



THE WORKING CLASS

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Magnificent Response to Nationwide Industrial Strike on 29th November

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The working class of India has declared in no uncertain terms on 29th November that it would not allow the national interests at the behests of the World Bank and the IMF tycoons when it went on historic All India General Strike in protest against the new economic and industrial policies of the Government of India. Despite malicious propaganda on the T.V. and the Radio and false claims made by the Union Coal Minister P.A. Sangma that the strike 'fizzled out', the mighty action of the working class was a grand success by all means.

The strike was not for any immediate economic demands for the working class but against some policies which threaten the sovereignty and self-reliance of the country. The strike has exhibited the maturity of the united movement of our working class to wage a nationwide struggle against anti-national and anti-people economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government.

Unprecedented Unity

The unprecedented unity built in the All India T.U. Convention of Public Sector Unions on 16th September and All India Convention Against Economic Policies of the Government of India on 17th September have set in motion a countrywide campaign against the economic policies of the Government of India. More than 50 Conventions were held in all major industrial towns in the country in which workers of all affiliations participated. The resolutions of these conventions were printed in several lakhs of copies in all languages calling upon the working class to prepare for the countrywide strike action. Hundreds of gate meetings were organised all over the country in support of the strike action.

CITU published a booklet 'Surrender of India's Sovereignty and Self Reliance' which was translated in all Indian languages. Over a lakh of copies of the booklet were sold all over India.

Though the INTUC and BMS did not join the

campaign the rank and file members of these organisations joined the campaigns in large numbers. In W. Bengal, the state unit of the INTUC openly came forward to the support the strike but later on were pressurised by the Central leadership to withdraw the support. In Karnataka the President of the INTUC unit openly issued statements to the press stating that INTUC activists would not be able to remain aloof from the movement against the economic policies of the Govt. of India. The Madhya Pradesh unit of INTUC had to announce its decision to launch independent agitation against these economic policies. The leadership of the BMS had also to take up the programme of agitation against these policies just on the eve of strike from 25th to 27th November.

All this point out that the powerful campaign launched in all corners of the country had its impact on cadres of INTUC and BMS who wanted programme of action against the retrograde policies. Despite the disruptive role played by the leadership of these two organisations the rank of INTUC and BMS by and large joined the strike. In some places however the die hards had actively worked against the strike which led to some disruption during the strike day. The general appeal of unity of the entire working class was so powerful that it cut across all affiliations. The strike became a milestone in achieving all in unity of the working class against these retrograde policies.

The participation of officers in Public Undertakings in this strike was another significant aspect. The Confederation of Officers Association (NCOA) and the All India Bank Officers Association brought in a remarkable unity of workers and officers widening the unity of the workers and officers on common issues. Even scientists, technicians, engineers and research workers campaigned in support of the strike. The Govt. of India's green signal to multi-nationals to induct technology would lead to non-development of indigenous technology which bro-

ught them together to oppose the economic policies. The coming forward of these sections which were keeping away from the general T.U. movement all these days had added a new dimension to the united struggle of our working class.

Initiative in Public Sector

The 22 lakh workers in public sector were at the helm of the movement and they played an important role in bringing together various section of workers. The new economic policy hit the public sector workers most. The drive towards privatisation, threat of closure of several public sector units, government circular virtually declaring moratorium when wage negotiations were pending for settlement, arbitrary stoppage of Govt. subsidy to all the loss making units have made the matter worse and the workers were pressing the trade union leadership for a countrywide action. Announcement by the Government to refer 50 public sector units to BIFR have evoked strong resentment among the workers. 20 per cent dis-investment in profit making public sector units have further accentuated the already growing discontent among them. The privatisation of P & T operations had antagonised the Central Government employees. The small scale industries facing acute distress as a result of the New Economic and Industrial Policies prevailed upon large sections of unorganised workers to join the mainstream of the countrywide struggle. The threatening statements made by the Ministers from time to time had only made the workers more determined to go in for the strike action. All these factors combined to create a favourable atmosphere a strike action.

Massive Strike Action

Despite false propaganda by the official media the strike was a grand success. The West Bengal industrial strike was unique and even students joined the mighty protest. Not a single railway could run on the day. The entire life in the state came to a grinding halt. The capitalist press tried to confuse public opinion by circulating false story that the Home Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal directed the police to help the organisation of strike could not hoodwink anyone and the response of the working class was spontaneous and overwhelming.

In Bihar, Left Parties and NF constituents gave a call for Bihar Bandh and it was a complete success. Shri Sangma, Union Minister of Coal was so much frustrated by this action that he called the Bandh as 'State managed'. Even rail transport was disrupted seriously and no trains could move on that day.

The people of Kerala also almost observed Bandh throughout the state and shops, business premises and markets were closed. The Karunakaran Govt. arrested more than 10,000 workers a day before the Bandh while more than 1,000 picketers were taken into custody by police for picketting at the railway track. On the day of Bandh police opened fire in 2 places in Trivandrum District. Despite all these repressive measures the strike in the state was near total. Workers in Beedi, handloom, coir, cashew,

construction, private buses and lorry, autorikshaws, taxis participated in big way in the strike action.

Despite reign of terror let loose by the extremists in Punjab 8 lakh workers joined the strike. Even in disturbed places like Hoshiarpur and Rajpura people observed total Bandh. In Amritsar a massive demonstration of 20,000 workers protested against the economic policies of the Congress (I) Govt. State transport and private buses were completely off the roads and even the INTUC workers joined the action. FCI contract workers, construction workers, Brick Kiln and foundry workers in engineering units & NTC joined the strike action. Railway workers wore black badges and held demonstration. Train services disrupted in some areas.

In Tamilnadu the strike was almost complete in all major public and private sector units. Massive demonstration were organised by workers throughout the state.

In Andhra Pradesh most of the public sector units in Hyderabad were closed down. Strikes have been reported in West Godavari, Nalgonda and Vijayawada districts. Road transport workers joined the strike throughout the state in a massive manner. The strike of unorganised workers in the state was extremely well organised.

S.N. Reddy CITU leader from Hyderabad was arrested by the police. In Visakhapatnam police arrested 500 workers for picketting before the gates of various undertakings. While staging a Dharna before the docks 300 workers were arrested. However all these attempts to broubeat the workers failed all strikes were organised in most of the units at Visakhapatnam.

Strike in Maharashtra was successful. Except 2.3 mills all the textile mills in Bombay were closed down. All major industrial units in Bombay including Premier Automobiles, CEAT Tyres, Fertiliser and engineering units and ports' docks observed the strike.

The employees in the Fort area organised a huge demonstration condemning Govt. of India's economic policies. The Central Govt. employees walked out of their offices at 12.00 noon and staged a demonstration. They were prevented from reaching Hutatma Chowk by the Bombay Police.

Powerloom workers in Solapur, Ichalkaranji, Malgaon and Bhiwandi went on strike. Western Coalfield workers observed successful strike at Wardha valley. Strikes have been reported at Nasik, Aurangabad and Pune.

All major industrial units in Faridabad were closed down completely. The entire Faridabad Industrial Complex where large number of small scale units are operating acquired a deserted look. In Haryana Roadways 90 per cent of the buses went off the roads. All the Central Govt. employees observed 2 hour strike while in some offices dharna's were organised. Scores of processions were organised throughout the day condemning Govt. of India's economic policies.

50 percent of the workers of the Haryana State Electricity Board did not report for duty. The PWD and irrigation department employees of State Government struck work throughout the state. According to press report the Haryana Police Association in a statement supported the strike action by the workers. The sweepers all over the state abstained from duty. All the textile mills in Hissar, Bhiwani, Sirsa, Rohtak, Hansi strick work while in Sonapat Atlas Cycle Factory small attendance was reported. Several unorganised sector workers observed strike throughout the state. In Gurgaon several industrial units including Public sector IDPL were closed down.

The NOIDA, G. T. Karnal Road areas reported complete strike. All textile mills were closed except Swatantra Bharat Mills which reported partial attendance. All city restaurants and most of the five star hotels went on strike. India Coffee Board and Tea Board establishments including those in Parliament House were closed down. Indian Airlines counter in Parliament downed its shutters throughout the day.

In Mayapuri industrial area a procession of 1500 strikers was lathicharged. Brinda Karat and Tripurani Jha were arrested. In Baba Export at NOIDA the hirelings of the managements pelted stones at the demonstrating workers injuring 2 of them. Police however arrested 5 CITU activists.

About 40,000 Central Govt. employees walked out of the office at 12.00 noon and held a rally at the Boat Club. They submitted a memorandum to the Union Finance Minister condemning the economic policies of the Govt. of India.

In Delhi and around Public Sector Units such as BEL, CEL, ETTDC Steel Stockyards were closed down.

In Ghaziabad the strike was so complete that even the Civil court, Municipal Office, Ghaziabad Development Authority Office and several State Govt. departments were closed down. UPTRON units as well as small scale units in Meerut Road and Bulandshahar Road were closed down. In Fare Metal the workers saw the General Manager, security guards and 2 anti-social elements were brandishing lethal weapons. The workers immediately drew the attention of the police and forced them to arrest the culprits. A large number of processions were organised throughout the day in this industrial belt.

In Rajasthan total industrial strike was organised at Kota, Sriganganagar, Krishangarh, Sikar, Jhunjhunu, Bharatpur, Bikaner, Ajmer and Jaipur. In Khetri Copper Project majority of the workers downed their tools while a massive rally of workers paraded the town.

In Gujrat, several industrial centres in the state witnessed strike action. In Baroda over 20,000 workers participated in a massive rally. The workers in the organised sector also participated in the strike

action.

In Bangalore all the units in public sector observed complete strike and a massive rally of workers was held at Cubbon Park to condemn the policies of the Govt. of India. The Visveshwarayya Iron and Steel Works Bhadravati was completely closed down while gold mine workers at KGF observed complete strike. The unorganised workers throughout the state observed successful strike. According to an estimate over 4 lakh workers throughout Karnataka participated in the strike.

In the Rourkela Steel Plant the strike was near total. 50 CITU activists were arrested while picketing in the township. The industrial area in and around Rourkela as well as Iron Ore mine belt observed complete strike. The P&T workers also joined the strike successfully. Till 12 noon no train passed through Rourkela station. In Talcher all the public sector units and coal mines observed complete strike. Several small scale units throughout the state were closed down.

In Assam in Oil refineries, Plywood factories, Tea plantations and small scale industries reported strike action. State Govt. and Central Govt. employees participation in strike.

In Madhya Pradesh in Korba belt and Chirimiri areas strikes were organised. In Indore the textile units and small scale industrial undertaking witnessed strike action. Over 200 workers in BHEL Bhopal were arrested by M. P. police for picketing at the factory gate.

In U.P. Scooter India workers observed complete strike. Strikes have reported in industrial undertakings in Lucknow, Kanpur, Dehra Dun, Naini, Hardwar, Jhansi and Shakitnagar.

Reports of strike actions have been received from Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Goa.

Banks and Insurance Institutions are paralysed

All the press has unanimously acclaimed that strike in Banking and insurance companies was total and more than a million participated in the strike in this sector alone. No financial transactions were reported anywhere in the country in Banks. The strike in State Bank was also quite successful. The opposition by INTUC, BMS and NCBE could not create any impact in this sector. Their strike covered all the states and the employees showed a remarkable sense of unity all over India. The Official propoganda that banking industry would not be privatised failed to create any impact among the employees. The offices were completely deserted due to the participation of the officers in the strike.

In Steel industry complete strikes were organised in Durgapur, Alloy Steel Plant, IISCO, Rourkela, Visakhapatnam, Salem and Bhadravati while 5 percent observed strike in Bokaro. In Central Marketing organisation of SAIL there was complete strike in all the units. Due to thermally sensitive areas

in the Steel Plants the unions agreed to look after these installations. However, management counting executives and such workers and also their staying beyond duty hours gave misleading figures to the press.

In Coal industry, complete strikes were organised in Eastern Coal field, BCCL and Singareni collieries while majority workers in Western Coalfields, Central Coal fields, Northern Coal fields and South Eastern Coalfields went on strike.

The strike in Indian Airlines was indeed spectacular. The strike was complete in the undertakings. Some flights were operated by the management with extremely small number of passengers. For the first time the Air India employees observed partial strike despite threatening posture adopted by Shiv Sena in Bombay. Fifteen employees were arrested by police for picketing. In Calcutta even the control tower was not manned by the employees due to strike by the National Airport Authorities employees.

In the Fertilizer industry the success of the strike was unprecedented. Complete strike was observed at the Plants located at Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Gorakhpur, Bombay, Vijapur, Ramagundam, Dehradun etc. and also Offices located at different cities of the country.

For the first time the Central Government Employees came forward in a big way alongwith the General Workers in West Bengal, Bihar and Kerala. They observed strikes while in other states they walked out of the office one hour before the lunch break and held demonstration demanding several of Govt. of India's economic policies. In certain areas however they could only organise demonstration in protest against these policies. The participation of the Central Government employees in the nationwide struggle has effectively removed the dividing line between their movement and the general T. U. movement. In Delhi 50 leaders of the Central Govt. Employees courted arrests alongwith the other T. U. leadership on 18th November 1991.

The non-participation of the leadership of the AIRF in the strike was a serious short-coming in this movement. The AIRF gave a call for only demonstrations and Dharna on 29th November. If Railway employees would have joined in a big way it would have added a new dimension in the entire T.U. movement. Yet railway services were paralysed in several states and at local level strikes were organised by the railway employees. Chittaranjan Locomotive works was closed down on the day of strike.

The remarkable participation of the State Government employees in the strike in most of the state had given a new flip to the national protest. In West Bengal and Bihar the strike was cent percent. In Maharashtra 4.5 lakhs employees struck work while in U. P. and Kerala 90% of the employees were involved in the strike. In Rajasthan, Tamilnadu and Assam more than 80 per cent of the State Govt. employees joined the strike while their participation was 70 percent in Haryana. The All India State

Government Employees Federation had launched a sustained campaign all over the country against the economic policies of the Govt. of India.

The Union Coal Minister P. A. Sangma in the Press Conference after the successful strike tried his best to underestimate the impact of the strike. Door Darshan also tried to act as an agency of official propaganda against the strike. However, press report clearly indicated the all pervasive impact of the strike throughout the country.

When Shri Sangma noted that power station worked in West Bengal the press correspondent pointed out to him that power was exempted from the strike. When he observed the normal working of airlines press correspondent retorted that in Delhi only one Air India flight took off from Delhi airport. Press did not accept his statement that the strike did not take place in Calcutta Port and Raniganj collieries. Never before the official spokesman was put in such a embarrassing position.

According to Sponsoring Committee over 12 million workers participated in the strike. In a press statement issued by the sponsoring Committee the working class of India was warmly congratulated for magnificently participating in the strike.

The National strike has clearly recorded the voice of the Indian Working Class against the sell out of the national interests by the Narasimha Rao Government. The World Bank and the IMF will have to take notice of the fact that the working class of India will not accept the humiliating conditionalities and despite Govt. Of India offered concessions to multinationals the working class will not allow multinationals to exploit the people of India.

The success achieved by the strike has created a sense of Confidence in the Working Class all over the country that it can effectively resist the retrograde policies of the Government of India. With the first round of struggle is over the working class will have to prepare for another countrywide struggle against these policies.

The Sponsoring Committee will meet some time and chalk out further programme of action. A new powerful movement is in the offing and the working class will have to be prepared for a sustained movement till the policy is reversed.

The most important achievement of this heroic strike struggle has been the coming together of as many as 40 All India Industrial Federations Employees Union, Confederations of Govt. Employees and Officers alongwith the national Trade Union Centres in a broad based Sponsoring committee to organise and lead the strike. It's most important haulmark is the all in Trade Union unity built during the preparation of strike.

This unity has to be consolidated further drawing other sections of democratic masses including the peasantry in the struggle against New Economic and industrial policies and sell out of the country. It is the only guarantee for advancement of working class for a better future for the country and its people.

CITU Congratulates Working Class for Magnificent Strike; Condemns Statement by Sangma and T.V. for Misleading Propaganda

The Secretariat of the CITU met on 30th November, 1991 under the Presidentship of E. Balanandan and heard the reports of the countrywide industrial strike of November 29 against the economic and industrial policies of the Narasimha Rao Government.

The Secretariat warmly congratulated the working class and the trade unions for their unique demonstration of unity against the IMF-World Bank dictated economic and industrial policies of the Narasimha Rao Government, which made the 29th November industrial strike a glorious success all over the country.

As per reports received from various states, while there was nearly complete Bandh in several states like West Bengal, Kerala, Bihar, etc., in all the major industries the strike was nearly total in both the public sector and the private sector. In an unprecedented manner the workers in several unorganised sectors of industries also joined the strike in a massive way.

The meeting especially congratulated the airlines employees, bank and insurance employees, the state government employees and the public sector officers for joining the strike in a massive way. The meeting

further congratulated the Central Government and Railway employees for demonstrating their massive support to the cause.

The Secretariat warmly congratulated the CITU unions and federations and activists of other unions for their untiring and assiduous work for trade union unity to make the strike a success.

The Secretariat strongly condemned the misleading and mischievous statements made by the Union Minister incharge of Labour, P. A. Sangma against the strike. The meeting further condemned the Government for gross misuse of the electronic media, the T. V. for anti-strike propaganda.

The Secretariat congratulated the Sponsoring Committee for its glorious role in conducting the united strike successfully. The meeting particularly noted with satisfaction that large number of INTUC and BMS unions also joined the strike in almost all the states and industries. The Secretariat appealed to the working class and all trade unions irrespective of affiliations to further steel the unity and intensify the struggle to compel the Narasimha Rao Government to withdraw the new economic and industrial policies dictated by the IMF-World Bank, mustering support of the people.

CITU Condemns World Bank Grant to Facilitate Exit Policy

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the grant of 500 million dollars by World Bank to help the Government of India to evolve the Exit policy. This fund is being given to the National Renewal Fund as a dole to the workers, who will be thrown out of job due to closures as consequent to the new economic and industrial policies.

It is astounding that the World Bank and IMF officials have now started holding press conferences at Washington to dictate the economic steps to the Government of India. Having dictated the Finance Minister to issue statements from Bangkok announcing closure of loss making public sector units, the World Bank/IMF have now themselves taken over the command to make announcements from Washington. Mr. Karaosmanoglu, the Vice President of the World Bank even went to the extent of announcing that the World Bank wanted the private enterprises must have a level playing field in the financial sector of the Indian economy, i.e. privatisation of the bank and acceptance of the Nara-

simhan Committee's recommendations.

It was under such dictates for implementation of the economic and industrial policies, that the Finance Minister had made those announcements from Bangkok and then the Government introduced the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provision) Amendment Bill, which in fact is intended to refer the loss making public sector units to the BIFR for liquidation.

Under such circumstances, the assurances being made by both the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister and those made by the Energy Minister, Mr. P. A. Sangma to the Trade Union leaders on 17th November tantamount to playing fraud with labour and deserves severe condemnation.

The CITU therefore appeals to all trade unions including the INTUC and BMS to join the mainstream of the Working Class struggle and support and join the countrywide industrial strike on 29th November. It appeals to all other mass organisations and patriotic sections of the people to support the strike to save the economic sovereignty of the country.

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is important to stress as a matter of policy for us.

36. Community Services

There are several bastis around public sector townships in which thousands of workers are living and the conditions are extremely bad. It is necessary that the trade union movement should include the charter of demands the problems of these bastis.

37. Reservation of Jobs to SC/STs

We should demand that all the quota of SC and ST should be filled up by the public sector managements.

38. Other Issues

There are other issues which are not stated here. Every public sector undertaking has special problems. The unions should be asked to formulate them and include in their charter of demands. It is not possible to mechanically work out standard approach on an all India basis.

39. Appeal to Other Trade Unions

The workshop decided to appeal to the trade

unions who could not participate in this workshop to support the conclusions of this workshop so that a country-wide unity is built up.

It is only by a powerful nationwide unity of the entire working class in public sector which can result in achieving this charter of demands.

40. Mechanism to Co-ordinate the Wage Negotiations

The workshop recommends that there should be some machinery to ensure information-sharing during the forthcoming wage negotiations. This would help unions immensely in dealing with the issues arising out of charter of demands.

41. Thanks giving to Joint Action Front (J.A.F.)

The workshop thanked the Joint Action Front, Bangalore for hosting the workshop and making excellent arrangements to make the programme a grand success. The workshop congratulated the public sector workers in Bangalore who immensely contributed in making the workshop a grand success.

Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers

(Base 1982 = 100)

Centre	Aug 1991	Sept 1991	Linking factor for Old base	Belgaum	222	223	—	Varanasi	242	252	5.12
ALL-INDIA	217	221	4.93	Hubli-Dharwar	221	223	—	Asansol	211	216	4.77
Gudur	24	221	4.33	Mercara	199	202	—	Calcutta	224	226	4.74
Guntur	197	204	5.60	Alwaye	193	20	5.19	Darjeeling	200	203	4.55
Hyderabad	211	214	5.23	Mundakayam	200	206	4.67	Durgapur	227	227	—
Visakhapatnam	213	215	—	Quilon	206	210	—	Haldia	235	237	—
Warrangal	209	214	—	Trivandrum	218	221	—	Howrah	235	239	4.12
Doisom-Dooma-				Bhalghat	222	223	5.24	Jalpaiguri	205	212	4.16
Tinasukia	200	202	4.05	Bhilai	199	206	3.49	Raniganj	205	210	4.40
Gauhati	212	220	—	Bhopal	225	226	5.46	Chandigarh	228	229	—
Labac-Silchar	201	204	3.96	Indore	234	230	5.18	Delhi	228	229	4.97
Mariani-Jorhat	20	216	3.95	Jabalpur	235	242	6.41	Pondicherry	231	234	—
Rangapara-Tezpur	218	223	4.29	Bombay	234	238	5.12				
Jamshedpur	208	215	4.68	Nagpur	230	234	4.99				
Jharia	202	206	4.63	Nasik	234	235	—				
Kodarma	199	204	5.43	Pune	222	225	—				
Monghyr	217	229	5.29	Sholapur	228	234	5.03				
Noamundi	209	27	4.58	Barbil	214	219	5.00				
Ranchi-Hatia	221	226	—	Rourkela	199	201	3.59				
Ahmedabad	225	226	4.78	Amritsar	20	213	5.19				
Baroda	251	228	—	Ludhiana	25	216	—				
Bhavnagar	227	229	4.99	Ajmer	224	225	5.01				
Rajkot	222	220	—	Jaipur	220	222	5.17				
Surat	236	237	—	Coimbatore	197	201	5.35				
Faridabad	210	210	—	Coonoor	28	29	4.80				
Yamunanagar	211	213	5.53	Madras	207	211	5.05				
Srinagar	205	208	5.47	Madurai	213	212	5.27				
Bangalore	207	209	5.66	Salem	196	205	—				
				Tiruchirapally	214	221	—				
				Agra	221	223	—				
				Ghaziabad	216	229	—				
				Kanpur	229	236	4.69				
				Saharanpur	217	220	5.06				

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

Additional Series of Labour Bureau

Kothagudem	231	230	3.25
Himachal Pradesh	110	26	3.75
Bhilwara	226	223	3.20
Chindwara	227	227	2.59
Tripura	217	222	4.37
Goa	224	228	3.40

Other Series of Labour Bureau

Centre	Base 1991	Mar. 1991	Apr. 1991
Ammathi	1960	873	895
Chickmagalur	1960	887	894
Kolar Gold Field	1960	910	914
Gwalior	1960	1022	1025
Sambalpur	—	—	—
Berhampur	—	—	—
Cuttack	—	—	—

CITU Condemns Firing on Textile Workers at Abohar

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the police firing on the workers of Sri Bhiwani Cotton Mills at Abohar, Punjab on October 25 which killed 8 workers including one child and injured many others.

The unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC, INTUC and others had started a peaceful dharna in front of the mill from October 21, when the management refused to negotiate on their demand for 20 percent bonus.

On 25th October afternoon a big posse of armed police and para military forces came to the spot and exhibiting blatant support to the management, called upon the workers to lift the dharna and agree to the terms of the management. When they were requested not to intervene in the dispute between the management and the unions, they opened fire at random. Simultaneously, the security guards and hired goondas also opened fire from inside the mill.

Six workers, one child of eleven years and one shop keeper were killed on the spot. Twenty one workers had to be hospitalised with serious injuries. Even the Deputy Commissioner of Police refused to hand over the dead bodies to the families.

The situation became extremely tense in the area. All trade unions, other mass organisations and political parties observed Abohar bandh on October 26.

The CITU demands immediate judicial enquiry into the firing, suspension of the guilty officials including the SDM and DSP of Abohar and arrest of the security officers. It further demands immediate payment of Rupees one lakh as compensation to the next of the kin of the dead and Rs. 20,000 to the injured workers, and employment to the dependants of the killed workers. It demands immediate settlement of the workers' demand for 20 percent bonus.

CITU Condemns Police Firing on Workers at Sangrur

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

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the police firing on the contract workers of Food Corporation of India on November 18, which injured more than 40 workers seriously.

The contract workers were on the path of struggle since long demanding regularisation and better service conditions. To dupe the workers, the Food Corporation management changed the contractor

and refused to negotiate with the unions. Instead, they called the police to contain the agitation of the workers. The police opened fire on the workers without any notice. Over and above, they combed the residential quarters of the workers and arrested a number of CITU leaders and activists.

It is to be noted that this is the second time within a month the police opened fire on the workers in Punjab. Earlier they fired on workers at Abohar and killed eight of them.

The CITU condemns such highhandedness by the police on the workers who are simultaneously fighting the terrorist activities of the Khalistanis in Punjab. The CITU demands immediate judicial enquiry into the firing and punishment to the guilty officers. It further demands immediate release of all the arrested workers and negotiated settlement of the demands.

Massive Rally at Sangrur:

A massive rally was organised by the CITU at Sangrur on November 28 to protest against the firing, which subsequently killed one worker, Com. Mahinder Singh. The police had further arrested about 400 workers. The CITU office at Sangrur was also broken open by the police and money and materials were stolen. About 5000 workers attended the rally, which was addressed by Masudal Hussain and Ashim Bala, MPs and P.K. Ganguly, secretary.

CITU Protests against Government Circular Obstructing Wage Negotiations in Public Sector

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU has issued the following statement to the Press.

The CITU records its strong protest at the circular issued by the Department of Public Enterprises on October 17, 1991 directing the Public Sector managements not to concede any demand of the workers till the Government finalises the guidelines for wage negotiations.

When wage agreements in several undertakings have already expired or are due to expire by the end of December 1991 this guidelines virtually put a moratorium on wage negotiations in Public Sector.

Charters of Demands have been submitted by the several unions in major Industries and this directive is bound to evoke strong protests from the workers in Public Sector all over the country.

The CITU demands withdrawal of the DPE Circular, so that wage negotiations can commence in all the undertakings without any further delay.

The CITU appeals to all the workers and trade unions in public sector to protest against this circular and demand its withdrawal forthwith. The Circular once again justifies the decision of the Public Sector Unions to go on strike on 29th November 1991.

Comrade Abdulla Rasul

The Secretariat of CITU expresses its profound grief at the passing away of Comrade Abdulla Rasul, an outstanding leader of Communist and Kisan movement in India. He died on November 21 at the age of 88.

Born in 1903, Com. Abdulla Rasul plunged in the freedom struggle against British imperialism at the age 18. He then entered the Communist movement and began the publication of English weekly "Comrade" during later part of 1903s. He joined Communist Party in the year 1938 and was elevated to the State Committee of the Party in the year 1939. He was jailed several times due to his revolutionary activities.

Com. Abdulla Rasul was the pioneer of the peasant movement and a firm architect of working class peasant unity, unflinchingly adhering to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Starting the days from his association with the Bengal Provincial Committee of Congress and Khilafat movement during 1920, he untiringly worked for the emancipation of the toiling masses till he breathed his last.

He was the Vice President of AIKS till the last day. His book, History of the All India Kisan Sabha is a valuable document about the development of organised Kisan movement in the country.

Till his retirement from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) due to old age and ill health, he was continuing as the Convenor of the Central Control Commission of the Party and also as the Secretariat member of its West Bengal State Committee.

The CITU dips its red banner paying homage to Com. Abdulla Rasul and sends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family.

Com: Swaran Singh Cheema

The Secretariat of CITU condemns the dastardly killing of Com. Swaran Singh Cheema, General Secretary of Punjab Kisan Sabha and five others by Khalistani extremists. Com. Cheema was martyred when his car was detonated by a bomb on 4th November 1991 while he was on the way to Jalandhur for attending a joint meeting of two Kisan Sabhas. He was the member of Punjab State Committee of CPI (M).

The Central Government cannot be absolved of the responsibilities for the worst deterioration of the situation in the Punjab during the last few months in which anti-national elements made CPI (M) and CITU as the main target for liquidation. The CITU urges upon

the Central Government to bring an end to extremist activities through faithful implementation of Rajiv-Longowal accord and other political process to isolate the extremists.

The CITU dips the red flag in memory of Com. Cheema and five others who sacrificed their lives along with him.

Com. A. B. Sawant

The Secretariat of CITU condoles the demise of Comrade A. B. Sawant, Vice President of CITU Maharashtra State Committee. He passed away in Bombay on 17th November after prolonged illness. He was 76.

Born in a poor family, Dr. Sawant was drawn to the working class movement during late 1930s as the leader of the Textile Workers in Girmi Kamger Union. He then plunged into the freedom struggle. He joined the Communist Party in the year 1940. He played an important role in Sanyukta Maharashtra movement and also Goa liberation struggle. He served the CPI (M) Bombay Committee for more than 18 years from 1972 and was the member of State Committee of the Party till the time of his death.

He proved himself as a staunch fighter against opportunist deviations in the working class movement.

The CITU sends heartfelt condolences to Com. Prabha Savant, his wife and Dr. Neela Ranadive, his daughter.

Com. O. J. Joseph

The Secretariat of CITU expresses its profound grief at the demise of Com. O. J. Joseph, affectionately known as O J, an outstanding leader of the working class movement. He died on November 19 of lung ailment at the age 77.

Born in a poor family in 1914, beginning a life of a pedler gatherer after discontinuing school studies owing to extreme pecuniary difficulties, Com. Joseph was attracted to the Left movement and came in contact with Com. P. Krishna Pillai and Com. E. M. S. during later part of 1930s. Gradually he was drawn into Trade Union and Communist Movement.

By the year 1945, he became a Member of the State Committee of the undivided Communist Party. After the split, he joined the CPI (M) and was elevated to the Secretariat in the year 1968. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in the year 1980.

As one of the great organisers of CITU in Kerala, Com. Joseph played a pioneering role in Kerala State Road Transport, Coir and Plantation industries. He was the member of CITU working Committee. The CITU dips its red flag in memory of Comrade O.J. Joseph.

The 29th November Strike

E. Balanandan

The victorious strike action of the working class on the 29th November 1991 has to be taken as the beginning of a great battle mobilising wider sections of our people. The preparations made by the Sponsoring Committee for the strike not only brought the working class together on the issues which are at stake but also helped in a big way to cement the unity of the working class engaged in different industrial and service sectors. The blue and white collared workers including the State and Central Government employees together with the officers of industrial undertakings and financial institutions who are highly qualified technicians, engineers and quasi-managerial personnel have joined in this gigantic action. The estimated participation is more than 12 million. This is a unique phenomena in the recent history of the Indian working class movement. The Government was working overtime to belittle the impact of the strike using the subservient electronic media. The Labour Minister in-charge was labouring too much to hide the truth by making false statements.

The Times of India dated November 30 editorially commented that : The response to the strike call has been substantial, particularly in east and south India. Given the fragmented nature of the trade union movement, and indeed of the working class itself, it is not surprising that the strike was not uniform over the whole country and across different industries. Nevertheless, the fact that significant sectors of the economy like the financial services, airlines, railways and much of heavy industry were seriously affected points to the discontent among a broad spectrum of workers.....the knee-jerk propaganda through the official media against the proposed strike may in fact have produced just the opposite effect. As a result, those sections of the working class which are organised in trade unions have responded in the manner best known to them, by striking in protest."

Though the leaders of the INTUC and the BMS disassociated themselves from the strike, their followers joined the strike in a big way in many industries and states. In West Bengal, the INTUC officially participated in the strike. The President of the Karnataka unit of the INTUC openly declared support to the strike. The workers belonging to the INTUC and the BMS joined the strike in public sector industries in Bangalore and Hyderabad in a massive way.

Role of PSUs

The public sector industries accelerated the growth of basic and infrastructural industries in the

country and strengthened our research and development base. Its contribution to the development of petroleum, coal, energy, electricity, heavy engineering and other crucial sectors of the national economy gave the country a self-reliant industrial base. In 1951 we had only five public sector industries with a capital of Rs 29 crores. By the end of 1989 the number of units rose to 244 with a capital of Rs 99350 crores. Its total production for the year 1989 in aggregate is to the tune of Rs 99497 crores i.e. of 75 per cent of the value earned by the manufacturing sector. About 52.8 per cent of our work forces in the organised sector is now employed in the public sector. According to the available statistics 85 per cent of the capital invested in the central public sector establishments was giving a fairly reasonable rate of return. Only 15 per cent of the capital invested in 98 public sector establishments employing about 30 per cent of the total work force have incurred financial losses of Rs. 1959 crores during 1989-90. 131 profit-making units made a net profit of Rs. 5741 crores. Thus, the net profit from all the public sector establishments was Rs 3782 crores in 1989-90. The value added by the Central public sector establishments to the national economy is to the tune of 29000 crores, in other words Rs. 1.26 lakhs per employee per annum. The internal resources generated by the public sector undertaking in 1989-90 was Rs 10772 crores after paying an interest of Rs 5341 crores. Though the public sector is maligned by the lovers of IMF-World Bank, the contribution of the public sector to the national economy is sizeable.

If today's bureaucratic functioning, the government's avoidable interference in day-to-day affairs, ever-increasing corruption, etc. are checked, these industries can make surpluses equal to or more than any of the similar private enterprises.

Out of 98 enterprises incurring losses, 46 were taken over as sick enterprises from the private sector. The required steps to make these industries viable has not been taken by the Government. If proper steps are taken by interlinking the units of the similar nature, and utilising the necessary managerial skill now available, ensuring modernisation wherever necessary, using the surplus can make these industries also viable. Why can't the Government create such a situation ?

The Financial institutions in the public sector which instilled confidence among our people in turn, resulted in its enormous growth. Now under World Bank-IMF pressure the Government has agreed to change the whole gamut of our policies and decided

to hand over these sectors to private capital both Indian and foreign. The stepped up anti-public sector campaign has to be viewed in this light.

Mr. Nitya Chakraborty, an economic journalist, stated in *The Hindustan Times*, December 1, that: "Exercises have already started for the preparation of 1992-93 budget scheduled to be presented on the last day of February next and the IMF officials are now fully involved in the budget making. The Budget will have to reflect 100 per cent policy prescriptions of the IMF and the World Bank..... In fact three issues have by now become most sensitive to the international agencies, as also the developed countries, especially USA, Japan and Germany. These are cut in defence expenditure, exit policy and the dilution of patents policy on the Mexican lines."

India is a free country, yet our budget exercises are not done at our Central Secretariat, but it is being prepared elsewhere in the IMF-World Bank office, which has recently started functioning in New Delhi. The Finance Minister's job is made easy. He has only to read the papers which will be given to him by IMF. Mr. Narasimha Rao's globalisation theory is nothing but compromising our hard won freedom accepting the overlordship of imperialist agencies !

In this connection it is relevant to note that India has applied for Extended Structural Facility Loan from IMF. This carries such humiliating conditions that those who take this loan are known in the IMF circles as part of the 'beggars' club'. Mr. Manmohan Singh has applied for India joining the 'beggars' club'. Beggars cannot be choosers, only they can submit to the will of the donors.

In the name of globalisation of our economy the multinational companies and financial institution can freely operate in this country. The delicensing and dismantling the MRTP regimes, the threat to close down the sick industries, the new exit policy and allowing the private sector, foreign and Indian to take over our public sector units, etc. under the guidelines of IMF will seriously affect the self-reliant development which we have attained so far, and end up in the complete domination of our economic and industrial sphere by foreign transnational corporations. Though the Central Government is talking too much about global integration and liberalisation—the United States is persistently insisting on our acceptance of Patent Laws, with the threat of imposing Special 301-US trade restriction laws against us. Mr. Chidambaram is working hard to accommodate US conditions which will immediately kill our pharmaceutical industry.

Those big capitalists who are supporting the new World Bank-IMF dictated policies will soon realise that they are no match to the giant transnationals with huge capital and technological power at their disposal. Messers Narasimha Rao, Manmohan Singh, Chidambaram and Company take us to the

"beggars' club" for getting a loan from IMF. It is nothing but a compromise of our economic and political independence.

The so-called restructuring sought to be imposed will render huge number of employees of the public sector industries and financial institutions surplus. In the railways, it is said to be in the order of 40 per cent; in the P&T and other departmental undertakings it is equal or more. The computerisation and other programmes will kill several lakhs of jobs of the Central and State Government employees. Needless to say that the private sector will not be spared.

In order to facilitate this offensive, changes in the existing Labour laws are also being made.

Our agricultural sector too is not going to be spared. Stoppage of all types of subsidies—fertilizer, electricity, water, etc—are in the immediate agenda. Besides India will become a dumping ground for the surplus agricultural products of the developed nations. The adverse impact of these policies will affect our agricultural production and in turn the rural poverty will enormously increase.

Our planned development strategy is being given up and the talk of 8th Plan has become a meaningless exercise.

Never we were faced with such a perilous situation after attaining freedom. The working class of the country is destined to meet this challenge.

The Government of India were consulting different sections of industry and trade about the new policy packages. But they did not care to consult the Labour. The INTUC which owes allegiance to the ruling Congress (I) Party, or the BMS which is being led by the BJP leaders, who are the staunchest supporters of this IMF dictated policy, were also not consulted. Therefore, the utter contempt shown to the working class cannot be forgiven. The leadership of INTUC, BMS and some other trade unions could keep away a section the work force from the 29th November strike. However they will not be able to resist further the workers from joining the mainstream and join in the fight in order to protect their livelihood and the nation's freedom and honour.

Ten crores of urban and rural population are already unemployed today in our country and millions of other who will be thrown out of employment because of the implementation of this imperialist inspired policies.

Therefore the working class should close their ranks and strengthen their unity to fight back this offensive. The experience of November 29, shows that nobody can resist the process of emerging unity of the working class. This fight is above all to strengthen our national honour and freedom. We
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A Landmark in Working Class Struggle

P. K. Ganguly

The 29th November countrywide industrial strike was a landmark in the united trade union movement in the country on several counts. It acquired a new height in the development of trade union unity and united struggle of the working class with a positive direction to its movement.

It is to be recalled that since its formation in 1970, the CITU has been ceaselessly striving for trade union unity to fight the anti-labour and anti-people policies of the Congress Governments, which have been ruling the country almost continuously with little breaks since independence, and growingly surrendering to the imperialist pressure. The CITU was branded as the splitters of the trade union movement. But the CITU remained undaunted with its objective and the first successful united stage was set with the formation of the United Council of Trade Unions in 1974. But alongwith the INTUC, several other major trade unions did not join this platform to fight the Government's policies. However, the Emergency exposed the anti-labour and authoritarian character of the Congress (I) to the working class. The first major united trade union stage was set with the formation of the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions (NCC) in 1981 to fight the anti-labour policies of the Congress Government. All the major Central Trade Unions except the INTUC joined the NCC alongwith about 40 national federations. The first major countrywide industrial strike was launched by NCC on 19th January, 1982 against the anti-labour policies of the Congress (I) Government, demanding repeal of ESMA, MISA, etc. The direction of the trade union movement was set. But the demands were mainly for the labour.

The NCC waged a number of struggles and played a significant role, uniting the trade unions and millions of workers in various industries. The next countrywide strike was called by the NCC on 26 February, 1986 responding to the call of the Left and several opposition parties for Bharat Bandh to protest against the steep hike in the prices of petrol, diesel and several essential food commodities imposed by the Rajiv Government. This was a breakthrough in the demands of the trade unions to support the cause of the common people, cooperating with the political parties.

During this period with the policy of liberalisation and denigration of the public sector, being growingly embarked upon by the Congress Govern-

ment under pressure from the IMF and World Bank, the CITU played a major role in bringing together the constituents of NCC and the non-NCC trade unions to mobilise the public sector workers and ultimately from the Committee of public sector trade unions (CPSTU). The CPSTU organised the first united strike of the public sector workers on January 21, 1987 against the move for privatisation and against the retrograde BPE guidelines for wage settlements. The strike was supported by broad sections of the public sector officers also.

After this came the two great Bharat Bandhs on March 15, 1988 and August 30, 1989 at the call of the left and opposition political parties demanding ouster of the Rajiv Government. The trade unions responded by calling countrywide industrial strike. The public sector workers went on three days' strike combining their demands for scrapping of the BPE and early wage settlements alongwith that of the ouster of Rajiv Government. While the INTUC opposed all these strikes and the Bharat Bandhs, the BMS dissociated from the Bharat Bandh strikes.

The 29th November, 1991 strike came in this background of growing united struggle by the trade unions. But the qualitative difference was that, while in all the other strikes the working class were drawn into action mainly on their own economic and immediate demands and against the labour policies of the Govt., albeit linking those against the economic policies of the Government, on 29th November they decisively crossed the barriers of the immediate and economic demands and declared a crusade against the entire economic and industrial policies of the Narasimha Rao Government.

The glorious success of the strike, the most wide spread so far, was because of the realisation of the working class and middle class employees of all sections, of the danger of surrendering to the IMF—the financial organisation of the international monopolists led by the USA. It was because of their realisation of the dangers of undermining a self-reliant national economy and of gradual liquidation of the public sector by diabolical international capitalist racketeering. It was because of their realisation of the danger of the working under the multinationals and private monopolists, who are avowedly against any type of trade union activities and to whom sickness has been a profiteering business, as can be seen from the growing private sick industries in the coun-

try. And, it was because of their realisation of the danger of subversion of the economic sovereignty of the country and its being drawn into debt trap and the imperialist net of neo-colonial exploitation. The working class did realise that the multinationals—the tentacles of imperialism do not rest after entering the economic life of the country only, they would try to enter its political life too, endangering its freedom and independence. The 29th November strike thus gave a political direction to the struggle of the working class to directly intervene in the functions of the pro-monopolist and pro-multinational Government of Congress (I) and also to contain the imperialist thrust in the country.

It is to be noted that as demanded by the IMF, the Narasimha Rao Government have opened almost the entire field of core industries reserved for the public sector, other industries and the unorganised sectors of industries too, which all are vital for the national economy, to the multinationals to cause so-called 'industrial revolution' in India. It was an irony of fact to see for the Narasimha Rao Government and its mentor, the IMF, that in all these industries the workers revolted on 29th November. No other strike engulfed in such widespread manner so many vital industries like Steel, Coal, Fertilisers, Oil, Port & Dock, Seamen, Engineering, Jute, Textiles, Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, Airlines, Transport, Power, Insurance, Banking unorganised sectors and what not. No other strike was so widespread covering all the states upto the remote corners of the country. All sections of workers and employees can boast of having done something. Even the Central Government and Railway employees have removed their stigma and struck work at several parts of the country and came out on the streets, with big demonstrations, including at the Capital of the country. Workers in the proverbially weak states—the Hindi belt, have similarly removed their stigma and downed their tools.

Despite the fact that the INTUC and BMS were not parties in the strike "officially", their unions and workers joined the strike almost in all states and industries. The cause for the strike brought the largest number of trade unions and workers under its fold irrespective of political leanings, as compared to other strikes.

Another significant feature was that while in other strikes, the left and opposition political parties were the main organisers and called for bandhs, and the trade unions responded by calling industrial

strike, this time the trade unions alone and of their own took the initiative and called for the strike, independent of the political parties. The left parties and NF constituents supported the strike. It was an exemplary and unprecedented instance that through this massive strike action the trade unions did create a big impact in the entire country and on national politics. They conveyed the warning to imperialism that the Indian Government may make a sell out of its sovereignty to the IMF but the Indian working class refused to be sold out. They struck the warning bell to the minority Narasimha Rao Government that the working class would not allow it to be the sole arbiter of the country's sovereignty. They conveyed the message to the international working class that the Indian working class refused to drift with the changes in the international situation and allow the US imperialists to dominate over the global economy, making the third world and India as its special target for neo-colonial exploitation.

The gigantic action drew support from all other mass organisations of agricultural workers, peasants, students, youth, women, parliamentarians and the patriotic section of the people in various parts of the country and stupefied the government. It desperately misused the electronic media and spread canards about the strike through the main spokesman, P.A. Sangma. But the Government further lost its credibility in the process. Even the bourgeois press, which had hitherto misrepresented the trade union actions, had to come out with flashing news about the strike. Editorials pointed accusing fingers to the government about the far reaching consequence of the IMF designed policies. The trade unions thus whipped up the consciousness of the common people to the danger of the policies, which the government had thought and planned to carry forward smoothly.

The strike was further significant from the fact that when the country is plagued by the communal, casteist and secessionist forces and the communal virus had entered the industrial cities also, consequent to the imperialist designs to destabilise the country and divert attention of the workers and people from the spiralling prices, galloping unemployment and growing closures, it united millions of workers both in the organised and unorganised sectors and focused their attention to the dangerous path embarked upon by the government under the guidance of the same imperialist forces which are
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74th Anniversary of October Revolution—New Perspective of Trade Union Movement

Jibon Roy

74th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution is observed under a completely different situation. Never before in the past since the Red Army accomplished its victory over the Nazi Germany, the October Revolution has been observed under such a strained international situation pregnant with volatile developments. In no celebration year the situation was so surcharged with emotion as this year under the shadow of down fall of the Communist Governments in East Europe and Soviet Union. The decision of Soviet Government to stop the celebration of the day, which has never been discontinued since the day working class captured power in Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Ilych Lenin, manifests the very depth the counter revolution has dug through and also the cause which torments millions of workers all over the world. The observance of October Revolution in Soviet Union with military parade as its integral part, had been the source of inspiration and courage to the international working class and people in their fight against imperialism throughout the period since the first successful proletarian revolution in the year 1917.

Faith Reclined

This year's observance of the anniversary, though not marked by usual splendour, has re-assured its solemnity to the cause. It has restored the faith that the international working class will not allow itself to be fettered by the ideological poison because of the setback in Europe and would carry forward the torch of Great October Revolution undaunted by all out political attack. Amidst unprecedented witch-hunting against working class detachments and unscrupulously cultivated confusions and distortions, the observance of 74th Anniversary of October Revolution in Soviet Union and in erstwhile East European Socialist countries was not less encouraging. Observance in India was also comparatively extensive and abounded with determined revolutionary zeal.

The causes for the set back of socialism in Soviet Union and East Europe are already under detailed investigation. A deep introspection on the part of the communist parties was an obvious necessity which it seems have already been undertaken worldwide.

History Moves Forward

It is obvious that the set back of socialism in Soviet Union will give rise to the school of ideologues which hears swan song for socialism at every twist and turn of history. This school, because of its compatibility with bourgeois property relations,

could never reconcile with the truth that the class antagonism one day or other brings the end of capitalism and pave the way for social transformation and a classless society.

The gradual separation of working class ideology from bourgeois ideological stream which started long before Karl Marx discovered the scientific socialism and the separation of working class struggle as an independent political force which began from the Chartist movement in England during the early forties of 19th century and all subsequent massive working class upsurges beginning from the French Revolution of 1848 were all nothing more than mirage to this school of ideologues. The emergence of Paris Commune in 1871 was a misnomer while the 1917 Great October Revolution and other successful working class revolutions in the later period are just the deformations of history according to them. Suppression of revolutionary struggles are the only truth in it. In every suppression—suppression of Chartist movement, French Revolution of 1848, suppression of commune, Russian revolution of 1905—they see the end of working class as the vanguard of revolution. This school of thought sounded effusiveness at the early period of Nazi emergence as being an anti-dote to Soviet Union, which had just emerged crashing counter revolution from within, will now feel warm at the present unipolar world balance of power—it is natural. It has pronounced the death of scientific socialism on uncountable number of times, let it do once again. History moves forward. But the current impasse has put forward the gigantic task before the working class to prove once again the relativity of the working class as the vanguard of the present day history and the validity of socialism till the human society reaches the outpost where all classes cease to exist altogether.

Socialism is a process 'to change society, to establish socialism'. It is necessary to 'overthrow the state, the political rule of capitalist class'. The greatest of all the works of Karl Marx is the discovery of socialism and directing it towards a fusion with working class movement. This fusion continue to act as the locomotive of social transformation, till the contradiction between the 'social character of production and private capitalist appropriator' is resolved. History testifies that it is socialism which has widened the horizon of humanity from the limitation of capitalist value system based on wage slavery. The flourishing of franchise right to the length of universality and the right to exercise that franchise (which is still absent in many parts of India), grounding of casteism or apartheid, equality of sex in real sense—all these are the by-products

of its crusade against capitalism. Even the idea of so called welfare state is the product of this contradiction. The people who are on their top to pass judgement on socialism are to first prove their jurisprudence answering whether the set back of socialism in Soviet Union has brought the contradictions in the human society to an end and, if not how they invalidate the great conclusion of Karl Marx when he said—Centralisation of means of production and socialisation of labour at last reaches a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. Thus integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds, the expropriators are expropriated (Capital, Vol. I).

No economist can argue that capitalism with all its achievements in the recent past has opened the 'prospects of peaceful progress to end all poverty, rendering class struggle superfluous'. Com. BTR in an article in the Marxist (July Sept. 1983) said—'Notwithstanding the changes that capitalism has seen during the last hundred years, notwithstanding the industrial and technical revolution which was hailed as the great achievement of capitalism overcoming its limitations, capitalist society could not escape Marx's judgement about growing concentration of production, the reserve army of unemployed, polarisation of social life—with poverty at one end and riches at the other end and increased class battles. No economist can argue that crises have been eliminated or their impact has been softened, reserve army of the unemployed has been reduced because of the new changes'.

The working class, as being the youngest social force in the history and still in the process of coming out from the ideological illusions of bourgeois property relation, is not expected to dominate over the course of the current development stage of society. It is not expected, therefore, its advanced detachments will reach full maturity the class to its confrontation against capitalism and imperialism. Com. Lenin once pointed out: "Even if we committed 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct action we performed, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and so it will be in the eyes of world history, because, for the first time, not the minority, not the rich alone, not the educated alone, but the real people, the vast majority of the working people, are themselves building a new life, are by their own experience solving the most difficult problems of socialist organisation' (Collected Works Vol. 28). The massive observance of 74th anniversary day worldwide, developing resistance in erstwhile East European Socialist countries against the drastic reduction of social security measures, also such resistance in Soviet Union and specially the growing struggles in capitalist countries and emergence of new tide of liberation struggle against apartheid and neo-colonialism—altogether gives confidence that the laws of social advancement must be very much at the wheel. All these developments reassure that despite current set back, socialism is very much in confrontation with imperialism and it represents all the oppressed and revolutionary sides

of the international contradictions against imperialism and all shades of reactionary forces.

Onerous Task in Developing Nations

The shift of world power balance consequent upon the setback in the Soviet Union towards imperialists has imposed a heavy task over the shoulder of working class in Third World countries. The retraction of Soviet Power, its economic, political and military support, form the Third World nations and its present role of appeasing the imperialists have virtually thrown many of these independent nations at the imperialists' paw. Most of these nations not unlikely of India were following the capitalist path of development and the line of compromising with the feudal interest. In the process they have destroyed all possibilities of domestic market expansion and got the nations succumbed to cruelty of consumerism. Despite having acute economic problems they maintained a degree of self-reliance and infrastructure at the Soviet assistance. National monopolists made most use of Soviet support to strike better deal with the first world on the question of technologies and other financial deals. The exit of Soviet power for the present has paralysed the independent role of monopolists in those countries in their relation with transnationals. Their immunity from imperialist blackmail—of dollar, technologies and nuclear threat have thus been impaired to severe extent because of Soviet developments.

In such a situation when the contradiction between the TNCs and the national monopolists starts compromising, all other social forces which had been so long maintaining affinities with the monopoly interests, but now adversely affected by the new build up would gradually shift them towards working class. Working class as being the most organised class in the economic production system will have no option other than to bear the new task. Otherwise it will have to stake the national independence of nations. Because of the desertion national monopolists to imperialists and indifference of the press controlled by them, other sections of democratic masses and the bourgeois political parties would vacillate to take up the cadgels against imperialism. As we see in India, the coming together of transnationals and the national monopolists have brought the ruling Cong. (I) and the BJP together in producing the new economic and industrial policies which sought the Parliament to surrender its sovereign authority over the industrial economy of the nation and hand over all the initiative to TNCs-national monopolists combine. Under this situation all the bourgeois democratic parties get completely paralysed till working class takes up position, as it has happened in this country. General opposition started building up only when all the trade unions and industrial federations decided jointly to call for a nation wide industrial strike on 29th November 1991.

Notwithstanding, the new world situation is precipitous of severe imperialist onslaught, also in-

fused of fire to invite people resistance. This will lead towards intensification of contradiction between the imperialism and the Third world nations into the focus of all contradictions. The people of the Third World nations would find no option without the socialism and the working class to survive the new attack. The contradiction between imperialism & socialism will get further fire in coming days. Since the working class represent socialism, and the labour is the only source of wealth accumulation, intensification of attack against working class will be general feature in the coming years. The working class will accept the challenge.

Unmask Imperialism

The new international economic order promoted by UNO during seventies through a number of declarations defining the code of economic co-operation between the developed and developing nations is substituted by a new one, engineered by USA after the Iraq war. Unlike the New International Economic Order which asked for ploughing back a share of the wealth outflow from developing countries as the basis of international co-operation, the New World Economic Order, sought 'competition' as the basis of such co-operation. In India the phenomenon making the slogan of 'competition' the vehicle of 'New Economic Policy' is not just concomitance, but the compulsion of 'New World Economic Order'.

The New World Economic Order is a design to dismantle the existing industrial structure of the Developing Nations and to rebuild it in a manner so that economies are integrated with the economies of the First World as the supplier of cheap raw material, labour and also the most fertile brains. It seeks to integrate the domestic markets of these nations with the distribution lines of three giant international combinations i.e. USA, European Community and Japan. This process of destruction of old structure and the rebuilding of the new is nomenclatured as 'restructure of economy'. Once this integration is materialised these nations would be compelled to depend, leaving their own domestic markets to the first world, over the world wide consumerism. This would bring the compulsion of restructuring the industrial bases again and again and depending permanently on imperialist dictates through World Bank.

The New World Economic Order has smuggled the World Bank into the centre of all 'international co-operation' between the Developing Nations and the Developed, while all the UN declarations under New International Economic Order had called for UN mediation in all cases. Indian experience shows how the World Bank traps the economies of the developing nations.

Notwithstanding the World Bank's high sounding promise while making the Central Govt accept all its conditionalities, the new economic and industrial policies has turned out to be a big hole of foreign exchange drainage. It got the industrial economy

of the country completely released from parliamentary control and thrown it completely to the dark forces of market mechanism, made the Govt agree to dismantle public sector and its role as moderator of industrial economy. World Bank did not stop here. It has compelled the Central Govt to release the leverage of all the economic ministries to such officials who were specially trained in World Bank in the past : in other words it has taken charge of all the economic ministries.

Against all these humiliating conditionalities real return is humbling. Financial Express of 1st Nov. '91 reports that the Central Govt till recently after the adoption of the economic policy has committed an outflow of 6.017 million dollars by way of technical know how fee against 50 proposals of foreign technology participation which together attracted equity of 1.368 million dollar. The said paper in another news item on the same day has claimed that the Govt of India has already made to commit in reducing defence expenditure. In every likelihood the news carries some truth. Any compromise on India's defence when its borders are almost exposed to the armed infiltrations from the otherside unremitantly would be suicidal for the unity of the nation and will pave the way for balkanisation of the country.

The Third World Nations are the main source of prosperity in the First World. The enormous and mostly uninterrupted flow of wealth from the developing nations carried through centuries since the period of imperial rules have built the foundation of modern industrialisation in those countries. Socialist Block and the socialism has been the only impediment against such outflow. Current setback of socialism in world power is thought to be the last chance to get all these nations permanently into the orbit around first world. Working class and the people should realise that any compromise to this game would throw the developing nations into the permanency of Third World status.

Would Indian Trade Unions Rise to the Occasion

It is well known that the Trade Union movement in India is mostly imprisoned by economism. It can not look forward beyond its economic interest within the factory. Its vision do not reach how the international developments mingle with the national questions cradling further crisis for the nation and the people. Had the trade union movement the capacity and wisdom to intervene effectively into national affairs—the common problems of toiling masses in general, the question relating to national unity and self-reliance, problem of casteism and communalism etc could be effectively addressed—probably the nation would have been saved from its dipping into current acute all pervasive crisis. Its incapacity to mobilise all sections of masses opposed to monopolies, feudal reactionaries and anti-imperialist opinion around working class, remains to be its basic shortcomings. The trade union movement have left political initiative to such people who do not have the courage or backbone to stand by

itself against current calamities forced over the nation.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses, which was probably natural due to enslavement of the country for decades and also partly due to number of splits from within at capitalist influence, Indian trade union movement has achieved almost unity in economic struggle. At the present realities arising out of the economic crisis which has got a sudden spurt at the current international development demands that the trade union movement 'must serve as a lever' in the struggle against neo-colonial expansionism. It is the biggest question posed before the Indian history whether the trade union movement would enable itself consciously to elevate the working class movement above the economic consciousness so that it can plunge into militant and revolutionary struggle and the foundation of broader anti-imperialist platform can be given a shape. Com. BTR teaches us 'militant and revolutionary experience is necessary for the working class to change itself and impart its changed consciousness' to the peasants and the people.

Once the working class builds up the resistance the wall of monopoly interest attempts to divide the national independence and the people will collapse. Notwithstanding, the world Bank conditionalities make national monopolists the main vehicle of transnational operation rising tide of mass ururge will crack the present monopoly unity and bring a section into the common mass resistance. The phenomenon of market encroachment by the TNCs which they dominated so long would be impossible for them to reconcile. Moreover, the expected quantum of liquidity, technology and knowhow are also not forthcoming. Moreover, the impending danger of balkanising the nation, which has become an important vehicle for imperialist operations in big third world nations will ultimately break the camp of monopolists and its comprador section would get completely isolated. But this contradiction gets sharpened only through picking up of peoples resistance and only the working class can ignite the same.

The CITU has to play the crucial role as the leading torch of the trade union movement at this critical junction. Experience on the preparation for 29th November strike shows that if the CITU with entirety of its force can take up the correct line and sincere enough to carry forward that line, it can rouse the movement and the class. With all the indications, the 29th November, if preparations moves in same direction, would turn into an important event in the annals Indian Trade Union movement.

It is the task of CITU with its organisation from top in the Head Quarter to shop level, to convince the movement and the working class that once the economic and industrial policy is allowed to compromise, not the very existence of the working class alone, but the national independence of the country would ultimately get compromised. Democracy will

be in jeopardy, the process of which would start from large scale dismissal of workers, scrapping the right to strike and encroachment on the right to organise. 'Competition and Market economy' the twin branches of imperialist philosophy would dip whichever human values remained and grate all the social welfare measures maintained so long for the poor. It has to convince that the introduction of economic and industrial policy statement and vigorous pursuit by the government to implement those policies has brought forth the severe limitation in the old fashion of trade union movement based primarily on economic interest. This type of movement cannot go forward without establishing a powerful bridge with the democratic aspiration of the people. At the same time CITU itself has to be convinced that its weakness in harmonising the trade union movement with general democratic movement is being systematically used to strip the trade union movement and the working class from its leading role in the society.

At this moment of time the situation probably calls for urgent and thorough scrutinisation of day to day activities of all the trade unions affiliated to CITU and they are required to address themselves whether they feel confident of their ideological and organisational capabilities to carry forward the current tasks they are confronting. In case of non-affirmation of such confidence one should take immediate rectification measures in both the spheres.

In the present struggle while developing an anti-imperialist platform in the backdrop of economic industrial policies, the trade union movement should put forward alternative programmes. This programmes should be on the following premises: (1) Expansion of domestic market through land reform, ploughing back of concentrated wealth and all other measures (2) industrial strategy based on basic economic need for the people with public sector in the command (3) decentralisation of economy under centralised planning system (4) workers participation at all levels of management (5) moratorium on repayment of loan (6) Expansion of south-south co-operation in all spheres of economic activities and resolution of all regional conflicts on the basis of panchsheel (7) UN declarations on New International Economic Order as the basis of North-South Economic co-operation.

If the working class could hoist the banner of this struggle high, it is certain that the present combination between imperialist and monopolist would go asunder and the struggle would proclaim the trade union movement as the natural leader of the entire people and the nation.

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Working Women's Convention of Thanjavur Division

The Third Convention of Working Women of LIC was held at the Rockfort Branch Unit premises of LIC of India on 10.11.91. The Convention had special significance as part of the campaign of 40th Anniversary of AIIEA. Considerable number of Women employees of LIC from all the four Districts under the jurisdiction of Thanjavur Division attended the convention. The convention was inaugurated by Com. Krishna Bai, Tamilnadu State Committee member of the Working Women's Co-ordination committee.

A presidium consisting of Com. M. Solachi, Com. J. Uma and Com. K. Kannammal conducted the proceedings.

Com. Krishna Bai in her inaugural address spoke of various struggles carried on by their working women in their movement. Her wide and rich experience in Trade Union movement reflected in her speech.

Most of the comrades who attended the convention, actively participated in the deliberations. Many spoke on the specific problems confronted by women employees in the work place such as lack of separate toilet, rest room, lunch room etc. and absence of creche facilities. A resolution was passed demanding these facilities. But discussions did not stop at this level. It covered a wider spectrum. The role of working women in the general uplift of women as a whole was also debated. A resolution exhorting working women to participate actively in the movement for the uplift and welfare of women in general was passed with great enthusiasm. Demanding separate transport facilities for women another resolution was passed.

Com. K. Lakshmanan, President, I.C.E.U., Thanjavur replied to the points raised in the deliberations.

Com. R. Govindarajan, Jt. Secretary, AIIEA greeted the Convention. Apart from the problems of working women in LIC and in general, elaborated about the prevailing conditions in our country, about the disastrous new economic policies of the Government and called upon the working women to raise their voice against oppression and cruelty. He appealed to the working women to work for the success of All India strike action on November 29th and make it a resounding success.

The convention constituted a Co-ordination Committee consisting of comrades Solachi, Kannammal, Maheswari, Padmini and Kalaiselvi.

Com. Solachi gave the vote of thanks and with that the convention came to a close.

Massive General Strike in South Africa

On 4th & 5th November, 1991, the call of general strike in South Africa given by Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and National African Confederation of Trade Unions received widest possible response from all sections of people all over the country putting the normal life of the entire South Africa almost to a grinding halt for two consecutive days. The strike call was given to voice the protest against VAT system pursued by the South African racist rulers and unilateral restructuring of the economy. The strikers, so to say the entire people of South Africa demanded immediate negotiation on macro economic future and policies to be pursued in South Africa. The strike demonstrated a total unity of the entire cross section of population from students, youths, teachers, small and medium business people, besides the 3.5 million strong working class, cutting across the colour barrier.

In the major industrial areas throughout the country, strike was near total embracing more than 90% of the entire work force. For the first time in the history of General Strike, in South Africa, strike was observed in Western Cape and large number of workers of mines, & farmers participated in the action.

Despite severe provocation by the State administration, security force, big business groups, the two day general strike in South Africa demonstrated magnificent expression of a dignified and most disciplined action by the entire working class of the country in spite of several arrests and police incited violence. Even in the Inkatha dominated areas strike was near total, giving expression to the determination and urge of the people for unity and defeat of the divisive design of the ruling polity.

This massive and successful strike action of the South African people under the leadership of the working class clearly proved the illegitimacy of the South African government to take any decision on behalf of the people of South Africa and make it imperative for the establishment of a negotiating forum on economic policies effecting the entire people and the country pending formation of a really representative government in the country.

The African National Congress, South African Communist Party and the COSATU hailed the South African people and the working class in particular for the magnificent success of the general strike and called upon to prepare for protracted and intensified struggle to bring the adamant government to terms.

'One Union in Railways'—a Compilation—Published by Guruswami—Alamelu Labour Research Centre, Madras

On Indian Railways in recent times the slogan of one Union in one industry was at the height of popularity around 1977 in which year a seminar was organised in Delhi, where George Fernandes, then a Cabinet Minister of Janata Government, delivered the validictory speech. The seminar created a lot of enthusiasm. Undoubtedly the seminar was the result of the urge of the railway workers for unity, the urge which was specially strengthened by the experience of the historic 1974 railway strike in which the railway workers could hold out for a record twenty days and which was obviously possible for the unity—almost an all-in unity (not joined by NFIR only)—that was forged on the platform of the famous NCCRS. This gave railway workers a fresh consciousness about the tremendous strength they potentially have and which can be realised through unity. They had the urge to realise it.

Unfortunately the matter was not pursued further by the leading organisation. And the urge for unity is no longer at that height, where it had been during the 1947 strike and some years following it. But the spirit of unity never abandons the working class mind and so discussion on the subject never loses its relevance and importance. The publication of the little 22-page booklet under review is therefore relevant and welcome.

There has almost always been some confusion on this slogan. The idea of one union in one industry has been so often confused with the issue of recognition of union on the basis of secret ballot of the workers. The discussion in the book is not free from this confusion. While considering the question of one union, it has to be clear that secret ballot is demanded for determining which union out of the several in the field is the 'most representative' in character, so that the most representative union may be granted recognition instead the most favoured union of the management. But this does not eliminate the other unions and therefore secret ballot system in itself cannot bring about one union in one industry. Because of the confusion in this regard the discussion in the booklet has got a formalistic and legalistic tilt and has missed the essence of the problem of real unity of workers finding expression in one organisation. Any serious discussion on the subject demands that history of development of trade union movement, and particularly of the development of multiplicity of the trade unions be studied scientifically to find out the root of the problem. Only then one can really think out ways and means to forge real unity by eliminating the root causes of the division. The first division in railway trade union movement with the emergence

of INTUC sponsored AIRWF was no doubt consciously and deliberately engineered by the Congress party for sectarian party interest. But the later fragmentation on emergence of categorywise organisation was for different reason. Has not the AIRF, the original and still the premier federation, some responsibility in the matter? Only an impartial and objective study will reveal the answer.

Finally, in the discussion on unity and on the slogan of 'one union in Railways' the most important development providing real clue to unity is surprisingly missing here viz the railwaymen's unity on the platform of NCCRS. The NCCRS and the struggle led by it shows how real unity develops. If serious efforts would have been made to carry forward the NCCRS, unity, who knows perhaps one union in railways (excluding of course NFIR initially) might have by now be a reality. Experience teaches us that the process of rebuilding unity in trade union movement once divided into several trade union organisations starts with joint platform of separate unions forged for struggle for common causes, with unity in action. The CITU, it may be mentioned in this connection, has given a call for a confederation comprising the central trade unions, federations etc as a step towards more unity.

However, the booklet provides some useful information. Besides, juxtaposition of different views on some issues will also be helpful to readers.

In spite of deficiencies which of course is not unexpected in such a work, wide circulation of the booklet might stimulate interest in the subject and that will surely be welcome.

B. T. Ranadive

on

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CITU Denounces U.S. Aggression in Iraq

(We are publishing hereunder a statement received from the President, General Federation of Trade Unions, Iraq on the continuing aggression by the USA against Iraq and the letter written by the CITU to the U.S. President—Ed.)

Statement

Issued by the General Federation of Trade Unions,
GFTU Iraq

Dear Friends,

The GFTUI presents to you its warmest greetings and would draw your particular attention to the U.S. provocative, aggressive and despicable criminal acts of blatant continuous violation of Iraq's airspace.

Whilst the grip of the iniquitous economic blockade imposed on Iraq further tighten to the extent of denying a whole nation the access to the simplest humanitarian daily life needs, US warplanes used to fly continually for observation and provocation purposes at very low altitudes which do not exceed sometimes 50 metres over Iraqi provinces Nineveh, Dohunk and Arbil with high speed and sometimes breaking the sound barrier to subject pregnant women to abortion and to create a state of panic and confusion among children, women and the elderly, leaving behind damaged houses and public buildings and wounded civilians because of splinters of broken window and car glasses and cracked buildings.

The U.S. irresponsible acts are against international norms and laws hence, you are called upon dear brothers, to vehemently denounce the American wanton acts against the innocent population of Iraq, which constitute a flagrant violation of the U.N. charter and a humiliating flout to human rights and man's security and dignity.

Looking forward to hearing your denunciation of such American horrendous practices and hoping to protest to the American administration, international organisations, U.N. and Security Council calling for an end to the U.S. atrocities.

With highest consideration.

Fadhil Mahmoud Gharib, President,
GFTU. IRAQ

Letter by CITU

Mr. George Bush
President
United States of America,
White House
Washington—USA

Sir,

The CITU strongly denounces the aggressive and inhuman behaviour of U.S. Administration which is non-chalantly continuing the economic blockade of

Iraq which is preventing the people of Iraq from getting daily necessities of life from outside.

The U.S. war planes are continuously hovering over Iraq territory in the name of observing the imposition of blockade which is causing serious problems for the entire population.

The repeated infringement of the sovereignty of Iraq by the U.S. Administration is a despicable act and its at the very concept of human rights. All these proves to the hilt how shallow is the concern of your Government for human rights all over the world.

We strongly demand that all acts of aggression against the people of Iraq should be withdrawn forthwith and the blockade arbitrarily imposed on the country and its people should be lifted so that necessary help to the people of Iraq can be made available from outside. The present action of your Government is totally against the U.N. charter itself and its withdrawal will alone uphold the dignity of this international organisation.

M.K. Pandhe
General Secretary

Sympathy over the Earth Quake hit people

The GFTU, Iraq in the following letter to the CITU also expressed sadness over the death of thousands of people in the recent earthquake in U.P. :

Dear Friends,

It is with immense sadness that our General Federation of Trade Unions in Iraq learned that thousands of Indian people have met martyrdom as result of the earthquake in the Himalyan region.

The GFTU, Iraq conveys its sincere condolences to you and to the bereaved families.

With kindest regards,

Fadhil M. Gharib
President, GFTU, IRAQ

Reply by CITU

November 18, 1991

Dear Comrade,

We thank you very much for your letter dated 27th October 1991 expressing your heartfelt grief at the loss of life of thousands of people in the Tehri Garwal region of U.P. due to earthquake recently.

Your deep feelings for the people of India at a time when the people of Iraq are passing through great difficulties indeed show the warmth of international solidarity felt by your organisation. We are grateful for the kind words expressed by you on the occasion.

With warmest greetings,

M.K. Pandhe
General Secretary

CITU Protests against Staff Reduction in Railways

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions records its strong protest against the move of the Railway Board to reduce the staff strength in Railways by 40% in the coming years.

It is reprehensible that the Government while in one hand resorts to victimisation of the railway workers, refuses to reinstate about 800 loco running staff who were victimised in 1981, does not fill up the posts of retiring employees and pays least attention to the amenities of the passengers while hiking the railway fares in a systematic manner, it had on the other hand appointed the so-called Rail India Technical and Economic Services (RITES) to recommend staff reduction, which is already adversely affected by automation and privatisation.

The entire gamut of this motivated step to progressively reduce the budgetary support and the staff complement is guided by private sector interest under pressure from IMF.

The CITU condemns the Railway Board for accepting such retrograde recommendations of the RITES and calls upon the railway workers of all categories to join the countrywide industrial strike on November 29 jointly called by the trade unions to lodge their protest against such draconian move of the Railway Board.

Anganwadi Women Promised a "Token Benefit"

Representatives of the All India Anganwadi Workers Federation accompanied by Com. Malini Bhattacharya MP met the Finance Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh to apprise him of the problems of the Anganwadi Workers. The primary demands of the women who work in this socially beneficial project is that they should be regularised as Government employees since they are denied many benefits as "Voluntary" workers. Pending this, a minimum wage should be paid to them, and such provision should be included in the current budget, because the burden of price rise has made it impossible for the workers to continue.

Dr. Man Mohan Singh expressed his inability to grant regularisation to the workers, but was willing, when pressed, to consider some "token" assistance to the Anganwadi workers and helpers from the year 1991-92. This would express the Govt's commitment to the ICDS project and a recognition of the contribution of the workers. He also assured the federation that there was no question of privatisation of the Anganwadis, since these were a social responsibility.

The All India Federation of Anganwadi workers

with the help of women MPs will continue to press for interim relief pending a serious review of the financial situation, to get recognition for the Anganwadi workers.

(From Page 10)

have before us recent example of Dalla cement factory workers' fight against Privatisation. The police killed about 40 of valiant fighters during the struggle. But finally the U.P. Government was forced to retreat and the unit has been brought back to the State Sector.

The working class is not alone in this fight. Large masses of the peasantry and the patriotic people are going to be rallied along with the working class to fight back the anti-people polices being pursued by the government of India at the cost of self-reliance and economic sovereignty of the nation. Prepare for stronger battles, battle to uphold national honour.

(From Page 12)

trying to destabilise the country. With the strike the working class threw a challenge simultaneously to the divisive forces like the Khalistanis, ULFA and the RSS-BJP-VHP combine and accepted the responsibility to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country.

It also gave a challenge to the government and the IMF-World Bank against any move to curb the trade union rights of the workers and their right to strike. It gave a challenge to the so-called Exit Policy and the employers' right to closure. It gave a clear warning to the government that the public sector belonged to the people and not to any government and the trade unions have the right to know the conditionalities of the IMF. It reiterated the demand for total withdrawal of the entire economic and industrial policies and not merely discuss their "impact" on the workers in the so-called Tripartite Committee. Further, through this strike, the trade unions and the working class warned the government against any hobnobbing with the IMF to formulate the forthcoming budget under their directions.

This one day strike was only the beginning of more concerted working class actions, as the Sponsoring Committee has said. The working class has given the lead to stop the government to go the IMF way. If only a few thousands of workers in Dalla can get the privatisation deal revoked, millions of workers in the country can and must force the Government to withdraw the entire economic policies. The trade union unity achieved through the strike must be further consolidated and broadened so as to bring more sections of the working class and other mass organisations on to the point of class struggle and bring a change in the correlation of class forces in favour of the working class and the toiling people. The CITU must continue its initiatives for furtherance of the struggle with more direct actions.

Workshop of Public Sector Unions:

Common Approach on the New Charter of Demands, Expressed Firm Resolve to Defend Public Sector

The all India Workshop of Public Sector Trade Unions held on 30 - 31 October '91 at Bangalore reiterated the call for adoption of a common approach towards defence of the public sector against the tirade of the central government and also towards problems of the workers and resolved to go in for united action.

The Workshop after protracted discussion for two days evolved a common approach for formulating the charter of demands for the public sector workers in view of the ensuing wage negotiations. Three approach papers were placed in the workshop by Com. M. K. Pandhe (CITU), Com. R. K. Samant Rai (HMS) and Com. Anand Reddy (JAF, Bangalore). All total 42 delegates participated in the discussion.

The notable feature of the discussion was the serious concern expressed by the speakers over the disastrous policies of the central government in surrendering the very approach of self-reliance of the country's economy, opening the door to multinational companies and monopoly capitals allowing them to make inroad in the most vital and strategic sectors of the economy, and declaring a virtual crusade against the public sector, which would inevitably bring about immense miseries for the people through further hike in price, unemployment, closures and even liquidation of many industrial units including public sector. The delegates expressed their firm resolve that these issues should be the focal points in the charter of demands. The alarming increase in the phenomenon of off-loading of more and more permanent jobs to contractors and consequent increase in the number of contract labour who are denied of minimum wage and other basic amenities including statutory benefits has also been focussed as one of the major problems facing the public sector trade unions. Other basic issues figured in the discussion were modern technology, effective workers' participation in management etc.

The workshop was presided over by a presidium consisting of R. Umanath (CITU), K. L. Mahendra (AITUC), R.K. Samant Rai (HMS), M. S. Krishnan (JAF, Bangalore) and William Passo (Hyderabad).

M. K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU summed up the deliberations and placed the concluding resolution evolving the issues for formulating the 'Common Charter of Demands' which included — Period of Settlement, Needbased minimum wage at AICPI 800 with a minimum basic pay of Rs. 2000.00, Minimum and maximum rate of annual increment at Rs. 40.00 and Rs. 200.00 respectively, Fitment benefits and fringe benefits like HRA, HBL, CCA,

PF etc. The demands of the Working Women and Contract Labour were included with due importance. Further, it demanded the implementation of the pending issues of the last settlements and immediate finalisation of the Pension Scheme and D.A. The resolution has also dealt with the questions of Health, Safety and Environment, New Technology, Workers' Participation in Management, Recognition of Unions through Secret Ballot, Suggestions of the Trade Unions for improving performance, Against Privatisation and Closures etc.

The resolution noted "The Trade Unions in Public Sector will have to further strengthened their unity and fight with firm determination to overcome the adverse situation" due to inter-alia the New Economic and Industrial policies, Threat of contemplated Wage-Freeze, Exit-policy, Interference of BPE etc. and appealed "to the trade unions who could not participate in this Workshop to support the conclusions... so that a country-wide unity is built up all over the country". The Workshop also resolved to evolve some machinery to ensure information-sharing during the forthcoming wage negotiations.

112 delegates from different Public Sector Undertakings from all over the country viz., Steel, Coal, Fertilizers, BHEL, BEL, Airlines, Bank, LIC, Bangalorebased and Hyderabadbased PSUs etc. participated in the workshop.

Earlier, on 29th October '91 in the evening the extended Steering Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions met Bangalore under the presidentship of Com. R. Umanath. Com. Pandhe reported to the meeting about the preparations for the countrywide Industrial Strike on 29th November '91. Thereafter, the comrades present in the meeting also spoke on the same issue concerning different states/industries. In the process the places required special attention were identified and decision for intensification of the strike preparations were taken. Further, the meeting discussed the approach to be adopted by the comrades attending the workshop.

Conclusion of the Workshop

1. The National Workshop of Central Public Sectors Trade Unions held at Bangalore on 30th & 31st October 1991 on "Charter of Demands" was attended by 110 representatives of all major public sector undertakings in India. The workshop considered three approach papers submitted before it dealing with various problems pertaining to forthcoming wage negotiations in Central Public Sector

undertakings and 42 speakers participated in the discussions. Four representatives of the Officers Associations attended as observers.

2. The deliberations of the workshop were conducted by a presidium consisting of Com. M. S. Krishnan, R. Umanath, K. L. Mahendra, Raj Kirhsore, Samant Roy, Michel Fernandez and William passo.

3. The workshop at the outset, passed a condolence resolution on the recent earth quake victims in Tehri-Gharwal region in Uttar Pradesh. Participants stood in silence to pay homage to the men, women and children who lost their lives in this major natural calamity in the country.

4. The workshop noted the special adverse circumstances in the country which the trade union movement will have to counteract while conducting wage negotiations.

a) The New Economic Policy announced by the Govt of India hits hard the public sector undertakings, withdrawal of budgetary support to several undertakings, steps towards privatisation of several undertakings, Govt of India's decision to disinvest in public sector undertakings will pose several problems during wage negotiations.

b) The competitive disadvantage faced by several public sector units will make them non-competitive in the market, seriously affecting their financial capabilities. It is likely that such units may advocate wage-freeze policy during negotiations.

c) The exit-policy announced by the Union Finance Minister at Bangkok for the public sector immediately affecting 50 or more undertakings will force the employees in these undertakings to fight for their survival, and will dominate even while wage negotiations are on.

d) Serious attempts may be made to scuttle wage negotiations through devices such as reference of dispute to National Industrial Tribunal as in case of Air Lines or Wage Committee for the entire public sector or consideration of sinister proposals to extend the agreements for a period of TWO or more years in the name of 'resources crunch'.

e) Non-implementation of the clauses in the previous agreements is a serious hurdle in the wage negotiations. In Coal industry which employs one third of the manpower in public sector undertakings, several clauses pertaining to welfare measures have remained un-implemented. In many undertakings there have been clauses which are yet to be implemented. Attempts to include them in the next agreement by the managements will defeat the purpose of past collective agreements.

f) Non-settlement of pending issues such as DA and Pension is evoking strong reactions among the public sector workers. The tripartite DA committee constituted in November 1988 had not made much

progress and the terms of committee has been arbitrarily extended by the government till March 1992. The Trade Unions cannot accept any proposal to grant new rate of DA in return for unions agreeing to extension of the old agreements for some specific period.

g) The pension scheme which is under discussion for several years is yet to see the light of the day. The arbitrary BPE circular on 12th April 1991 directing the management to contribute only Rs 100/- per annum for the entire undertakings has made a mockery of the pension scheme. In Steel and Coal industries the 2% deduction of workers contribution towards Pension Fund has been made since 1991 and the management has given written commitments to contribute equivalent amount are facing difficulties due to this directives. In India Airlines and Air India, a similar commitment given to workers remains unimplemented.

5. The trade unions in Public Sector will have to further strengthen their unity and fight with firm determination to overcome the adverse situation. The workshop is confident that as in the past through united struggles, the workers in public sector will succeed in defeating all machinations that come in the way of proper negotiations.

6. The workshop considered the main demand of the worker in public sector undertakings and evolved following agreed conclusions on various issues involved in the formulation of the Common Charter of Demands.

7. Period of Settlement

The settlements should be valid for a period of not more than 4 years.

8. Need-Based Minimum Wages

The workshop felt that the public sector workers are justified in striving to achieve the need-based minimum wages based on the norms laid down by the 15th Indian Labour Conference in 1957. As a step in that direct on, the workshop demanded 25% rise in the wage of workers. Since an offer has been made in the Tripartite DA Committee to revise the DA rate with effect from 800 points we propose the following as the total minimum wage :

Basic Wage at 800 points of CPI	Rs. 2000
FDA/VDA at the rate of Rs. 2.50 per point for 200 points	Rs. 500
Total Minimum Wage as on 1.1.1992 at about 1000 points	Rs. 2500

The wage scale to be worked out accordingly.

9. Rate of Increment

A minimum rate of increment should be Rs. 40/- while the maximum to reach Rs. 200/-. Since number of pay scales are different in various industries,

the distribution of the rate of increment to be decided separately in each undertaking within the framework of above parameters.

10. Service Weightage

To protect the wage differential for the senior workers, service weightage is the only rational solution and all unions should press for service-weightage in the charter of demands.

11. Fitment Benefit of One Increment

All the trade unions should demand a fitment benefit of one increment to all the workshop as in the past.

12. Guaranteed Minimum Benefit

Before fitting a worker in the new scale, a guaranteed minimum benefit of Rs 500/- or 25% wage increase whichever is higher should be given to the workers.

13. Full Neutralisation in Rise in Price

The worker should be paid the DA rate that would ensure full neutralisation in the price rise at all levels. As per earlier decisions of Bangalore workshop on DA, we should demand Rs 2.50 per point rise in price index (1960=100) as the minimum rate of DA. The four slab system of DA for the workers categories demanded by the trade union representatives on the Tripartite Committee on DA and endorsed by the managements representatives on the committee can be the basis the formula. The calculation of DA on the basis of percentage of basic wage can also be considered for the purpose.

14. House Rent Allowance

In view of the steep rise in house rent we should demand payment of HRA on the basis of new basic wages. The concept of pre-revised wages to be dropped this time. The rate of recovery however should not be changed. In special circumstances, a high rate of HRA should be demanded.

15. House-Building Advance

The quantum of house-building advance to be raised substantially in view of the phenomenal rise in construction cost. The rate of interest should be reduced to encourage house building activity by the workers.

16. Other Allowances

Allowances vary from industry to industry depending on the nature of jobs. Hence generally, it is proposed that the allowance should be raised by 25 per cent. In the case of reimbursement of conveyance expenditure the amount may be more in view of drastic rise in petroleum prices. Similarly, may be the case of education allowance. The nature of allowances and the quantum may vary from industry to industry. It may not be feasible to achieve uniformity in the matter in all the public sector undertakings.

17. Relativity Between Terms and Service Conditions

Due to substantial concessions received by section of Officers and workers, the relativity between different categories have been greatly disturbed. This is causing deep resentment among the workers. Attempt should be made this time so that the relativity in wages and terms and service conditions is not disturbed and wherever it is disturbed should be restored.

18. Pension Scheme

We should demand scrapping of BPE circular dated 12th April 1991. The commitments given by the steel, coal and other industries in joint committee by the managements should be honoured in full and pension scheme should be implemented without any delay. In other industries where pension committee's work is obstructed should be allowed to continue their deliberations to see that mutually accepted scheme should be worked out as soon as possible.

19. Ceiling in Bonus Act

We should demand immediate rising of entitlement of ceiling in the payment of Bonus Act from existing Rs. 1600 to Rs. 3000. While the ceiling on the eligibility should be removed altogether.

20. Exemption Limit of Income Tax

The present exemption limit of Rs. 22000 is too low. Several workers are victims of it. Hence we should demand that the exemption limit under the Income Tax should be raised to Rs. 36000.

21. Workers Participation in Management

All unions should demand that a scheme of workers participation in management on the basis of Bill brought in Parliament and improvements suggested by the trade unions should be implemented by all the managements in public sector undertakings.

22. City Compensatory Allowance

The Charter of Demands should mention the removal of ceiling on CCA for the workers.

23. Provident Fund and Gratuity

Units which have not implemented 10% P F scheme should raise the demand. We should also demand increase in the rate of interest on PF deposits. The rate of gratuity should be raised to ONE month gratuity per year of service without ceiling as provided in the law.

24. Women Workers Demands

Legitimate demands of the workers are generally neglected. Medical facilities and LTC benefits for the dependents of a women employees, provision for staying of husband and wife in the same Township, opportunities to women employees for performing different skilled and highly skilled operational jobs, proper creche and separate room facilities, messing

allowance for nursing staff can be further concentrated by the public sector workers.

25. Emphasise on More Social Benefits

During the forthcoming wage negotiations we should give more emphasise on social benefits such as better housing facilities, welfare measures, canteen facilities, social security measure so that special attempts can be made to enhance the quality of life of the workers. We should make efforts to get a portion of the additional generated funds arising out of increase in productivity or improved performance for social benefits for the workers.

26. Uniform Leave Facilities

The system of different types of leave facilities in public sector is causing resentment among the workers who are getting less leave facilities. We should demand that uniform leave facilities should be made available to all the workers in public sector units.

27. Problems of Contract Workers

The demands of contract workers which come within the framework of public sector managements as a principle employer should be raised by the trade unions. The wage level of contract workers should be raised to occupational wage while their regularisation after abolition of contract labour in permanent nature of jobs should be ensured. Their safety and full compliance of statutory benefits should be ensured.

28. Health, Safety and Environment

These demands are also generally neglected by the trade unions. The problems may vary from industry to industry and department to department. Trade unions should raise these aspects in their charter of demands, so that health hazards can be reduced in public sector undertakings.

29. Medical Benefits After Retirement

Full medical benefits to dependents families of the retired employee should be provided.

30. Employment to Dependents of the Deceased Employees

Providing employment to dependents of the deceased employees to be continued. Till such time the jobs are provided, monthly payments to be made to the dependents till the notional age of retirement of the deceased employee. Genuine locally displaced persons should be provided jobs.

31. Supply of Essential Commodities At Fair-price

With rising prices this demand assumes importance, we should rise it suitably.

32. Recognition of TRADE UNIONS

As in the past, we should reiterate our demand for recognition of trade unions through secret ballot of all workers.

33. New Technology

Trade unions do not oppose the induction of new technology. But the following precautions are necessary:

- a) There should be no introduction of new technology without agreements with the trade unions.
- b) No retrenchment as a result of introduction of new technology.
- c) There should be expansion of capacity and diversification of products for improving viability, profitability and generating employment.
- d) Protective measures against health hazards arising out of induction of new technology.

34. Improvement in Performance

We should suggest positive measures to ensure full utilisation of capacity of public sector units. Elimination of wasteful expenditure, end of corruption and malpractices etc. through Joint Vigilance Committee etc. should be proposed by the trade unions in the Charter of Demands, so that, our commitment to improve production and productivity in public sector units is stated in a clear cut manner.

35. Against Privatisation and Closures

Our demands should include our opposition to privatisation and closure of public sector units. This

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