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THE WORKING CLASS

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**ANGANWADI
WORKERS
RALLY
HYDERABAD**
(Report on
Page 16-17)



**AP 'CEO
NAIDU'S
POLICE
LATHI
CHARGING
RALLYISTS**

CITU GENERAL COUNCIL CALL:

MAKE 11TH MAY GENERAL STRIKE A HISTORIC SUCCESS!

The advent of the new year 2000 was marked by a surge of strike struggles. The all India Convention of the National Platform of Mass Organisations in the Capital city of New Delhi on 20th March, 2000, greeted the wave of struggles sweeping across the country and announced an action programme to carry forward the agitation against the anti-national economic policies and communal designs of the Government of India.

The massive march to Parliament on the 9th March, 2000, participated by lakhs of workers, peasants, agricultural workers, women, youth and students, gave a clarion call for a countrywide general strike on 11th May, 2000.

This meeting of the CITU General Council, held at Kozhikode, 20-22, April, 2000, endorses the NPMO call for 11th May strike and directs all affiliates of the CITU to make all out efforts to mobilise the working people and masses of the country, to give a befitting rebuff to the ruling NDA Government.

It is significant to find that even those who have been ardent admirers of the economic reforms have now started voicing concern. Yashwant Sinha, Finance Minister, who has donned the mantle of 'reformer-performer', had started lamenting that "the political consensus on economic reform has started retreating". Of course, he might be talking of a "consensus" that was only between the ruling coalition and the main opposition in Parliament, the Congress Party. The so called reforms had consistently met with stiff opposition from the Left forces and the general trade union movement right from inception. But, what is worrying the Finance Minister now is that there is a groundswell of opposition to his policies from the hitherto-supporters!

Even inside the Congress Party, voices are discernible, blaming the economic reforms policies, implemented by that Party while in power at the Centre, and now supported under the BJP dispensation, as a cause for its failures in the electoral front.

Even the bourgeois commentators in the Financial Newspapers have, of late, started admitting that

globalisation is coming increasingly under abrasive criticism. Starting from Seattle in November last year, a momentum is gaining ground against the multilateral institutions - the trinity of WTO, World Bank and IMF - which are on course to create an international economic order where the developing and the poor countries will have to be at the mercy of the rich countries. The demand for radical reforms in these organisations to make them accountable to the world's poor, rather than continue to function as the instrumentalities for economic expansion of the affluent countries, is becoming louder and louder.

The recent days have also witnessed growing resistance to the BJP and the Sangh Parivar using their stint in power at the Centre to advance their communal agenda, which is no longer hidden.

The discomfiture of the parties-which are aligned to the BJP, just to share the spoils of power- both against the anti-people economic measures and the communal designs is also manifesting.

The more recent announcement of the Exim Policy which sets the pace of total deindustrialisation and liquidation of even the agricultural sector, the hikes in kerosene and LPG prices, have enraged vast sections of masses.

The CITU General Council opines that the consistent effort of the working class movement and the united struggles against the anti-national policies of the BJP-led Govt., despite all limitations and the disastrous impact of the policies on the life and living of the people and on the society, - are all the contributing factors to the louder voice of resentment against these policies and their impact even among the erstwhile supporters of liberalisation.

All these have created a fertile ground to further broadbase the resistance to policies of economic ruination and communal orgy.

In this background, this meeting of the CITU General Council, appeals to all sections of workers and employees and mass organisations to rally to make the 11th May countrywide general strike a resounding success.

THE WORKING CLASS

CITU MONTHLY

MAY 2000

ON
TO
MAY 11
COUNTRYWIDE
GENERAL
STRIKE

- NPMO

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EDITORIAL

NO Mr. PRIME MINISTER!

Vajpayee has at long last found time to spare for the labour. He inaugurated the 36th session of the Indian Labour Conference, in Vigyan Bhavan, in New Delhi on 14th April, 2000.

He came, spoke and left. Just for about an hour.

He urged the trade unions "to adopt a positive attitude towards the program of economic reforms - we would like you to be partners in the reform process".

He called for "change, urgent change, redicel change".

But he ruled out no change in his Government's policies, which are wrecking the economy, people's living and the country's self-reliance.

He clamoured for "changes in labour laws" "to reap the full benefits of economic reforms".

Why? "Inflexibility in labour deployment in the face of changing market conditions" is one of the reasons for industrial sickness, says the PM.

He admits "Ours is a labour abundant economy. Yet new industrial investment is showing a marked preference for projects that depend the least on labour".

Yet change, he must, the labour laws, to do away with inflexibility, to speed up economic growth through de-regulation and de-control! Did the PM have anything to offer to the workers of the country?

Yes, a platitude: "We must look upon our labour force as a source of strength - and never as a liability".

For the public sector workers? "Last week, I have reconstituted the Groups of Ministers which would make recommendations on wage-related matters..."

For the vast majority of workforce in the unorganised sector - the farm workers? "We have not been able to reach a consensus on this vital subject (legislation for agricultural workers) so far"!

But whatever he said was sweet music for the MNCs, the employers' class. The bourgeois Press hailed his speech with headlines; "**PM gets tough with labour**".

That was not unexpected either. The "World Economic Outlook" released by the IMF just a day before, dictated to Vajpayee's "new Government" : "important challenges still need to be addressed, including further deregulation and privatisaiton, measures to increase labour market flexibility and reform of the agricultural sector".

The PM has only faithfully dittoed it!

No Mr. Prime Minister. We the trade unions, the working people cannot be partners in your programme which showers favours for the affluent, the MNCs and employers, heaps misery for the poor and the common people and wields the big stick against labour.

Resist we shall, with all our might!

CITU MANIFESTO FOR MAY DAY, 2000!

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) extends revolutionary greetings to the working class fraternity all over the world, on the occasion of the First May Day of the new millenium. The CITU greets all the working people engaged in an unrelenting fight against the general offensives of imperialism.

The CITU greets the working class and the people of the Socialist countries for holding aloft the banner of Socialism, notwithstanding the setbacks of the last decade in certain parts of the world.

The CITU greets the working class of the advanced capitalist countries who are pitted against the ruling polity of their respective countries, for imposing unbearable burdens, in the process of pampering to the greed for profits of the transnational corporations in the neo-liberal globalisation regime. The CITU pledges solidarity with the fellow fighters from the ranks of working class of all the third world countries, engaged in fighting back the offensives of imperialism. The CITU also greets their struggles for safeguarding hard won trade union and democratic rights and against the capitulation of the ruling classes, abdicating the path of self-reliance, to imperialist forces.

The CITU urges all anti-imperialist forces to condemn in unequivocal terms the frequent violations, by G-7 countries and U.S.A. in particular, of the United

Nations Charter, mounting militarist attacks and imposing economic blockades on the countries which opt not to toe their line. In the name of economic blockade against Cuba, Libya and Iraq, the U.S. and its servile partners are waging a trade and financial war against these countries. In this attempt to arm-twist the Governments of these countries, the worst sufferers are the common people, particularly children. The CITU expresses full sympathy to these victims of imperialist design to achieve global hegemony and pledges to mobilise all forces in support of the courageous and patriotic crusade of the opposed people to defeat these offensives.

II

This May Day in India, we are faced with the aggressive anti-people offensives launched by the BJP led coalition which has captured power at the Centre, in the last hustings. The rank communal party leading the ruling coalition has put on a cloak in the name of the common minimum programme of their National Democratic Alliance just to hoodwink the secular minded masses of the country.

Commencing with the steep hike in diesel prices immediately after the last general elections were over, the present Government at the Centre has unleashed economic terror against the people. The issue prices of food grains under the Public Distribution System have

abnormally been increased, withdrawing the subsidies given to poor people. Fertiliser subsidies have also been cut, putting the small and marginal farmers to undue hardship. Excise duties on products of domestic industries have been raised and with the increase in rail freight, the essential commodities of every day use have been placed out of reach of the common people. On the other hand, import duties have been reduced and with the removal of quantitative restrictions on imports, in the recently announced export-import Policy, the Indian market has been left wide open for plunder by multinationals. Indigenous industry, small scale sector and agriculture have been hard hit. Fast-track privatisation is on: disinvestment is gaining jet-speed; the Central Public Sector assets are being squandered and offered in gold platters to private and international capital market operators.

The ruling BJP has found a pliant opposition in the Congress Party, which has willingly and over-zealously acquiesced in passage of Insurance Regulatory Authority Bill and other legislative measures to usher in the new patent and free market regime dictated by international finance capital. The international trade and financial institutions, viz., the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are dizzy with

raptures at the pace and speed with which their dictates are being carried out by the NDA Government.

But, it is heartening to find that the Fund-Bank dictated policies of neo-liberal globalisation is meeting with forms of resistance not only in the third world countries, but at the global level as well. International unity of trade unions opposed to these policies is growing and manifesting in many forms.

III

The communal agenda of the saffron party in power at the Centre is no longer hidden. The Gujarat Government order removing the ban on its employees participating in the activities of the RSS, the open support and justification by the Prime Minister and others, laudatory discourses on RSS role by the Home Minister - all smacked of the most sinister design. Concerted resistance by the secular opposition, deadlocking the Lok Sabha proceedings for days together, coupled with murmurs from within the coalition, had led to a face-saving retreat by the Gujarat BJP Government. Yet, the saffron designs can, by no means, be presumed to have ended there. The stopping of printing of the two volumes of "Towards Freedom", authored by eminent historians, the ugly incidents that marred the shooting of the film "Water" in Varanasi are clear symptoms of the 'Hindutva' forces, directed by the fascistic RSS, spreading their tentacles.

The BJP Government has proceeded with the constitution

of a Committee to review the Constitution of India ignoring the wise counsel of no less than a person than the President, K.R.Narayanan. His soul searching question whether "is it the Constitution that has failed us or is it we who have failed the Constitution?", fell on deaf ears of those in governance. Despite their repeated assertions to the contrary, this exercise could prove to be a subtle move to subvert the very basic structures of our Constitution.

The much orchestrated visit of Bill Clinton, U.S.President, was marked by a competitive display of vulgar psychopancy and slavish surrender to the head of the U.S.A., which is behaving like a world gendarme. The BJP Government has lost all its sense of proportions and went ahead with appeasing its "master", who utilised the visit to get a stranglehold over the affairs of the sub continent and clinching deals securing the trade and business interests of the U.S. The BJP Government described the past record of India's commendable role in the Non-Aligned Movement as "wasted decades" and openly tilted towards the USA by joining the "Community of Democracies" sponsored by it.

IV

At the very outset of commencing its present term, this Government announced the constitution of the Second National Commission on Labour, with a tailor-made terms of reference to change the labour laws to suit the requirements of employer-class, in the present liberalisation -

globalisation dispensation. The Commission is packed with pro-employer, pro-Sangh Parivar nominees and the suggestions of the Central Trade Unions, both on the composition and the terms of reference of the Commission, have totally been brushed aside. Not content with this brazen anti-labour move, the BJP Government is in a mad hurry to tinker with the Trade Union Act, trampling upon the workers' right to organise, even without waiting for the recommendations of their 'National Commission'.

With the Government policies speeding up the process of deindustrialisation on the one hand, the proliferating sickness afflicting the Indian industries is spelling grave dangers to the industrial economy as well as the jobs of millions of workers. Instead of taking meaningful measures to revive the sick units, the Government is preparing a case for repealing the Sick Industrial Companies Act itself, leading to abolition of the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) and its Appellate Authority, AAIFR. Thus, whatever limited avenues are open for revival or rehabilitation of sick industries through the mechanism of BIFR, its several shortcomings notwithstanding, are sought to be shut out. This reflects a totally callous attitude towards employment protection - not to speak of employment generation.

V

The hypocritical assertions to abide by the democratic process have been laid bare by the

murky events in the aftermath of elections to the Bihar Legislative Assembly. The unscrupulous machinations to hijack the mandate of the people in that State, by the partners in the National Democratic Alliance, floundered in the face of post-poll realities in Bihar. The BJP Government had no qualms to misuse every institution or authority, including the office of the Governor and the Central Investigating agencies, to subserve its partisan interests. The BJP and its allies in the NDA face a big stumbling block, in their path, in the Left forces. The Left forces and the Left-led mass organisation have been consistent in their steadfast resistance to anti-people measures, be it the retrograde economic policies or the nefarious communal game plan or shameless compromise on the question of national sovereignty. Hence, the saffron brigade is scheming to target and isolate the Left. The talk of a 'Mahajot' in West Bengal, with the communal BJP and professedly 'secular' Congress joining hands from behind their

backs, is an off-shoot of this scheme. International pressure is also aimed at helping this process of isolating and marginalising the Left forces, as in their perception, in the realm of economic policies, it is Left versus the rest. But, the masses who by every passing day realise the anti-people character of the pro-reform politics, will rally round the Left forces which are spearheading the campaign and agitation against these policies.

VI

The vast multitude of Indian people - workers, peasants, agricultural labourers, women, students, youth and even sections of self-employed and intelligentsia are victims of these disastrous policies. They are coming together in the arena of struggle. The National Platform of Mass Organisations has become the broadest forum and the launching pad for united struggle and resistance. The 9th March rally in New Delhi had given the clarion call for a countrywide general strike on 11th May.

Following this May Day, the

country is poised to witness a most powerful country wide general strike on 11th May, against economic policies and communalism. The trade unions in South Asian countries in a splendid display of solidarity will observe 11th May as a day against globalisation and express solidarity with the working class of India.

On this May Day, the CITU exhorts the working class of the country to strengthen and consolidate the unity of all masses, to unleash more and more united and powerful struggles against imperialist designs, ruinous economic policies and divisive forces of communalism, casteism and terrorism.

Let us march ahead to defend the interests of our great country and its people.

On to 11th May countrywide general strike!

Long live working class unity!

Long live international solidarity of working class!

Down with Imperialism!

Down with Communalism!

Long live Socialism!

ALL INDIA WORKSHOP ON ORGANISATION

The All India Workshop on Organisation was held in New Delhi on 13-15, March, 2000. The CITU workshop was participated by 63 comrades from 18 States and Industrial Federation. The participants were divided into four groups each taking up for discussion one aspect of the organisational tasks, viz.:

1. Democratic Functioning
2. Expansion of Membership & Organisation
3. Education and Ideology
4. Functioning of Industrywise Federations

A detailed report on the Workshop was placed before the meeting of the CITU's General Council at Kozhikode on 20-22 April, 2000. A special discussion was held at the meeting, with the objective of preparing an action plan for implementation of the Bhubaneswar Document.

FACILITATING LOOT BY MNCs - SWADESHI WAY

Mortgaging of the Swadeshi brand at the altar of MNCs became further clear with the announcement of total liberalisation of all imports in two years, to remove all quantitative restriction by April 2001 immediately after Clinton's India visit. 714 items in the negative list of import has already been freed from April 2000 and rest 715 items would be put on free-import list from April next year. These items include almost all agricultural products and consumer goods for free-import which, alongwith drastic reduction of customs duty in successive years is bound to affect many domestic industries and also the Indian agriculture. The whole exercise is going to severely erode the domestic manufacturing base and convert the same to the selling agency or shopkeepers for the MNC products.

The economic Times dated 3rd April, 2000 has reported about the Hindustan Lever's decision to import the unilever products of Olive Oil, Mustard Sauce and other fast-food ingredients, Cosmetics etc. to the tune of Rs.400 Crores following the recent announcement of Exim Policy by the Govt. Similar drive is also expected from other MNCs operating in India, who would prefer to import and sell in Indian soil instead of operating factories here.

The Trades and Development Report by UNCTAD pointed on gradual decline in the share of all developing countries including Indian in World trade, denoting consistently reducing access of Indian exportables in the market of the muscle-flexing G-7 countries. During the entire post liberalisation period India has been consistently losing its market share in World trade even in the areas where it had earlier a sizable presence like in Tea & spices, Woven Cotton fabrics, Cotton yarn, and other primary products.

On the other hand, the export performance of the Foreign Companies operating in Indian Soil shows that, those Foreign Companies are actually sending out more resources, than they have brought in, in the name of so called FDI. Data released by Reserve Bank of India revealed that, those foreign companies sold more in Indian

market than they have exported, thereby marginalising domestic producers from their own home ground. And whatever foreign currency these MNCs have brought in through export, much more have been sent out by them only through import of spares, consultancy fees and various other mechanisms. THE RBI data on the Finance of FDI companies pointed out that from 1994-95 onwards, import intensity of export by the FDI companies operating in India has been always much more than 100% (From 107% to 177%) meaning thereby net out flow of resources from Indian soil by their operation, to the detriment of the country's economic interest. But still, the Indian rulers refused to see reasons in their anxiety of obliging their foreign masters.

Alongwith ongoing pace of liberalisation, the working class has been subjected to worst form of exploitation. As per data released by Annual Survey of Industries and also, the updated data of Central Statistical Organization, during 1990-99 period, the real value added per worker increased by 39%, whereas the real wage of workers (wage deflated by wholesale price index) went up only by 10% and the share of casual/contractual workers in the total employed workforce has been increasing phenomenally.

As against 303% increase in net sales, the Indian Corporate houses managed to keep their excise duty obligation grow only 222%. During the same period as against increase of gross profit by 369% by the MNCs, their direct tax obligation increased by only 305%, and for the Indian Corporate, the direct tax payment grew only by 223% as against the increase on gross profit to the tune of 336%. On the whole, the thoughtless pursuit of liberalisation has been leading the country's economy to the path ruin and disaster. The ominous indications are seen from continuing decline in the growth rates of gross domestic savings, investment, and net in flow of capital, rising unemployment, and aggravating poverty level alongwith phenomenal increase in the profit and fortunes of the MNCs and big business.

(Excerpts from the General Secretary's report to the Kozhikode meeting of the CITU General Council)

FORWARD TO LONG DRAWN STRUGGLES

M K PANDHE

The most important task of CITU today is to prepare for a massive countrywide strike against the economic policies of the Govt. of India on 11th May, 2000. Already widespread response have been received by the working class throughout the country to the clarion call. Still there should be no complacency and all CITU Unions and activists must plunge into series of action to popularise the strike call so that a countrywide voice of protest is heard in a powerful way on that day. Our State Committees and Industrywise Federations should immediately approach all other organisations to participate in this crucial strike action. Series of State level, Industry level, district level and regional level conventions should be organised to popularise the issues raised by the National Platform of Mass Organisations.

CITU Unions should also keep in touch with other organisations like Kissan Sabha, AIDWA, AIAWU, DYFI, SFI so that mass action can be organised in cooperation with other mass organisations. The other mass organisation can join the agitations like Rail Roko, Rasta Roko, Human Chain, Dharna, Picketing etc. so that on that day of general strike, in every centre of human life the protest of masses should be powerfully heard all over the country.

Comrades, there are some areas of weakness which should also be kept in mind. All over the country, our unions are not equally active in popularising the action programme. Even some of the unions are starting the activities at a very late stage. Wherever possible, door to door campaign, wall writing, issue of hand written posters, issue of leaflets etc. should be given due importance. Our campaign must cover all sections of masses and workers. Particularly unorganised sector workers, who are seriously affected by the recent steps taken by the Govt. of India, should be mobilised in a bigger way so that the programme of 11 May is really converted into a nationwide people's movement.

We should also make efforts to approach political parties at State levels so that they also give call

for State level Bandh in support of our struggle. On 11th Dec, 1998, it was possible to organise Bandhs in eight States. We should ensure many more states are covered in this protest action all over the country. Wherever possible, NPMO type Action Committees should be developed so that they can coordinate state level actions more effectively. CITU unions and leaders must give top priority to this crucial task so that the nationwide general strike on 11th May becomes a much bigger action than the five all India strikes we have organised during the last decade. The future of our movement much depends on the success of this mass action. We should try to involve masses supporting the NDA Govt. in our programmes so that discontent among them also should be fully utilised.

While making every effort to organise successful general strike on 11th May we should prepare the working class and the toiling masses of India to prepare for a long drawn struggle to reverse the policies of financial globalisation.

As we have seen, the NDA Government's policies are serving the interests of MNCs at the cost of our national interests which are bound to place crushing burdens on the common people of India. The present simmering discontent among the masses will rouse their anger which will bring them into more and more actions. We have to mobilise vast number of masses into various forms of struggles. These struggles are bound to acquire more and more militant character when the attacks on their standard of living will become ferocious. We have to play a crucial role in unifying all sections of popular masses. Despite several shortcomings National Platform of Mass Organizations has become popular all over the country and increasingly the mass organisations are drawing closer to it.

Under these circumstances, sustained and concerted actions, much powerful than what we are organising to-day have become need of the hour.

The response, people are giving in our day to day

struggle is indeed overwhelming. The experience of Salem and Visakhapatnam struggle shows clearly that the struggle against privatisation and sickness can be converted into a genuine people's struggle which can force the Government of India on the defensive. Though these struggles are today of a local character, they may acquire the shape of regional or State level struggles. We have to seize such opportunities so that our actions acquires the widest possible broad based character.

Our struggles are likely to get international support and we are also extending supports to the struggles being organised in different parts of the world. The atmosphere for strengthening international solidarity actions is becoming more

(In the report to the Kozhikode General Council meeting)

(Textiles Cont. from page 19)

with alternative avenues of livelihood" and the "least painful conversion" mean virtually wiping out the existence of over 60 per cent of weavers who fall into the categories of the second and third tiers. But that is not the end of the story. It is well known that the first tier handlooms produce unique and exquisite varieties of cloth in all the States. They are famous by their names according to the places.

Trade in Textiles

At the conclusion, however, it will be pertinent to make a brief comment on the euphoria shown by the Sathyam Committee that by such a "high-tech and modernised" policy the country will produce "World Class" products and can overwhelm its exports against imports, doubling it within two years, and more so after MFA phases out in 2004. First of all, so far as exports are concerned, particularly handlooms, although the Government figures show an increasing trend between 1995-96 and 1998-99, yet the Government has concealed the fact that handloom exports have dwindled from about 50 per cent of the total exports from the time of independence to about 20 per cent now.

It has to be recalled that Textiles were one of the hardest fought issues in the GATT and WTO. The developing countries did want an end of the quota system. But they were duped by the developed countries led by the USA with the so-called principle of "non-discrimination" under the WTO

and more favourable to our movement.

Hence, converting the symbolic struggles into long drawn nationwide struggle should be our priority task and CITU should muster its strength in consciously organising the all India movements of all toiling masses.

Let this struggle create confidence in the mass of people that the policies of capitalist globalisation can be defeated and independent national economy can be built up by adopting alternate policies by opposing MNC's exploitative policies and also the struggle for elimination of poverty can be developed by relying on the policies of self reliant development of economy.

Let us march with confidence! We can achieve success if we are united and determined!

regime and successfully bargained to include new issues like intellectual property, services and investment in the Uruguay round with a transitional Agreement on Textiles (ATC-1995-2004) by which time the MFA will completely phase out, heralding the era of WTO. The arrangements conceived by the developed countries in fact became open ended charters for the practice of protectionism on an ever increasing scale.

Following bilateral agreements with USA, Canada, EEC, Japan, etc. removing quantitative restrictions on imports into India and also exemption or reduction of import tariff, imports of textile products in the country have swollen from Rs.1272 crores in 1996-1997 to Rs.1492 crores in 1997-98, exhibiting a rise of 17 per cent. During April to October, 1988 again there was another whopping increase of 28 per cent in imports as compared to the same period one year back. The recent bilateral agreements will further boost the imports. Apart from the agreements, the major sources of regular imports are already South Korea, Taiwan, China, Thailand, Bangladesh, Hongkong, Nepal and USA.

Thus, the BJP Government, the advocates of Swadeshi, is playing into the hands of the imperialist countries led by the USA. It is necessary to carry forward the united movement in a sustained manner to save the Textile industry and the Handloom Sector in particular.

14TH WORLD TRADE UNION CONGRESS

M.K. PANDHE

The 14th World Trade Union Congress was held in New Delhi at Vigyan Bhawan from 25th to 28th March 2000. Over 400 delegates attended the Congress from 72 countries, of which 250 were from outside India. The last Congress was held in Damascus (Syria) in 1994.

A broad based Reception Committee was formed in India with Jyoti Basu as the Patron and Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer as Chairman. The CITU joined this committee and actively participated in the preparatory work of the Congress.

AGAINST BLOCKADES AND SANCTIONS

On eve of the Congress, an International Trade Union Solidarity Conference against Economic Blockades and Sanctions was held on 23rd March, which squarely condemned U.S. imperialism for imposing economic blockades against Cuba, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and other countries and sanctions against India, Iran and other countries. It denounced blockade and sanctions as weapons to strangulate the economy of the countries who do not toe the line of U.S. imperialists. The conference demanded immediate withdrawal of the blockades and sanctions. It congratulated the people of these countries who heroically faced the challenge of blockade and sanction and continue to oppose the vile

designs of U.S. imperialists.

Jyoti Basu could not attend the conference due to his involvement in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly. His speech, however, was read out in the conference - in which, while forthrightly condemning the U.S. imperialist blockade and sanctions, he appealed to all trade unions in the world to strengthen the struggle against these blockades so that the U.S. imperialist machinations are defeated. Justice Krishna Iyer in his hardhitting speech attacked the inhuman crimes of U.S. imperialists. Countries who are victims of the blockades and sanctions gave a vivid picture of the suffering of the people in their countries due to the heinous nature of the blockades. On behalf of CITU, M.K. Pandhe spoke in the conference.

INAUGURAL SESSION

On 25th March, the 14th World T.U. Congress was inaugurated by Krishan Kant, Vice President of India, who began by noting "opportunities" provided by globalisation "through an amorphous but remarkably powerful dynamics, creating a new global order, whose shape, direction and potential few are able to visualise. "The trade union movements" the Vice-President advised, "have to grapple with this new reality and to see what opportunities this uncertain future presents them and for humanity".

Satyanarayan Jatia, Union Minister for Labour who addressed the inaugural session, also asked the Congress "to look at globalisation as an opportunity". The other speakers in the inaugural session, however, criticised globalisation and its impact on the working class of the world.

K. Radhakrishnan, Minister for Social Welfare, who conveyed greetings on behalf of Government of Kerala and its Chief Minister, E.K. Nayanar, spoke about the achievements of the Kerala Government and noted how it was opposing the policies of globalisation.

Md. Amin, Minister for Employment, Govt. of West Bengal conveyed greetings to the Congress on behalf of Government of West Bengal and its Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu. He pointed out how the structural adjustment programme in India has brought the Indian economy to stagnation or ruin. He explained how the Left Front Government in West Bengal introduced genuine land reforms, Panchayat Raj system and decentralised planning which has resulted in winning popular support among the people during the last 23 years even within the framework of capitalist system. He assured support to all the trade unions in every struggle against globalisation.

Indrajit Gupta, President,

WFTU, despite his ill health, attended the conference and conveyed his greetings to all the participants in the Congress.

THE POLICY DOCUMENT

Alexandor Zharikov, General Secretary, WFTU who placed the draft policy statement of the WFTU, presented exhaustively statistics, from official reports to highlight how the globalisation has resulted in strengthening the grip of MNCs over the world economy and how the standard of living of the people in developing countries had been deteriorating as a result of it.

The document noted how trade union rights are under attack in major capitalist countries. It further attacked the U.S. imperialists for their depredations all over the world, attacking sovereignty of several nations in all the continents. The report called for a worldwide struggle against capitalist globalisation, so as to protect the working and living conditions of the workers and masses all over the world.

Though the report noted that the Government of the advanced capitalist countries are unable to control the Multi-National Corporations, it ignored the fact that in reality the MNCs were controlling the Governments and all the economic and political policies of the Governments in advanced capitalist countries were serving the interests of the MNCs. Even the developing countries, which accepted the policies of globalisation, have been implementing all economic policies to ensure super profits for the MNCs investing in their countries. Under these

circumstances, to give a call for "democratic control of MNCs" and other UN and imperialist financial agencies was totally unrealistic and failed to give an appropriate directive in the struggle against MNCs. Several speakers during the course of their speeches strongly criticised this aspect of the policy document.

COMPREHENSIVE DEBATE

A number of speakers spoke about the inactivity of the WFTU since the last Congress and observed that the TU movement in the world could not effectively resist the capitalist onslaught. The question of democratic functioning of the WFTU was also raised by some speakers during the discussion on the policy document. The most outspoken criticism was made by Pedro Ross, General Secretary, CTC, from Cuba who vehemently attacked the style of functioning of the WFTU.

Despite reduction in the number of TUIs, some of them do not function at all. Without activating the TUIs, the revival of the WFTU would not be possible, many speakers during the debate pointed out.

Some speakers noted the failure of the WFTU to hold even the General Council meeting since the last Congress. They stressed the need to activate the functioning of all the WFTU bodies, so that decisions taken in the Congress would be implemented in full.

Many speakers emphasised that there is a paramount need for an organisation like WFTU to co-ordinate effectively the class struggles conducted all over the

world. Hence, WFTU will get response if it is in a position to guide and initiate world wide actions of the working class.

Need for democratic functioning of the WFTU was stressed by some speakers, who desired more transparency in the functioning of the WFTU.

A point was emphasised by some speakers that delegates have come to attend the Congress by spending their own money and even paying for residential arrangements during the Congress. That, despite acute financial difficulties, the WFTU could survive and hold its conference itself was a significant achievement, observed a number of delegates.

Though WFTU has no affiliated central trade unions in major countries such as U.K., USA, Canada, France, Italy, Germany, South Africa, Australia, Japan, China etc., unions from some of these countries participated as observers. Major participation in the Congress was from developing countries, which resulted in reflecting the issues faced by these countries.

Regional organisations of united trade union movements in Africa, Latin America, Arab countries etc., expressed their solidarity with the WFTU. The International Committee on Trade Union Rights (ICTUR) also expressed support to the activities of the WFTU.

Speakers from the CIS countries informed the Congress about deteriorating working and living conditions of the workers after dismantling of socialism in these countries. Workers have to fight

even to get their earned wages while social security has gone down drastically. Trade Unions are coming forward to oppose privatisation and closure of industrial units. They are also resisting taking over of units by MNCs at throw away prices. Russian Government has not been implementing the commitments given in agreements signed with the trade unions.

Speakers from Latin American countries narrated growing unity among these countries in the struggle against globalisation and intervention of U.S imperialists in their domestic affairs. Several strike struggles have been launched against new attacks from the Multinationals against the standard of living of the workers. The participants from Arab countries were particularly vocal against U.S. intervention in their countries. The delegate from Sudan gave a graphic picture of the U.S. attack on a cosmetics factory on the plea that it was manufacturing deadly chemicals. The delegate from Iraq narrated how children have died due to shortage of medicines and baby food. The speaker from Palestine narrated how Israel continues to occupy a large part of their territory despite agreement to vacate them.

Speaker from Yugoslavia explained how their country was divided due to U.S. imperialist machinations and the economy was shattered due to the role played by MNCs.

Delegates from the Socialist countries pointed out how

despite worldwide capitalist economic crisis, their economies have been rapidly advancing due to their reliance on Socialism.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU, while reviewing the international scenario, pointed out how working class of India is conducting united struggles against the economic policies of the BJP led Government. He mentioned the call given by the NPMO in the massive rally on 9th March to organise one day nationwide strike on 11th May 2000, against the policies of globalisation.

Sukomal Sen, speaking on behalf of TUI Public Employees, gave a resume of its activities and how it has been able to coordinate the struggles of the public employees all over the world.

Suneet Chopra, speaking on behalf of AIAWU, narrated the struggles conducted by the agricultural workers in India and how they are coming to the forefront to participate in the united movement of the mass organisations.

NO ADOPTION OF POLICY DOCUMENT

Despite interesting debate, the Congress could not adopt the policy document due to differences expressed by various speakers. It was, therefore, left to the newly elected Presidential Council to finalise the document in the light of discussions in the Congress. There were regional meetings of the delegates from all continents on 26th March, when delegates discussed the regional issues

and the manner in which the activities should be coordinated. During the discussions, it was pointed out that experience of the last two WFTU Congresses showed that no follow up action was taken by the WFTU on the recommendations of the regional meetings. Most of them expressed the view that at least this should not be repeated and serious efforts should be made to develop regional co-operation. Most of the speakers underlined the growing attacks of the MNCs and emphasised the need for international co-operation against the depredations of the MNCs.

SOUTH ASIAN CO-OPERATION

There was a special meeting of the representatives of trade unions in South Asian countries which considered the issue of improving the regional coordination. All countries, except Pakistan, were present. Pakistan delegation could not attend since the Government of India did not grant visa to the delegates. The meeting decided to have regular meetings of trade unions of South Asian countries and take up the issues with Heads of the States of SAARC countries. The meeting also decided to have solidarity action whenever workers of one of these countries launched struggles on common issues. To begin with, the meeting decided to observe 11th May 2000 as a day against globalisation and express solidarity with the working class in India, who would be going on nationwide strike against the economic

policies of the Govt. of India. A meeting of the trade unions in South Asia has been fixed in Calcutta by the end of June.

The Resolution Commission constituted by the Plenary Session finalised several resolutions which were approved by the final plenary session. It approved a Delhi Declaration which called upon the working class all over the world to organise protest action against U.S. imperialist hegemonism and globalisation. It further endorsed the declaration adopted by the International T.U. Solidarity Conference Against Economic Blockades and Sanctions. By another resolution the Congress strongly condemned the discrimination and inhuman treatment of immigrant labour and called for national and international action to guarantee their trade union and human rights. The Congress further demanded cancellation of foreign debt of the least developed countries so that the funds could be used for economic development of those

countries.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS

The Congress expressed concern for non-implementation of the decisions of the World Development Summit held at Copenhagen in 1995, and appealed to International T.U. organisations to jointly campaign for implementation of these decisions. It further expressed regret for non implementation of Beijing declaration for women and supported the women's global march for implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action.

The Congress condemned the violation of trade union rights by several countries in the world and demanded restoration of T.U. rights for the workers.

By a separate resolution the World Congress supported the demands of the Arab people, for unification of Korea and Cyprus. It congratulated the working class of India for the decision to organise general strike all over India on 11th May 2000.

The Congress passed resolutions on protection of

environment, on demands of young workers and retired workers and pensioners.

On behalf of CITU, Chittabrata Majumdar, Kali Ghosh and M.K. Pandhe participated in the Resolution Commission. Sukomal Sen was nominated as Rapporteur of the Asian and Pacific Regional T.U. meeting. E.K. Nayanar, Chief Minister, Kerala gave a lunch to the delegates and observers on 25th March while Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister, West Bengal hosted a lunch on 26th March. The All India State Government Employees Federation arranged lunch on 28th March. The CITU took the responsibility for arrangement of simultaneous translation and extended secretarial services during the Congress.

The Congress elected a new General Council and Presidential Council, including K.L. Mahendra as President (for 2000-2001) and Alexander Zharikov as General Secretary. The 14th World Trade Union Conference concluded with the singing of "The International".

There is a serious crisis in the economic sphere, especially in the third world countries. The crisis have deepened because, in the name of globalisation and liberalisation, new economic policy guidelines have been thrust upon the national governments. In India, the average annual rate of growth of industrial production came down sharply after adoption of policy of liberalisation. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the rate of unemployment and side by side, prices, particularly of essential commodities, have also increased unabatedly. As a result of the entire policy - the slowing down of production, unemployment and inflation - the interests of the 80% of the population of our country have been adversely affected and the poor have become poorer. We, of the left, are against these policies. Therefore, there is an international pressure on the Government and other institutions to marginalise left forces and play down our views and policies. Economic pressure is being exerted by international forces for political purposes in order that the so called reforms process goes on much to the detriment of the people's interests, but it is worth-noting that protests and resistance are growing.

(From Jyoti Basu's speech at the International TU Solidarity Conference)

ECONOMY ON RAILS !

DERAILING OF TARGETS...

Stagnant tax-GDP ratio, coupled with other unavoidable expenditure has derailed the 9th plan financing pattern....

Tax-GDP ratio target for the 9th plan, as per revised GDP series with 1993-94 as base year, was fixed at 9.5% in 1997-98 to reach 10.85 % in the terminal year of the plan in 2001-02.

As opposed to the targets, the tax-GDP ratio has been estimated at 9.2% in 1997-98, further slipped to 8.2% in 198-99 and 9.2% in 1999-2000. Unfortunately, the tax-GDP ratio has never reached the level of 9.5% for 1997-98(not to speak of 10.85% for the terminal year)

(The Financial Express, 10-04-2000)

GDP TARGET TO BE MISSED : 9TH PLAN REVIEW

The mid term review of the 9th plan says: GDP growth target of 6.8% will be missed....The real cause for slow growth is lack of investments, officials say. The private investments cannot be expected to fill the gap. There is therefore need to raise public investment to around 33% of total investments...

(Business Standard, 11-04-2000)

UNSOOUND RECOVERY

Indian policy makers are upbeat over economy's recovery from an industrial slump...But many economists say it is premature to assume a bright prospect...

Lack of capital investment and absence of sustained domestic demand may temper growth this year.....Last year's acceleration in industrial growth and export was so pronounced because of a weak base(lower performance in the year before last)... "The current recovery is quite patchy and will not go for long" said Pradeep Srivastava of National Council of Applied Economic Research(NCAER)...Bank credit has risen but not capital expenditure, exports have grown but not the country's export range or markets, with the sole exception of software, which still account for less than 1.5% of GDP....

(The Financial Express, 11-04-2000)

CONSUMERISM BASED INDUSTRIAL RECOVERY !

The CSO's quick estimates on index of industrial production for December 99 reconfirms the trend the nature of industrial recovery is pronounced in consumer durables(12%) than in other categories...The Consumer non-durables in contrast grew by only 3.9%(much less than the growth in 97-98 period)...Performance of capital goods sector was dismal. In December 99, it registered 4.4% growth, compared to 11.9% in December 98...Industrial recovery is skewed in favour of consumer durables and biased against capital goods sector... this means that productive potential for long run is not being created...

(The Observer, 15-02-2000)

DUMPING OF CHEMICAL GOODS HITS SSIs...

The Chemical Industries have become worst victims of large-scale dumping...Most of the chemical units affected are small scale units... A study by ASSOCHAM found that of the 42 reported cases of dumping so far, as many as 35 are for chemical products...

(The Financial Express, 10-04-2000)

SURGING PLASTIC GOODS IMPORT THREATEN LOCAL INDUSTRIES...

Consumption of plastic products made locally has slid down by 4% to 12% over last three years, mainly because rising import of plastic goods from various parts of the globe, according to All India Plastic Manufacturers' Association(AIPMA).

Around 60% of the plastic units in the small scale industry sector(SSi) are currently fighting their battle against the surging import of plastic goods. The latest EXIM policy of 2000-01 has further relaxed the norms of import and made situation for the domestic industry more difficult. According to AIPMA President, Arvind Mehta, during last few years, plastic goods are being dumped in the country....and the situation raises doubts of under invoicing by importers and evasion of customs duty...

(The Financial Express, 10-04-2000)

HEADING WHERE ?

HEY DAY FOR MNCs HIGHER PROFIT DESPITE LOWER SALES GROWTH

An independent study of MNC's performance showed aggregate net profit went up by 31% while aggregate sales grew by 13% only. An Economic Times study on financials of 64 MNCs showed that aggregate sales of sample companies grew by 15% in 1999 while their net profit went up by 42%.

Hindustan Lever posted a 33% jump in net profit despite depressed sales growth by only 7%. Bata recorded a 26% growth in net profit for a mere 4% rise in sales. Auto ancillary MICO grew 51% in net profit while the sales turnover was up by 16%. Less growth in production, even less rise in sales,

still much higher rise in net profit...

(Source: The Economic Times, 10-04-2000)

FII's RULING THE ROOST...

The last week's meltdown and subsequent resurgence in stock prices has established that the Foreign Institutional Investors(FII) are in full control of the Indian bourses. There are 506 FIIs registered for trading in India, of these 200 are active and yet it is about two dozen FIIs who rule the roost. If anybody dares to question them on their action, they would hold the entire economy to ransom. This much is clear from the events. Witness the income-tax notices to FIIs and the subsequent retreat by the tax authorities...

(Times of India, 10-04-2000)

WITHOUT COMMENTS

GLOBALISATION COULD MEAN RECOLONISATION

"South East Asia risks being colonised again unless the forces of globalisation are regulated...We did not fight to be free of old imperialism in order to have the privilege of bowing down to new imperialism...Malaysian experience had shown that the process of globalisation apart from encouraging foreign investment could also mean massive outflows of capital to impoverish and weaken us and to prepare us for foreign takeovers of our business and possibly our countries too" : Mahathir Mohammad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, in Asian Business Summit at Kualalumpur on 11-04-2000.

(The Observer, 12-04-2000)

PROSTRATING AT THE FII ALTAR...

Just last week, some foreign institutional investors and their Indian cronies brought Indian Finance Minister to his knees as they were upset that the income tax authorities were looking into a few instances of tax evasion...At least two foreign funds decided to quit the country against this move. So the finance minister Yashwant Sinha decided to summon the IT officer concerned and asked him to withdraw the action taken by the department...The point one wants to make here is how long are we going to kowtow to foreigners and their investments in such a slavish manner..at what cost do we need these investments?...Where is India's sovereignty if anyone from across the seas can hold out a threat even when we are only implementing the laws of our land?...Our policies are being dictated by the IMF and World Bank. we are being threatened every now and then and we submit humbly to these threats.....

We were told that the objective of globalisation was to increase economic prosperity and not bleed the country...If the whole game is to be economic prosperity of few individuals, then what is the whole objective of globalisation? It also indicates the inability of the Govt to enforce any kind of law or rule within the Indian state.

We seem to holding ourselves to ransom ... and it is so visible....

(Olga Tellis in The Observer, 11-04-2000)

A.P: BRUTAL POLICE ATTACK ON ANGANWADI WOMEN

Chandra Babu Naidu never tires of talking about his "untiring efforts" for the development of the State of Andhra Pradesh and for the upliftment of poor women. On many an occasion he had told that because of the blessings of women he could get re-elected. But the real face of this "hi tech" Chief Minister and the favourite "yes man" of the World Bank and imperialism was exposed on the 30th of March, 2000, with the inhuman treatment meted out to the thousands of anganwadi workers and helpers, who gathered in Hyderabad. The anganwadi women were demanding that the Chief Minister implement the promises made by him about 4 years back.

The anganwadi workers get from Rs.438/- to Rs.563/- p.m. and the helpers Rs.260/-. It will be clear to any sensible person that it is impossible to maintain oneself, let alone the family, with this meagre amount. The anganwadi employees are continuously burdened with extra work. A recent report of the Government itself recognises that they are forced to do various types of work, quite unrelated to their job in the ICDS. It has also pointed out that 50% of their work time was spent in implementing the programmes of the State Government. Naidu had in fact agreed in 1996 that the anganwadi women would be paid extra money for extra work assigned by the State Government. This was not

implemented till now even after repeated representations, demonstrations and agitations in various forms. On 30th March, the anganwadi employees in the State went on strike and came to Hyderabad again to represent to the Chief Minister. Last time, when about 10,000 anganwadi women demonstrated at Hyderabad, Naidu told them that he could not promise them anything because the notification for assembly elections was issued on that very day. The women thought that this would be the proper time as the assembly was in session.

While the rally was going on at the Indira Park, a delegation including Lalita, President of the union, M.A.G. affor, President of the State committee of the CITU, and other office bearers and executive members of the union went to meet the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister refused to pay anything from the State budget on the plea that there were no funds and even denied of ever making any promise. Before the delegation came out of the assembly premises all of them was arrested. The anganwadi women who were waiting for their leaders to come and report the outcome of the talks became restless at the undue delay in their return. The Police evaded reply when questioned. At about 4 p.m. it was known that the delegation was arrested. The women became very angry and all of them at once started to cross the

barricades. Police used water cannons to disperse them but failed. The women stood firm. Tear gas was also used without success. Women threw the tear gas shells back at the Police. Finally, mounted police were used to disperse the women. Hundreds of women were injured in the lathi charge. An anganwadi worker, Kouslya, from East Godavari district was hit in the abdomen by the horses. Some fell down unconscious. Initially, there was some confusion, as the anganwadi women had never had this type of experience in their lives. But once they realised that their leaders were arrested and the Government was answering their demands with force, they refused to yield and resisted the Police with all their might.

Entire media, the trade unions and all the democratic minded people severely condemned the brutal Police attack on the anganwadi women. It has to be noted that the State Government spent hundreds of crores of rupees for the visit of the American President Bill Clinton. In the presence of Clinton, Naidu boasted of his developmental activities and efforts to empower women through self help groups. But, to the anganwadi women, Naidu had only lathi charge to offer. There was heated discussion in the assembly on the next day and the Chief Minister had to apologise to the anganwadi women. But at the same time, he was not ready to

concede any of their demands and rather chose to brand their struggle as politically motivated. The intolerance of Naidu towards the genuine demands of the people and their struggles was again manifested a few days later, when he bluntly told a delegation of "education volunteers" - teachers in primary schools who were engaged on contract basis and given that name - that he wanted to ban trade unions.

The Andhra Pradesh Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union, CITU State committee, and the State committee of AIDWA gave a call for statewide protests against the Police atrocity on the poor anganwadi women. Massive demonstrations were held throughout the State, in which workers from various other industries and a large number of women participated. The union printed leaflets with the photographs of the police attack and has distributed them among the general public, explaining the genuineness of the demands of the anganwadi employees. It has decided to collect one crore signatures in support of their demands.

The All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers has severely condemned the brutal attack on the anganwadi employees in Andhra Pradesh and sent a telegram to the Chief Minister demanding that their genuine demands be conceded immediately. It has directed all the State committees to send similar telegrams to the Chief Minister of the State.

S.K. NAMBIAR

Com. S.K. Nambiar, veteran leader of the railway workers' movement and former General Secretary of Dakshin Railway Employees Union (CITU), passed away on 6th April, 2000 in his native village of Palayangadi, Kannur District, Kerala. He was 77. Beginning his career as a railway employee, Com. S.K. Nambiar took a leading part in organising the railway workers in Tamil Nadu, along with Comrades K. Ananthan Nambiar, M. Kalyana Sundaram and R. Umanath. He was a detenué during 1948-49 and 1976 in emergency period. He was also the editor of "Thozhilarasu", DREU's Tamil monthly. He had authored a book on the history of railway workers' movement. He was also a member of the CITU, Tamil Nadu State Committee. The CITU and "The Working Class" pay homage to the memory of Com. S.K. Nambiar and convey condolences to the bereaved members of his family.

CITU DEPLORES AP CM's COMMENTS

In a letter dated 10.4.2000, addressed to Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary said:

"We are shocked at your views towards trade unions as reported in the Press on various occasions recently.

Ours is a democratic country and our Constitution provides the right to association to all sections of the society. Trade union rights of the workers, as enunciated in the Trade Union Act of our country, have been won by the workers after decades of struggle and are part of their democratic rights. We want to remind you that the Trade Union Act allows that 50% of the office bearers of a union can be outsiders. This has been necessitated to protect the interests of the workers, particularly in the unorganised sector, where they face threats to their job security from employers on forming unions. It is unfortunate that as a peoples' representative, you chose to echo the demands of the employers, instead of trying to safeguard the interests of the workers.

Your allegation that trade unions led by the Left "do nothing but organise strikes and bandhs and thus paralyse industrial growth" is entirely unfounded. The Reserve Bank report clearly states that in 98% of cases, the management is responsible for closures and lockouts, which affect industrial production. Workers go on strike only as a last resort and are well aware that their interests lie in protecting the industry.

We shall, therefore, be glad if you will review your stand and ensure that the hardwon democratic rights of the workers are respected."

GLOBALISATION AND THE NEW TEXTILE POLICY

P.K. Ganguly

Kashiram Rana, the Minister of Textiles had announced in Parliament in mid 1998 that the existing Textile Policy (1985) had become out dated, and a new Textile policy will be formulated. Very hurriedly the Government constituted a 12-member "Expert Committee" by a Resolution dated 24th July, 1998, under the Chairmanship of S.R. Sathyam, the former Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, who was mainly responsible for scuttling the unanimous agreement for revival of NTC mills. The 12-member Expert Committee comprised of the private mill magnets, IDBA Chairman, Planning Commission member and bourgeois economists, the protagonists of liberalisation, but no representatives from the handloom or powerloom sector.

Although the Sathyam Committee has submitted its report to the Ministry on 3rd August, 1999, it has been kept "secret". The plea of the Minister is that the Ministry itself has not yet finalised its views on the report. But they have not kept it secret from the press. The Minister himself alongwith the Secretary have addressed several press conferences to brief the forthcoming textile policy, as well as their plans on NTC.

In any case, whatever have come out in the press, the recommendations of the Sathyam Committee are a further aggressive turn in pursuit of the liberalised and globalised economy, in view of the phasing out of the Multi Fibre Arrangement (MFA) by December, 2004, heralding the post-WTO dictated international trade scenario.

The Main thrusts of the recommendations are as follows:-

General Recommendations:

- 1) Production of textiles for export (not for domestic consumption).
- 2) Production of "World Class" fibers/yarns and textile products of "internationally acceptable quality".
- 3) Additional thrust to be given to non-cotton fibers, despite cotton being the most important raw material even now.

4) Closure of sick mills - private, cooperative and NTC mills, as well as sick State Textile mills. Immediately, all the plain looms in the NTC mills be scrapped. Further, "to revive the potentially viable NTC mills, such mills be privatised." Now the Government has come out openly with its policy of withdrawing public sector from the non-core industries like textiles.

5) Conducive labour laws and Exit Policy to be officially implemented forthwith. There is a full chapter on Industrial Relations recommending complete pruning of the entire set of Labour Laws to suit the Corporate Sector and the liberalised economy. Recommendation has also been made for Corporate governance for "healthy industrial relations" and Corporate growth.

6) Since the BIFR has not succeeded in either closing down the non-viable mills or reviving the potentially viable ones, with the Exit Policy coming into force, the BIFR will become redundant. The managements and lenders have to decide on revival or closure of the mills.

7) Mills in the metropolitan areas to be shifted to rural areas and the finance for this purpose can be obtained by selling the land in the cities.

8) Recommendations have also been made for liberalised industrial and labour laws to be implemented in the first instance to 100 percent EOUs, EPZs and Textile Parks, which should be declared as Public Utility Services and free from labour laws.

9) Although the composite character of mills has been meekly appreciated as having intrinsic strength, yet recommendations have been made to ensure larger profits of the textile barons for phasing out all plain looms and upgradation of semi-automatic looms to automatic or shuttleless looms.

10) In the Powerloom Sector also same recommendations have been made. In addition to this, family held powerloom units and the small and medium owners have been asked to consolidate into single bigger unit of powerlooms

instead of having fragmented small nature of their units. Also, recommendation has been made to free powerlooms from all labour laws and social security measures. Already about 80 per cent of the powerlooms are directly or indirectly controlled by the big business. Thus a further large section of the small and medium powerlooms will be closed down and render joblessness in tens of thousands.

Handloom Sector

The Handloom Sector in particular, is going to be worst affected by the Sathyam Committee recommendation and is under the threat of being virtually wiped out.

But the Sathyam Committee recommendations have in one go withdrawn all the protective and supportive schemes and thrown the entire sector open for ravage by international capitalist racketeering. It is true that since the liberalisation started in 1991, there were attempts to open up the sector to Globalisation theory. In 1996, a High Powered Committee (Mira Seth Committee) was constituted to look in to the Handloom Sector. This Committee however recommended for continuation of all the protective and supportive measures. Then the Abid Hussain Committee was constituted, which gave the retrograde recommendation of deservation. But a Supreme Court judgement asked the Government to strictly ensure that all the 22 reserved items are produced in the Handloom Sector and not encroached upon by big business. Now the Sathyam Committee report has not only rejected the Mira Seth Committee recommendations but gone ahead of the Abid Hussain Committee report.

Retrograde Recommendations

According to Sathyam Committee, reservation for production in Handloom is an "artificial support. It has got no meaning in a period of globalisation and liberalisation of imports. The handloom weavers will have to stand on their own". This one step will cost the teeming millions of the country of their only livelihood. This recommendation follows simultaneously with the Government's agreement with USA and other countries to remove quantitative restrictions on imports of a large number of items. This will further most particularly affect Assam and the entire North-East region which have got 60 per cent of the

handlooms in India and the main stay of the economy.

The Committee says that if at all some reservations be there, it should for bulk purchases by the Government departments of Defence, Railways, Police, Hospitals, etc. The Sathyam Committee experts do not know that bulk purchases by these departments are made from mainly powerlooms and mills, except for a very few handloom items like furnishings, bed sheets for Railways and Bandage cloth for Hospitals, and the situation is not going to change.

Another disastrous recommendation is to exempt the spinning mills from the obligation of producing Hank Yarn, the main raw material for handlooms. The Committee has summarily stated that Hank Yarn requirement can be met by conversion of Cone Yarn (produced for powerlooms) to Hank Yarn through the Master Weavers or Cooperative Societies. The experts have no idea of what level of infra-structure is needed for such conversion with additional costs, for which the poor weavers will have to pay a heavy price. So, withdrawal of all reliefs ad support on one hand, and withdrawal of reservation and Hank Yarn availability on the other hand will go together to kill the handloom weavers.

But the last nail is yet to be put in the coffin. The experts have divided the Handloom Sector into three tiers. The first tier producing unique, exclusive, high value added items of 80 to 100 counts. The second tier producing medium priced fabrics of 40 to 80 counts, and the third tier producing plain and low cost items of 40 counts and below.

Since the policy is for production of "World Class" fabrics of "international standards", so the recommendation is that, "the weavers of 3rd tier and their progeny need to be provided with alternate avenues of livelihood. The least painful conversion would be to convert them into either skilled weavers in cooperatives, or commercial first tier handloom units, or powerloom weavers of third tier with semi automatic looms. The weavers of the first tier will be strengthened and second tier will be provided with adequate support to graduate to first tier".

So the recommendations like "need to be provided

(cont. on page 9)

REPORTS & EVENTS

PORT & DOCK: PM's INTERVENTION SOUGHT

Meeting in Calcutta on 11-4-2000, the leaders of the five all India federations of Port & Dock workers, have deplored the failure of the Government of India to honour their commitment to settle the outstanding issues by 31.3.2000. They have addressed a joint letter to Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister, seeking his immediate intervention. The text of the joint letter is as under; "As you are aware the joint Bipartite wage negotiations have been stalled as the Government of India went back from their earlier directive that the wage settlement should be for a period of five (5) years. This directive was unilaterally changed for 10 years later on, which made all workers restive.

As a matter of fact the guide line for 10 years agreement was issued by the Department of Public Enterprises. There is no justification for extending the

guidelines to the Port and Dock industry, since it is not a public sector undertaking even according to the concept laid down by the Government itself.

The Five Federations had to go on strike from 18th January 2000 in which the demand for settlement for a period of 5 years was also included. During the course of discussions the Minister for Surface Transport agreed to settle the matter before the end of March, 2000.

Another demand was concerning the payment of House Rent Allowance from the date of the commencement of the agreement. The Minister for Surface Transport agreed to settle this issues also before the end of March 2000.

We deeply regret to inform you that the matters have not yet been settled so far causing strong resentment among the Port and Dock workers all over the country.

If the issues are not settled at an early date, the Five Federations of the Port and Dock workers will be left with no other alternative but to relaunch the nationwide Dock strike to press for these demands.

We, therefore, seek your intervention so that the matters are settled amicably without any delay.

We earnestly hope that you will view the matters with concern and use your good offices to settle the two outstanding issues at an early date." This letter has been signed by: S.R. Kulkarni (All India Port & Dock Workers' Federation, M. Shetye (All India Port & Dock Workers' Federation (Workers); M.K. Pandhe (Water Transport Workers' Federation of India (CITU); D. Kalan (Indian National Port & Dock Workers' Federation (INTUC); and Rama Rao (Port & Waterfront Workers Federation of India (AITUC).

STEEL WORKERS AGAINST PRIVATISATION

All over the country the steel workers are on the path of struggle against the Govt of India's desperate bid to privatize/sell out a major part of public sector steel industry.

On 15th February 2000 the Union cabinet decided to sell out Alloy Steels Plant, Salem Steel Plant and VISL besides hiving off the captive power plants at Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro, the fertilizer

plant at Rourkela and the oxygen plant at Bhilai. Also the Govt decided to privatize Vizag Steel Plant, the most modern steel plant in the country. The steel workers all over the country immediately reacted through massive demonstration in all the steel centers in the country on 16th February itself and in Salem Steel Plant 100% strike was observed by all the trade unions.

The Steel Workers Federation of India in its working committee meeting held on 17th March at Calcutta decided to hold protest demonstration all over the steel industry on 3rd April 2000 and also prepare for resistance to any move of sell-out at the plant level itself in association with other unions if available.

Report received so far reveals that in almost all the steel centers at

REPORTS & EVENTS

Durgapur, Bokaro, Rourkela, Bhilai, Salem and Vizag massive demonstration was held against the privatization move of public sector steel plants.

Besides above, even before 3rd April, the workers sprang into resistance struggle. On 28th March, workers in the Durgapur Steel Plant successfully resisted the entry of the prospective buyer of the captive power unit into the plant premises.

On 27th March workers of Rourkela Steel Plant demonstrated at the Rourkela Railway station to block the proposed visit of NTPC for buying the captive power unit of RSP and the NTPC team cancelled their programme. On 24th March, more than 2000

workers demonstrated before the Orissa Assembly opposing sell out of RSP power plant and fertilizer plant and 1540 workers were arrested. The MLAs from CPI(M), CPI, JD(S), JMM and Congress demanded in the assembly a resolution opposing privatization of RSP and proceeding was stalled.

In Salem Steel Plant, all the trade unions joined together to form Save Salem Steel Committee, and on behalf of the committee, a delegation consisting of P Paneerselvam and S Selvamani from CITU, AP Senthalmanni from INTUC, K Subramani, A Selvaraj from PTS, a Rajarathinam and P Murugesan from ATP, R Thiagarajan from Ministerial Staff

Association and K Manuvel and R Perumal from SC/ST association met the leaders of all the political parties in the Tamilnadu Assembly and requested them to oppose privatisation of Salem Steel Plant in pursuance of the unanimous resolution in the Assembly against Salem privatisation.

On 5th April 2000, in the meeting of National Joint Committee for Steel(NJCS), representatives from all the trade unions viz CITU, AITUC, INTUC and HMS recorded their strong protest against the Govt move to sell out major part of the public sector steel industry and also the anti worker policy of the SAIL management.

PSU WAGE NEGOTIATION: WORKERS PROTEST

The anti worker guidelines of the Govt extending the tenure of wage settlement for PSU workers to 10 years along with other conditionalities have been opposed by the entire trade union movement. On 2nd February 2000, 15 lakhs PSU workers all over the country went on strike at the call of Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions. On 1st February, the on Labour Minister reported in the meeting held with the Central trade Unions that The Union Cabinet has discussed the demands of the striking PSU workers and appointed a Committee of Ministers to deal on the concerned issues and take decision by the end of March.

CITU General Secretary, M K Pandhe in his letter to Union Labour Minister dated 24th March reminded him about the commitment made before the Central Trade Unions and also the Minister's statement in the meeting of the Standing Labour Committee that the issue of the tenure of PSU wage revision will be reviewed in the light of the opinion of the trade unions and others in the SLC and finalised by 31st March. Pandhe demanded immediate withdrawal of the anti-worker guidelines to facilitate meaningful wage negotiation in the PSUs which has already been delayed for more than three years. The Joint Action Front of

Bangalore based Public Sector Trade Unions representing the entire workforce of the Bangalore based PSUs and that of KGF and Mysore has sent an ultimatum that if the Govt do not come out with final decision in line with the demand of the unions within 15th April 2000, then the JAF leadership would be compelled to go in for INDEFINITE HUNGER STRIKE and other forms of industrial action by the workers from any day after 15th April. The joint ultimatum to Prime Minister was signed by Michael Fernandes, S Suryanarayana Rao, A Harry Joseph, G Nagaraju and C V Krishnappa, all Joint Convenors of Joint Action Front Bangalore.

REPORTS & EVENTS

BRICK KILN WORKERS' MILITANT STRUGGLE

Around one lakh brick kiln workers of Haryana, out of total two and half lakh, scattered over 19 districts of the State, have been in the midst of grim struggle including strike in many districts since 10th March 2000. In five districts, viz., Hissar, Jind, Sirsa, Bhiwani and Gurgaon, around 70000 workers went on for continuous strike braving brutal attacks by the gangsters deployed by the brick kiln owners in collusion with police and local administration. But, in the face of militant mobilisation and resistance by the striking workers in all those five districts, the armed gangsters deployed by the brick kiln owners had to beat a retreat and the police did not dare to publicly take the side of the brick kiln owners. The district administration also had to intervene and put pressure on the

owners for negotiated settlement with the CITU Union.

In the process of determined and militant strike action by the brick kiln workers, the brick kiln owners' associations in the district of Hissar, Jind and Sirsa had to enter into agreement with the CITU Union(Laljhanda Bhatta Mazdoor Union, Haryana) on 31st March, 1st and 4th April and strike was called off there. In Bhiwani and Gurgaon district, the district level associations of brick kiln owners initially refused to negotiate with the CITU Union, but many brick kiln owners in those districts have already come forward for unit wise settlement and the process of negotiation is going on with the striking workers' union. In other districts, the brick kiln workers preparing for strike action have mounted pressure on the brick kiln owners

there.

On 4th April 2000, the central rally of the brick kiln workers was held in Hissar, which witnessed militant mobilisation of 10000 workers. The rally was addressed by Satvir Singh, General Secretary, Haryana State CITU, Pravat Singh of Laljhanda Bhatta Mazdoor Union, Prithhi Singh of Kisan Sabha and Indrajit of CPI(M) among others.

The district level agreements between the Brick Kiln Owners' Association and the CITU Union in association with the district administration led to increase in wages of the workers by around 10% minimum, besides regular arrangement of medical check up of workers and primary school facility for the brick kiln workers with active involvement of the CITU Union.

HUMAN CHAINS IN MUMBAI

As processions to and demonstrations near the State Govt. Mantralaya and other administrative offices in Mumbai are banned and prohibitory orders under section 144 are in force, the protest action took a different turn in the city. It was in the form of Human Chains against the continuing anti-people and anti-working class policies of the BJP led Government in 12 centres in different parts of Mumbai on 15.3.2000. The demands inscribed

and highlighted in the banners, posters and caps were

- * Stop surrendering to the imperialist policies;
- * Stop privatisation of public sector industries;
- * Stop fraudulent method of compilation of index figures for the purpose of calculation of statutory minimum wages.
- * Stop contract system in industries
- * Give up the contemplated plan

of bringing in anti-working class amendments in the existing labour laws.

The protest action was jointly organised by the Mumbai based Trade Unions Joint Action Committee. This committee comprises the central trade union organisations and independent unions.

The 12 different places selected for staging this human chain protest demonstrations were near the domestic airport in the

REPORTS & EVENTS

highspeed national highway at Santacruz in north west side of Mumbai and in Bhandup, Mulund, Kanjur Marg, Kurla and Chembur in the north east. Andheri in Western Suburbs, Dadar in central Mumbai, Priyadarshini to Sion Railway Station in the eastern highways, Dock and Port locality at Ballard Pier in Fort area and

Flora Fountain, near Churchgate in South Mumbai. Leaders of the action committee addressed the participants and other sections of the people in all the 12 places.

The human chain programme was preceded by a week long preparation and propaganda meetings by different constituents of the Trade Unions Joint Action

Committee.

The President of Maharashtra State Committee of CITU, Prabhakar Sanzgiri, General Secretary, K.L. Bajaj and others have jointly congratulated the workers for making this programme a success.

(Report from P.R. Krishnan)

PONDICHERRY GOVT EMPLOYEES RALLY

Confederation of Pondicherry State Government Employees Associations staged a mammoth rally of Employees working in Government, Local Bodies, Co-operative Institutions, Public Undertakings, Private Schools etc. in Pondicheery on 22.03.2000. The rally, participated by over 4000 employees including 500 women, started at 6.30 pm. from opposite the Swadeshi Cotton Mills at Maraimalai Adigal

Salai and culminated at the Government square at 7.30pm. A meeting was held with R.Jayaraman, President of the Confederation, presiding. R. Anandarajan, General Secretary of the Confederation, explained the objectives of the rally and the salient features in the memorandum to the Chief Secretary to Government.

The rally condemned the attitude of the authorities in not holding

effective discussions with the Confederation and Association representatives over their demands, in victimising the office bearers and activists for Association activities and coercive tactics to crush the Association in several departments.

If the demands are not settled through proper discussions, the Confederation will launch State-wide direct actions in May 2000.

MASSIVE CITU RALLY IN CHENNAI

Braving Scorching sun, nearly fifty thousand workers, both men and women, marched through the streets of Chennai on 3rd April, 2000, echoing demands of various sections of the working people of the State.

The march, organised by the CITU State Committee, was the culmination of a three months long campaign in the State.

The 17 point charter of demands included all the major issues - price-rise, closure, sickness,

privatisation, unemployment relief, equal wages for women, child care facilities, sexual harassment, fixation of proper minimum wages, pension and other social security schemes to unorganised sectors and ensuring democratic rights.

The procession begun from Anna Salai-Wallajah Road junction and passed through the Triplicane High Road and culminated in Car Street, where a massive public meetings was held.

The processionists, covering all industries in the public, private, co-operative and unorganised sectors carried flags, banners and placards with their demands. There were thousands of women, mostly from unorganised sector, including construction, tailoring and beedi. Many of the workers, including those from Public Sector and unorganised workers like head-load workers, marched in their uniforms.

The processionists had come form

REPORTS & EVENTS

all the districts of the State and from Pondicherry.

Prior to this rally, hundreds of meetings were held in various centers in the State. Thousands of hand-bills and posters were published. The first phase of the campaign concluded with the massive Dharnas in more than 50 centres in the State on 24th January.

During February and March, scores of sectorial campaigns were undertaken, in addition to the district level campaigns. The Government of India's budget and the privatisation efforts in respect of the prestigious Public Sector unit in the State-Salem Steel Plant created a further impetus to the campaign.

The procession in Chennai on 3rd April, thus became one of the largest mobilisation of the

working people in the State. The procession was led by J. Hemachandra MLA, President, T.K. Rengarajan, General Secretary and other office-bearers of State CITU.

The public meeting was presided by J. Hemachandran and addressed by T.K. Rengarajan, A.K. Padmanabhan, A. Soundararajan, P.M. Kumar, D. Janakiraman, and T.A. Latha. E. Ponmudi, Secretary, South Chennai CITU, welcomed the gathering and T. Narayanan, Secretary, North Chennai CITU, proposed vote of thanks.

The speakers, explained the demands and reported on the meeting with the Chief Minister, to whom a representation outlining the demands charter was presented by a delegation led by J. Hemachandran.

The meeting called upon the workers to continue the struggle and the next phase will culminate in the General strike on 11th May. T.K. Rengarajan, addressing the rally, called upon the workers to seek the support of all sections of the people, on these demands, so that the General Strike becomes a Bandh on 11th May.

CITU State Secretariat, met at Chennai, after the rally, congratulated the participants in the rally and the District Committees and Federations for making the rally a success. The Secretariat called upon the unions to continue the struggle so as to achieve the demands and also conduct widest united campaigns, so as to make the 11th May strike, a complete success.

(Report from A.K. Padmanabhan)

CITU-ILO TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Two more training programmes, under the Workers' Education Project of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in which the CITU is one of the counterpart central trade union organisations in India, were held in March-April, 2000.

The programme at Singrauli (Headquarters of the Northern Coalfields Ltd.) was under the aegis of the All India Coal Workers' Federation and held from the 27th to 31st March, 2000. The training programme was inaugurated by Mary Johnson,

Director of the ILO office in New Delhi on 27.3.2000. Sunil Basu Roy, General Secretary, AI Coal Workers' Federation presided.

25 participants, from different affiliate unions of the Coal Federation, attended the programme.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU and President, Coal Federation gave the valedictory address on 31st March 2000. Tapan Sen, Secretary, CITU, presided.

The national level training programme with participants from

the Hindi speaking States was held from the 3rd to 7th April, 2000, in Jaipur. 22 participants from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Goa, Punjab, Delhi and Haryana attended the programme.

Ravindra Shukla, General Secretary of the Rajasthan State CITU, inaugurated the programme on 3.4.2000. Tapan Sen, Secretary, CITU, presided.

The methodology of these training programmes were so designed as to ensure active involvement of all the participants. In each session,

REPORTS & EVENTS



the facilitator introduced the subject in around 60 minutes time. The participants were divided into 4 groups. The groups discussed the subject on the basis of activity sheets, for about 2 hours. After group discussions, presentations were made by one participant from each group. The session ended with summing up by the facilitator.

This methodology was very much

appreciated by the participants in both the Singrauli and Jaipur programmes. The participants actively took part in the group discussions and made presentations in rotation.

Emerging challenges before trade unions, Structural Adjustment Programme and its impact, Organising, Gender Equality as Trade Unions, Workers' Graduation and Training were

some of the subjects covered in the training programme.

W R Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU, and Pranab Chakraborty, Steel Workers' Federation of India, coordinated these training programmes. Coalfield Labour Union, Singrauli and the Rajasthan State Committee of CITU extended full cooperation by making excellent arrangements for conducting the programmes.

BTR FUND (Receipts since Jaipur Working Committee Meeting)

CMC Karmachari Union, Hissar	3,100.00	Participants of CITU-ILO Workshop	27,391.00
W R Varada Rajan, CITU	500.00	CITU Gwallior Dist. Committee, MP	500.00
A Dakshi, CITU	1,000.00	Airport Emp. Association, New Delhi	5,000.00
All India Peerless Emp. Union, AP	2,000.00	Engineering Kamdar Union, Gujarat	1,000.00
BEFI Kerala State	5,350.00	Municipal Kamdar Karmachari Union, Gujarat	1,000.00
A Dakshi, CITU	2,000.00	UP State Committee of CITU	10,000.00
W R Varada Rajan	250.00	From Participants of Workshop	1,60,000.00
NPCC Ltd. Workers Union of India, WB	11,000.00	W R Varada Rajan, CITU	1,000.00
MP State Committee of CITU	2,000.00	K Hemalatha	1,000.00
AP State Committee of CITU	52,015.00		
Kerala State Committee of CITU	4,00,000.00	Total (Upto 10.4.2000)	6,90,257.00
Niranjan Singh, CITU	551.00	Receipts upto 7.11.99 (Jaipur meeting)	1,24,35,937.00
Delhi State Committee of CITU	3,000.00		
Sikha Das Gupta, WB	100.00	Total	1,31,26,194.00
W R Varada Rajan, CITU	500.00		

Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers on base: 1982 = 100

Sr. No	Centre	Dec 99	Jan 2000	Feb 2000	Sr. No.	Centre	Dec 99	Jan 2000	Feb 2000
1	Gudur	430	427	426	45	Amritsar	376	378	379
2	Guntur	422	420	419	46	Ludhiana	382	382	380
3	Hyderabad	404	401	403	47	Ajmer	419	421	423
4	Visakhapatnam	428	430	431	48	Jaipur	390	392	395
5	Warangal	436	438	432	49	Chennai	452	458	462
6	D D Tinsukia	395	393	382	50	Coimbatore	426	423	424
7	Guwahati	443	453	450	51	Coonoor	433	424	429
8	Labac-Silchar	386	370	360	52	Madurai	436	431	430
9	Mariani Jorhat	433	423	422	53	Salem	430	420	421
10	Rangapara-Tezpur	431	401	401	54	Tiruchirapally	480	481	470
11	Jamshedpur	409	402	397	55	Agra	401	396	399
12	Jharia	370	367	365	56	Ghaziabad	439	439	441
13	Kodarma	380	368	369	57	Kanpur	427	424	428
14	Monghyr Jamalpur	431	424	423	58	Saharanpur	392	392	392
15	Noamundi	396	388	387	59	Varanasi	474	468	463
16	Ranchi-Hatia	425	414	413	60	Asansol	413	404	399
17	Ahmedabad	435	430	432	61	Calcutta	447	434	430
18	Bhavnagar	456	460	458	62	Darjeeling	391	384	372
19	Rajkot	412	414	415	63	Durgapur	464	457	451
20	Surat	436	437	437	64	Haldia	484	469	471
21	Vadodra	404	409	416	65	Howrah	488	480	474
22	Faridabad	432	432	432	66	Jalpaiguri	406	394	395
23	Yamunanagar	400	399	397	67	Raniganj	379	377	370
24	Srinagar	476	480	480	68	Chandigarh	450	449	448
25	Bangalore	416	416	414	69	Delhi	488	490	491
26	Belgaum	463	471	469	70	Pondicherry	477	471	463
27	Hubli-Dharwar	428	428	426					
28	Mercara	452	453	460		All India	431	431	430
29	Alwaye	429	431	436		Additional Series of Labour Bureau			
30	Mundakayam	454	453	455					
31	Quilon	445	447	452	1	Kothagudem	431	424	424
32	Thiruvananthapuram	482	488	488	2	Himachal Pradesh	413	415	415
33	Balaghat	386	381	379	3	Bhilwara	431	429	430
34	Bhilai	386	382	378	4	Chhindwara	423	419	416
35	Bhopal	445	444	442	5	Tripura	416	399	394
36	Indore	428	426	426	6	Goa	496	504	506
37	Jabalpur	440	433	439					
38	Mumbai	468	484	489					
39	Nagpur	435	438	435					
40	Nasik	439	442	445					
41	Pune	459	466	469					
42	Solapur	455	461	458					
43	Barbil	404	401	397					
44	Rourkela	407	405	401					

Government of India
Ministry of Labour
Labour Bureau
Shimla - 171 004

NEW EXIM POLICY: ABJECT SURRENDER TO IMPERIALISM

Swadesh Dev Roye

The new exim policy for the year 2000-01 announced by the Government is an abject surrender to imperialist forces and is completely against the sovereign economic interest of the country. This is one of the steps agreed to by the BJP Government in December last which has been gifted to the US imperialist as a follow up of Clinton's India visit. The Government is taking a stand that declaration is necessary to comply with the obligation under WTO. However, it should be noted that the Government has already committed such anti-national step to the US imperialist in an agreement signed with the American Government on 28th December, 1999.

It is shocking that the new exim policy has freed another 714 items from the import curb list. Moreover, as per the terms of the agreement by April, 2001 another 715 items will be freed from import restriction. Ever since the BJP-led government has been installed at the centre, control on import including quantitative restrictions for a total of 1905 items have been withdrawn.

It is horrifying that in total neglect to the interest of the industrial growth, development and protection of the domestic country, the new policy has allowed reckless import of wide-ranging consumer goods, food products including those from agriculture and dairy firms. A look at the list of the items released for free import would clearly show that it includes everything; right from very common food items to hosts of daily necessities domestic consumer goods. The list contains 58 items produced in the small-scale industries. The net result of such mindless opening of the floodgates of domestic market for foreign multinational companies is bound to be disaster to the national economy. Our domestic products shall come under open onslaught of the power full foreign MNCs. The latter shall establish dangerous grip on the consumer market in India. Thus the long standing principle of self-reliance and import substitution is given an ominous

goodbye. The small-scale industries will become one of the worst victims to the rabid pro-MNC policies of the Government. At the same time such policies shall definitely widen the path of precious foreign exchange drain from our country resulting heavy pressure on our foreign exchange reserve. The balance of payment crisis shall also deepen. The new exim policy has also announced to establish 'special export processing zones' (SEZ). The SEZs have been allowed 100% foreign direct investment and permitted duty free import of capital goods and raw materials and will have 'full flexibility' from the points of labour laws and other rules and regulations of the country. Thus these Zones shall enjoy endless concessions on account of taxes and duties. It has been estimated that revenue loss to the exchequer on account of the concession will be to the tune of Rs.21,428 crore in the year 2000-01. Given the experience with the EPZ, the SEZs are sure to enjoy immunity in violating the laws of the land including labour laws.

While concessions are granted to foreign MNCs, even the minimum support to the domestic industries are withdrawn, thereby demolishing the much publicised 'principle of level playing field'. Reacting to the new policy the CITU has strongly condemned the BJP-led government's extra loyalty to the imperialist dictates, too much love for the foreign MNCs and disastrous neglect to the interest of the country and mass of the people. Such policy measures of the government are dangerously degrading the political independence and economic sovereignty of the country.

The CITU has called upon the mass of the people in general and working class in particular to take the street to oppose tooth and nail the anti-people and anti-national policies of the government and unleash a powerful movement to liberate the country from the yoke of the pro-imperialist forces.

M.K. PANDHE
ADDRESSING
WFTU
CONGRESS
(Report on
Page 10-13)



WFTU
CONGRESS
DELEGATES
(Photos courtesy :
J Ballabh)

MASSIVE
CITU
RALLY
IN CHENNAI
ON 3.4. 2000
(Report on
Page 20)

