - The fact is that under so called liberalised environment the Defence Research and Development is being scaled down. Defence Reserves are to be secured at "Cheaper Cost from US". On all Crucial occasions sophisticated weapons to Pakisthan the US was on the other side, at present too they supply and then force the present co-operations with US will end in jeopardising our independent defence development which every Patriotic Indian must oppose.

Against these policies the CITU together with the other trade unions were engaged in serious fight mobilising the cooperation and support of other sections of the people. This has exposed the government policies to a large extent. But we have not succeeded in reversing the same. Therefore again it is our duty to further strengthen the movement to see this policies are reversed for which continuous and strenuous efforts should be made.

Congress (I) Party in crisis

In the recently held assembly elections the Congress (I) party has been subjected to serious drubbing by the people. They have been defeated in Karnataka in Andhra Pradesh and in Sikkim in the last November Elections- They could win the Orissa

elections only because the chief minister and the Janata Dal party were more vocal than the Congress(I) party in implementing the new economic policies. Therefore Congress could stage a come back in Orissa. In the next round of state assembly elections in February too the Congress(I) party suffered a serious set back. The major industrial state of India, the state of Maharashtra, BJP/Shiv Sena alliance got elected to office. While the BJP got majority in Gujarat. But in Bihar, Laloo Prasad inspite of many henious attempts has been elected with increased majority in the state. The present round of defeat for the Congress is a serious blow to their anti-people policies. Where there was viable alternative the people voted them to power. In Maharashtra and Gujarat, the Shiv Sena-BJP combine and BJP got majority because of the weakness of the left and democratic forces in these states. A new political situation has emerged due to this new electoral verdict. A near total rejection of the Congress party, while they have chosen the most reactionary party, Shiv Sena-BJP combine in Maharashtra and BJP in Gujarat.

After these elections a serious split arose in the Congress (I) party which culminated in the final break away of a sizeable section of Congress leaders. In a Congress workers convention held at New Delhi on 19th of this month, they have elected new president and office bearers of the party claiming that they are the real Congress while denouncing the present President Mr. Narasimha Rao and he is removed from the post of President.

The ruling party is defeated and in eleven states they have lost power besides their party is seriously split. Therefore, they have no moral authority to continue in power. The correct course would be that Mr. Rao should quite and face elections.

The coming to power in Maharashtra Shiv Sena-BJP Combine and BJP in Gujarat further emboldened the communal forces to vigorously pursue their policy for capture of power at the centre. In the Circumstances the working class is to play a decisive role to strength democratic forces to give a defeat to the Congress party and the reactionary parties like BJP and Shiv Sena.

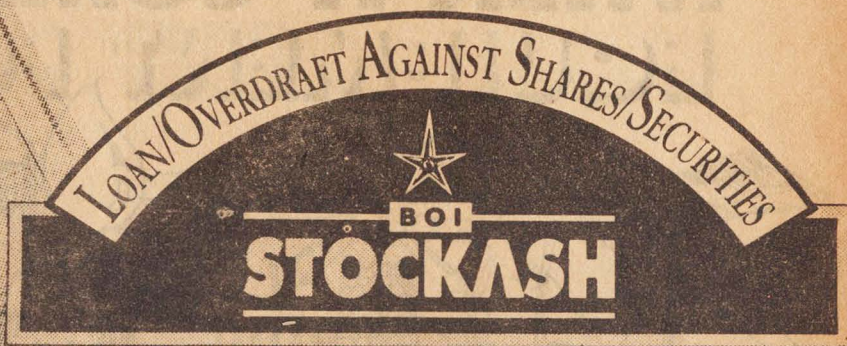
Strengthen the organisation

Comrades,

Before concluding I wish to draw your attention on certain organisational matters. The prestige of the Centre of Indian Trade Union is on the increase due to the constant policy of pursuing the fight against the government's retrograde policies and by carrying out

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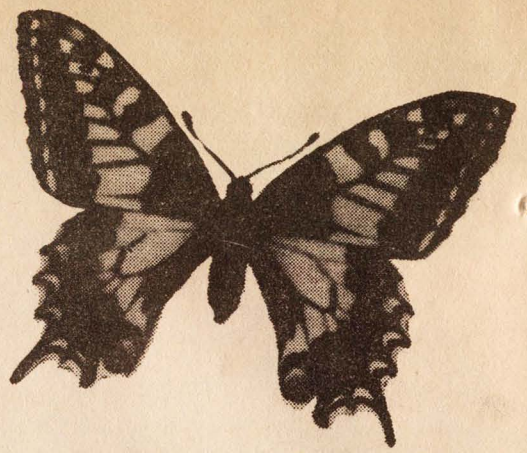
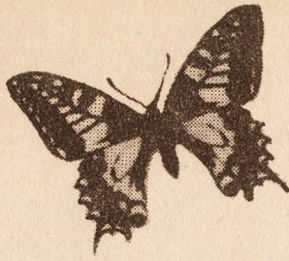
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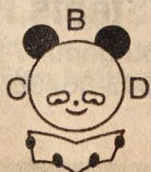
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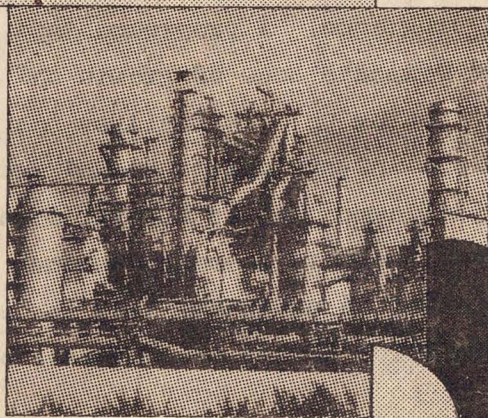
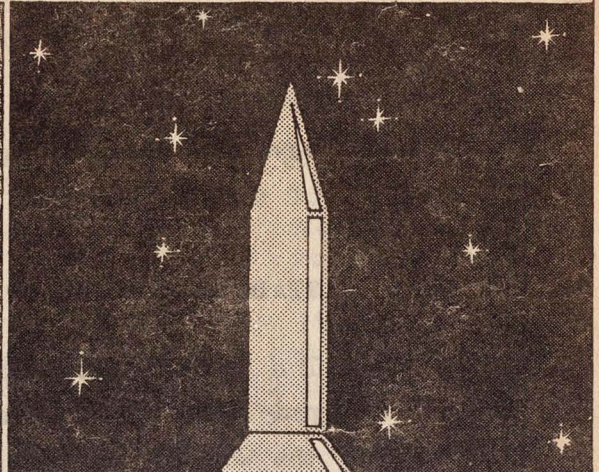
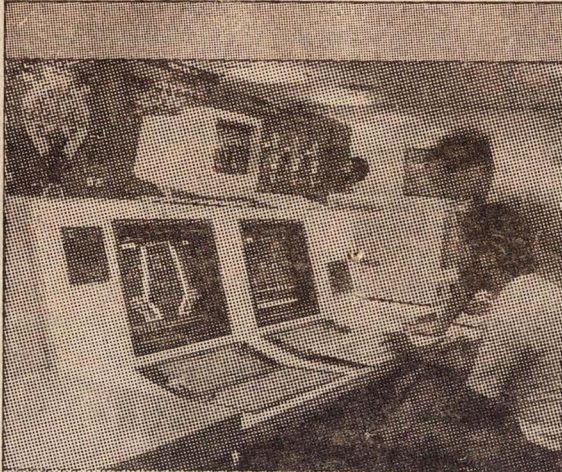


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the fight for winning the day today demands of the working class. This has earned us tremendous sympathy among the working class. But our organisational strength does not reflect this since we are lagging behind in our effort to draw this new sections of workers into our organisational fold. Without increasing our strength we may not be able to play the role which is destined to play by us. The CITU is not only a trade union centre among many others but it is an organisation which has to play the leading role in mobilising the whole class and the protector of the interest of the whole of the working class. This is a gigantic task. But this task should be undertaken by us.

The organisational report which we adopted clearly noted our weakness and strength and noted the directions for getting over our weakness. This is to be taken seriously by all the CITU cadres without which we cannot go forward.

The CITU was all along insisting the importance of forming the confederation of trade unions. The possibility of unity of trade unions has tremendously increased because of the experience of united struggles and the continuing offensive by the ruling classes. The urge for organisational cohesion is developing below from the base level since they have had recent experience of many united battles. Pressure is mounting from the ranks for unity and no trade union centre can take a negative attitude. Therefore it is the duty of our unions and our leadership to see that steps are taken for widening our organisational strength and building unity at all levels.

On the question of recognition of trade unions, a historic judgement which has been given recently by the supreme court in the case of food corporation

(From Page 2)

to rally behind the telecom employees so that they achieve success in their legitimate struggle in the national interest.

The meeting condemned the call of the Central Government to the State Governments to use ESMA against the striking employees. If any state Government resorts to such draconian action the constituents of the national Platform of Mass Organisations will not behave like a silent spectators but come forward to protest in consultation with trade union working in the industry.

Sd/- (M.K. PANDHE) General Secretary
Sd/- (A.B. BARDHAN) General Secretary
Sd/- (UMRAOMAL PUROHIT) General Secretary
CITU HMS

employees. It is said by the supreme court for the recognition of trade union's secret ballot should accepted and they have suggested the process of conducting the elections for this purpose. Therefore the CITU should vigorously campaign for the acceptance of trade union recognition through the system of secret ballot. Comrades, I wish to remind you about the constitution of the CITU. The democratic functioning of the trade unions are given utmost importance in this constitution. Respecting the minority opinion in the matter of decision making and providing minority sections in the union leadership by adopting cumulative voting system. The essence of the matter is that the trade unions are primary organisation of the workers to defend their right against their employers which can be most effective if all the workers are united in the same organisation. This position is disrupted due to various reasons today, political or otherwise. However each case to be examined separately and steps are taken to restore unity at base level is developed.

Comrades,

This year being the silver jubilee of the CITU the allround strengthening of the CITU should be taken as a special job. The united fight against the government policies is to be strengthened and the attack against the workers is to be reversed. Let us the pledge that we will strengthen unity and fight back and defeat this retrograde policies of the ruling class. With these words I offer you my revolutionary greetings.

— LONG LIVE TRADE UNION UNITY —

(From Page 5)

the CITU journals and publications. Special attention to be made for the sale of BTR's writings in three volumes.

e) State Committees should decide additional programmes to celebrate the 25th anniversary. Full efforts should be made to involve all the friendly mass organisations to make the programmes successful.

E Balanandan summed up the deliberations giving a clarion call to all State Committees and unions to forge ahead making full preparations for the next phase of action programmes against the NEP, and strengthen the organisation accordingly in all aspects, both to defeat the IMF dictated anti-national policies and to defeat the communal forces in the country. The next three months activities in observance of the 25th Anniversary of the CITU must pave the way for further progress of the CITU and consolidation of trade union unity.

DELHI AND U.P. PREPARE FOR 24TH JUNE STRIKE

Delhi and UP State Committees of the CITU are on the final steps of preparation for the joint strike action in the two states on 24th June in the Engineering industry and in the unorganised sector of industries.

As per earlier decisions a central rally was held at Jantar Mantar Park, Delhi on 13th June, which was participated by thousands of workers from Delhi, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and UP. From Jantar Mantar the procession went upto the Parliament Street Police Station, where it was stopped. A public meeting was held at that spot. The meeting was addressed among others by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU; SB

Bharadwaj, the Delhi State General Secretary; Mohanlal, the State President; K.N. Bhatt, the UP State CITU President and S.N. Solanki, the Haryana State CITU President. A delegation later submitted a memorandum of demands to the Delhi State Labour Minister. The demands included revision of wages in the Engineering industry at par with that in W.Bengal, revision of minimum wages in the unorganised sector, etc.

Earlier, another joint central rally was held at Lucknow on 19th May. The rally called upon the workers of both the states to make the 24th June strike a complete success.



The rally at Delhi on 13th June proceeding towards Parliament. S.B. Bharadwaj, Mohan Lal, S.N. Solanki and K.N. Bhatt are leading the procession.

The strike was successful in U.P. and Delhi. It was observed in several areas of Haryana also. Full report will be published in the next issue.

MASSIVE RALLY BY RAJASTHAN CITU AGAINST ANTI-LABOUR POLICIES OF BJP GOVERNMENT

The Rajasthan State Committee of CITU organised a massive central rally at Jaipur on 16th June against the anti-labour policies of the BJP State Government and the Central Government of Congress (I). Workers and employees from various organised and unorganised sector of industries, from the state sector and private sector came from all parts of the state to join the rally braving the sweltering heat. A large number of working women participated in the rally. The colourful procession of several thousands assembled at Khasa Kothi Chowk with flags and banners and marched through the main thoroughfares of the city shouting slogans and reached the State Assembly, where a public meeting was held.

The rally was presided over by Hethram Beniwal, the State CITU President. Among those who addressed the rally were P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU; Ravindra Shukla, the State CITU General Secretary; Hethram Beniwal; the State Kisan Sabha Joint Secretary Dhuli Chand; DYFI State General Secretary Lakhman Sain; Puspa Sharma, the Joint Secretary of Janawadi Mahila Samity, etc.

The speakers condemned the Narasimha Rao Government for embarking upon the path of unbridled privatisation of all the industries including the vital core sectors and opening the path for entry of the multinationals in all sectors of economy including the unorganised sector and agriculture. They pointed to the results of the economic policies, which mani-

festated in galloping prices, unemployment, sickness and closures of industries and undermining the self-reliant economy of the country. The BJP Govt in Rajasthan was also supporting the same disastrous policy and embarked upon the path of privatising the state owned sectors in Rajasthan. At the same time it had unleashed the offensive of its communal ideology fanning up communal passions among the people. The minimum wages of the workers in the vast unorganised sector were below poverty line making their lives deplorable.

A delegation led by Hethram Beniwal met the Deputy Chief Minister and submitted a memorandum of 25-point demands to him. The demands included reopening of the closed units, revival of the Tripartite Committees, implementation of labour laws and social security measures, fixation of criterion-based minimum wages with DA; stoppage of privatisation, closes and retrenchment; revival of the sick state sector units; genuine land reforms; stoppage of police repression and attack on trade union rights, etc. As the Chief Minister was out of station, despite having fixed up the appointment, the delegation did not get any positive assurance from the Deputy Chief Minister regarding the demands or any further discussion on them. The rally therefore decided to further intensify the struggle. The decided to observe 9th August as Demands Day all over the state by holding rallies, dharnas, demonstrations and burning of the effigy of the Chief Minister. □

JOINT NATIONAL CONVENTION OF TEXTILE WORKERS AT CALCUTTA

The Joint National Convention of Textile Workers will be held at Calcutta on 21st July, 1995. The Convention has been called by the Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers comprising of the INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS, and NLO.

The Convention will declare the next phase of countrywide joint action by the textile workers, demanding immediate implementation of the unanimous 8-point agreement on modernisation of the NTC mills; immediate convening of the Tripartite Committee meeting in Textile Industry to discuss the

sickness in the private sector mills and opening of all closed mills; minimum wages, social security measures, labour laws and supply of Hankyarn at subsidised rates in the powerloom and handloom sectors; a new integrated Textile Policy to ensure balanced development of all the three sectors, etc.

The convention will be attended by over 1000 delegates, out of which about 700 will be outside Bengal. The CITU will be represented by 150 delegates from outside Bengal. □

RAW DEAL FOR THE COAL MINERS —NCWA-V X RAYED

M K Pandhe

The wage negotiations for National Coal Wage Agreement V (NCWA-V) were dragged on for a considerably longer period due to the dilatory tactics adopted by the Coal India management. When the discontent among the seven lakh coal workers was mounting in January 1994 all the five unions in JBCCI gave a notice for one day nation wide strike on 31st January, 1994. Except CITU, other unions withdraw the strike as a result of the settlement with the union coal miners on following terms:

1. Rs 100 to be paid as interim relief.
2. Pension question to be finalised by Marc, 1994.

3. Wage negotiation to be expeditiously settled.

The CITU was not called for negotiations due to its refusal to withdraw the strike. The CITU asked for more interim relief since coal workers got the lowest quantum of interim relief in public sector undertakings. The CITU did not believe in the other 2 assurances. It, therefore, gave a call for nationwide strike on 31st January, 1994 and majority of the coal workers observed the strike in the country.

We should note in this connection that the question of pension for coal miners still remains unsettled while wage negotiations continue to be dragged for a considerably longer time.

Once again the 5 unions had to give strike notice when management was forced to increase the quantum of interim relief to 10 per cent of basic plus fixed DA which gave coal miners a minimum of Rs 150/- and a maximum of Rs 293 as in other public undertakings. This shows that if workers immediately decided to fight they would have won concessions from the management.

The MoU signed on in Calcutta by 4 unions in a hurry which failed to meet the aspirations of the seven lakh coal miners. The CITU did not sign it since it gave much less concessions to coal workers in comparison with other public sector undertakings. The MOU gave only Rs 85/- as guaranteed minimum benefit over and above which is lower than most of the public sector undertakings.

In Steel industry the interim relief varied from Rs 155 to 393 and workers got guaranteed minimum benefit ranging from Rs 100 to 150. In the last wage agreement the steel workers wages at the minimum level were only Rs 13 more than the coal workers. Now after this agreement only on amount of wages

etc the difference as on 1995 June would be as follows:

	Minimum	Maximum
Interim Relief	5	100
Guaranteed minimum benefit	15	65
Difference of increments from 1992-95	45	—
One additional increment given to workers on 1.1.95	40	140
	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 305

Thus the difference between the minimum wage has increased both at the minimum and the maximum level between coal and steel workers.

Over and above this, the coal workers have been paid only Rs 3.50 as conveyance allowance as against Rs 5 for the Steel workers. Thus every day of attendance the steel workers will get Rs 1.50 more than the coal workers. Those who have moped in steel industry would be paid a monthly payment of Rs 200/- while steel workers having scooter/motor cycle would be paid Rs 300/- per month. They also get advance for purchase of moped/scooter at concessional interest rates.

The night shift allowance for the coal workers is paid only Rs 5 per night while steel workers get Rs 10 per night shift worked in BHEL and NTPC it is Rs 15 per night.

The steel workers get free education upto 12th standard which is denied to coal workers. The steel workers get house building advance at the rate of 2 percent interest but coal workers do not get this benefit.

The steel industry has well built township and good civic facilities. In several coal miners the conditions of housing is extremely deplorable. The medical facilities available to steel workers are much better for the steel workers. The per capita expenditure is substantially higher in steel industry.

Even it supply of free coal, electricity and housing is taken into account for coal workers the overall standard of living is much higher for the steel workers than the coal workers.

The CITU and the AICWF strongly feels that the coal mine workers who are risking their life in unsafe mining conditions deserve a better deal than what is

provided in MOU for NCWA-V.

According to the NTPC agreement the fitment benefit ranges from Rs 261 at the minimum level Rs 700 at the maximum level. The Bangalore based agreements in BEL, HAL, ECIL, ITI, BEML give similar benefits to the workers and the working and living conditions are much better than the coal miners. The Oil Industry and ONGC are not mentioned here though they get substantially higher benefits. On the whole, among all major public sector undertakings the coal workers will be lower paid workers. When the contribution of the coal workers is important to the nation this condition is not justified for the coal workers. The quality of life of coal miners is much below the desired level.

The CITU wanted to fix minimum basic wages to be more than R 1700 but it agreed to accept it and it also agreed for Rs 28 as minimum rate of agreement though it was much lower than others. This was done with the hope on other count the benefits would be given more to compensate for the loss in this. This hope was however belied and when it saw the on other counts also lesser benefits are given to the coal workers then CITU found them unacceptable.

The CITU tried its best to cooperate with others in arriving at a satisfactory settlement but unfortunately other trade unions succumbed to the plea of the management that the position of industry is very bad and it cannot be more benefits. The CITU had to remain aloof from this understanding in the overall interest of the coal workers.

The CITU considers that the present worsening of the situation in the coal industry is due to the economic policies pursued by the govt of India which neglecting this core sector industry. The Government of India fixed the price of coal but does not give budgetary support to the industry.

The acceptance of lower wage of the coal workers is not justified. If all trade unions would have fought jointly for a better deal for the coal workers CITU and AICWF believe that it was possible to achieve better facilities to the coal workers comparable to the workers in other public sector undertakings.

Queer Logic of Low Underground Allowance

Over a period of years the percentage of underground allowance paid to the workers has been declining despite increase in UG allowance in money terms. This is causing great injustice to the underground workers who are doing hazardous job in the coal mines.

The underground allowance was paid 20 per cent of the basic wages in NCWA-III. The NCWA-IV

decided to make it 16% of the basic wage at the lowest levels by reducing Rs 200/- from the basic wages and calculating 20% allowance on the basic. It was expected that this reduction would be a temporary phase but to our surprise the underground allowance in NCWA-V has come to only 13 per cent of the basic wages at the minimum level. This was done by reducing Rs 600 from the basic wages.

Though underground allowance is considered as basic wages for all benefits the payment of the new rate was made applicable from 1.7.1994 depriving the underground workers the arrear payment of even the low rate fixed by the agreement.

The logic for low rate of underground workers was that though nearly 80 per cent of the coal workers work underground the production of UG workers is only 25 percent of the total production.

Is it fault of the UG workers that the production in UG mines is low? As a matter of fact the productivity of underground mines in 1993-94 was even less than 1970-71. The CIL management deliberately ignored the development on underground work and gave more emphasis on open cast working. Hence 75 percent of today's production was done through open cast mines while prior to nationalisation nearly 80 percent of the production was done through underground mining.

The wrong emphasis given on open cast mining is the root cause of the present day low production and productivity in underground mining for which workers cannot be held responsible.

Except Australia where there is no land problem in all other major coal producing countries underground production is given more importance which can be seen from following data about percentage of underground production.

China-95%, USA 50%, Russia 55%, Poland 100%, Australia 30%, Germany 100%, S Africa 65%, UK 90%.

According to CMPDIL study only 44% of the coal reserves in India can be extractable by open cast mining while 56% are extractable by underground mining. China produces the largest quantity of coal in the world, which is only by underground mining. Several mines in China are not even fully mechanised. Our govt however only emphasises mechanisation and not relying on manual operation of mine. Therefore, the fault lies with the management policies.

The CITU and AICWF does not accept the low rate allowance paid to UG workers. If management gives due emphasis on UG production and gives proper UG allowance to workers it can be possible to increase UG production substantially to meet the

national requirement.

How CIL management argument that it has no money to pay UG allowance is not acceptable can be seen from the following remark made by the Standing Committee on Energy in its 10th Report. The Committee are shocked to note that 47 project out of 168 projects sanctioned during the 7th Five Year Plan period were abandoned by CIL after incurring an expenditure of Rs 52 crores including Rs 22 crores on equipment."

The coal mine workers should ponder over this state of affairs.

THEFT AND PILFERAGE IN COAL MINES

When the managements talk of shortage of funds to pay decent wage rise to coal miners it is refusing to take any strong action against theft, pilferage prevailing in the coal mines. The theft of coal from the pithead is estimated to Rs 1000 crores per year. The mafias, management and police are jointly responsible for this colossal theft. If this theft is checked the entire picture of the coal industry will change.

The subsidiaries of Coal India are awarding contract to notorious gangsters at a high rate causing loss of funds for Coal India. In the matter of purchases huge funds are drained out of Coal India. These practices go unchecked because they get protection from a section of the management.

It cannot be denied that some trade union leaders are indulging in taking benami contracts and are encouraging such malpractices. Several trade union leaders also misuse facilities under section 9.4.3 of the NCWA-IV we cannot expect that such leaders will fight against corruption of the management.

It is well known that over reporting of production figures has been a regular feature in the Coal Industry and crores of rupees are involved this malpractice. Senior posts in the coal industry are auctioned by the Central Government to persons promising higher amount to the ruling party. Huge resources are frittered away in such a manner. This will all continue as per management's policies. Only the coal workers will be denied their rightful dues for the hard toil they do for the industry.

WHITHER PENSION SCHEME

As a result of agreement between management and trade unions in coal industry it was decided to introduce a pension scheme as early as in 1986. Workers were to contribute 2 per cent of their wages and management would also pay 2 per cent to the pension fund. The workers have started contributing their share from 1st April 1989 but the management has not implemented their commitment. This has led

to strong resentment among the workers and some of have withdrawn their contribution is disgust. Thousands of workers who have retired after 1st April, 1989 have also been paid only their share of contribution without payment of the managements contribution.

Now a plan is being attempted to introduce a pension scheme without matching contribution by the management. Many workers are aware that a Family Pension Scheme was introduced by the Government of India in 1971. Since then several thousands of workers have died while in service but their unfortunate widows could not get the benefit of family pension. By the end of October 1994 the amount of contribution of workers with the scheme has accumulated to Rs 860.34 crores. The workers contribution has also reached Rs 200 crores on this basis of which a pension scheme is planned.

The CITU and AICWF has demanded a Pension Scheme with managements contribution and the scheme should be jointly administered by the bipartite committee and not the coal mines PF organisation. The CITU and HMS have no nomination on this committee. Otherwise the fate of the workers money will be the same as the Family P[pension scheme. the MOU for NCWA-V provides that one additional increment will be paid to the workers from 1st July 1995 which will diverted to the Pension Fund. It will mean for the entire period of agreement the managements contribution will be only Rs 168 at the minimum level and Rs 840 only at the maximum level. How a proper Pension Scheme can be worked out on such a paltry amount? It should be noted that in steel industry workers who retired after 1st Jan 1989 till the commencement of Pension Scheme will be paid machining contribution over and above their own contribution. The management will prepare a company performance scheme providing for a minimum earning of Rs 75 and maximum of Rs 145 from 1st January 1994.

It should be noted by all the coal workers that in the Annual Report of the Department of Coal, Government of India for 1994-95 does not mention a single word about the so called proposed pension scheme for the coal workers. P A Sangma's proposal that before the signing of the NCWA-V the government will pass a Bill in Parliament before May has also not materialised.

Several Central TUs in coal industry committed that without finalisation of the Pension Fund they would not sign the agreement. It was only CITU which remained true to the commitment. The coal miners should think how the management is playing with their Pension Scheme. Without a nation wide joint

movement no genuine pension scheme will be implemented for the coal workers.

MOCKERY OF WELFARE MEASURES

The NCWA-IV has not been fully implemented regarding welfare measures even while NCWA-V period will be over within 6 months. The commitment to construct houses during NCWA-IV has not been implemented by half, while several houses of the coal miners have either been collapsed or dismantled by the management. But to subsidence in Raniganj Coal field hundreds of houses have been made unusable. The number of substandard houses in the coal mines is nearly 90 thousand which are unfit for human habitation. The NCWA-V will be over without any better prospect of housing for the coal miners.

Regarding sanitation in workers colonies, the less said the better. The promise of creating a civil authority to look after the cleanliness in colonies was not implemented by the managements while the maintenance of the houses is extremely poor.

The management's claim that 22 lakh population is covered by drinking water facilities is not based on facts. The promise given in NCWA-III and IV that per family 15 gallons of drinking water would be supplied has not yet been implemented. A large number of coal miners have to depend on unfiltered water and are victims of water born diseases.

Coal industry does not take any responsibility for the children's education. Grants are given to some institutions where wives of senior officials easily find jobs at god salaries. But for general workers educational facilities are negligible. For aided schools the teacher are not paid the scales of the state govt teachers. With paltry salaries one can understand the feel of education in these schools. As noted earlier in Steel industry the management has taken the responsibility of free education to all children upto 12th standard. BHEL and other public sector management also runs schools for workers children. Coal managements has completely neglected this aspect with the result that the quality of life of a coal miner is extremely poor.

The medical facilities are totally inadequate and workers do not get proper attention. The Coal India management claims availability of 632 ambulances, some of them are not in running conditions while misuse of ambulances for private purposes by senior officials is seen by the workers quiet frequently. The conditions in hospitals and dispensaries need drastic improvement. Due to insufficient facilities to doctors and nurses in hospitals they do not remain in service of Coal India for a long time. The general health condition of coal miners is extremely poor which is

adding to their absenteeism.

UTTER NEGLECT OF SAFETY

The callous neglect of safety rules has been a regular phenomenon in the Coal industry causing loss of life and limbs of the coal workers. During 1994 a total number of 236 workers died in the coal mine accidents in the country while 711 workers suffered serious injuries. If the case of miner injuries is taken into account one can imagine the serious situation prevalent in the coal mines. The coal managements are more interested in renovating the offices but they do not bother about the safety of coal miners. The officers of DGMS do not undertake proper inspections and fail to take strong action against violation of safety rules. The pit safety committee and internal safety organisation are only on paper and do not play the important role per statutory provision. The coal managements generally defend the culprits in the court of Enquires. The shocking behaviour of the coal India management was exposed by the Standing Committee on Energy of Parliament in its Tenth Report (1994) in the following words:

"While dealing with the Safety aspect, it came to the notice of the Committee that three officers were found guilty of capable negligence by a Court of Enquiry which enquired into the accident of Mahabir colliery in November, 1989. Whereas Directorate General of Mines Safety has launched persecution against three officers in the Court, the management has not only allowed them to continue in service but in one case even promoted the officer to a higher grade. The management has not bound fit to initiate departmental action against those found guilty by a court of enquiry" (page 71).

While the trade union activists and workers are penalised vindictively by the managements this behaviour only highlights their inhuman attitude towards the safety of the workers who produce valuable source of energy for the country.

THREAT OF RETRENCHMENT

In the name of Voluntary Retirement Scheme the managements have retrenched 21,542 workers during the last 7 years and they have asked for Rs.120 crores from the government of India for payment retrenchment compensation to several thousands of workers. When management talks of surplus workers in the industry the overtime bill in very high. Women workers have been special target of attack by the management in the so called VRS. They are also denied job opportunity when dependents job is provided in the agreement. The management] is moving with the idea of wiping out women's

employment in the production process in the coal mine industry. The reckless mechanisation is also leading to loss of jobs of large number of workers while thousands of landlosers are still ensuing for job in the coal mines.

DRIVE TOWARDS PRIVATISATION

The Government of India has decided to privatise the coal mines and 40 projects have been earmarked for handing over to the private sector. Private Thermal Power companies have permitted to have captive coal mines of their own. The coal mines (Nationalisation) Act 1973 has been amended to privatise coal mines and coal washeries in the country.

When coal industry was in the private sector it was producing less than 7 crore tonnes of coal. It was only after nationalisation and over Rs.5000 crores investment the coal production increased at a faster rate. The rate will increase further if the management adopts proper policies. Therefore, there is no justification for privatisation in coal mines. The Government of India is also entering in collaborate with U.K., France, Germany, Russia, Canada and Australia and permitting the multinational companies in these countries to enter in the coal mining sector in India. In the name of importing new technology control of these foreign invate companies over the Indian coal industry will further increase in the country.

The more and more handing over jobs of permanent and perennial nature to contractors despite prohibition of some categories by the Govt. itself has now become a routine matter. The Department of coal is openly conniving at illegal practices indulged in by the CIL management. The import of coal in India is another anti-national steps being taken by the Govt. of India. The reduction of custom duty on coal has opened the floodgates of foreign coal coming to India in a big way. When our country is having coal reserve of 20,002 crores tonnes more emphasis should be given to produce coal within the country and generate more jobs for the workers.

CENTRAL GOVT. SHOULD PAY OUTSTANDING DUES

The outstanding dues of Coal companies has reached Rs.3000 crores from various customers and much of the coal was supplied at the instance of the Central Govt. It is the duty of the Govt. of India to pay the dues to the coal industry or admist it towards past loans and interests so that the coal industry's financial position improves.

The Central Government has provided Rs.5000 crores in the Budget to partly liquidate the bad debts

of the banking industry. In a similar manner the Central Government should provide adequate to funds to provide for the outstanding dues of the coal industry. The proposal from coal Industry for the restructuring of the capital is pending before th Govt. for quite some time. Mere restructuring of capital will not help the industry unless a proper solution is found to the problem of outstanding dues of the industries will the trade union movement allow this situation in an endless manner? If we accept the raw deal given to the coal mines we are also accepting the unjustified refusal of the government to take any positive step to put coal industry on a sound footing and continue the present chaotic situation at the cost of decent living standard to the coal miners. □

CITU GREETS FMRAI FOR STRIKE AGAINST AMENDMENT OF PATENT ACT

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions warmly congratulates over 20 thousand Medical and Sales Representatives of the country who went on one day's strike on 20th June protesting against the move of the Government to amend the Indian Patent Act as per the GATT agreement, responding to the call given by the Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Associations of India.

As per reports received from the Central Office of FMRAI at Calcutta, the strike was almost hundred per cent successful in all the states of the country. Massive solidarity demonstrations by other unions with the striking employees were reported from Calcutta, Delhi, Lucknow, Patna and other places.

The National Platform of Mass Organisations haod already extended support with strike. The amendment of the Indian patent Act would result in undermining the indigenous research and development of drugs and pharmaceuticals in the country, giving

unbridled dominance to the giant drug multi-nationals over the industry in the country. It will increase the prices of all life saving and essential drugs several times and flood the Indian market with irrational, hazardous and spurious drugs which are banned in the advanced western countries.

While extending full support to the struggle launched by FMRAI, the CITU calls upon all its affiliated unions in the pharmaceutical industry to launch united struggle to compel the Government to withdraw the amendment of the Indian Patent Act. □

The CITU Surging Ahead Through Struggles

E. Balanandan

This is the second part of the article. The first part was published with last issue -Ed.)

Multiplicity of Unions

As is shown above the pressure for trade union unity from below is on the increase which has to be taken note of by everybody. The line of unity and struggle which we have pursued resulted in this developing urge for unity, and also increased the prestige of the CITU very much. However, this is not yet reflected in the membership of our unions. Though we have fought many united struggles in the industry or factory the division existed among the unions still continue almost without much of a visible change. This multiplicity of unions and its rivalry constitute one of the main problems to be addressed by us. The CITU Constitution enjoins upon us "for helping workers organise unions where none exists and for rallying the workers in a single union by uniting the rival unions in one industry." At present the position is that the CITU union is one among the many unions existing in the same industry or factory. In many cases our union might be stronger among others but however is still not representing the majority. It seems that many of our leaders are not worried about this situation and rest contented with the status quo. This needs change. The struggle for strengthening the base level unions cannot be successful without undertaking incessant and continuous education of the workers. Not only the members of our union but also the other workers organised in different trade unions.

One union in one Industry

The CITU stands for one union in one industry. As pointed out earlier this is the idea enshrined in our Constitution. While proposing these ideas we must make it clear that we will ensure democratic functioning of the unions; ensure minority sections in the unions appropriate representation in the union executive bodies; when deciding controversial political issues it will be decided only on the basis of 60% majority. These kind of square proposals should be put forth after studying the concrete situation in each case, not only in the personnel discussions with the other trade union leaders but also publicly placed before the total workers where intense debate on this questions must be organised. So that our earnestness on the subject should be made thoroughly understood by the workers. Every union should as-

sess themselves their position among the workers and they must try for the majority of the workers if not for a unified organisation. Every union should have its own programme for achieving this goal.

While we say democratic functioning of the trade union it has a wider connotation. The trade unions are not only the fighting organs of the workers for securing their demands, but also the schools for educating them, the complexity of the present day society and training them to undertake various responsibilities. This kind of training cannot be given to the workers unless the trade union leaders are able to devote sufficient time for the same. In spite of the decision of the CITU that the trade union leaders should not take up work in many union by which the interaction with the workers is made almost impossible. We have the example of trade union leaders holding positions in 30-35 unions. Means that he cannot go to any trade union office at least once in a month. This is alien to our understanding. Trade union leaders however efficient they may be and they are in demand by the workers very much, they must see that the other leaders and cadres to take up the responsibility. They must concentrate in certain unions through their work they must set an example to others. However, the democratic functioning of the trade union should be ensured and the level of knowledge of workers should be improved.

While we go for celebrating our 25th anniversary we must take note of the new dangers that are developing in the trade union movement of the country. Trade unions are being organised on the basis of caste communities besides based on religion which is cutting at the root of workers unity. The basic fact the employers of this or that community or caste or religion treat their workers equally and the united fight workers will only ensure them better conditions. This basic fact is sought to be negated by poisonous propaganda by these casteist and communal forces against which we have to put up a stiff resistance.

The increasing propaganda against the public sector claiming that private sector can only be efficient is to be exposed by us. Above all the developing crisis in the capitalist system world over including our own country, the nature of developing inter imperialist crisis, trade wars and the imperialist offensive of various nature against the weaker nations, should form part of our propaganda and also the importance of socialist order should be properly placed. □

CPSTU Holds All India Convention on Contract Workers

At the initiative of Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU), a two day long All India Convention on Contract Workers in public sector and organised sector of industries was held at Durgapur Steel Township, West Bengal on 10-11 June 1995. This convention is the first of its kind to raise the contract workers problems as an agenda of national level struggle.

Around 200 delegates from various industries like Steel, Coal, BHEL, Engineering, Transport and different service sector units from all over the country attended the convention.

The Convention was presided over by a five member presidium consisting of Sunil Basu Roy (CITU) B N Tewari (AITUC), R N Ganguly (HMS) H Mahadevan (JAF/Bangalore).

Com.M K Pandhe, General Secretary CITU inaugurated the convention and Com.S Dev Roye, secretary CITU presented the background paper. Among the other speakers were Com.A B Bardhan, General Secretary, AITUC, R N Ganguly (HMS), H Mahadevan (JAF, Bangalore) Sunil Sen (AITUC), Kali Ghosh, Secretary, CITU, Com.Dilip Mazumdar MLA, chairman Reception Committee.

Around 52 delegates participated in the deliberation which dwelt on various facets of the contract workers problems and the phenomenal increase in the number of contract workers even in organised sector of industries and services, and the urgent need on the part of the entire TU movement in the organised sector to build up countrywide movement on contract workers' problems.

The convention has given call for observing All India Contract Workers' Demand Day' on 21st August in all industrial and service units all over the country.

The convention was followed by a mass meeting on 11th June which was presided by Dilip Mazumdar MLA, chairman Reception Committee and addressed by M K Pandhe, B N Tewari, H Mahadevan, Niren Ghosh, Kali Ghosh and Jibon Roy.

The Declaration adopted in the convention is reproduced below:

DECLARATION

The National Convention on Contractor workers being held at Durgapur on 10-11th June, 1995 under the auspices of Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) notes with concern the menacing increase in the pace of contracterisation of regular jobs in the various establishments both in Public and Private Sectors and intensified exploitation of crores

of contract workers in various sectors. Convention also notes that the off loading of regular jobs to contractors, which is an ugly design for economising on labour cost and getting the job done by the workers in lieu of pittance had been a continuing phenomenon since long but the pace of such contracterisation has gained momentum after the launching of the New Economic Policy of Govt. of India followed by certain other State Govts and reached an alarming proportion. The number of contract workers in the country has already reached a staggering figure of 20 to 25 million and it is on the increase. Contract workers are now the single biggest working force. They do the most laborious, hazardous jobs and play the most vital role in the entire construction, manufacturing, servicing systems. But at the same time contract workers are the most exploited section of the working class subjected to paltry wage, subhuman and unsafe working condition and deprived of economic and social justice, job security and hence of all kinds of Trade Union rights.

The Convention also notes that the Govt. of India itself is the biggest employer of contract workers with the rapid pace of contracterisation of various jobs in various Govt. departments and Govt. run Industries such as Postal, Telecom, Railways, Steel, Coal, Construction, Engineering, Air Transport and others, besides public sector industries and corporations.

Hence it is but natural that the most unfair practice of off loading permanent and perennial jobs to contract system would enjoy indulgence from the Central Govt. and its law enforcing authority.

Convention notes that the Contract Labour (Abolition & Regulation) Act happens to be the most violated legislation in the country, despite all its limitation and despite the fact that the Act has got a clear bias in favour of employers' class. Govt. of India is itself the biggest violator. Whatever relief provided in the Act for the workers could hardly reach the negligible percentage of the contract workers. The 'Abolition' aspect of the Act is hurdled at every step by bureaucratic bungling, the scope of which is offered by the vague and incomplete provisions of the Act and on the other 'Regulation' aspect is always ignored and seldom enforced and the 'Absorption' in overwhelming cases are not taking place at all.

The convention also notes that the contract workers are also deprived of coverage and benefit under many of the social welfare and social security measures and legislations. Particularly contract workers in the construction sector, there being no comprehensive legislation to take care of their inter-

est in consideration of the typical character of their jobs, are being subjected to immense exploitation, complete lack of job security and sub-human and unsafe working condition, not to speak of welfare and social security benefits for them.

The Convention firmly opines that it is the task of the entire Trade Union movement in the organised sector to take up the cause of contract workers and take active role in organising their brothers and sisters in unorganised sector, in organising contract workers and launch struggle on their basic demands both on National, State and Industry level. The Trade Unions of regular workers in the industry must also lend active support for the cause of their contract labour counterpart who are made to undertake more hazardous job with much less wages and benefits. They should include in their Charter of Demands, the basic demands of the contract workers as well and struggle to achieve the same, while fighting for their own demands.

The Convention firmly believes that in the event of increasing pace of contracterisation in the organised sector as a consequence of the New Economic Policies of Govt, of India and consequent increase in contract workforce, leading to rapid change in their proportion in the entire workforce in the industries, it has become all the more an urgent necessity to co-ordinate and develop the struggle of contract workers and Trade Union movement can afford to ignore this foremost task only at their peril.

The Convention, therefore, call upon all the constituents of CPSTU and also the organised Trade Union movement to build up a powerful movement on the demands of contract workers both at National, State and District level. The Convention demands:

1) The provision of the existing statutes, in particular the contract labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act and rules framed there under must be suitably amended to define 'Permanent and Perennial nature of job' in concrete and unambiguous terms and to make mandatory on the part of Principal employers to regularise/absorb all contract workers engaged in perennial nature of work, without the 'Service break' if any, effected by the employer from time to time.

2) In case of recruitment/filling of vacancies in any industry/establishment either in private or public sector, specific percentage of vacancies should be earmarked for absorption/regularisation of contract workers and for that, if necessary such workers should be provided in-plant or in-house training to meet the necessity.

3) Strict application of the principle of equal wage and service condition for same and similar nature of work to determine contract workers wage and to ensure payment of Industry's governing wage (for the regular workers) for different levels of work (unskilled, semi skilled and skilled) to contract work-

ers under respective industries, corporations as well as departmentally run undertakings.

4) Violation of the statutory provisions either in respect of regularisation/absorption of contract workers, or in respect of payment of equal wage and service condition as per regular workers must attract strongest penalty including imprisonment.

5) Contract workers should be ensured same service conditions and social security and welfare measures including compensation for employment injury at par with regular workers in all establishments.

6) Social security legislations like, Workmen's Compensation Act and others should be suitably amended to ensure equal benefit to contract workers at par with regular workers.

7) A comprehensive legislation should be enacted for the construction workers to take care of their interest, service security, wages, safety etc in consideration of their typical nature of work, in consultation with the Trade Unions.

8) In order to ensure proper protection of health and safety and environment for the contract workers, strict implementation of suitable Statutory provisions be made and enforced.

9) Special attention be given to the specific requirements of women contract workers namely provisions of maternity benefits, creche and other facilities for women workers under contractors, and strict adherence to equal pay for equal work for the women workers.

The convention has resolved:

1) to observe 'All India Contractor Workers Demands Day' in all the industrial units/centres all over the country on 21st August, 1995 through joint demonstration/Dharna/Rally/ Torch light processions etc. to highlight the above demands, under the initiative of CPSTU constituents.

2) to hold State level/District level/Industry level joint conventions to popularise the above demands and call for struggle at the grass root level.

3) Convention also calls upon the T.U. movement as a whole and all the units of CPSTU constituents in particular to take effective initiative to build up and organise sectoral/industry level movement on contract workers' issues alongwith the contract workers and prepare for a massive workers rally in front of the Parliament House during the Parliament session. Convention authorises CPSTU to decide the date and other detail.

Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-
M.K. PANDHE	B.N. TEWARI	R.N. GANGULY
(CITU)	(AITUC)	(HMS)

Sd/-
H. MAHADEVAN
(JAF/BANGALORE)

□

ANGANWADI WOMEN PROTEST AGAINST PRIVATISATION

Vimal Ranadive

The Ramlila Maidan was almost full with Anganwadi women standing in different rows under their own flages on 5th May. It was a sight to be seen. There were women in tattered clothes with children, women from tribal areas and women from different states and regions, raising slogans in their own languages.

The main slogan at Ramlila was "No privatisation of ICDS projects." They also raised slogans demanding regularisation and minimum wages, protection from sexual harassment, etc." The main festoon of Samyuktha Sangharsh Samithi of Anganwadi workers and helpers was in front. The leaders of all the constituents, AITUC, CITU, HMS, HMKP, NFTU, were leading the procession.

Com. Vimal Ranadive, the convenor welcomed the gathering. After congratulating the vast masses, coming from all over India she told the women how much they were exploited taking up more work than 5-hours and getting honorarium of Rs.200/- to Rs.450/- only. She recalled that many times they had met the Prime Minister or Social Welfare Minister for the demand of increase in honorarium. But nothing had happened. She called for more militant actions for redressal of their demands.

The rally adopted a resolution placed by Com. Amarjeet Kour, protesting against privatisation of ICDS and demanding regularisation and minimum wage. She condemned the govt of their indifference towards women inspite of the Prime Minister's promises for development of women.

NFTU secretary Rajkumari, herself an anganwadi worker, spoke vigorously about the exploitation of women in ICDS.

Smt Jaya jaitly, HMKP, described the present deplorable conditions and CDPO's exploitation of women.

Nilima Maitra, General Secretary of Anganwadi Federation (CITU) attacked the Congress government for not fulfilling the demands of minimum wage even after so many years. She told the gathering that after the privatisation, the women working in ICDS were being dismissed.

Shri Patil of Lal Nishan supported th resolution in full and demanded minimum wage and regularisa-

tion.

The main attraction of the mass rally was the presence of members of Parliament from different opposition parties. The trade unions and some other important personalities.

Com. Bardhan, General Secretary, AITUC while supporting the demands, said the question was raised in parliament by many opposition members.

Com. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU congratulated the women workers. He sharply criticised the approach of the Congress govt towards the plight of Anganwadi women workers. He said liberalisation policy of the govt has resulted in increase in unemployment, closure of industrial units and high price rise. But the government is keeping quiet. He appealed to all women to prepare for a big struggle.

George Fernandes, MP, leader of HMKP spoke on the discussion which took place in Parliament. Sharad Yadav of JD too raised the question of Anganwadi women and their working conditions in Parliament. Com. Geeta Mukherjee, Mrinal Gore, Malini Bhattacharjee, Pramila Dandavate, all were always raising this issue in Parliament and outside and they spoke in the rally in support of their demands.

Com. BK Prasad of NFTU said that Anganwadi workers were employees of the govt and they should get the status of govt employees.

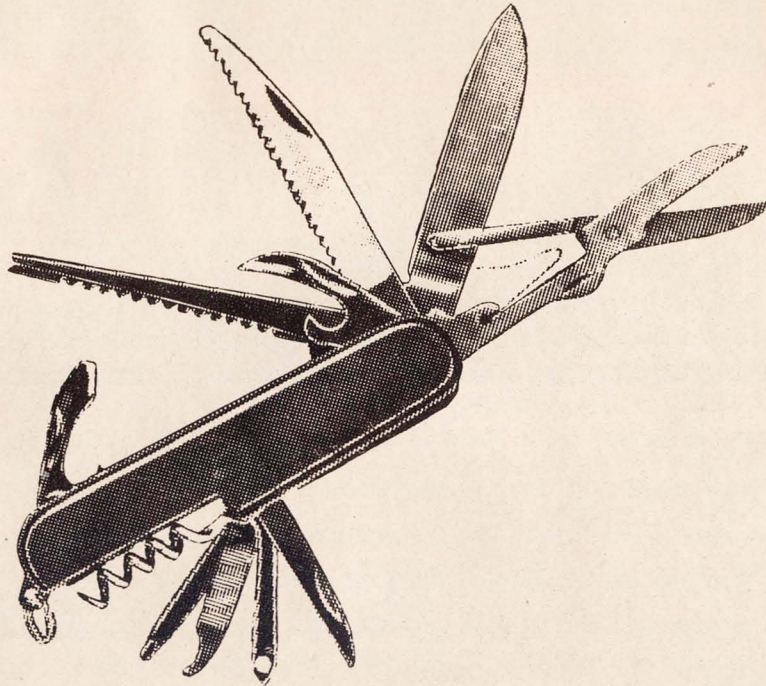
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**Observe August 6 and 9
as Hiroshima and
Nagasaki Days**

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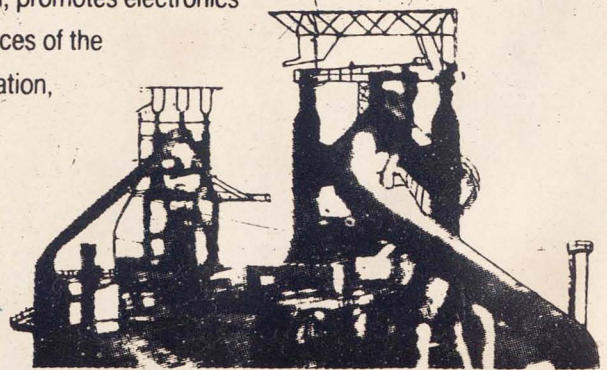
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WEST BENGAL POISED FOR INDUSTRIAL REGENERATION

West Bengal today offers an ideal climate for industrial investors from across the globe. A well diversified infrastructural base. Surplus of power. Abundant natural resources. Skilled manpower. Congenial working atmosphere. A co-operative, progressive and culturally vibrant people. All this makes West Bengal a prime location for industry.

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G O V E R N M E N T O F W E S T B E N G A L