



THE WORKING CLASS

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May Day Manifesto of the CITU, 1996

On the occasion of May Day 1996 - the day of international working class solidarity - the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) extends its revolutionary greetings to all workers and toiling people in all countries around the globe.

On this occasion, CITU pays respectful homage to the martyrs across the world including of our own country who laid down their lives in the struggle in defence of democracy, socialism, jobs, wages and workers' rights and for social change.

As the working fraternity prepare to celebrate the historic May Day 1996, the working class and toiling masses all over the world are confronted with an extremely complex situation as never before since the end of World War II.

With its military might, the USA is trying to dictate the laws of international relations and become arbiters of nations. Despite the oft repeated claim of the end of the so-called Cold War, the USA continues to update and add to its nuclear arsenal, more nuclear weapon-bearing submarines roam the bottom of oceans and more naval ship prowl the international waters. It is expanding and fortifying its military bases in different continents and involved in all the regional and local wars trying to dictate its own terms as the world gendarme.

The flagrantly unlawful blockade of Cuba not only remains in place for over 3 decades but is being further tightened without the fig-leaf of a provocation by the Helms-Burton law. Successive resolutions of the UN General Assembly massively disapproving the blockade is treated with contempt. The sanction on Iraq has not been relaxed. Libya continues to suffer from boycott. It is USA's machinations that keep the two Koreas divided and South Korea has been transformed into a centre of provocations against the North. The arrogant U.S.A intervention in Bosnia is only an example of its mad drive towards strengthening its greedy claw in Central Europe. It is

China's strength, diplomatic skill and commitment to peace that have helped avert a crisis situation in Taiwan strait. The USA is the most reliable ally of all tyrants, despots and autocratic regimes. It is trying to retain its stranglehold on third world countries through the World Bank, IMF and WTO.

But while on the one hand world capitalism is becoming more arrogant and intolerant of workers' rights and demands and maximising profits at the workers' cost, the working class in advanced countries are putting up stiff resistance in defence of their rights and benefits. The high watermarks are the strike by long shoremens in USA, the chain of strikes in Germany and the prolonged united strike by French workers that brought the economy to a halt in France. The Coal miners in Russian Federation had a massive strike only recently. The working class movement throughout the globe bids fair shaping new alignment, with the trade unions cutting across the affiliations to various international centres raising voice against the machinations of World Bank, IMF, WTO and the MNCs.

May Day 1996 arrives in such a backdrop. The CITU greets and congratulates the workers and toiling people of Cuba for the steadfast resistance being kept up against the US blockade and the resultant unspeakable hardships and extends its solidarity to their grim struggle. The entire people of Cuba are united on President Fidel Castro's stirring call: Socialism Or Death.

The CITU sends its May Day greetings to the working class of Vietnam, DPRK and China and wishes them greater successes in their socialist construction. The CITU greets the working classes in all the third world countries who are struggling in ever newer forms to preserve jobs, wages and rights, to resist imperialist penetrations in their economies and subversion of democracy.

May Day 1996 arrives riding the crest of wave of renewed conviction in socialist philosophy and more

contingents of working class movement reinforcing faith in the future of socialism.

The deafening noise of the spokesmen of the advanced industrialised countries and chieftains of international finance capital that capitalism as a social system had proved its superiority as the ultimate stage of civilization had not brought any solution to the intractable problems of each of these countries. Indeed, each one has gone into deeper layers of economic and social turmoil. The glee over the collapse of erstwhile Soviet Union and retreat of socialists in East European countries has been short-lived. The 24-nation OECD countries is plagued by unemployment of over 40 millions, while in the USA, the king pin of capitalism, unemployment rate was never as high as today since the end of Second World War. The situation in the countries of European Union is worse with 18 million unemployed. Even the "miracle economy" country of Japan is afflicted by higher unemployment rate than in the last 20 years. Wage hikes have become less regular with the employers stoutly resisting workers' demands. Temporary and insecure contract jobs, job-sharing and shedding of manpower as a part of effecting economy has become the order of the day. Workforce in the informal sector is growing with paltry wages. In each of these countries, social security for the poor aged and infirm, unemployed, widows and children are being cut systematically. Homelessness has become endemic with more and more people falling below the poverty line. Crime rates are soaring and prison population is swelling steadily. Discriminations against women are acquiring new forms and economic inequality was never as wide as now. May Day 1996 arrives as a fresh reminder that imperialism is the enemy of all humankind, that capitalism as a social system can not solve the problems of working class and toiling people and that emancipation lies in ending exploitation of man by man.

II

May day 1996 arrives in India when the working class is engaged in a fierce political battle of the general elections for a new Parliament and new Assemblies in six states.

When the country observes the May Day 1996, the working class and every segment of toiling people are confronted with problems of unprecedented magnitude created by the Narasimha Rao Government of Congress (I) under the IMF dictated new economic policies. With the public sector derided, denigrated and shattered by every devious method, infrastructural expansion effectively sabotaged and future industrial growth potential pulverized, the unemployment situation was never as desperate. Mounting number of sick and closed industries, reck-

less privatisation, stoppage of recruitments, senseless application of labour-saving devices and outright shedding of jobs have rendered the country into a vast continent of unemployed. Skyrocketing of prices amidst a spurious claim of fall in inflation rate, periodic hikes in administered prices continue to heap miseries on the people. Indeed, life for workers was never as hard and food so dear as today.

A government busy liberalising the economy refuses to carry out agreed tripartite decisions, declines to enforce ILO conventions, mounts offensives against scanty social security and winks away the gross discriminations against women. Unshackling of the economy has not brought about unshackling of labour in the expanding unorganised (informal) sector. 92 per cent of the Indian workforce are emaciating below poverty line wages. India has become the abode of the largest army of child labour. Many are in debt bondage. Similarly, for the agricultural workers, below poverty-line wages are prescribed and in many areas even these wage rates are slashed by the kulaks. Land reform has ceased to occur even as a slogan. The poor peasants are compelled to make distress sale of their produce due to lack of remunerative prices and are fleeced through the system of usury. Market friendly-policies are friendly only to monopoly and multinationals and these policies are ruining the lives of millions while corporate India and multinationals reap super-profits.

May Day 1996 arrives when a stinking garbage of bribery and corruption by people in power mock at every sense of value cherished by the nation. Corruption had never assumed such gigantic proportions; never its tentacles had spread so far and wide; never was the cover-up operations so massive and never had the cancer eaten so deep in to the vitals of the nation.

May Day 1996 arrives when the champions of obscurantism and forces representing the most bigotted sections who have been supporting the economic policy are proclaiming themselves as the saviour of the nation. Beneath the pretention of religiosity of these agents of reaction -the Sangh Parivar and the Shiv Senas, lies the game plan of disintegrating the country, under the slogan of Hindutva and destroy its secular character and composite culture and take it back to middle ages. It is no accident that this detachment of world reaction is painted with the same brush of tar. Their lowering achievement is the destruction of historic Babri Masjid and the tragic blood bath of the minority Muslim Community in various parts of the country. These scums are deadly opposed to socialism, socialistic values and are champions of capitalism.

May Day 1996 calls upon all workers to defeat

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Observing May Day While Being Out-of-Work

□ Sukomal Sen

One hundred and ten years after the Chicago's Haymarket episode of 1886, it is an entirely different world today. While raising their main slogan of 'eight-hours work,' the Chicago workers also urged the working class to fight against the capitalist system itself. 'Down with capitalism' — that was the slogan that reverberated throughout the length and breadth of America.

The tendency of capitalism, from its very inception, had been (and is) to lengthen the working hours of the workers as that was the best means for intensifying the workers' exploitation and extracting surplus value to the maximum possible extent.

Workers fought bitterly to resist this exploitation by demanding a shortening of their working hours. The entire period following the first industrial revolution was marked by such intensified struggles of the working class for a shortening of their working hours primarily and then for security of jobs and social security benefits. To a great extent the workers came out victorious. The norm of eight-hours work was eventually recognised, and particularly after the great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, the workers' demands for a better deal received immense boost. Many of the workers' demands were achieved, particularly in the so-called welfare states of Europe.

DIFFERENT SITUATION

Today, in the wake of the ongoing scientific and technological revolution or what is also called the second industrial revolution, the world capitalist crisis has so much aggravated that the strife between the working class and the capitalists has assumed a more formidable dimension.

The acuteness of this crisis is best revealed by the changed attitude of the capitalists today compared to that of their counterparts a hundred and ten years ago who doggedly resisted the workers' demand for reducing the working hours. In Europe and the United States in particular, the capitalists are now frantically trying to reduce the working hours while the workers are making desperate attempts to resist this and to maintain the eight-hours norm of work. A total reversal of the situation indeed!

Why has this happened? It is because engaged in a mad race for more and more profits, the capitalists are making use of the scientific and technological revolution, thereby recklessly replacing human labour by machine. Automation, computerisation and robotnics are the order of the day for the capitalist world. And it is changing the scenario altogether.

THE CASE OF AMERICA

In 1886, the question before the workers was to get the working time fixed at eight hours. This is not so now. It is a question of safeguarding the very jobs of the workers.

What is the job situation in America itself where the May Day episode took place? As one American analyst puts it:

"America has entered the age of the contingent or temporary worker, of the consultant and sub-contractor, of the just-in-time workforce — fluid, flexible, disposable. This is the future. Its message is this: You are on your own. For good (sometimes) and ill (often), the workers of the future will constantly have to sell their skills; invent new relationships with employers who must, themselves, change, and adopt constantly in order to survive in a ruthless global market" (Lance Morrow, *The Tempting of America*).

The point is: if regular workers vanish and contingent and temporary workers somewhat fill up the vacuum, then where is the question of limiting the working hour for which the American workers fought and many of them embraced martyrdom in 1886?

William Bridges, an American business consultant, poignantly narrates the situation obtaining in his own country which is supposed to be the supremo of the entire capitalist world:

"Then a new statistic started to appear, though it was still overshadowed by the more familiar unemployment figures. It measured not the people who were out of work but the jobs that those out-of-work people would never be able to find because they had disappeared completely from the economic landscape. By the fall of 1992, only 18 per cent of the lost jobs had returned, although at such a late stage in every other recession for a half century, all the previously lost jobs have come back again. In the summer of 1993, the Bureau of Labour Statistics announced that the ratio of permanently terminated workers to temporarily laid off was four to one, whereas at the recession bottom of 1975 it was 1.5 to 1, and at the bottom in 1982 it was 2 to 1. The message was clear: jobs are going away, not just until times improve but for good. James Medoff, a Harvard economist who has studied these figures in more depth than anyone else, has summed up the situation with discomforting bluntness: 'Today, people who lose their jobs are history' " (William Bridges, *Jobshift*).

This American business consultant further asks his reader to imagine a workplace without daily 9-to-5 duties, base salaries, benefits and defined career

paths as we know them and concludes: "That day is not far off!"

These horrifying words come from an American business consultant and not from a labour leader.

DANGER REALISED; ACTION REFUSED

It is not that only some American intellectuals have started realising the danger the scientific and technological revolution spells for the working class; the utterly reformist American trade union, AFL-CIO, has also started realising its gravity. The American and many European trade unions initially ignored the offensive that the capitalists were going to launch on the working class, taking advantage of the scientific and technological revolution. It was thus that these trade unions did not think of organising any working-class resistance against this capitalist offensive. But now, when the danger has appeared in its full dimension, these unions have also started rethinking. The heads of the American AFL-CIO ended a bus tour of the country's industrial, commercial, farm and public employment centres in July 1993, after which they issued a dramatic announcement. It stated:

"We were wrong for having worked "jointly" with employers against our rank and file's opposition to the introduction of computer automation. Our apology and admissions have become necessary because what we have seen during our tour has convinced us that the current depression has only just begun and, as far as we can now see, is bottomless. Automation has not made new jobs. Not only has it directly killed millions of primary jobs for ever. Because of computers and satellite telephonics, instant controls over production oceans away are a reality. For the first time in history manufacturing corporations have been freed to become multinationals like those in oil and mining. They now transfer jobs from industrial nations like the US, Japan and Germany to poverty nations whose rulers have become job brokers. They shamelessly underbid each other at the expense of all working people. These corporations will leave these poor countries for poorer ones as soon as their new employees begin to organise unions that are independent of the governments!" (Quoted by David F. Noble in *Progress without People*.)

FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

This was the first time the utterly reformist AFL-CIO openly came out against the offensive launched on the working class. But even then the leadership of the AFL-CIO kept silent about the perennial mission of the capitalist class to intensify their exploitation of the working class, this time taking full advantage of the scientific and technological progress. This attitude of the AFL-CIO leadership somewhat resembles that of the Luddites during the British working class resistance of the early 19th century. The Luddites

blamed the machines for the workers' exploitation and failed to identify the real culprits — the newly emerging capitalist class. As a result, destruction of the machinery continued for years together till the realisation came to the workers that it was not the machine, but the owner of the machine — the capitalist — that was the real enemy of the worker.

In the background of the AFL-CIO's attitude of casting all blame on automation, instead of blaming the capitalists for their particular mode of use of automation in furtherance of their profits, it is worthwhile to recall what Karl Marx said about the Luddite movement in his celebrated work *Capital*, Vol I (1867). Marx commented:

"The enormous destruction of machinery that occurred in the English manufacturing districts during the first 15 years of this century, chiefly caused by the employment of the powerloom, and known as the Luddite movement, gave the anti-Jacobin governments of a Sidmouth, a Castlereagh, and the like, a pretext for the most reactionary and forcible measures. It took both time and experience before the work people learnt to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, and to direct their attacks, not against the material instruments of production, but against the mode in which they are used."

The reformists of the present time are just blind about the mode in which they (the automation, electronics etc) are used. That is, they keep themselves blind to the fact that automation, electronics, etc., are per se not the enemies of the working class; the real enemies are those who use the new devices, i.e., the capitalist class with their capitalist system of exploitation.

WORKERS DESERT REFORMIST UNIONS

Utter reformism and collaborating attitude of the American labour unions in the midst of this crisis has led to the mass desertion of workers from the organisational fold of these unions. The situation has become so critical that the AFL-CIO could not even hold a proposed second conference. According to a report in June 1993, "within hours after the closing of the first, there is a mass outbreak of stop-work meetings inside the job places of America. The stoppages soon escalated into the largest strike wave since 1946 when over four million workers were out at one time."

The most serious aspect of the mass anger, as far as the unions were concerned, was expressed in this way: "The most widely made demand to come out of these meetings is that employers immediately cease deduction of union dues from pay-checks. Managements cave in, at first by dozens, then hundreds, then more, anything to defuse the rebellion, to get a resumption of work and the use of official

channels by both sides..... the participants gather at central community locations. From them, the most popular demand made upon the President and Congress is that all corporations which have used computer automation to cut working conditions and wages or to export jobs must bring back and re-create all lost jobs....." (Stan Weir, June 1993).

The above quotations give a fair picture of the anger the American labour is harbouring against the capitalists as well as the collaborating unions.

In brief, whereas the working class of America fought during the 1880s for reduction of abnormally long working hours, in which struggle they shed their blood and embraced martyrdom, now after 110 years, the new generation of American workers have no problem about reduction of working hours, they are now faced with the basic problem of saving their work which they are losing very fast. This is the difference in the American labour situation today compared to one hundred and ten years back.

EUROPEAN LABOUR: OUT OF WORK

The struggle for an eight-hour working day had swept not only the United States, but also Britain and Western Europe in the later half of the nineteenth century. The fledgling capitalism was then providing more and more jobs to the working people. At that time the question of losing jobs did not arise; the crucial question was about reducing the working hour.

However, after one hundred and ten years, now the basic question is of protecting the job itself. Dejobbing has assumed such formidable proportions that the advanced capitalist countries are now compelled to put their heads together to find a way out.

A European columnist of The Statesman wrote on March 31, 1996: "twenty four million people are currently out of work in the world's richest countries."

The same columnist, reporting about Britain which is claiming a reduction in the unemployment figure, wrote: "in spite of the announcement of 1,700 job going at United Utilities, hard on the heels of 1,900 jobs being cut by Pilkington, Treasury officials believe that the government's reforms of the UK labour market will allow UK unemployment to fall still further from its present level of 7.9 per cent to perhaps below six per cent without fuelling inflation. But at the same time, Tony Blair, the opposition Labour leader, is casting doubt on Britain's jobs record by warning of "rampant insecurity", with more than ten million people in Britain experiencing at least one spell of unemployment since 1992 election."

ALARM BELLS FOR G-7

It was in this situation that the G-7 countries — the capitalist world's topmost industrial powers — met in a two-day conference at Lille, an industrial town of France, on April 1-2, 1996, to find a way out

of this job imbroglio. This Group of Seven meeting was convened by French president, Jacques Chirac, who won power in 1995 on a pledge to fight the high levels of unemployment in his country.

According to a report by The Statesman dated April 2, 1996, "President Chirac urged the seven richest nations to seek a 'third path' between unbridled free-market economies and interventionist policies to get millions of people off the unemployment lines..... Welcoming the group of seven labour ministers at their second jobs summit, Mr Chirac said it was the G-7 nations' "obsession" to get their 22 million jobless back to work. He called for a mix of economic strategies as the remedy."

The report further states: "Ten years after the initial jobs summit in Detroit, once prosperous Lille, like the American city, symbolises industrial decline with high crime and high unemployment, and little hope for improvement. Germany and Japan, two of the world's most powerful economies, have just hit their highest unemployment rate since Second World War. Unemployment in the 15-nation European Union stands at 20 million or 11.9 per cent."

Chirac also made a very significant remark: "The opening up of the world economy, if you don't watch out, holds the risk of leaving a growing part of the population by the wayside..... globalisation did not create exclusion but it makes it worse."

Like the United States, in Britain, Japan and the entire Europe too, the main question before the working class is to protect their jobs or to re-create the lost jobs. This is the big difference between the situation in Chicago in 1886 and that obtaining in the advanced capitalist countries today. In all these countries, the slogan of the workers while observing May Day is to re-create jobs, and to reduce unemployment. Thus, joblessness has become the ultimate destiny of the world capitalist system.

As for the plight of the former Soviet Union and East Europe after restoration of capitalism there, it is simply beyond description. That is why, in the unofficially organised May Day rallies in these countries, the workers are demanding restoration of the socialist system which provided them not only job security, but all essentials necessary for a decent living.

SHORTER WORKING HOUR BEING IMPOSED

While modern technology is being indiscriminately used by the capitalists in the western capitalist countries to replace humans by machines, workers are faced with the horrifying problem of a shortening of the working hour being forcibly imposed by the capitalists. Since there are not enough jobs, the capitalists are imposing shorter working days of four to six hours with corresponding cuts in the workers' wages. The workers are thus faced with a dilemma of whether to accept it or to lose their jobs altogether. In the so-

called welfare states of Europe like Sweden, Denmark and other countries, this has become a universal problem for the working class.

Alongwith this is emerging the phenomenon of job-sharing — to share the same job between two workers with a simultaneous sharing of wages.

Thus the May Day demand today is not for the reduction of working hour but for resisting the capitalists' attempt to reduce it or to totally abolish jobs. This is like the workers observing May Day now while being 'out of work'.

SITUATION IN INDIA

India, which is far behind the US, Japan or the European countries in regard to industrialisation, is facing a highly complicated and dangerous situation

today. The unemployment rate here is formidable. Moreover, in the wake of the World Bank-IMF dictated economic policy, already one million workers have lost their jobs during the last five years and the urban and rural unemployment figures have crossed an astronomical ten crore mark. A bleaker situation is ahead of the Indian working class.

Today, therefore, May Day comes before the world working class with an altogether different perspective. The world crisis of capitalism has assumed such formidable dimensions, with most disastrous effects on the working class, that the working class can have no other way of redemption without fighting for the downfall of capitalism and building of socialism.

May Day Manifesto...

(From Page 2)

and these elements in the ensuing elections together with the Congress (I), currently ruling at the centre. The forces that have sold the country to foreign creditors, helped foreigners plunder this country's wealth, heaped miseries, privations, price rise and unemployment on workers and compromised our sovereignty must be removed from the seat of power together with their cohorts.

May Day 1996 comes as a reminder that though the Indian working class fought valiantly against the so-called new economic policy, for self-reliant growth and for preservation of economic and political sovereignty, much more remains to be done in the days ahead. CITU congratulates the workers of telecom and financial sector for the stubborn struggle they organised recently. The 75 lakh fishermen's struggles to save our sea wealth especially fish have changed the face of India's coastline. The very recent nationwide one-day strike against the Government's retrograde Pension Scheme with the demand for pension as third benefit shines in resplendent glory as a source of inspiration towards greater united action. CITU congratulates these and every other contingent of workers including those in the unorganised sector and home-based industries for the struggles they have fought. All these add up to an exhilarating history of struggles under the banner of the National Platform of Mass Organisations. Congratulations to the Indian working class.

On this election surcharged May Day the working class must act decisively and take the vow to denounce and defeat those perpetrators of the most heinous crimes against the people of the country - both Congress (I) and BJP and ensure victory of the only alternative—the left, democratic, secular and

patriotic forces to save the country's sovereignty and unity and integrity.

May Day 1996 beckons all workers in the name of the martyrs of Hay Market Square and the unaccountable numbers in all continents for the last more than a century to intensify more vigorously organised battles not only to gain their immediate economic demands, but to transform the society, to make life worth living, free it from being pillaged by hunger and unemployment and herald a dawn of promise of opportunity for all, a life that extends to the farthest horizon.

Red Salute to May Day!

Long Live India's Independence and Sovereignty!

Long Live India's Unity and Integrity!

Long Live Socialism!

Down with Imperialism!

Workers of All Countries Unite!

CITU Criticises Ban on May Day Processions

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly criticises the banning of processions, rallies, etc on the May Day by the Election Commission.

May Day is the international day of working class solidarity with revolutionary significance to renew the workers' pledge to end the social system of exploitation of man by man. Maintaining the revolutionary traditions of May Day, the trade unions all over the world observe the day with massive processions and rallies according to the prevailing conditions in each country.

Thus, banning processions and rallies and putting limitations on the issues tantamounts putting a curb on political rights of the workers.

The CITU therefore urges the Election Commission to exempt the trade unions from the ban.

New Recognition Rule Violative of Central Employees' Freedom of Association: ILO Committee; Govt asked to amend Rules

The CITU lodged complaint with the ILO against the Govt of India for gross violation of central employees' freedom of association through unilateral and arbitrary promulgation of a new set of undemocratic recognition rules. 302nd Report of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association from which some excerpts are given below shows that ILO has found almost all the points raised by CITU to be valid and declared that many of the rules are actually violative of Central Employees' freedom of association. ILO has asked the govt to amend those rules. AITUC also lodged similar complaint with ILO.

The Committee's conclusion

The Committee notes that the allegations in this case concern the unilateral and arbitrary promulgation by the Government of the Central Civil Services (Recognition of Service Associations) Rules of 1993 which would affect the conditions of service of at least 1.5 million central government employees. Moreover, the conditions laid down in the Rules for the determination of the representative character of an association for collective bargaining purposes are allegedly unreasonable and in violation of freedom of association.

As regard the issue of consultation, the Committee would only recall the principle that it is essential that the introduction of draft legislation affecting collective bargaining or conditions of employment should be preceded by full and detailed consultations with the appropriate organisations of workers and employers (see Digest of decisions and principles of the Freedom of Association Committee, 4th edition, 1996, para 931]

With regard to the allegation that recognition already granted to existing associations of central government employees will be withdrawn after a period of one-and-a-half years from the date of promulgation of the new Rules if these associations do not abide by the conditions set out therein, the Government responds that the Rules only seek to place certain reasonable restrictions and conditions which new associations, as well as previously existing ones, have to fulfil in order to obtain recognition. Moreover, no service association has so far been derecognised. In the Committee's view, the question of whether this withdrawal of recognition is in line with freedom of association would depend very much on whether the conditions laid down in the new rules of recognition are themselves compatible with freedom of association principles. The Committee will determine this matter in the following paragraphs.

The complainants allege that under Rule 5 (c) which stipulates that membership is restricted to a distinct category of government servants having common interest, nei-

ther a federation nor a composite union will be recognised thus breaking up most existing unions which mainly consist of different categories of employees in order to reduce their collective bargaining strength. The Government, for its part, states that this provision aims to achieve homogeneity within associations and to avoid conflict of interest situations. Moreover, this provision does not debar the formation of composite unions or federations as these Rules set out the conditions for granting recognition to first-level associations only and no to federations. However, the Government acknowledges that guidelines for the recognition of federations might be issued at a later stage. The Committee would, at this point, remind the Government that federations and confederations should be able to conclude collective agreements (see Digest op.cit, para 783). The Committee further recalls that with regard to restrictions limiting all public servants to membership of unions confined to that category of workers, it is admissible for first-level organisations of public servants to be limited to that category of workers on condition that their organisations are not also restricted to employees of any particular ministry, department or service, and that the first level organisations may freely join the federations and confederations of their own choosing. Thus, the restrictions on first level organisations to limit their membership to government servants having common interest may be admissible, provided no such restrictions is placed on the membership of higher-level organisations.

In respect of clauses (e) and (g) of Rule 5 which prohibit retired and former employees from becoming members or office-bearers of an association, the committee notes the Government's argument that since service associations are formed to protect the interest of serving government employees in matters relating to conditions of service, welfare and so on, it follows that members and office-bearers should be confined to serving government employees, if only for ensuring effective negotiation. In this respect, the Committee would first of all emphasise that retired and former employees should have the right to join organisations of their own choosing and thus, in this case, be members of service associations if they so wish. In any event, it should be left to the organisations themselves to make provision, in their constitutions or rules, as to what rights retired and former employees are entitled to. As regards the right to hold trade union office, the committee would draw the government's attention to the general principle that the right of workers organisations to elect their own representatives freely is an indispensable condition for them to be able to act in full freedom and to promote

effectively the interests of their members. For this right to be fully acknowledged, it is essential that the public authorities refrain from any intervention which might impair the exercise of this right, whether it be in determining conditions of eligibility of leaders or in the conduct of the elections themselves. More specifically, for the purpose of bringing legislation which restricts union office to persons actually employed in the occupation concerned into conformity with the principle of free election of representatives, it is necessary at least to make these provisions more flexible by admitting as candidates persons who have previously been employed in the occupation concerned and by exempting from the occupational requirement a reasonable proportion of the officers of an organisation. The Committee would therefore request the Government to take steps to amend Rule 5(e) and (g) accordingly.

With regard to various clauses of Rule 6 which allegedly place restrictions on trade union activities, the Committee notes in effect that Rule 6(g) stipulates that any amendment to the constitution or by-laws of an association "shall be made only with the prior approval of the Government." In this respect the Committee has pointed out that amendments to the constitution of a trade union should be debated and adopted by the union members themselves. To guarantee the right of workers' organisations to draw up their constitutions and rules in full freedom, national legislation should only lay down formal requirements as regards trade union constitutions, and the constitutions and rules should not be subject to prior approval by the public authorities. The Committee would therefore request the government to take steps to amend Rule 6 (g) so that amendments to the constitution or by-laws of an association are not subject to prior government approval.

Similarly, the Committee observes that an association "shall not start or publish any periodical, magazine or bulletin without the previous approval of the Government" (Rule 6(h); "shall cease to publish any periodical, magazine or bullet, if directed by the Government to do so, on the ground that the publication thereof is prejudicial to the interests of the central government, the government of any state or any government authority or to good relations between government servants and the government or any government authority, or to good relations between the Government of India and the Government of foreign State"(Rule 6(i) and "shall not address any communication to, or enter into correspondence with, a foreign authority except through the Government which shall have the right to withhold it" (Rule 6(j)). The Committee has emphasised on previous occasions that the right to express opinions on all issues of general or special interest to trade unions and their members, without previous authorization through the press or otherwise, is one of the essential elements of the rights of occupational organisations. Moreover, the fear of the authorities of seeing a trade union newspaper serve political ends unrelated to trade union activities or which, at least, lie far outside their normal scope, is not a legitimate

reason to refuse to allow such a newspaper to appear. Finally, the principle that national organisations of workers should have the right to affiliate with international organisations carries with it the right, for these organisations, to make contact with one another and, in particular, to exchange their trade union publications. The Committee therefore calls on the government to take steps to amend clauses (h), (i) and (j) of Rule 6 in line with the above-mentioned principles.

Finally, the Committee notes that Rule 7 stipulates that the verification by the government of membership for the purpose of recognition of a service association "shall be done by the check-off system in payrolls at such intervals and in such manner as the Government may by order prescribe." However, the Committee is of the view that pre-established, precise and objective criteria for the determination of the representativity of workers' and employers' organisations should exist in the legislation and such a determination should not be left to the discretion of governments. The Committee believes that such a determination of ascertaining or verifying the representative character of trade unions can best be made when strong guarantees of secrecy and impartiality are offered. Thus, verification of the representative character of a union should a priori be carried out by an independent and impartial body. The Committee would therefore request the Government to take steps to amend Rule 7 accordingly.

In a more general manner, the Committee observes that these new Recognition Rules regulate issues pertaining to service associations in too much detail. In this respect, the Committee would draw the government's attention to the principle that legislation concerning workers' organisations should not undermine the rights of workers as defined by the principles of freedom of association. Overly detailed or restrictive legal provisions in this area may in practice hinder the creation and development of trade union organisations.

Coming back to the initial question of whether Rule 4 (which withdraws recognition granted to already existing associations of central government employees if these do not respect the conditions set out in the new Rules) is compatible with freedom of association or not, the Committee notes that while some of the conditions set out in the new Rules are in line with freedom of association principles, others are not as explained in the preceding paragraphs. The Committee is therefore bound to conclude that the withdrawal of such recognition from associations of central government employees is not in accordance with freedom of association in so far as the conditions laid down in the new Recognition Rules are themselves incompatible with freedom of association principles. The Committee takes due note of the government's statement that recognition has not yet been withdrawn from any existing service association. It would request the Government to adhere strictly to this practice until such time as it takes the appropriate steps to amend the provisions of its new Recognition Rules

which are incompatible with freedom of association principles.

The Committee's recommendations

In the light of its foregoing conclusions, the Committee invites the Governing Body to approve the following recommendations:

a) The Committee recalls that it is essential that the introduction of draft legislation affecting collective bargaining or conditions of employment should be preceded by full and detailed consultations with the appropriate organisations of workers and employers.

b) The Committee reminds the Government that federations and confederations should be able to conclude collective agreements. It further recalls that with regard to restrictions limiting all public servants to membership of unions confined to that category of workers, it is admissible for first-level organisations of public servants to be limited to that category of workers on condition that their organisations are not also restricted to employees of any particular ministry, department or service, and that the first-level organisations may freely join the federations and confederations of their own choosing.

The Committee requests the Government to take steps to amend Rules 5(e) and (g), 6(g), (h), (i) and (j) and 7 of the Central Civil Services (Recognition of Service Associations) Rules of 1993 in line with the principles enunciated in detail in its conclusions. It would ask the Government to keep it informed of any progress made in this regard.

d) The Committee requests the Government to adhere strictly to the practice of not withdrawing recognition from desisting service associations until such time as appropriate steps are taken to amend the provisions of the new Recognition Rules which are incompatible with freedom of association principles. It asks the Government to keep it informed of any developments in this respect.

ILO Committee Concerned about Police Atrocity Against Choibari Tea Garden Workers Govt asks for independent enquiry.

A similar complaint was lodged by CITU in connection with police atrocities on workers of Choibari Tea Garden assembled to observe May Day on May 1, 1995, under the banner of Nikhil Assam Cha Majdoor Sangh, an affiliate of CITU. The conclusions and recommendations of the ILO Committee are reproduced below which speak for themselves.

The Committee's conclusions

The Committee notes that the allegations in this case concern physical assaults and acts of anti-union reprisals carried out against certain workers and union activists employed in Choibari Tea Garden, Dhubri, Assam State. The Government for its part, asserts that an inquiry carried out by the Labour Commissioner of the State Government of Assam revealed that the above allegations were without any foundation.

As regards the allegation that workers belonging to the

Nikhil Assam Cha Mazdoor Sangh affiliated to the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) were prevented by the police from hoisting the union flag on May Day in the Choibari Tea Garden, the Committee observes that the Government admits that the police did intervene to disperse a group of workers, anticipating a law and order problem in the eventuality that a meeting was held. However, the Government maintains that only a few workers were present and that the management of the tea estate was not informed thereof.

In this respect, the Committee draws the Government's attention to the principle that the right to organise public meetings and processions, particularly on the occasion of May Day, constitutes an important aspect of trade union rights and that the authorities should resort to the use of force only in situations where law and order is seriously threatened. In the concrete case before the Committee, there is nothing to suggest that the law and order situation was endangered, especially as the Government itself points out that only a few workers from the union affiliated to CITU were present at the time. The Committee would therefore request the Government to take measures to ensure that the competent authorities receive adequate instructions, so that during the holding of public meetings, particularly on the occasion of May Day, the police resort to the use of force only in situations where law and order is seriously threatened.

The Committee further notes with concern that the main justification for the police intervention on 1 May 1995 appears to be, in the Government's own words, the fact that CITU was attempting to "forcibly win over the tea estate workers who are happy with their organisation and the garden management." The Government also adds that some CITU members have been trying to stir up trouble and unrest among the tea garden workers who "had formed a committee called the Choibari Cha Shramik Sangh" which "is the only labour organisation representing the workers of the tea estate." In this regard, the Committee recalls the importance that it attaches to the fact that workers and employers should in practice be able to establish and join organisations of their own choosing in full freedom. It reminds the government that the right of workers to establish organisations of their own choosing implies, in particular, the effective possibility to create—if the workers so wish—more than one workers' organisation per enterprise.

With regard to the events that took place following the dispersal of a group of workers by the police on May Day, the complainant asserts that the police intervention resulted in many workers being injured while the Government maintains that although some workers were manhandled by the police, nobody sustained serious injuries. The Committee nevertheless notes that in response to the complainant's ascertain that Umesh Das, the most seriously injured worker, was denied medical treatment by the tea garden's medical centre, the Government indicates that Umesh Das was able to procure medicines from the tea garden hospital through his younger brother. The Commit-

tee believes that if Mr Das was procuring medicines, this is because he must have been injured. The Committee further observes that the Labour Commissioner refused to visit Mr Das despite repeated requests from the union because "despite earlier intimation given to him..., he did not present himself for making any submission he might have had." The committee considers that it may have been difficult for Mr Das to make such a submission if he was in effect, seriously injured. The Committee notes that there is a striking contradiction between the complainant's and the government's description of events which took place following the hoisting of the union flag on May Day, including the nature of the inquiry carried out by the Labour Commissioner of Assam. Nevertheless, in view of what it has observed in the preceding paragraphs, the Committee would draw the government's attention to the following principle. In cases in which the dispersal of public meetings or demonstrations by the police for reasons of public order or other similar reasons has involved loss of life or serious injury, the Committee has attached special importance to the circumstances being fully investigated immediately through an independent inquiry and to a regular legal procedure being followed to determine the justification for the act taken by the police and to determine responsibilities. The Committee request the Government to ensure that such an inquiry is held. It ask the government to keep it informed of the outcome of this inquiry.

The Committee's recommendations

In the light of its foregoing conclusions, the Committee

invites the governing body to approve the following recommendations:

a) The Committee requests the Government to take measures to ensure that the competent authorities receive adequate instructions, so that during the holding of public meetings, particularly on the occasion of May Day, the police resort to the use of force only in situations where law and order is seriously threatened. It requests the Government to keep it informed of developments thereof.

b) The Committee reminds the Government that the right of workers to establish organisations of their own choosing implies, in particular, the effective possibility to create—if the workers so wish—more than one workers' organisation per enterprise.

c) The Committee ask the Government to ensure that an independent inquiry is held immediately to determine the justification for the act taken by the police in the Choibari tea estate, Dhubri District, Assam State, on 1 May 1995, and to determine responsibilities. It further requests that this inquiry cover all aspects of the events that allegedly took place following this police act, including the allegations that the house of Mr Umesh Das, a worker at the Choibari tea estate, who took part in the hoisting of the union flag on May Day, was ransacked, that his family members were assaulted by the local police and that he was forced to sign his own resignation letter. The Committee requests the government to keep it informed of the outcome of this independent inquiry. □

CITU Condemns Misleading Statement of Mamata Banerjee

P K Ganguly, Secretary of CITU has issued the following statement:

A news item published in the Calcutta issue of the Economic Times on 12th April has stated that in a pre-poll gesture the Union Textile Ministry has written off the loan burden of the National Textile Corporation (NTC) in the order of Rs 550 crore. This news item is as per a statement made by Ms Mamata Banerjee, MP to the paper. The news further states that the Union Textile Minister, Sri G Venkatswamy has written a letter to Ms Mamata Banerjee that the Government order to this effect had been issued on March 27.

The CITU states emphatically that the above news deemed to have been published as per the statement made by Ms Mamata Banerjee is totally wrong and misleading. The fact is that no such orders have been issued by the Government till date.

The statement made by Ms Mamata Banerjee is misleading and appears to have been made deliberately to catch votes of the thousands of NTC mill workers in W. Bengal during the forthcoming Parlia-

mentary and Assembly elections.

The fact is that the BIFR had asked the Government of India to write off the loans of the four subsidiaries of the NTC viz, W Bengal (WBABO), Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat by 15th of April, failing which the BIFR may give winding up orders to these four subsidiaries on 26th April, on which date the BIFR has called a meeting of the share holders of these subsidiaries. But despite continuous struggle by the workers and repeated appeals made by all the Central Trade Unions to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister, and also several requests made by the Chief Minister of W. Bengal, Shri Jyoti Basu, the Narasimha Rao Government has refused to write off the loans. Thus on the eve of the elections the 53 NTC mills under these four subsidiaries are threatened with closure throwing out about 55 thousand workers.

The CITU also demands of the Chief Election Commissioner to take cognizance of such misleading statement by Ms Mamata Banerjee on the eve of elections and take appropriate measures against it.

Government of India Opposes proposed ILO Convention on Home based Workers

The forthcoming 83rd session of the International Labour Organisation to be held at Geneva from 4th June, 1996 will consider adoption of a Convention followed by Recommendation on Home based workers.

In its 82nd session held in June, 1995, the ILO held the first discussion on the issue. The 82nd session accepted the Report of the Committee on Home Work, which was voted for a Convention, supplemented by a Recommendation. A number of countries however opposed the proposed Convention and Recommendation. The Government of India, which sheds a lot of crocodile tears for the teeming millions in the vast unorganised sector in India also opposed the Convention. The Report however was passed with slender majority of four votes. Now the 83rd session of ILO to be held in June, 1996 will consider adoption of the Convention and Recommendation.

In the informal (unorganised) sector home based work is a growing international phenomenon. The liberalisation and globalisation of economy have further accelerated it. Factory based production is giving way to decentralised production and the big companies are farming out work to home based workers. In India alone there are about 30 million home based workers, most of whom are women. They constitute the majority in a large number of unorganised sector industries like in Beedi, handloom hosiery, garments, leather, papad, plastic, match making, silk weaving, toys and so on. They are vulnerable to worst sort of exploitation. They do not have any protective legislation, nor any social security benefits. They get wages below poverty line, as low as Rs 8/- to Rs 15/- a day. By this modus operandi of exploitation the employers earn huge profits, and are in fact subsidised by these workers by way of free work-site (home), electricity, etc. Moreover, because of their grinding poverty they are compelled to engage their children also in their work, resulting in growing child labour in this sector.

To focus attention on this growing problem the CITU and AIDWA also held a joint national workshop at Delhi on home based workers drawn from various industries in the country on 2nd and 3rd July, 1995.

This workshop also supported the proposed ILO Convention on home-based workers.

On 3rd to 5th April, an Asian Workshop was held at Delhi to consider the draft of the proposed ILO Convention and Recommendation on Home-based workers for the 83rd session. The workshop was organised by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in cooperation with the International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (IUF); International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF/TWARO); and International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine General Workers Union (ICEM).

The workshop was addressed by M K Pandhe (CITU), R L Thakar (INTUC), V Tiagi (HMS), G Prabhakar (BMS) and K L Mahendra (AITUC). It was also addressed by delegates from ten countries. The Central Trade Union leaders criticised the Govt of India for not supporting the proposed ILO Convention and decided to put pressure on the Government for supporting it. The foreign delegates also highlighted the need for adoption of the ILO Convention. One session was held on the law relating to home-based workers. This session was chaired by M K Pandhe. The session discussed a draft bill prepared by Indira Jaisingh, R K Subramanya and T Shankaran.

The workshop after discussing all the issues relating to home-based workers, unanimously adopted the following resolution:

Having considered that the incidence of home working has been growing nationally and internationally;

Having considered that globalisation of national economies has given an impetus for home working arrangements;

Having considered that home workers have little or no legal protection with respect to either their employment or their conditions of work and are extremely vulnerable to exploitation;

Having considered that most homeworkers are women, that they remain invisible as workers and that their earnings and working conditions are below all minimum standards;

Having determined that in these circumstances

pertaining in all member countries of the ILO, there is an urgent need for appropriate international standards for the protection of homeworkers;

The meeting, attended by participants from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, as well as representatives of the IUF, ITGLWF and Home Net,

Strongly supports proposals for an ILO Convention supplemented

by a Recommendation to defend and protect the rights of

homeworkers and to improve their working and living conditions;

Calls in all governments to support a Convention and

Recommendation at the ILO Conference in June 1996

Urges trade union organisations and organisations supporting homeworkers in all countries to conduct a strong and united campaign in advance of the ILO Conference in June to lobby their respective governments in order to secure active support for the ILO Convention and Recommendation.

On 5th April a delegation consisting of M K Pandhe (CITU), K L Mahendra (AITUC), G Prabhakar (BMS), R A Mittal (HMS), and Renana Sabwala,

Meena Patel (SEWA) met the Union Labour Minister, Sri G Venkatswamy and submitted the resolution of the workshop to him with the following joint letter:

The Labour Minister,
Government of India,
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that there are about thirty million homeworkers in India, most of whom women, who live and work in the worst conditions. They are covered by practically no legal provision, and even those laws that exist are not implemented in their case. They are vulnerable and subject to exploitation.

Home work is an international and growing phenomenon and the International Labour Conference in 1996 is considering a Convention on Home Work. We urge the Government of India to:

1. Strongly support the Convention supplemented by a Recommendation on Home Work at the ILO Conference, in 1996.
2. Take the lead among Non-Aligned Countries for promoting a Convention for these unorganized workers at the ILO.

A statement was also issued by the CITU in this respect.

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Maharashtra forms State Coordination Committee of Beedi Workers

A state Coordination Committee of Beedi Workers in Maharashtra was formed in a meeting held at Solapur on 8th April. This was preceded by another meeting held at Pune on 17th March, which took the decision to form the State Coordination Committee.

The meeting was attended by leaders of the Beedi Workers Unions from Solapur, Pune, Varsi and Sangli, namely Narsaya Adam, Ravindra Mokashi, M H Sheikh, Mangala Hotgi, A Sayeed, Alla Bux Patel (Solapur), Vinaya Deshpande, Vasant Pawar (Pune), Sabina Danke Bai (Varsi), Shivaji Salunke (Sangli); Vivek Monteiro (State CITU Centre) and P K Ganguly (CITU Centre). Vivek Monteiro became the convener and Narsiyya Adam the Joint Convener with Mangala Hotgi, M H Sheikh, Ravindra Mokashi, Vinaya Deshpande, Vasant Pawar, Sabina Danke Bai and Shivaji Salunke as members of the Coordination Committee. The meeting decided to further expand and consolidate the Coordination Committee by organising the Beedi workers in other centres like Jalna, Nasik, Nagpur, Bhiwandi, etc and increase the membership.

The meeting also decided to carry forward the movement of the Beedi workers in the State by popularising the 21-point demands formulated by the A I Committee of Beedi Workers with particular focus on minimum wage, social security measures, labour laws and the demand for withdrawal of the excise duty concession given by the Central Government on mini-cigarettes manufactured by the multinationals and other monopoly cigarette companies.

The meeting was followed by a mass meeting of over 300 women activists of the Lal Bavta Beedi Kamgar Union of Solapur. The mass meeting was addressed among others by Mangala Hotgi, Vinaya Deshpande, Sabina Danke Bai, M H Sheikh, Ravindra Mokashi, Vivek Monteiro, P K Ganguly and Narsiya Adam. The meeting assailed the policies of the Cong(I) Government at the Centre and the Shiv Sena-BJP Government in Maharashtra and gave a stringent call to defeat these forces and ensure victory of the left, democratic and secular forces in the forthcoming Parliamentary elections.

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ROUND TABLE FOR RENEWAL OF WORLD TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

□ MK Pandhe

Disunity in the world trade union movement is seriously affecting the struggle of the working class all over the world against the growing attacks of the monopoly capital. The growing unemployment in most of the advanced capitalist countries, the drastic curtailment of social security benefits, increasing health hazards with the advent of new technology, environmental degradation and pollution, ferocious attacks on trade union and democratic rights of the workers have become the order of the day.

The response of the trade union movement to these attacks has been much below the mark. The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) has been considerably weakened after the dismantling of socialism in former USSR and East European countries. Its capacity to organise worldwide resistance to this offensive has been drastically eroded. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has not come forward in a forthright manner against this offensive and is not rousing the mass of workers to oppose these policies.

Its refusal to have a dialogue with WFTU for a united movement is obstructing the process of development of international TU movement. The World Confederation of Labour (WCL) is not playing any effective role in the world TU movement. This situation has created a stalemate all over the world despite struggles emerging in various capitalist countries. The fall in trade union membership in major capitalist countries is an indication of the present level of trade union movement in capitalist countries.

As Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) observed, "In most countries, while trade union membership has not risen, trade unions occupy a centre stage as they challenge programmes that are being planned or implemented by governments, multinationals, the IMF and the World Bank. Issues such as privatisation, erosion of social security, destruction of collective bargaining structures are confronting labour everywhere. With unemployment rising, the standards of living of workers are under attack."

COSATU further noted, "We need as labour to move beyond analysing the above issues to where we table proposals to deal with them. A weak and divided labour movement at home and internationally stands very little chance of success."

To break the present impasse and create a basis of a unified trade union movement in all the continents the Egypt Trade Union Federation (ETUF) convened an International Round Table meeting at Cairo on 10-11 April. It was an informal meeting without any preconditions and twelve central trade union organisations were invited for the discussion. The countries invited were: France, South Africa, Portugal, Mexico, Uruguay, India, Namibia, Can-

ada, Nigeria, Spain, Algeria, Morocco. From India the CITU was invited to participate in the round table discussion. Representatives of Spain, Nigeria, Morocco and Canada could not attend the meeting though they welcomed the proposal for such an initiative.

The meeting was held in the campus of the workers university in the outskirts of Cairo City. It was presided over by Mostafa Mongi Senior Vice President of ETUF since the president was ill.

In his inaugural speech Mongi noted that the World had been changing very fast. New economic and trade groupings were emerging having impact on global economy. Poverty, unemployment and backwardness continue to dog the world as before. He emphasised the need for the world trade unions to act as vanguards of the poor to bring about improvement in the standard of living of the poorer sections of the society.

Mongi pointed out that terrorism, fanaticism, destabilisation and other social evils have adverse impact on economic development of the third world countries while frequent disturbance of international peace resulted in making workers victim of the situation. The situation can be met by only consolidation of the world trade union movement.

He discarded the idea of formation of a new international trade union centre. He actually stressed the need for bringing together all affiliated and non-affiliated trade unions on common issues facing the working class.

Alphonse Verones, secretary CGT(France) referred to the consultations in Paris during the last CGT Conference which laid the basis for the round table. He noted several international actions by the working class against the attacks of multinational companies and mentioned the struggle against deregulation and privatisation by the European Chimney Sweepers in 1993, sailors in 1994 and gas and electricity workers in Bologna in February 1996. The united action of several French unions on 1st April 1996 along with Belgina workers union in Lille at the opening of those G-7 meeting on employment was a notable event. He further hoped that international trade union movement will press for its viewpoint when the Heads of the States and Governments would meet in Lyon (France) in June 1996.

Under these circumstances the world trade union movement had to shoulder huge responsibilities to meet the challenges posed by the transnational corporations. "The approach to these questions and the capacity of international trade union movement to address them collectively are, in the opinion of the CGT, crucial considerations for the world trade union movement that is recovering its efficiency and credibility" he said.

The representative of the Authentic Front of Labour

(FAT) explained the serious situation faced by the working class of Mexico as a result of the structural adjustment programme. He noted that out of 40 million workers employed in the country only 6 million have a reasonable standard of living. The rest of the workers are living in sub-standard conditions while the profits of multinationals were swelling every year. Over 2.5 million workers are unemployed. When the inequality in the country is growing fast, drastic reduction in health services was observed in the recent past. The attack on the TU rights of the Mexican workers is increasing and only the stooge unions are being recognised by the government.

He welcomed the proposal for an international dialogue between trade unions of different affiliations and pointed out that without an international struggle the World Bank and the IMF cannot be challenged effectively by the trade union movement.

R C Haikali, Acting General Secretary of National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) noted that in the present world situation no country can remain in isolation. He explained how after liberation the trade union movement in Namibia has acquired strength and the working class is participating in the struggle for independent economic development. Referring to the attacks on the standard of living of the workers by the multinational companies he stressed the need for a coordinated struggle to resist the offensive of the multinational companies. He laid special emphasis on regional cooperation of the trade unions in the third world countries so that they can meet the offensive of the international capital effectively.

"We must look beyond the frontiers of our country and take a view of the problems in the world in its entirety, otherwise the trade union movement cannot register any progress today," he concluded.

Florival Rosa Lanca from General Confederation of Portuguese Trade Unions (CGTP) said that the international trade union movement should address itself to the long term perspective of their objective. The balance of power in the world today must be changed to make it favourable to the working class, he said, while pointing out that the capitalist system is unable to utilise fully the productive forces and the trade unions should suggest steps to be taken to ensure fullest use of this productive capacity to eliminate hunger and poverty from the surface of the earth.

He criticised the claim of the spokesmen of capitalist society that the new capitalism had become more human and democratic. He described how capitalism had been breeding unemployment and systematically curtailing all existing benefits achieved by the working class through struggles. He observed that an international movement should raise the demand of right to work and proper distribution of national wealth. M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU while noting growing inequality at the international level pointed out that it was due to unequal trade relations. The trade union movement in the third world countries are facing most ferocious attacks by the multi-

tional companies and working class in these countries are coming forward to resist these attacks.

Noting series of direct actions organised by the National Platform of Mass Organisations and the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions in India Pandhe pointed out how larger number of workers are coming forward in the united movement. In these struggles affiliates of the WFTU, ICFTU as well as non-affiliated national trade union centres had come together in the common struggles. He underlined the need to bring together the affiliates of WFTU and ICFTU so that the resistance of the working class is intensified. The CITU representative suggested that trade unions who are not invited to the round table can also be approached for building widest possible unity against the depredations of the world bank and the IMF.

Juan Alberto Castillo, Secretary, PIT-CNT from Uruguay mentioned about the multifarious problems faced by different countries which lead to evolving different approaches. However, attempts should be made to find out common solutions in the overall interest of the working class all over the world.

He noted that the united movement at the international level can be broadened only with the increase in our action programme. Pointing out the attacks on democratic rights in Latin America Castillo underlined the need for international struggle for preservation and strengthening of the democratic rights of the working class. By developing mutual solidarity actions of the trade unions we can immensely strengthen our movement in the present world situation.

Sam Silowa, General Secretary, COSATU (South Africa) observed that the new agenda before the world trade union movement should meet the needs of the working class today. Growing unemployment was directly linked with the labour market policies of the capitalist class. He therefore gave top priority to the question of full employment for which international TU action must be strengthened. Growing indebtedness of the third world countries was affecting the development of these countries and trade union should demand drastic reduction of the foreign debt burden. The international TU movement should oppose the attempts of the multinationals to use the new technology only for earning super profits.

The issues identified during the debate were concretised in the later discussion and unanimity was reached on the issues to be focussed for a world wide dialogue for international working class solidarity actions.

The entire debate was organised in a friendly atmosphere and participants felt that the round table expressed the legitimate feelings of millions of workers all over the world for building new avenues of united working class movement. All felt that it was only a beginning in the direction of renewal of the World TU movement. Similar efforts should be carried forward in all the continents by different trade unions. The Cairo meeting from that point of view has made a good beginning in the direction of building united actions of the working class all over the world.

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Massive Women's Rally on 8th March at Hyderabad

□ S Punyavathi

On 8th March a big women's rally was conducted on behalf of Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham in which about 10000 women participated. Women gathered from all over the State to press their just demands.

Prior to this rally, women's jathas were held in more than 700 villages. In these jathas, women activists have campaigned for strict implementation of prohibition against violence on women and other demands, i.e. minimum wages, civic facilities, etc

At the end of the rally, a public meeting was held. Smt Mallu Swarajyam, president Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham presided the meeting. Smt Meum Udazam Honourary president Smt S Punyavathi, secretary and Mrs P Bharathi MLA spoke in the meeting. Com. Vimal Ranadive, vice president, All India Democratic Women's Association addressed the gathering. She narrated how the policies of Cong-I and BJP are against the interest of women and emphasised the necessity of defeating both Cong-I and BJP.

S Chandra Babu Naidu, Chief Minister also addressed the gathering. In his speech, he narrated the Govt's women's policy and his Govt's efforts to uplift women. he also promised to resolve 113 jobs and seats in educational institutions and for joint pattas for lands and house sites in the name of women.

Com. Swarajyam submitted a memorandum to the Chief

Minister. The memorandum contains the following demands:

1. Strict implementation of land reforms, joint pattas should be given, minimum and equal wages for agricultural labourers and women in unorganised sector.
2. Dairy industry in cooperative sector should be provided and private dairies should not be allowed.
3. Special law for home based workers
4. PDF should be strengthened and ration cards should be issued on women's name.
5. Special provisions for girls education.
6. Better medical and maternity facilities for women.
7. The following laws should be amended
 - a) Sec 125 Crpc should be amended to remove minimum allowance of Rs 500.
 - b) Right of matrimonial property
 - e) Right of guardianship.
 - f) AP Panchayat Act should be amended as it disqualifies the persons those who are having more than two children.
 - g) Allowance for a old aged people, widows and pregnant women
9. Welfare hostels for child labour.

The Chief Minister had promised to implement the Equal Remuneration Act strictly and pursue other demands also.

IDPL Workers on Struggle for Revival of Company

The workers of the Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd (IDPL) are on grim struggle for the revival of the company. This large pharmaceutical unit in the public sector employing about 14,000 workers and manufacturing all life saving and essential drugs from the basic stage was made sick due to the Government's recalcitrant attitude and referred to the BIFR. Despite undertakings for so-called sacrifices by workers given by some non-CITU unions, the schemes sanctioned by the BIFR did not work, as the Government refused to release any funds as specified in schemes for the revival of the company. The company is under the threat of being given winding up orders by the BIFR.

The CITU unions which refused to sign the retrograde undertakings, made continuous efforts to unite all the workers at the company's major plants at Rishikesh, Hyderabad and Gurgaon. Ultimately a Joint Action Committee was formed with the CITU, INTUC, AITUC, BMS and other independent unions. A common Charter of Demands was also served. Although the management started negotiations, yet it was stalled later on. Conventions and joint gate meetings rallies and dharnas were held in different plants.

At Hyderabad joint dharna was staged at the plant

gate on 16th March, which was participated by more than 100 leaders and activists of all the unions. This was followed by a relay hunger strike on 18th March before the State Secretariat. This was participated among others by Com. M A Gaffur, the CPI-M MLA. On 19th March a massive rally of over 1500 workers was organised. The procession started from P Sundarayya Vigyan Kendram in Bagalingam Palli and marched through the streets to the State Assembly. A large number of women workers participated in the rally. A public meeting was held in front of the State Assembly. The public meeting demanded withdrawal of the IMF-dictated economic policies, strengthening the public sector, immediate release of funds by the Central Government, purchase of IDPL medicines by all Government hospitals and dispensaries and resolution of the joint Charter of Demands.

Among those who spoke in the rally were S Narasimha Reddy, S Srinivas Reddy (CITU), K L Mahendra, P Nageshwar Rao (AITUC), Khurusi (INTUC), N Narasimha Reddy (HMS), B Bal Reddy (BMS), N Narasimha Reddy (CPM-MLA), K Subba Raju (CPI-MLA), N Giri Prasad (CPI-MP), etc.

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

	Linking factor for Old Base			Linking factor for Old Base			
	Jan '96	Feb. '96		Jant '96	Feb. '96		
All India	315	316	4.93	Barbil	311	309	5.00
Gudur	322	322	4.33	Rourkela	290	292	3.59
Guntur	317	314	5.60	Amritsar	276	274	5.19
Hyderabad	296	296	5.23	Ludhiana	286	282	—
Visakhapatnam	311	308	—	Ajmer	309	215	5.01
Warrangal	310	311	—	Jaipur	300	300	5.17
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	290	296	4.05	Coimbatore	309	310	5.35
Guwahati	325	326	—	Coonoor	324	323	4.80
Labac-Silchar	266	269	3.96	Madras	332	337	5.05
Mariani-Jorhat	310	314	3.95	Madurai	324	326	5.27
Rangapara-Tezpur	296	305	4.29	Salem	317	320	—
Jamshedpur	300	305	4.68	Tiruchirapally	342	333	—
Jharia	270	269	4.63	Agra	292	291	—
Kodarma	270	270	5.43	Ghaziabad	308	305	—
Monghyr	298	293	5.29	Kanpur	305	311	4.69
Noamundi	284	290	4.58	Saharanpur	289	295	5.06
Ranchi-Hatia	298	302	—	Varanasi	321	323	5.12
Ahmedabad	311	312	4.78	Asansol	292	290	4.77
Baroda	313	311	—	Calcutta	322	314	4.74
Bhavanagar	326	324	4.99	Darjeeling	282	279	4.55
Rajkot	306	309	—	Durgapur	332	325	—
Surat	335	339	—	Haldia	340	340	—
Faridabad	304	307	—	Howrah	331	324	4.12
Yamunanagar	286	290	5.53	Jalpaiguri	282	280	4.16
Srinagar	308	308	5.47	Raniganj	283	282	4.40
Bangalore	314	314	5.66	Chandigarh	303	299	—
Belgaum	338	339	—	Delhi	327	327	4.97
Hubli-Dharwar	323	324	—	Pondicherry	360	360	—
Mercara	316	317	—	Additional series of Labour Bureau			
Alwaye	333	334	5.19	Kothagudem	319	327	3.25
Mundakayam	334	341	—	Himachal Pradesh	294	296	3.75
Quilon	347	351	—	Bhilwara	314	316	3.20
Trivandrum	351	357	—	Chindwara	330	327	2.59
Bhalaghat	305	303	5.24	Tripura	305	305	4.37
Bhilai	286	287	3.49	Goa	349	349	3.40
Bhopal	332	334	5.46	Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number. —Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series,			
Indore	322	322	5.18				
Jabalpur	321	320	6.41				
Bombay	346	349	5.12				
Nagpur	321	325	4.99				
Nasik	334	336	—				
Pune	348	348	—				
Solapur	336	345	5.03				

Complete Strike by FMRAI Field Workers

Over twenty thousand medical and sales representatives in India organised under the Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives' Associations of India (FMRAI) went on complete strike on 20th March in pursuance of long pending 17-point common Charter of Demands.

The demands included enactment and enforcement of labour laws for the field workers, fixation and enforcement of minimum wage, in protest against attack on trade union rights and victimisations and demanding to make medicines available to the common man at reasonable prices.

The strike was the culmination of year-long campaign and was complete in W.Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, UP, Delhi, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, MP, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Pondicherry, Kerala and Karnataka. It was partial in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and J&K. Due to holiday on 20th March, Maharashtra and Karnataka observed strike on 19th March, and Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu on 21st March.

The CITU and other central trade unions, various industrial federations and organisations of central and State Govt employees, banks, insurance, students, youth, women, IMA, Govt doctors' associations and chemist and druggists' associations supported the strike in different states. The AICAPEF,

W.Bengal Branch and several other pharmaceutical workers unions issued statements supporting the strike. The All India Federation of Sales Executives' Association also issued statement supporting the strike.

The strike brought the marketing and sales promotion activities to a grinding halt in the entire country. Thousands of field workers came out in the streets with banners and placards, organising rallies and picketing on the day and submitted memoranda to the Govt authorities. Some conferences of the pharmaceutical companies were cancelled. The supervisors also in general did not come out for work. The Press, TV and radio gave wide coverage of the strike.

The participation of FMRAI in the four country-wide strike actions against the new economic policies, in the 23rd February strike against the Govt's retrograde Pension Scheme and against the amendment of the Indian Patent Act on 20th June, 1995 are significant land marks in the field workers' movement in the country.

The Working Committee of FMRAI, which met at Calcutta on 24th and 25th March, congratulated the field workers for their massive participation in the strike, and decided to carry forward the struggle till the demands are met. □

Contract Workers thrown out of job in Delhi International Airport; One Women Worker died of starvation

About 350 contract workers so long engaged in sweeping cleaning work in International Airport, New Delhi have been thrown out of job by the contractors in collusion with the management of National Airport Authority. One of those workers, Ms Chando Devi has succumbed to death on 13.4.96 after two month long unemployment and compelling starvation.

The said contract workers have been working since last ten years or more in the International Airport at Delhi. In spite of change of contractors during the intervening period, the same set of contract workers continued to work since beginning.

Recently the management of national Airport Authority has appointed three new contractors for the same sweeping/cleaning work in the airport and the new contractors refused to accept the old set of workers with the tacit support of Airport Authority. The workers under the leadership of Airport Employees Union (CITU) protested such move and in that process one of the contractors agreed to accept 112

workers in work while two other contractors still continued to remain adamant. Still now 210 contract workers, including sizeable number of women workers are out of employment and have been staging dharna demanding job since 16th February 1996.

From CITU central leadership matter has been taken up with Union Labour Minister who has given assurance to take suitable steps to ensure that concerned workers are taken back to work. But nothing has been done as yet. Poor workers, having lost their only source of livelihood have been facing starvation with their family members. One women worker Ms Chando Devi has already succumbed to death on 13.4.96 facing starvation.

But still now government could not set their own management of National Airport Authority and the arrogant contractors to track who, in connivance with each other are showing thumb to the law of the land standing on the corpse of the dying workers! □

Unprovoked Highhandedness by CISF at IISCO

At 10 pm on 7th April 1996 the CISF Jawans went on a rampage beating the IISCO workers indiscriminately and injuring hundreds of them, some of them seriously. Out of them 18 workers have been admitted to the Burnpur hospital of whom 14 are in a serious condition. Most of the admitted workers have suffered fracture of legs, hands, etc. One Sri Rajbhir Singh is still in a critical state. He was lying unconscious till 8th morning. Sri Ganesh Singh has had a deep cut on his head. In protest against such inhuman beating, there was an undeclared bandh in the factory spontaneously. Workers staged a demonstration before the authorities demanding exemplary punishment to the guilty CISF people, proper compensation to the injured workers, repair/replacement of damaged scooters, motor cycles and cycles. On Monday morning nearly 5000 workers gave vent to their outraged feeling to the ED(Works), IISCO, holding demonstration at the factory.

The incident occurred at 10 pm in B shift. Even after 10 pm, the gate was not opened. As a result the B shift duty workers were agitated and obviously they urged them to open the gate. But the CISF personnel lathicharged the workers. The workers became much astonished with such behaviour of the CISF and they tried to leave the place. But the Asst Commandant (CISF) accompanied with nearly two hundred jawans attacked the workers with weapons, lathis and empty wine bottles. Again at about midnight the CISF went from Dept to Dept and beat the workers with lathis and butts of their guns.

Having come to know of this inhuman behaviour and torture by the CISF, on 8.4.96 Com.Jibon Roy, all India Secretary of CITU and MP reached Burnpur and visited the place of occurrence and individually met the workers and

talked with them about the incident. He went to the Burnpur hospital. There he enquired about the seventeen injured workers and advised the Hospital authorities for their better treatment. After that Com.Roy met Mr Patni, MD, IISCO, Burnpur, for immediate removal from Burnpur Sri Negi, Asst Commandant, CISF including others who were guilty. Com.Roy also demanded of the local administration for immediate arrest of the said Asst Commandant, CISF Sri Negi.

In a general meeting held at 5 pm on the day, Com. Jibon Roy addressed the workers and told that it was the most notorious and inhuman incident in the recent days. He requested the workers to stand united for fulfilment of their demands and be ready for further struggle.

The unions met the management and demanded removal of the Asst Commandant with those guilty jawans of CISF, proper compensation for the injured workers and compensation for the broken, stolen scooters/cycles due to that incident.

On 11.4.96 Com.Haradhan Roy, Member of Parliament from this constituency visited the Burnpur works and the SCOB gate where the brutal lathi charge was made on the workers by CISF. He also visited the hospital, met the injured workers and enquired about their treatment.

He also met the Managing Director of IISCO, Burnpur and demanded the removal of guilty CISF personnel including the Asst Commandant immediately from Burnpur. He further demanded proper compensation for the injured workers. He wanted to know about the steps taken by the management in this regard. Com.Roy asked for a copy of the enquiry report which was instituted by the management and warned the MD against any such action by the CISF in future. □

Joint Seminar on Pension Scheme in BHEL

A joint seminar on Pension Scheme was held at BHEL, Tiruchirappally on 24th & 25th March 1996. The Joint Action Committee on BHEL pension scheme comprising all functioning trade unions in BHEL, Trichy including those affiliated to CITU, INTUC, BMS, HMS, HMKP, DMK besides other independent unions, organised the seminar.

In the seminar, representatives of 31 unions from various units of BHEL all over the country participated. Representatives of all the unions cutting across affiliation expressed in clear terms that the Govt Pension Scheme which is designed to impound almost half of the PF generation of the workers for the so-called pension fund is in no way beneficial to workers, rather it would adversely affect the existing retiral benefits.

What is needed is a separate pension scheme for the BHEL workers and united movement by the BHEL workers to achieve the same, as was the conclusion drawn by the seminar. From the seminar, after detail deliberation on the impacts of the Govt Pension Scheme, it was unanimously decided that BHEL workers would move jointly to ensure

that the Govt pension scheme and the provision for diversion of half of the PF generation to pension fund is not made effective on BHEL employees and accordingly all the unions would write to regional PF commissioner and BHEL management not to insist on and/or effect reduction of 8.33% PF generation for pension fund.

Seminar also decided to unitedly build pressure on BHEL management to seek exemption from Govt Pension Scheme and formulate separate pension scheme for BHEL employees. It was also decided to observe BHEL PENSION DAY on 9th April 1996 in all the BHEL units all over the country through badge wearing, dharna, etc and press for the above demands. Com.Jibon Roy MP, Secretary, CITU and Com.Suryanarayana Rao, vice president CITU also addressed the seminar among others.

As per reports received, the BHEL pension day was observed in different units of BHEL all over the country by mass of the BHEL workers.

(From Anwar Hussain, Convenor, Joint Action Committee, BHEL, Trichy). □

CITU-ILO Workshop on Child Labour in Unorganised Sector

Punjab

The Punjab State level CITU-ILO workshop on Child Labour in Unorganised Sector was held at Chandigarh on March 9 and 10, 1996. The workshop was presided over by Com. Inderjeet Singh and attended by 28 comrades from different parts of the State representing the industries of textile, brick-kiln, quarries, construction, hotel and restaurants and general.

Com. Chandrasekhar, the State General Secretary inaugurated the workshop and placed the Theme Paper. Com. P K Ganguly, Secretary CITU explained the approach of the CITU on the issue. He focused at the grinding poverty of the people, wages below poverty line and lack of educational scope as the main reasons for child labour in the unorganised sector, which was further aggravated due to the new economic policies.

The workshop was greeted by Com. Vimla Devi, the State JMS president. After general discussions, the participants discussed in details various points related to the conditions in the unorganised sector responsible for child labour. The group discussions were led by Com. Gurmeet Singh, Amarnath Kumkalan, Ram Singh, Dinesh Prasad and Raj Kumar.

After the group discussions the workshop formulated the following demands and action plan.

Demands: Land reforms, need based wages, right to work, PF, Pension, ESI, gratuity, special free compulsory schools for working children equal wages to working children with 6 hours work leave, holiday, etc, and suitable amendment of the Child Labour Act.

Action Plan: 1. Campaign with posters, leaflets, street dramas

2. District wise rallies culminating into a State level rally and convention.

Organisational Task: Form unions in the unorganised sector and increase membership by 20 per cent, and coordinated action with other trade unions and mass organisations.

Maharashtra: The Maharashtra State workshop was held at Pune on March 16 and 17. The workshop was presided over by Com. Sadasiv Bhat and attended by 48 comrades from the State representing the industries of Engineering, Construction, hotel and restaurants, beedi powerloom, Angnawadi workers, auto and general industries.

Com. (Prof) Ajit Abhayankar made the introductory speech, Com. K L Bajaj, the State General

Secretary welcomed the delegates and Com. Vimal Ranadive, Secretary CITU inaugurated the workshop.

The workshop was addressed by Dr Mahaveer Jain, the Coordinator of the National Resource Centre on Child Labour of the V K Giri National Labour Institute, NOIDA. The Assistant Labour Commissioner, Maharashtra State also addressed the workshop. P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU explained the approach of the CITU. Three papers were placed on behalf of the State Committee of CITU, namely by Com. P R Krishnan, Com. Usha Datar and Com. (Prof) Ajit Abhayankar.

This was followed by a session of questions and answers in which a number of members participated and Dr Jain made the replies.

The next day the workshop was divided into five groups led by Coms. Ramesh Dahibade, Ravindera Mokashi, Datta Mane, Usha Datar and U K Nair.

After reporting by the group leaders, the workshop unanimously came to the conclusion that poverty was the main reason for child labour and formulated demands concerning land reforms, need based wages, employment generation programme, free compulsory schooling for the working children, equal wages to them, etc.

On organisational task, the workshop called upon to increase membership of CITU in the unorganised sector by at least 20 per cent.

Action Plan : Districtwise conventions, street corner meetings, culminating in a massive state level central rally at Bombay within three months, mobilising workers of the unorganised sector and several hundred working children from the state.

Com. K L Bajaj summed up the deliberations.

Madhya Pradesh

The CITU-ILO State workshop on child labour held at Bhopal on March 19 and 20 discussed the prevailing conditions, causes and remedy of this social evil. Every participant who spoke and participated in the group discussion offered the same conclusion that the poverty, unemployment and below poverty level wages are the main causes of prevalence of child labour. It can be abolished permanently only through the change of social system.

Com. P K Ganguly secretary CITU explained the approach of the CITU. Dr Mahabir Jain from National Labour Institute inaugurated the workshop. Com. S

(On Page 24)

Report on Western Regional Conference on "Future of Industrial Relations"

□ P R Krishnan

The topic of the 3-day seminar held on 12th, 13th and 14th June 1995 in the Gandhi Labour Institute campus at Ahmedabad was titled Western Regional Conference on "Future of Industrial Relations - Industrial Relations in Future." Though it was given to understand that this would be a workshop on industrial relations, in fact, it turned out to be a seminar. The participating 5 States were Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Goa. It was jointly organised Freidrich Ebert Foundation (FES), Gandhi Labour Institute (GLI) and Indian Industrial Relations Association (IIRA).

The participating Central Trade Union organisations were CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, BMS, National Labour Organisation of Ahmedabad and some independent unions from Maharashtra and Gujarat.

R K Swami from Rajasthan and P R Krishnan from Maharashtra were the two comrades representing CITU.

Representatives from Indian Industrial Relations Associations, Delhi, academicians from University of Delhi, Gujarat Institute of Development Reserach, Ahmedabad, Institute of Labour Development, Jaipur, Indian Merchant Chambers, Maharashtra, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Tata Organisation, Goa, Gandhi Labour Institute, Ahmedabad, consisted of faculties and speakers. Besides representatives from labour judiciary and Finance Department of Government of Gujarat also participated and spoke.

The themes of presentations and discussions were:

- * Changes in Govt policy and labour relations
- * Recent approaches in judiciary and labour bu-reaucracy
- * New trends in collective bargaining
- * New trends in Trade Unions
- * New approaches in HR/IR policies and practices

Representatives from organisations of industries

and commerce and from industrial relations organisations also made detailed speeches reviewing the labour situations in the states of Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

On the last day there was also a "Syndicate Group discussion." The subjects for that group discussions were:

Desired and discerned changes in industrial relations; Reflect on the perception of future of industrial relations;

Focus on the agenda for industrial relations with identified goals and objectives

Swami and Krishnan participated very actively in all sessions and discussions. Participants expressed appreciation of the CITU view points. On many occasions the discussions centered around these view points. On the question of sickness and closure of industries, the CITU stressed that the conference should make a demand to the Government to come out with a white paper on the causes of increasing sickness and closure of industries in India.

Apart from actively participating in the discussions through out, the CITU representatives also participated in the discussion on the labour situation in Maharashtra, when the Indian Merchant Chamber Dy secretary Dr Geeta Bharadwaj presented the paper on Review of Industrial Relations, Trends in the state of Maharashtra.

From the trend of the presentation of papers and speeches delivered by the experts in the seminar, the conclusion could easily be gathered that such types of seminars and workshops were being organised and conducted for the purpose of orientation of the working class to accept the inevitability of the situations arising from the new economic, industrial and liberalisation policies of the Govt of India. The CITU's opposition in this respect was however pronounced, which made impact in the seminar supported by other trade unions.

□

May Day Message from Zenroren

(We are publishing hereunder a message in abridged form received from the National Confederation of Trade Unions of Japan (Zenroren) on the occasion of May Day, and the reply by CITU—Ed).

The history and tradition of May Day since 1890 teaches us even now the importance of international united struggle for a noble task of workers' liberation.

Intensified world-wide domination of economy by monopoly capital and multinational corporations has made economies stagnant and increased contradictions among themselves, on one hand and between developed and developing countries, on the other. Monopolies and their reactionary governments are desperately struggling to get out of the situation by forcing a sacrifice on working people. This is all out attack on workers; intensified exploitation such as wage restraint, longer working hours, dismissals and unemployment; and infringement upon workers' and trade union rights.

International solidarity has become important more than ever in trade union struggles against selfish and highhanded activities of monopolies and reactionary governments. Multinationals are exploiting workers in their investing countries to seek for maximum profits.

Succeeding to the history and tradition of May Day, Zenroren further strengthens its struggle within the country as well as its international solidarity activity in order to project livelihood of workers and their rights, peace and democracy through the might of workers' unity.

**Long live militant May Day!
Workers of all lands, unite!**

May 1st 1996,

National Confederation of Trade Unions (ZENROREN)

CITU's Reply

On the occasion of May Day 1996, the CITU conveys its warmest greetings to the leadership and members of Zenroren who have played an important role in building a powerful movement of the working class of Japan in defence of their interests.

The multinational companies all over the world have been trying to strengthen their control over the economies of the third world in the name of structural adjustment programme. The Zenroren and the CITU have tried to resist the machinations of global capital in their thirst for higher profits. The multinational companies in Japan have penetrated Indian economy in a big way and we are confident that our joint efforts to fight the depredations of these multinationals will be considerably strengthened in the forthcoming

period. Through united and solidarity actions it will be possible to protect the workers from retrenchment and arbitrary dismissals, wage freeze and curtailment of TU and democratic rights.

The CITU is happy to note on this occasion of May Day, the remarkable cooperation developed between CITU and Zenroren which led to observation of 50th Anniversary of the Nuclear Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A delegation from Zenroren visited India while the CITU delegation visited Japan during the observation of the anniversary. We hope that this cooperation between the working class of our two countries will continue to grow in the struggle against nuclear weapons and for world peace.

In the present world situation when the World Bank and the IMF are trying to strengthen the grip of monopoly over the entire world, the working class and the toiling masses are the worst victims of their offensive. It is only through joint international movement the trade unions can defeat the game of these reactionary forces.

The CITU pledges to strengthen its struggles in India as well as its solidarity action towards all the trade unions who are fighting for social justice; full employment, nuclear disarmament and world peace.
Long Live the Revolutionary traditions of May Day!

Workers of all lands unite!

MK Pandhe Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)

1 May 1996

INTUC Expresses Thanks to CITU President

The INTUC President of the HSL unit, Vizag has sent the following telegramme to the President of CITU acknowledging the CITU's role in developing united trade union movement;

E Balanandan New Delhi

We express our heartfelt thankfulness for the initiative you have taken on the issue of regularisation of the services of C series workmen working on casual basis in Shipyard with the Hon'ble Minister for Surface Transport when we met in your presence on 6th March, 1996. Despite your hectic political activity in the recent Hawala scam your initiative will definitely stand as an inspiring source for the development of trade union movement not only in Shipyard but also in our mega industrial Vizag city.

G V Ramana

President, INTUC, HSL Unit
Visakhapatnam

International Struggles

Peru: Management at the biscuits and chocolate manufacturer Field & Royal in Lima, Peru has launched an aggressive drive to break the workers' union through a programme of forced retirement of permanent workers and their replacement by casual employees. Field & Royal is a subsidiary of the US-based baking and snack foods transnational Nabisco, which has been expanding rapidly in Latin America while scaling back its European operations.

The Union of Workers of Field & Royal, a member organisation of the Peruvian federation uniting IUF-affiliated food and allied workers' unions (COTAAP), traditionally enjoyed a stable relationship with company management. Last year, a newly-installed management team began pressuring union members and leaders - many of them women with many years of service - to voluntarily "resign" their positions. Pressure on the permanent workforce has intensified to the extent that between 20 to 30 workers a week are now being fired or have been forced to resign. There now remain only some 200 permanent workers, while the number of workers on fixed contracts fluctuates between 350 and 400, depending on demand.

Earlier this year, workers began to be called to meetings with the Director of Human Relations (a former naval officer) and informed that the parent company in the United States had issued instructions to discharge all personnel. In the light of this directive, workers were told they were best advised to settle for voluntary retirement immediately. Following the meetings, workers who refused to sign retirement notices were forcibly removed from their workplaces by private security guards.

At a general meeting of the union on February 4, members agreed on a programme of action to counter the company offensive, including a legal injunction, union mobilisation, and media and political pressure. The state of emergency under which Peru is still governed requires that all public demonstrations be authorised by the military authorities.

The IUF regional and general secretariats have protested to the company at the local and international levels.

Malta: The Hotel, Restaurant and Food Workers' Section of Malta's General Workers' Union has negotiated an agreement with the owners and management of the Malta Hilton Hotel which guarantees that the hotel's owner, Spinola Hotels Group, will absorb all employees with no loss in salary at other hotels

owned by the group during the Hilton's reconstruction.

The Malta Hilton is scheduled to be demolished and rebuilt over two to three years with expanded and upgraded facilities to five-star standards.

Under the terms of the agreement, workers who leave to seek employment outside the Spinola Group have the same right to re-employment as workers who stay within the Group.

Switzerland: The Union Helvetia is demanding a general adjustment of the minimum wage scales set out in the national collective agreement for the HRC sector, which expires in June. The branch agreement, which dates from 1992, provides for an annual revenue of wages and salaries, but these have remained unchanged in the 4 years since the agreement was signed.

According to government statistics, wages for HRC workers represented 72.9 percent of average national wages in 1980, declining to 68.3 per cent in 1986, 65.8 per cent in 1991, and 65.3 percent in 1993. Union Helvetia is demanding that this widening discrepancy relative to other sectors be taken into account in renewing the agreement. The employers are insisting that the agreement be renewed as it stands. The struggle between the workers and the employers is getting intensified on the issue.

South Korea: Despite pledges by President Kim Young-Sam to reform labour legislation in line with international standards, the government of South Korea continues its policy of repression and intimidation of the independent trade union movement. The formation of a new national centre, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) on November 11, provided the occasion for a new round of attacks on democratic and trade union rights. The new centre, with over 418,000 members, brings together in a united organisation the majority of independent unions, white and blue-collar, previously organised in the Korean Congress of Trade Unions and the Korean Congress of Independent Industrial Federations.

On November 23, key leaders of the new confederation were arrested on charges of "Third Party Interference," the key legislative weapon used to repress union organisation not sanctioned by the employers. Among the arrested were KCTU president Kwon Young-Kil, who was taken into custody the same day the organisation applied for registration at the Labour Ministry. Prior to his arrest, Kwon had

been the object of a nationwide police manhunt stemming from his involvement in the transport workers strikes of 1994.

On February 1, KCTU Vice President Yang Kyu-Heon was arrested and his teen aged sons threatened at gunpoint. Other prominent KCTU officers have gone into hiding.

The IUF has protested these arrests to the Korean authorities, and has associated itself with the KCTU complaint lodged against the government of Korea at the ILO.

Swaziland: Jan Sithole, General Secretary of the Swaziland Agricultural and Plantation Workers' Union who also heads the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, was arrested on January 22, together with the President and Assistant General Secretary of the Federation. The arrests followed an effective 8-day general strike by the country's trade union movement to protest the state of emergency in force since 1973 and to highlight union demands for democratic change. Sithole had previously been the victim of an attempted kidnapping and murder in September 1995.

The IUF and its affiliates have protested these repressive measures to the Swaziland authorities.

Employment Woes: The Perverse Prescriptions of the OECD

The Committee on Tourism of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) organised a seminar in Vienna, Austria last November to consider problems arising from the sector's growing difficulties in attracting and retaining workers.

The problem - and the proposed remedy - is of course a familiar one for trade unionists: jobs are on offer primarily to unskilled or semi-skilled workers, frequently on part-time or seasonal contracts with low pay and few benefits. Working conditions are mediocre, possibilities for job promotion are limited, and professional training is poorly adapted to the newer forms of tourism.

To rectify the situation, the Tourism Committee recommended further de-regulation of the industry along strict neo-liberal lines. Priority should be given, according to their prescription, to increasing flexibility of scheduling worktime and the reduction or elimination of the majority of employers' obligations towards their employees.

The OECD shows no inclination to resolve the contradictions arising from the neo-liberal orthodoxy. It confirms that employment in the tourist sector is characterised by mediocre social conditions; it concedes that this is a principal cause of worker dissat-

isfaction and high turnover; and it concludes that, in order to create more jobs, even more latitude must be given the employers to deregulate the terms and conditions of employment, i.e. to further weaken workers' abilities to defend their wages, working conditions, and collective interests.

SAP Leading to Unemployment

France: The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) following the transnationalisation of global economy has resulted in a high unemployment rate of 12.3 per cent in France. This combined with the problem of homelessness for a rising number of people, has forced many people to speak in terms of "social exclusion." According to a recent survey 55 per cent of French men are afraid of being "excluded" one day and 72 per cent think it could happen to members of their family. (The Guardian, April 13)

Britain: The Banking industry in Britain is threatened with redundancies due to SAP. The prediction of a further 75,000 redundancies has come at the top of the 1,00,000 banking jobs lost since the peak of employment at the end of 1980s. 20 per cent of the bank branches have been closed during the last 5 years. While industry sources claim that job cuts are an inevitable result of new technology and increased competition, critics allege that automation is being used as an excuse to deliver poorer services while fattening up profits. (The Guardian, April 3).

Japan: The fear of unemployment is stalking Japan's young graduates, who could once count on a job for life. The Japanese companies have been cutting costs by scaling down new hires, making harder for new graduates to find salaried jobs.

"Unemployment, especially among the young, could be biggest problem for Japan's economy from now on," said Johsen Takahasi, a senior economist at Mitsubishi Research Institute. The unemployment rate for people aged between 15 and 24 climbed to a record high of 7.5 percent in March, 1995, more than double the overall jobless rate, according to Government data.

India - Unemployment and Structural Adjustment

In his paper "Impact of Structural Adjustment Policies - hunger and jobless growth," D Bandyopadhyay (Chairman, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta) has summarised the existing information on unemployment arising as a result of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). There is no employment/unemployment survey data covering three years of the SAP from mid 1991 to mid 1994.

Estimates of SAP-induced unemployment made by the ILO - Regional Team for Employment Promotion range from 4 million to 10 million under various assumption of growth conditions.

A survey by the All India Manufacturers' Association in November 1993 said that industry has become more capital intensive and less labour intensive, that this trend would accelerate over time, that 75 per cent of units had a medium level surplus manpower of 10-12 per cent, that 40 per cent of units stopped recruitment and that they would face the competition of liberalisation through new technology, reduction in labour and new investment. (Mainstream, May 13.)

CITU-ILO Workshop on ...

(From Page 19)

Kumar, General Secretary of MP State CITU presided over the workshop. Com.Badal Saroj, President of the State Committee placed the Theme Paper. In contrast to the claim of the MP Government that there are only 16,98,517 child workers in MP, it was found from the discussions that the number must be from 50 lakhs to even 1 crore. They were from the unorganised sector of industries and in agriculture.

Therefore, the issue of minimum wages in unorganised sector, implementation of labour laws, restriction of privatistaion, change in economic polices and particularly the issue of land reform came up in the discussions, and participants felt that these issues should be taken effectively. The workshop on 19-20 March was being held just after the massive CITU rally in State capital. The action plan was formulated as to how this momentum should be kept going through district level conventions and divisional level actions during the next three months. The workshop also decided to increase membership in the unorganised sector of industries by at least 20 per cent.

In all 56 delegates participated from Anganwadi, powerloom Engineering, Textile, energy, coal and agriculture, etc. The above demands and action plans were unanimously adopted after group discussions, which were led by Coms. Ram Bilas Goswami, Vidya Shankar Mufliis, Bau Sidha Azad, Pramode Pradhan and Manyuata Saroj. the workshop was also addressed by Com.Bahalur Singh Dhakar (AIKS), Com.Urmila Singh(JMS) and Com.Zakir Ali (SFI).

WFTU Expresses Concern Over American Highhanded- ness Against Cuba

The following is an abridged version of the WFTU statement on Cuba:

The recent escalation of provocative actions violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Cuba which are organised by hostile groups financed by and located in the United States is leading to a dangerous confrontation in the Caribbeart, threatening peace and security in the region and in the world.

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) expresses its grave concern and strongly condemns the further imposition of sanctions against Cuba, which directly affect the jobs and lives of the working people, and the continued refusal of the US Administration to respect the repeated resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly for the lifting of such sanctions. The new moves in the US Congress to penalise all countries trading with Cuba have to be seen also as a gross violation of international law.

The World Federation of Trade Unions reiterates its complete solidarity with the Cuban Workers' Centre (CTC) and the people of Cuba in their resistance to all attempts to violate their national sovereignty and territorial integrity. □

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