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THE WORKING CLASS

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WARM GREETINGS

For the New Year 2003 !



AS WE ENTER YET ANOTHER NEW YEAR
LET US REAFFIRM OUR RESOLVE,
AND MATCH IT WITH ACTION,
TO MAKE THE WORLD WE LIVE
A PRECIOUS TREASURE IN THE UNIVERSE,
WHICH EVERYONE, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WILL EVER CHERISH!

COAL MINERS RESTIVE OVER GOVT. INACTION

The five lakh coal miners all over the country had unitedly decided to go on a countrywide strike from 5th to 11th August, 2002. The Government of India, sensing the mood of the workers, had convened negotiations on the eve of the proposed strike. A tripartite agreement was signed between the Coal India management and five Federations functioning in coal industry on 1st August, 2002 in presence of the chief Labour Commissioner, Government of India. But, the Government and the Coal India management have gone into deep slumber thereafter. There being no progress on their demands, the coal miners have become restive.

In this background, the leaders of the five Federations viz. M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Shafique Khan (AITUC), Rajendra Singh (INTUC) Jayant Poodar (HMS) and Basant Kumar Roy (BMS) addressed a joint letter to Uma Bharati, Minister for Coal and Mines, Government of India, on 12th December, 2002.

They recorded their deep regret that despite lapsing on four and a half months none of the clauses of the agreement have been implemented by the Coal India Management so far.

In their letter, they further stated:

"The assurance that the seventh JBCCI would be constituted by the end of September has not been honoured so far. Though one and a half years has gone by after the expiry of the last wage agreement we have yet to start negotiations for a fresh settlement.

"No meaningful dialogue with the Minister of Coal on the outstanding issues concerning the Department of Coal Government of India has taken place.

"The meeting with the Group of Ministers regarding demand and supply situation during the next two plans have not been arranged uptil now to consider the manner in which Coal India can meet the national requirements of coal.

"There was no serious effort to work out survival packages for ECL, BCCL, CCL, NEC and Dankuni Coal Complex. The management is only interested in talking with Trade Unions and insisting on its proposals, which were not accepted by the trade unions. As a result of dilatory tactics, the condition in some companies have only deteriorated in this period.

"The issue raised by the Charter of Demands by the Five Federations while giving strike notice have remained unsettled, despite written assurance given by the Coal India Management to settle them by the end of December, 2002.

"On the issues relating to Pension rate of PF interest and enhancing the exemption limit for income tax we were assured that meetings will be arranged with concerned Ministers. However, no such step has been taken so far.

"All these clearly indicate that the Coal India Management is not serious to settle the issues. As a result of this discontent among six lakh coal workers is increasing every day and trade unions will be left with no other alternative but to resort to direct action to prevail upon the Coal India management to take expeditious steps to settle the issues".

The leaders of the five Federations had sought time on or before 20th December 2002 from the Minister to apprise her further on the developing situation.

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THE WORKING CLASS

CITU MONTHLY

JANUARY 2003

HERE & NOW | Sudhir Tallang



What change?! BJP is a Modern, Moderate and Modist party!

Courtesy: Hindustan Times

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EDITORIAL

RING IN 2003 WITH INTENSIFIED STRUGGLES!

As we ring out the year 2002 and ring in the New Year 2003, the Atal Behari Vajpayee led NDA Government at the Centre is on course to take the country further down the disaster lane on all fronts.

The fascistic votaries of aggressive 'hindutva' in governance and in the 'sangh parivar' are upbeat with the success of the high voltage communal polarisation experimented in Gujarat. They are now emboldened and gearing up to replicate the 'Gujarat model' throughout the country in the run up to the elections to some of the State Legislatures due in 2003 and the Lok Sabha elections in 2004. The statement made in Parliament by the Disinvestments Minister Arun Shourie confirms that the dissenting views being aired by some Ministers and different constituents of the NDA in this regard are nothing more than a dialogue among the deaf.

In his latest address to the FICCI, the Prime Minister chose to catalogue his worries over the slow pace of reform measures including the ones relating to labour laws.

The scams that have marked the governance of the 'Party with a difference' are piling up with every passing day; the only difference witnessed is the dogged refusal by everyone of the Ministers associated with these scams to own moral responsibility and bow to the democratic demand to step down from their posts.

The present incumbent in the Finance Ministry has embarked on a new venture to demystify the process of budget making and the debates doing the rounds are pointers to the further attacks in the offing on the livelihood of common people and heaping bonanzas on the capitalist class - native and foreign.

This will be the most formidable challenge before the people in the times ahead.

The working class has no option but to rally the masses in the impending struggles against all these offensives. This is a twin battle - one to defend the unity of our class from poaching by the destructive forces of communalism, as well as of casteism and the other to carry forward the resistance to the disastrous policies of the Government to militant heights. On hand we have the immediate tasks of making hectic preparations for successfully carrying out the two tasks outlined by the National Assembly of Workers, in July last -

⇒ January 8 country wide 'satyagraha'

⇒ February 26 March to Parliament

Let us all rise up to the occasion!

On to intensified struggles!

GUJARAT POLLS AND BEYOND

W. R. Varada Rajan

The Gujarat State Legislative Assembly was dissolved in July last year and the State Chief Minister Narendra Modi of BJP vehemently demanded a snap poll in the State. The intention was obvious. He wanted to reap a rich harvest in the immediate aftermath of the genocidal violence engineered by subsequent to the gruesome Godhra incident. Communal violence was then still to abate and normalcy had not returned. Rehabilitation camps for those who had been uprooted by the communal orgy cried for real relief. Minorities still dreaded to return to their original inhabitation. In such an extremely explosive situation, the Election Commission decided that conditions were unsuitable for holding elections.

But now the elections to the Gujarat Legislature have finally been held and the results are out. It is obvious that Narendra Modi's calculated gamble has paid dividends, perhaps, beyond everyone's expectations. By the time this issue of 'The Working Class' is in the hands of our readers, Modi would have triumphantly taken over the reigns of governance in Gujarat yet again.

MASCOT AND 'MUKHOTA'

The BJP and the '*sangh parivar*' is naturally jubilant. Modi has become the 'mascot' for those atop the bandwagon of aggressive 'hindutva' ideology.

But what should be the concern of the whole nation is the shifting stances that the '*Mukhota*' of the '*sangh parivar*' - Prime Minister Vajpayee - chose to adopt during the last over ten months.

After the senseless communal orgy in Gujarat, Vajpayee wondered with what face he would face the international community. But, he was a different man when he went to Goa for the BJP session. Admittedly, he first contemplated asking Modi to step down from the Chief Ministership. However, he allowed himself to be 'persuaded' by his cohorts in the BJP not only to change his mind about Modi but also to put the onus for the entire communal carnage in the State on 'Godhra'. Next, when Modi took the plank of early polls in

the State, the Prime Minister had no qualms to authorise a Presidential reference to the Supreme Court, calling into question the decision of the Election Commission.

In between, he hesitatingly advised Modi to defer his '*gaurav yatra*', which was intended to keep the communal fires aflame.

Vajpayee allowed his deputy, L.K. Advani, to indulge in anti-Pakistan rhetoric during the election campaign in Gujarat, as if the poll campaign was the place for deciding the foreign policy issues. This was in consonance with the '*Mian Musharaff*' baiting loudly resorted to by Modi. Finally Vajpayee himself was in full blow before the electorate as 'an advocate' of Narendra Modi. This is only keeping in with Vajpayee's usual tactics. When the Gujarat was rocked with the saffron attacks against Christian Churches and believers in Dang District, was it not the very same Prime Minister calling for a national debate on conversions?

After the poll outcome in Gujarat, Vajpayee had chosen to complete the record. Addressing the BJP Parliamentary Party, he virtually charged the Muslim community with not having sufficiently condemned the Godhra incident. He made it out as if the minority community in Gujarat had invited the mass killings, arson, rape et al against their own community by not coming out with enough of condemnation of Godhra. When nothing conclusive has been established as to who perpetrated the horrendous crime in Godhra, does it behove well for a person, holding the constitutional office of Prime Minister, to accuse an entire community for the crime committed by a few? But then, who cares for constitutional propriety?

SAFFRON GAMEPLAN

Vajpayee has also described that with Gujarat, the BJP has entered the phase of victories. No doubt, this has come as a reprieve for the party which has had to face humiliations in every successive elections, ever since the 1999 Lok Sabha elections.

Praveen Togadia, of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, who ran a concurrent campaign along with Modi during the electioneering, had detailed out the future plan of the '*sangh parivar*'. He has declared that the '*hindutva*' storm would not be limited to Gujarat. This is nothing but an open declaration that the communal polarisation patented through bloody assaults in Gujarat, would be replicated throughout the country. He had the temerity to hand down death sentence for all opponents of '*hindutva*' - read secularists - which 'would be carried out by the people'.

Shrill assertions have been made that India would be a '*Hindu Rashtra*' within the next two years and also that the geography of Pakistan would undergo a change.

A wholesome agenda comprising Ram temple at Ayodhya, anti-conversion law throughout the country, a common civil code, abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution (which gives Jammu & Kashmir a special status), deportation of all Bangladeshi intruders and a statute for cow protection had been spelt out by this rabid exponent of '*hindutva*'.

The Ayodhya issue is again back to square one with the Rama Janmabhoomi Nyas of the VHP asserting that the date of starting the temple construction at the disputed site would be announced any time during the next 18 months. This is nothing but a period of run up to the 2004 elections to Lok Sabha.

The so called secular allies in the National Democratic Alliance are unashamedly muted in the face of these turn of events. The BJP, the political outfit with a Hindu majoritarian philosophy, is fast resurrecting *albeit* covertly, that very part of its agenda, put in the back burner for the sake of roping these allies in the NDA. It is now clear that these allies have reneged every bit of their commitment to secularism, just for the sake of sharing the spoils of power.

LESSONS OF GUJARAT

The Gujarat happenings, the poll outcome and subsequent declarations hold important lessons for the working class and secular India.

We must remember that the communal polarisation that has resulted now in Gujarat is not just the making of the last ten months. Over the last decade and half, the RSS and the BJP

have sown the poisonous seed of communal hatred against the minorities. The attack against the Christians and the Muslims during this period, the articulation of the *hindu rashtra* concept, the roping in of the innocent tribal communities in the killer brigades had all culminated in the most disturbing phase.

The Congress has failed as the main opposition party to win the confidence of the people of Gujarat. It has failed to arrive at an electoral understanding with the other secular parties and ensure a one to one fight against the communal BJP. The weakness exhibited by the Congress party in resorting to a '*soft hindutva*' plank has virtually made the Gujarat elections a one way journey. Moreover, it had nothing different to offer on the economic policy questions.

While it may not be that easy and simple for the communal forces to carry the Gujarat experiment to the rest of the country, in view of the complex and vastly varied situation obtaining in the various States, the immense damage caused to the secular fabric of the country's polity should not be underestimated.

The aggressive '*hindutva*' of the '*sangh parivar*' brand had to be fought decisively, without any compromise over the principle of secularism.

The working class of the country must rise to the occasion. It must be in the forefront of the impending struggle to defend the unity of the people, safeguard secular principles and frustrate the design to perpetuate the communal polarisation in Gujarat and extend it to the whole of India.

With the BJP and '*sangh parivar*' falling back on their hindu vote bank concept, the Vajpayee regime will on the one hand mount further offensives against the people and on the other capitulate to the imperialist dictates.

At the same time, in the name of retaliation, the minority fundamentalist forces may also resort to such tactics, which will undermine the very fight against communal fascism.

The working class of the country must rise to the occasion. It must be in the forefront of the impending struggle to defend the unity of the people and carry forward the resistance against the communal fascism, the disastrous economic policies and surrender to imperialism.

CITU WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

TOWARDS MASSIVE COUNTRYWIDE UNITED ACTION...

Tapen Sen

The meeting of the Working Committee of CITU held on December 2-4, 2002 at Shanti Ghatak Nagar, Hissar, Haryana, called upon the working class and toiling people of the country to heighten the countrywide struggle against the anti-people, anti-national and fascistic offensives of the BJP-led NDA Govt. The meeting also decided to ensure massive mobilisation throughout the country in the forthcoming action programmes jointly decided by all the major trade union centers - the satyagraha and court arrest on January 8 and the march to Parliament on February 26, to prepare for a countrywide strike action in the subsequent phase.

IMPRESSIVE RALLY

The working Committee session was preceded by a massive 15000 strong rally of workers and employees at the Old Govt. College ground on December 1, 2002. The State administration made several attempts to disrupt the rally. At different parts of the State, police obstructed the movement of

vehicles in which the workers from different parts of the State were travelling. But nothing could deter the workers and several thousands of workers reached the meeting place in procession covering more than 10 kilometers distance by foot from various spots. A resolution, moved by Balbir Dahya, Vice President, Haryana, condemned the brutal lynching of five dalits at Dulina at Jhajjar district in connivance with police authority by the VHP/Bajrang Dal hoodlums. It also condemned the murder of Ramchandra Chhatrapati, a noted journalist, at Sirsa by the gangsters engaged by the ruling clique in Haryana.

The mass rally was presided over by S N Solanki, President, Haryana CITU. Md. Amin, Vice President of CITU and Labour Minister, Govt of West Bengal addressed the rally. He congratulated the working class of Haryana for their heroic struggles, braving the brutal atrocities of the State administration and employers'

henchmen. Md. Amin explained the pro-people, pro-worker policies of the Left Front Govt. in West Bengal, being pursued despite various limitations and hurdles imposed by the Centre. He made a special reference to the State-assisted Provident Fund Scheme for the unorganised workers, besides various other pro-people welfare measures. Amin also told that the Left Front Govt. came to power, and continues for over 25 years, on the strength of united struggle of the workers, peasants and the democratic people of the State. He called for strengthening the united action of the toiling people, to defeat the disruptive anti-people policies of the communal Govt. at the Centre and its allies in various States including in Haryana and develop a pro-people alternative.

E Balanandan, President CITU, referred to the opposition to the policies of neo-liberal globalisation, which is gaining momentum not only in our

WHITHER LABOUR LAW CHANGES WILL LEAD TO?

As per data available from the Ministry of Labour sources, during the ten year period between 1991 and 2002, a total of 230 million man days were lost, out of which strikes accounted for about 92 million (39.8 per cent) only, whereas lockouts accounted for about 138 millions (60.2 per cent). The Economic Survey 2001-02 reports the number of man days lost from 1997 to 2001 (see next column):

These figures testify to the fact that it is the employers who had chosen the path of aggressive confrontation and the workers had been at the receiving end, in the era

of liberalisation and globalisation. If this be the situation, even prior to labour market 'reforms', what will be in store for the workers after the 'reforms' are implemented?

Mandays lost (in million)

Year	Strikes	Lockouts	Total
1997	6.3	10.7	17.0
1998	9.4	12.7	22.1
1999*	10.6	16.2	26.8
2000*	12.0	16.8	28.8
2001*@	2.5	10.8	13.3

(*Provisional; @up to September)

country but also all over the world. We must take initiative to further broad base the struggle. He also emphasised the urgent need to expose and fight the nasty communal design of the Vajpayee Govt. to disrupt the unity of the toiling people.

M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU called upon the working class to fight unitedly against the communal and casteist forces in the State, abetted by the Chautala Govt. to create division among the people. While detailing the forthcoming struggle programmes adopted jointly by all the major trade union centers, Pandhe urged for vigorous initiative by the working people of Haryana to ensure massive mobilisation in all the programmes.

Others who addressed the rally were: K Hemalata and Tapan Sen, both Secretaries, CITU, Satvir Singh, Prabhat Singh, Avtar Singh and Jasbir Kaur (Haryana CITU), R C Jagga (Sarva Karmachari Sangh), Prithi Singh (Kisan Sabha) and Inderjit Singh, Secretary, CPI(M), Haryana.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Working Committee session commenced on December 2, 2002 at Panchayat Bhawan, Hissar, in the "Suryanarayan Rao Manch", named after the veteran CITU leader, who departed few months back. In his presidential address, E Balanandan, outlined the major developments in the international arena since April 2002 meeting of the CITU General Council at Siliguri. He referred to the rising tide of strike-struggles against the neo-

liberal imperialist globalisation as well as the mobilisations against the US imperialist's aggressive design to impose its hegemony over the globe. The US war mongering against Iraq was condemned by massive mobilisation of toiling people within the USA itself, besides all the major cities of Europe, Latin America and Asia as well. Balanandan reiterated that the movement of the Indian people against the economic policies of the Vajpayee Govt. and its increasing surrender to imperialism, on both economic and political fronts, must gather strength from such growing world-wide anti-imperialist assertion.

Drawing attention to the fascist communal offensives of the sangh parivar, Balanandan emphasised the urgent task of mobilising the workers to isolate and defeat the anti-human communal divisive forces.

DISASTROUS POLICIES

In the General Secretary's report, M K Pandhe outlined the major political developments. The Govt. at the Centre has been playing rank opportunist role on the political front and at the same time it has become the fountainhead of mind boggling corruption and scams. Side by side, the BJP bandwagon indulged in a criminal resort to engineer communal riots, as in Gujarat, to achieve narrow political gains for its survival. Never before, was such heinous crime to humanity committed by any political force as the BJP and other sangh parivar outfits had done during the Gujarat carnage, just to remain in power.

This communal fascist offensive is the worst enemy of humanity and must be fought resolutely by the working class, Pandhe asserted.

The report dealt in detail the grievous impact of the policies of neo-liberal globalisation on the country's economy, as visible in consistent decline in all the sectors of the economy. In such a situation, the noise over 8% growth rate targeted during the tenth plan period has turned out to be a crude joke on the people. The phenomenon of overflowing godowns with food grains along with increasing incidence of starvation-death, suicides, mounting unemployment and joblessness in both urban and rural areas, deepening poverty and destitution, exposed the utter bankruptcy of the economic policy of the Vajpayee Govt. The clear anti-national bias of the economic policy found expression in desperate frittering away of national wealth for private interest, foreign and domestic, in the process of privatisation of the profit making PSUs, at throw away prices. Each and every case of privatisation had turned out to be a scandalous scam. The recently declared initiative for monetary and fiscal policy reform aims at granting more liberal giveaways to foreign capital and Indian corporate lobby, reducing the interest rate on workers Provident Fund and small savings, and diverting the savings of the common people to stock market for speculative operations.

Owing to widespread poverty and reckless import

liberalisation on the one hand and increase in the cost of agricultural inputs due to faulty policies on the other, the peasants are not getting the right prices for their crops and the small and middle peasants are worst affected. Agricultural workers have become destitute in large numbers. The most ominous symptom is that landlessness has started growing and large number of small and middle holdings are going to the hands of big landlords, either through reverse leasing or through outright sell-off. Added to this has been the severe draught situation and consequent distress suffered by the people. The Vajpayee Govt. has chosen to remain indifferent.

The rising tide of struggles by the workers and people from all sections of society against such disastrous policies has witnessed a greater unity emerging, countrywide. In various States, resistance struggle is mounting against the same policies being followed by many State Governments, barring few exceptions. A nefarious design to drastically curtail the trade union and labour rights is on. The recommendations of the Second National Commission on Labour are a predecided text of the Vajpayee Govt. design as per dictates of the World Bank and IMF on changes in labour laws. It seeks to give the employers total liberty to "hire and fire" and unilaterally change the service conditions of the workers, deploy contractor workers in all occupations and virtually ban

the right to strike. In fine it seeks to impose the conditions of slavery on the working class. The trade union movement has to unitedly resist this evil design of the ruling class.

UNITED STRUGGLES

The meeting addressed the issue of "United Struggles and Organisational Consolidation of the Trade Union Movement" and outlined the CITU perspective and approach in the matter. Tapan Sen introduced the subject for discussion, on the basis of a draft prepared by the CITU Secretariat. It outlined the experience of CITU on the evolution of united movement in the country since 1970. Despite multiplicity of trade unions, tangible unity in the trade union movement was achieved through vigorous pursuit of the line of united struggle against the exploitative policy of the ruling class. It was through assertion of struggle, the united platform of the trade union movement could gradually be broadened and at present, in the struggle against policies of neo-liberal globalisation, almost all the trade union centers in the country had to join together.

CITU has to take note of the activity of the disruptive and divisive forces hampering the working class unity and emphasised the urgent need for conscious struggle against the forces of communalism and casteism to defend the unity of the class.

In the present context, efforts for unifying the class have to be carried on vigorously at the grass root level to create conditions for united

countrywide struggle. There is also urgent need for independent initiative of CITU in creating awareness on the real face of the policies of the ruling class and need for all in unity of the trade union movement to fight against those policies among the mass of the workers. The need for re-activating the National Platform of Mass Organisations (NPMO) has also to be reiterated, to ensure mobilisation of all the sections of the society in the fight against the anti-national policies. The idea of Confederation of all the trade unions at the national level must also be popularised. To be able to effectively take up this challenging task, a prerequisite is to strengthen and consolidate the organisation at all levels both ideologically and in physical terms. 26 members took part in the debate on the report and another 18 participated in the special discussion. The debate reflected a self-critical examination of the activities during the period under review and laid stress on the need for greater initiative at all levels to carry the ongoing struggle to a more militant height.

The meeting unanimously adopted the following resolutions: 1) Against US design of imposing war on Iraq; 2) On danger of Communalism; 3) On struggles against the bankrupt policies and in defence of rights; 4) Greetings to the struggling working class of Haryana; and 5) Demanding enhancement of honorarium of the Anganwadi workers and helpers; 6) On protection of "Jute Packaging Materials Act 1987"

RUSSIAN WORKERS DEFEND T.U. RIGHTS

M K Pandhe

The deteriorating working conditions of Russian workers are leading to widening of struggles among the workers all over Russia and also in the segments of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) together. According a recent report the membership of trade unions in 10 CIS countries have been increased to 75 million. Thirty seven industrial trade union internationals have been formed to fight for and defend the working and living conditions of workers.

In Georgia, the growing discontent among the workers in energy sector was visible and Georgian Trade Union Amalgamation (GTUA) observed a campaign week from 26 June to 1 July 2002 to ventilate the grievances of workers. On 28th June the GTUA staged a mass protest rally in front of the Office of the National commission for Regulating the Energy Industry and the wholesale Market of Electric Power in Georgia. It demanded settlement of wage arrears to the tune of \$30 million and protested against placing the country's electric power companies under the management of Ireland's ESB International who are planning massive jobs cuts.

In Kazakhstan, the Federation of Trade Union's of Kazakhstan (FTUK) demanded restoration of justice to the workers with long records of service at enterprise who had been stripped of rights and privileges formerly inherent in their occupation. The union decided to submit to Parliament a bill on social benefits to be paid by the state to such categories of workers. "Our Federation will not budge an inch as far as this demand is concerned." FTUK President said.

The Canadian management of Hurricane Hydro carbons Ltd in their Netteorgsynter plant refused to involve the local trade union for any discussion on the threat given by the company to cut two-thirds of the jobs. As a result of the struggle conducted by the union the management was forced to provide with an alternate jobs.

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of

Russia (FNPR) condemned the violation of the agreement by the State authorities resulting in unpaid wage-arrears of \$1.13 billion by August. It protested at low wage rates of the workers while the service rentals have increased by 50 per cent. The Government curtailed the system of obligatory social insurance. The FNPR therefore decided to hold protest actions on 17 October all over Russia to press "For Decent Pay and Social Guarantees" in the form of marches, Rallies, strikes etc. Accordingly whole of Russia witnessed massive and militant demonstration on 17th October.

The young workers are joining to protest movements in increasing numbers as a result of alarming growth of unemployment all over Russia. According to a study, one in three Russians upto 35 years of age is unemployed and demanding for more creation of jobs all over Russia through rallies and demonstrations.

"No one will solve these and other problems" an appeal of young workers convention stated, "It is high time we take care of our future ourselves. For this purpose, we must come together in the trade unions, display solidarity, Achieve unity and become socially active in order to secure the genuine right to work, decent remuneration and legal protection and be able to solve the numerous burning problems."

The Russian trade unions have also taken up the issues of environmental damage taking place all over the world. The General Confederation of Trade Unions condemned the non ratification's of the Kyoto declaration by several states including the USA, which are the worst polluters of the global environment.

The growing strength of the trade union movement in CIS countries is winning solidarity support by the trade union movement all over the world. The GCTU in turn has expressed its keenness to develop solidarity movement with the working class movement in other countries irrespective of international affiliations.

CITU DISCUSSIONS ON WORKING WOMEN

A meeting of the CITU State leadership along with the Convenors of the State Coordination Committees of Working Women was held on 5th December 2002 in the auditorium of BTR Bhawan, the Central Office of CITU. 37 CITU leaders, both men and women from 17 States attended the meeting. The meeting was called mainly to discuss the implementation of the decisions of the CITU on the issues of Working Women and to take the necessary steps to improve CITU's work in this field. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU explained the purpose of the meeting. Kanai Bannerjee, W.R. Varada Rajan and K.Hemalata, all Secretaries of CITU, participated in the meeting. Hemalata, Secretary, CITU and All India Coordination Committee of Working Women

(CITU) presented a note for discussion. She told that there is some improvement in the work of CITU among working women. The percentage of women members in CITU has increased over years and in many States women were included as Office Bearers and members in the State and District Committees. Women's Sub Committees were formed in several industries in some States. Yet, most of the decisions taken on the issues of working women remain unimplemented. She felt that one of the important reasons for this was the lack of proper understanding of the functioning and the role of the Coordination Committees and the Women's Sub committees among the leadership, both men and women, at the different levels. She reiterated that this meeting was meant for a frank discussion

on what efforts the State Committees have made to implement the decisions and why they could not succeed.

IMPLEMENTATION OF TASKS

The meeting took up the decisions of the Tenth Conference on the work among working women one by one and discussed the efforts made by the State Committees of CITU for its implementation. An interesting discussion followed in which all the representatives of the States participated. Some of the State Committees reported that they did make serious attempts to develop working women cadres but it was difficult to get a woman activist who can take up the responsibility of moving around the entire State and actively coordinate the functioning of the coordinate committees and industrial sub committees of working women. When a woman full timer was given the responsibility, there was considerable improvement in the functioning of the State and District Coordination Committees of working women, as was the experience of Tamil Nadu. Several State representatives admitted that the efforts they made in this regard were only half hearted. Representatives of some States observed that some women cadres were more inclined to work for women's organisations than for trade unions. It was felt that this was because the trade unions did not utilise their

Percentage of Women Membership in CITU (All India)

Year	% Of Total CITU Membership
1985	7.72
1986	11.35
1987	12.28
1989	10.20
1990	11.69
1991	13.94
1992	13.50
1993	12.91
1994	10.60
1995	12.86
1996	15.51
1997	17.37
1998	16.29
1999	16.73
2000	19.89

services properly; they were not getting the required help and encouragement from the trade union leaders. They did not get 'job satisfaction' as one participant observed. The CITU leadership were asked to take this aspect seriously and help the women activists to evolve as leaders of the unions.

Several State Committees have reported that they have identified the priority industries with large number of women workers like anganwadi, beedi, construction, plantation, brick kiln, food processing etc. But serious attempts were not made in all the cases to organise the women in these industries. Where proper efforts were made, there were good results, as in anganwadi in Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Assam, plantation in Assam.

It was noted that in some States like Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh etc the membership of women was more than 50% of the membership of CITU in the State. It was interesting to note that in one district in Karnataka, the entire membership of CITU consisted of women. In several other States the women membership was more than 25% of the State CITU membership. State Coordination Committees of Working Women were formed in several States but only in a few States they were functioning actively. Sub Committees of women were also formed in some industries like Beedi, Plantation, Mines, etc, at the State and district level.

DECISIONS

All the participants felt that the meeting was very useful and this

would further improve the work of CITU among working women. Some States suggested that such meetings should be conducted occasionally. It was also suggested that the woman comrade in charge of the AICCWW should attend the State Committee meetings when the agenda of working women is taken up. The State Coordination Committee meeting could be arranged the next day. The All India Centre should pay more attention to monitor the implementation of the decisions.

The following decisions were taken in the meeting:

All the State Committees should hold such meetings at the State level with the district CITU leadership and the working women coordination committee members.

State level Trade Union Classes specially for working women

activists should be held before July 2003.

State Committees of CITU should take initiative to organise meetings of working women on the occasion of the International Women's Day on March 8.

Conventions on 'Recommendations of the Second National Commission on Labour and their impact on workingwomen' should be organised by the CITU State Committees as early as possible. All the State Committees should discuss the Commission Paper 'Working Women - A Class Perspective'.

All the comrades promised that in the next State Committee meeting of CITU, they would discuss and plan for the implementation of these decisions.

The meeting ended with the concluding remarks by M.K. Pandhe.

Percentage of Women Members in CITU in Some States

Sl.No.	Name of the State	%
1	Andhra Pradesh	18.96('99)
2	Assam	40.79('00)
3	Bihar	6.69('99)
4	Delhi	5.36('99)
5	Haryana	20.48('99)
6	Himachal Pradesh	53.90('00)
7	Karnataka	53.39('00)
8	Kerala	26.26('99)
9	Maharashtra	9.83('99)
10	Orissa	13.05('99)
11	Rajasthan	1.57('99)
12	Tamilnadu	11.77('99)
13	Tripura	24.09('00)
14	West Bengal	11.81('99)
15	Uttaranchal	4.62('99)
16	Chattisgarh	2.30('99)

(Figure in brackets denotes the year)

Second National Commission on Labour and Working Women

ADVOCACY FOR ORGANISING OR PITCHING FOR GENDER DIVIDE?

The Second National Commission on Labour has given some attention to the question of organising working women.

The Commission report noted: "One of the issues that is often discussed is whether women workers should be organised as part of a general workers' organisation or whether they should have separate organisations. In this context, the experience in our country indicates that both types of organisations do exist, and have their respective advantages and disadvantages, and roles to play". "Today there are many different types of organisations that work with or for women workers".

While this is the ground situation even according to the Commission, it chose to "recommend that the Governments should allow widespread registration of MBOs (Membership Based Organisations) of women workers under the Trade Unions Act and issue special explanatory guidelines to all Labour Departments to facilitate this".

Why? The reasons put forth by the Commission are:

- ➡ In India, the trade union movement has developed through the struggles of workers mainly in the industrial sector.
- ➡ Only marginal numbers of the total membership of the trade unions are women.
- ➡ The established trade union movement has not been able to cover large numbers of women workers in the unorganised sector.
- ➡ There is a feeling that women workers are marginalised in Trade Unions.
- ➡ Women's organisations, that want to register under the Trade Union Act, generally run into problems with the Labour Department and are unable to get registered at all.

➡ Some States seem to have taken policy decisions not to register new trade unions, in the context of the multiplicity of trade unions in the formal sector enterprises.

➡ Organisations which are member based, have the advantages of autonomous functioning and a focused action plan, besides the quality of being democratic. (This is an unwarranted insinuation against the trade unions, as not being democratic).

Most of these are mere assumptions.

Moreover, none of these reasons justify the suggestion for a gender divide in the trade union movement. In fact, the Commission report itself records: "Women had also been active in the growth of the labour movement. The struggles of the jute workers in Bengal, of textile workers in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Coimbatore, of the plantation workers in the North East and of the coir workers in Travancore (Kerala), all involved the active participation of women workers".

However, it drew a strange inference that "as the labour movement became formalised into trade unions, and as it became part of the tripartite system, and achieved many material gains and some security for workers, the active participation of women declined". In this the Commission appears to be entertaining two fallacious notions. One: advances registered by the labour movement neither lead to increased organisation of the workers nor promote their active participation. Two: women workers tend to become inactive once they get into formal trade unions. Does the Commission seek to perpetuate the status of women workers as informal workers, outside any bargaining arrangements, without material gains and security, to ensure their active participation? Is that what the MBOs are intended to 'achieve'?

The Commission report has generally welcomed the recent amendments to the Trade Union Act,

which are aimed at curbing the workers right to organise, even in the present situation, where trade union membership as a percentage of the non agricultural labour force in India is a bare 5 per cent as per the Human Development Report, 2002. But, it laments that the Labour Commissioners would try to frustrate attempts by women workers to register trade unions by raising issues like 'how can you have a union of self-employed workers?' The Commission conveniently forgets that several organisations of self employed workers are registered as trade unions, such as the artisans' union in Kerala, besides the SEWA, to which the Commission report had devoted considerable attention.

The Commission admits: "Trade unions have also been trying to bring in women into their fold". "In some cases, the existing trade unions have encouraged the growth of women's sections within their own ranks, but the success of these sections or departments is yet to be assessed by internal evaluation or external evaluation". Nobody has prevented the Commission from making an evaluation.

The Commission has pitched for wide-spread promotion of MBOs, even when it has found that organising poor women workers into co-operatives, described in the report as a viable alternative, has had little success. The report noted: 'In 1998, there were only 8714 women's co-operatives, constituting only 1.8% of the total number of co-operatives in the country'.

In the post-globalisation era, there has been a marked preference for the NGOs and other categories of organisation over trade unions. This

is not accidental. The trade unions, not only seek to advance the interests of the workers but also resist the offensives of globalisation. The Commission is also aware of the fact that the MBOs, which it seeks to promote, are satellite organisations created by the NGOs.

The Commission report concedes: "Organisations can be effective only if they can reach large numbers of workers, and build solidarity among them. One of the reasons for the success of the trade union movement in the past, has been its size and hence its capacity to represent a large number of workers". Why then the preference to MBOs?

A fact admitted by the Commission is that "to a large extent, the initiatives in organising workers in the informal sector in general, and women workers in particular, share the same genesis and evolutionary path as the leftist and labour movements". Obviously, the Commission wants to take extra precautions to keep women workers outside the influence of the leftist and labour movements by mobilisation in MBOs, instead.

Working women in general and those in the informal sector in particular should be made aware of this disruptive design of the Commission recommendations and should be mobilised in the class organisation, i.e. trade unions.

This does not mean that where circumstances do not permit organising women workers straightaway in trade unions, certain other intermediary forms of organisation could not be thought of. But, to keep the women workers 'quarantined' away from the trade unions can by no means serve their long term interests.

AIFAWH DELEGATION MEETS PM

A delegation of the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers (AIFAWH) met Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on 16th December 2002 and demanded that the enhancement of honorarium of the anganwadi workers and helpers, announced by the then Finance Minister of India Yashwant Sinha be implemented from the beginning of this fiscal year and the concerned Government Order be released immediately. Budgetary provision has been made for the proposed enhancement, but the Government has not issued the GO even 9 months after the announcement.

The delegation also submitted a memorandum signed by various MPs and showed the Prime Minister the various advertisements from the Ministry showing the enhancement of honorarium as their achievement. Though the Prime Minister did not give any assurance, he told the delegation that whatever announcement is made by the Government should be implemented. He assured the delegation that he would look into the matter and see why the order has not been issued.

The delegation consisted of A.R.Sindhu, Treasurer of the Federation and Basudeb Acharya, MP, CPI (M), both General Council members of CITU.

2002 IN RETROSPECT

All the Central Trade Unions unanimously demand pro-people changes in economic policies in a joint memorandum to the Finance

Minster on 10th January 2002 and call for nationwide protest day on 14 March.

Six lakh coal workers prepare for a week long strike on 5-11, August, 2002; the strike deferred as the Government agreed to defer pursuit of the privatisation bill and negotiate with the five federations.

Stone quarry workers in Bhiwani district, Haryana, covering 35 villages, fight against Chautala Government – Contractors nexus, braving brutal repression in February

2002. Satvir Singh, General Secretary CITU, Haryana, along with other leaders, was arrested and jailed for over two weeks.

Over 5 lakh teachers and Government employees in Kerala launch an indefinite

strike from 6th February, 2002, defying ESMA. Statewide hartal held on 5th March in support.

On February 5, Prime Minister announces the Cabinet decision to downsize 11 lakh Central Government employees and to amend Industrial Disputes Act to facilitate 'hire and fire' by employers.

58 persons, including Kar Sewaks returning from Ayodhya, were torched in a gruesome attack on Sabarmathi Express at Godhra, in Gujarat on 26th February, 2002. Commencing with a Gujarat

Bandh call, the VHP, Bajrang Dal and other saffron outfits, launch a genocidal attack on minorities, with the full backing of BJP's Narendra Modi Government. National Human Rights Commission, Minorities

Commission, Election Commission, Supreme Court, scores of civil society organisations and media repeatedly indicted Narendra Modi.

Railway and General Budgets inflict further severe burdens on common people, working class targeted for barbaric attacks. Protests

ensure. All India Protest Day on March 14 witnessed massive mobilisation of workers against the impending attacks.

BJP and its allies in NDA suffer reverses in the polls held in U.P. Utharanchal, Punjab and Manipur, testifying to the growing isolation of communal and opportunistic alliance. But, BJP & BSP cobbled up an unprincipled arrangement to form Government.

2002 IN RETROSPECT

VHP ups the antenna again with a move to commence temple construction at the

disputed site in Ayodhya on March 15. After high drama, Vajpayee bails out the 'parivar'

by accepting the 'shilanyas' pillars, after Supreme Court says a firm no to any 'pooja'.

In a nationwide general strike by public sector workers on April 16 to protest policies of disinvestment, downsizing and attack on trade

union rights, employees of banks, insurance, and State Governments also join en-masse.

CITU General Council meets in Siliguri on 22-25, April 2002 and calls per carrying forward the united struggles to militant heights

July 15 National Assembly of workers, massively attended by the representatives of all

central trade unions and federations calls for intensification of struggle

against anti-labour offensives. BMS withdraws from the united platform at the last stage.

The Second National Commission on Labour, headed by Ravindra Varma presented its report to the Prime Minister on 29th June, 2002. CITU denounced the report as a blue print for

imposing slavery on the working class. The 38th Session of Indian Labour Conference stables move by the Vajpayee government to secure a 'go-ahead' signal for the report.

CITU Working Committee meeting in Hissar, Haryana on 1-4 December, calls for preparations towards massive country wide united actions.

KR Narayanan demitted office as President on 24 July. BJP spurns move to give a second term to K R Narayanan. After tossing up the candidature of P.C. Alexander, it fields APJ

Abdul Kalam, the brain behind nuclear weaponisation programme, for the post. Though the Congress and parties like Samajwadi Party endorsed Kalam's candidature,

the left parties field Capt. Lakshmi Sahgal, a first-ever woman Presidential candidate. The election campaign evoked wide spread response.

IDA Govt. move to privatize NALCO meets resistance by workers and people of Orissa.

Total Orissa bandh on 19 September and struggle continues.

The Left Front Government in West Bengal completes 25 glorious years in office.

(There was a debate on sell-off of PSUs on 29-11-2002, by way of a private member's motion. Again, there was a debate in the Rajya Sabha on 4-12-2002 on the disinvestment policy of the Government of India. We give below some excerpts from the interventions of Jibon Roy and Dipankar Mukherjee, both CPI(M) MPs, during these debates. - Editor)

PARLIAMENT DEBATE ON ON PSU SELL-OFF

Excerpts from the speech of Jibon Roy

The Govt is totally changing the basic direction of the policy without admitting the same by its policy of selling out the PSUs.

After World War II, there being no investors in the private sector to develop industries in the newly independent third world countries, The Govts had to come forward with public funds to industrialise and particularly to provide for basic and infrastructural industries to facilitate and promote the economy and also to help the private investment. This policy went a long way in industrializing the third world countries on self reliant basis. Now when the scenario is changed, the Govt of the day has become keen in transferring all those industries and public assets to private individuals in the name of privatization. Is that fair and just? Certainly not.

Secondly, while drawing the plan for industrialisation following the independence, through the industrial policy resolutions of 1948 and 1956, and taking vigorous public sector initiative, the "Socialist pattern of society" and "equity" had been the stated policy direction. Subsequently, during Indira Gandhi's regime, the word "socialism" was incorporated in the Constitution which is still there. Without caring for that and without bothering for the obligations such policy pronouncement in the Constitution vests on the Govt, they have been moving nonchalantly in trampling underfoot all those policy-directions by their mad drive for privatization along with other measures. If the Govt has the guts, they should first come forward with the proposal for amending the Constitution, removing the word "socialism" from the Constitution before their sell-off exercise, for the sake of propriety.

Thirdly, the Disinvestment Minister very often refers to the industrial policy statement of the Congress Govt. made in 1991. We never supported that; rather we opposed it vociferously. But still, the Minister must note that he is doing

totally different from what has been envisaged in the policy statement of Congress Govt of 1991. The 1991 policy statement envisaged disinvestments of a part of equity with the aim of reviewing the "portfolio of public investment with a view to focus the public sector on strategic, hi-tech and essential infrastructure." The NDA Govt's policy is one of complete liquidation of public sector altogether which cannot be bailed out showing the 1991 policy declaration which never envisaged so called 'strategic sale' of PSUs to private hands.

We had opposed the 1991 policy declaration of the then Congress Govt since we could foresee that in that given scenario, the dilution in the policy regarding PSU will make way for further and more grievous compromise, may be in some other's hand, as is happening now.

And one must also note, in the present scenario, when imperialist pressure is mounting on the third world countries, in the absence of socialist block and the Soviet Union who had played a positive role in the industrialization of the third world countries in the post-world-war period, when the imperialist powers are out to take revenge on the third world countries for their role in the post-world-war period, the present Govt's policy on economic front and on the public sector in particular signals compromise with imperialism. The USA is waging war on Iraq for their big oil reserve and Iraq is resisting till now. And here, even without any such development, the Govt is surrendering its control on the precious and strategic Oil sector, we do not know yet, in whose favour. Is it in the interest of the country and the people? Certainly not. Govt must review its policy on PSU if they are least concerned about the national economy and its economic sovereignty.

Excerpts from the speech of Dipankar Mukherjee

The Business Standard reported that the Minister of Disinvestment has stated in the India Economic

Summit that the letters written by various MPs opposing privatization are drafted by Corporate Houses, as the content of the letters shows, as revealing an understanding of business accounting which was way above and average MP has. Myself, admitting to be an average MP, having meager knowledge of business accounting, can assure you of raising nothing such allegedly drafted by the Corporates.

The minister is making apprehensions about drafting assistance to the MPs by the Corporates, but what would he say about the reality of his Govt's economic policies being drafted by the World Bank.

Secondly, it is worth noting that a Business Weekly (owned by a Corporate) has given very high rating to the Disinvestment Minister, Mr Shourie for his performance and rapidity in the privatization of PSUs. I do not know, whether the rating for Petroleum minister Mr Ram Naik is marked very low or note.

Thirdly, while dealing on the differences emerged within the Govt on privatization of profit-making PSUs and various disputes pertaining to privatization, the Minister said that "Mr Advani will settle the issue". The minister must note that the PSUs are neither the property of Mr Advani nor the Sangh Parivar, they belong to the Bharat Parivar, this great country. When the minister again said "Prime Minister should speed up the process", I like to remind him that the PSUs are not Mr Vajpayee's property either. Hence the matter must be clinched on the floor of Parliament and this is the appropriate forum for dealing on national property.

Fourthly, The Minister says that there has been consensus on privatisation. Where is the consensus? Even there is no consensus within the Cabinet and within the allies of the ruling combine. One of the allies of the ruling combine stated in Parliament that "business (Dhanda) is going on in the name of privatisation". It reminds me of What the Noble laureate and an ex-World Bank man Joseph Stiglitz said about Privatisation. He termed it "briberisation". The NDA allies are making similar complaints about privatisation, the cabinet ministers are expressing differences and yet the Disinvestment Minister would claim about consensus! Can anybody accept that?

Rather a different consensus has developed even among those having opposing ideas and ideologies. The same is that the profit-making PSUs should not be privatised. The NDA Govt has been trampling this consensus underfoot.

It also needs to be clarified that disinvestments and privatisation is not one and the same thing. I like to again refer to "Briberisation" what Joseph Stiglitz characterised 'the ongoing privatisation process' all over the world. I also like to quote here Greg palest, an eminent investigative journalist in his book "The best democracy money can buy". Palest noted that "Step-1 is privatizations which Stiglitz said, could more accurately be called 'Briberisation'. Rather than object to the sell-offs of the State industries, he said national leaders—using the World Bank's demand to silence local critics—happily flogged their electricity and water companies...you could see their eyes widen at the prospect of 10 per cent commissions paid to Swiss Bank accounts for simply shaving a few billions off the sale price of national assets."

India is no exception to it. And I again refer to the allegation of "business (Dhanda)" made by one of the allies of the ruling combine. The Centaur Hotel was sold at Rs 83 crore to Batras and after four months it was again transferred to Sahara at Rs 115 crore. Shaving lots of crore from the initial selling price of Rs 83 crore is apparent. And such was the haste in clinching the deal that the petroleum outlet in the Hotel premises owned by the Indian Oil Corporation was also handed over to buyer without the knowledge either of IOC or the Petroleum minister. And the Disinvestment Minister is justifying everything as a super Minister. In the whole privatization exercise, the whole Parliamentary system is being undermined and sought to be derailed. The consensus opinion of the Parliamentary Standing Committee comprised of members from all political parties has been ignored several times. Instead of clinching the issues pertaining to sell-off of National assets is being sought to be clinched not in the house but between few ministers and individuals. Is that the way the national assets should be handled and profit earning jewels will be handed over to private individuals? The entire policy warrants a thorough review.

PETROLEUM WORKERS TO GO FOR STRIKE

The Joint Convention of Oil sector Trade unions held on 16th December 2002 at Dy Speaker Hall, Constitution Club, New Delhi called upon the workers of HPCL and BPCL to go in for Lightning Strike on the day tender is invited for sell-off of HPCL and BPCL. The Convention also welcomed similar move by the Officers Association of HPCL.

The National joint convention of trade unions was participated by the representatives of the Oil sector trade unions of different affiliations from all over the country functioning in the Refineries and Marketing set-up of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), Kochi Refineries Ltd (KRL) and Numaligarh Refineries Ltd (NRL). In totality Oil sector unions from all affiliations viz., CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, Shiv-Sena, Kamgarh Aghadhi, and various independent unions joined the Convention opposing privatisation move of HPCL and BPCL. The convention resolved to intensify their campaign and agitation to oppose the privatisation move. The Convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of S Devroye, Secretary, CITU, Y D Sharma, Vice-President, AITUC and S V Mhadik of BPC/HPC Karmachari Union, Mumbai (Shiv Sena).

The main Resolution was moved

by Swadesh Dev Roye, Secretary, CITU. The Resolution denounced the anti-national move of the central Government for privatizing the HPCL and BPCL totally unmindful of the national security and the economic sovereignty of the country. These CPSUs have excellent track record in contribution of revenue to the Government exchequers and generation of internal resources. The oil and petroleum sector is the most efficient and highest profit-making sector amongst the entire CPSUs in the country. Out of the top ten profit making CPSUs, five are from oil and petroleum sector alone. During the year 2001-2002 the oil PSUs recorded profit after tax of Rs.12, 749.53 crore against the paid up capital of Rs.5, 204.00 crore. Of these the performance of these two oil PSUs in the hit list is worth-noting. The net profit earned by BPCL in the year 2001-2002 is Rs.835.72 crore against a total turnover of Rs.40, 094.88 crore and dividend paid to the central Government is Rs.330.00 crore and that of HPCL, the net profit is Rs.788.00 crore against a turnover of Rs.45, 287.00 crore and dividend paid to the central Government is Rs.340.00 crore. The Resolution also pointed out that since nationalization the HPCL, which has now been picked up for strategic sale has generated huge internal

resources and the company has invested more than Rs.9,000 crore. Again from a measly sum of Rs.16.80 crore, the share capital plus reserves of the HPCL has gone up to Now it is little less than Rs.6,000. crore under PSU management only besides its huge contribution to national exchequer in the form of dividend and tax. The current assets value of HPCL is estimated at Rs.20,000 crore against the acquisition cost of Rs.49.00 crore.

The HPCL and BPCL came into being under two different acts of Parliament. The ESSO (acquisition of undertakings in India) Act of 1974 created the HPCL and the Burma Shell (acquisition of undertakings in India) Act of 1976 created the BPCL. The identical preamble of both the acts clearly reflects the strategic national importance, which prompted nationalisation of the foreign oil companies and continues to be valid unquestionably. The preambles mentions that "it is expedient in the public interest " to acquire ownership of these companies, "in order to ensure that the ownership and control of petroleum products distributed and marketed in India" by these companies, "are vested in the state and thereby so distributed as best to subserve the common good". These acts of Parliament continue to remain valid unless they are specifically repealed by

the Parliament itself. Until that is done, any form of privatisation of these oil PSUs is illegal. But the Govt of the day has become desperate for sell-off of these two companies through executive order.

Dev Roye also explained that with the Reliance Petrochemicals or any other oil MNC purchasing the refineries of HPCL or BPCL, there is a threat of existence of these refineries. Because, the private oil companies with most modern technology based refineries shall dump the old PSU oil refineries as economically unviable and capture the market created by these oil PSUs for their own products. Therefore, the move of privatization of HPCL and BPCL carries inbuilt threat of closure and retrenchment of thousands of workers. It is important to note that HPCL and BPCL together own more than 9,000 petrol pumps

situated at prime locations throughout the country. The Resolution called for Oil sector workers to build up countrywide united resistance against the disastrous move of the Govt.

112 leaders from 20 oil sector unions from all over the country participated in the convention. 20 members took part in the deliberation on the future course of action and it was unanimously resolved to go in for all out countrywide resistance against the anti-national move of the Vajpayee Govt to hand over the highly profit making HPCL and BPCL to private hands. Dipankar Mukherjee, MP, Jibon Roy, MP and Manoj Bhattacharya, MP and Sebastian Paul, Ex-MP also addressed the Convention.

It was also decided to intensify the on going agitation against the decision of the Government and go for LIGHTNING STRIKE on the day tender is invited by

the Government towards privatization of HPCL and BPCL. It was also noted that in a related development, the Officers' Association of HPCL has already served strike notice to the Government.

From the convention a joint delegation led by a broad team of Members of Parliament across the political parties viz., Somnath Chatterjee, Rupchand Pal, Jibon Roy, Nilotpal Basu, Dipankar Mukherjee (all CPI-M), J Chittaranjan (CPI), Manoj Bhattacharya (RSP), Mulchand Meena (Congress), Ramdeo Bhandari, Saroj Dubey (RJD) etc met the Prime Minister and submitted the enclosed memorandum opposing privatization of the HPCL and BPCL. The Prime Minister received the memorandum and heard the views of the delegation but remained non-committal.

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Tamil Nadu

STRUGGLE AGAINST TRANSPORT PRIVATISATION

AIADMK Govt. in Tamilnadu following the footsteps of the NDA Govt. at centre, has started a selling spree of the State owned public sector units.

The attack by the Govt. began with a G.O. which paves the way for handing over 50% of the State Transport undertaking in the state. The state govt. through a statement issued by the home secretary made it clear that at the first instance they want to handover 4000 of the 17000 buses run by the state transport corporations in the state and to send out 32,000 from the one lakh of workers.

CITU led state transport employees federation decided upon a series of campaigns. Other trade union organisations also came out against this decision of the govt. All the opposition parties, of course with the exception of BJP, opposed this privatisation move.

It was pointed out by these organisations that this privatisation will create a serious crisis in the transport system in the state. Actually it was after the nationalisation of major routes in the state, the transport system improved and state transport buses ply to interior villages, which can not be considered as economic routes.

It was pointed out that more than 22 lakhs of Students upto XIIth Standard travel free. Other Students travel with concessions.

All these benefits will be withdrawn, once the private Sector takes over.

The claim of the Govt. that the transport Corporations are on loss is also not correct. CITU came out with official details, which showed that these corporations, including those in the Metro areas are on net profit and during the last Six months profit amounts to Rs 73.66 Corers.

CITU started the campaign with Dharnas in divisional centres on 26th and in Chennai on 27th November. Thousands of workers participated in these Dharnas and in Chennai, more than 5000 workers participated. Lakhs of hand bills were distributed. Representations were made to thousands of peoples representatives of various levels. There was very good response to this and peoples representatives, irrespective of political affiliations promised support. Many of them promised to move resolutions in the local bodies.

The next phase of action was forming human chains to protect the public transport system. Thousands of workers from various CITU unions along with members of fraternal organisations of Insurance, Bank, Telecom, Govt. Employees and from mass organisations like SFI, DYFI, AIDWA participated in the human chains in district centres and other

major towns on 9th December. In Chennai, the Human Chain with thousands of participants was formed on 12th December.

In the meanwhile, another front for opposing the Govt was opened by filing writ petitions in the High Court. In addition to CITU led State Transport Employees Federation, various other unions have also filed petitions. State Committees of CITU, CPI(M), SFI, DYFI, AIDWA also have filed writ petitions. With the begining of hearing of the petitions, new complications arose for the Govt's aim of completing the process by December. CITU and other Organisations have pointed out the illegal nature of the Govt's action. The hearing of the case has been postponed.

The public hearing on petitions with objections, before the Home Secretary, fixed for 17th December also had to be postponed by the State Govt. as per court's direction.

Nearly 100 Jathas, covering about more than 4000 KMS of urban and Rural dwelling areas toured between 18th and 20th December, explaining the issues. A lot of smaller Jathas were also organised. Petitions with signatures of Elected representatives were submitted to the Collectors on 20th December. While CITU was conducting these campaigns, other Trade Unions

REPORTS & EVENTS

were also organising various campaigns.

In the meanwhile, a meeting of all Trade Unions in the State Transport Corporations was held on 10th December. A decision to conduct joint agitations was taken. Leaders of all Trade Unions, except that led by the ruling AIADMK, will tour the major

centres from 21st December. Depot level joint meetings and campaigns will be undertaken. On 10th January 2003, massive protest rally is to be organised in Chennai. Thousands of transport workers will march to the State Secretariat to submit a memorandum.

In Tamilnadu, with the struggle of State Transport workers against

privatisation a new phase of agitations has begun.

Various sections of working people are already on the street, and the new year will begin with concerted actions both at the state level and in the National Level Programmes. All-around preparations are also being made for the Court Arrest programme on 8th January.

(Report from A.K.Padmanabhan)

IISCO COLLIERY WORKERS STRIKE SUCCESSFUL

Over 5000 workers from 3 collieries in Ramnagar, Jitpur and Chasnala under the IISCO management went on indefinite strike from 12th November 2002 demanding implementation of JBCCI agreement and payment of bonus to all the workers.

Earlier the united movement of workers resorted to Dharna, Hunger Strike and other forms of agitation. Immediate cause of discontent among the workers that all coal mine workers all over India paid Rs.3200 as ex-gratia by Coal managements. Only the workers in the 3 mines did not get any bonus payment this year.

Despite protracted negotiations at the deputy CLC(C)'s office no settlement could be arrived at due to recalcitrant attitude of the IISCO management. The colliery workers were left with no other alternative but to resort to indefinite strike action.

The strike was so complete that even the essential services were totally stopped. It was only at the

intervention of the CITU that these services were restored. Attempts made by the officers to run the essential services could not succeed since they failed to operate them without the help of workers.

The strike continued for one week unitedly. It was peaceful and no untoward incident occurred during the period of strike. Seeing the fighting mood of the workers the IISCO management was compelled to offer Rs.2000 as advance to the workers with an assurance that the other demands of the workers would be discussed on 28th November with the leaders of the striking workers.

With the assurance given by the IISCO management the workers called off the strike and resumed duties on 21st November 2002. A further strike of the workers would have adversely affected the supply of coal to IISCO whose production would have come to a grinding halt.

The Burnpur workers of IISCO

expressed their solidarity with the striking coal miners and demanded early settlement by the managements. The leaders of IISCO workers addressed the meeting of coal workers to express their solidarity.

After withdrawal of strike the proposed meeting on 28th November could not take place due to non-availability of IISCO Chairman. The meeting however was held in SAIL Corporate office on 13th December in which Chairman IISCO, Executive Director (P), SAIL MD, IISCO and other senior SAIL executives participated. From the workers side representatives of 3 mines along with S.K. Bakshi, working president, All India Coal Workers Federation attended the meeting. From the CITU centre M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary participated in the meeting.

During the meeting the IISCO management agreed to consider the demands of the striking workers sympathetically and steps

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would be taken to settle them amicably within 3 months through discussion with the trade unions working in the 3 coal mines. The union leaders pointed out that even the facilities available to plant workers in IISCO are denied to

the workers working in the mines. The union representatives agreed to give 3 months time to settle the outstanding issues. If however the matters are not resolved by that time the workers would resort to united struggle.

The strike action has strengthened the unity of the workers who are taking steps to further build up powerful unity of the workers so that the IISCO management will be forced to accept their legitimate demands within February next.

SOLAPUR: 60TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF DR. KOTNIS

The Sixtieth Death Anniversary of Dr. Dwarkanath S. Kotnis was observed in Solapur his home town, on 9th December and people from all walks of life in the city paid their homage to the great martyr who laid down his life in the battlefield of anti-fascist war of liberation of the Chinese people.

Solapur Municipal Corporation invited Mayor of Shiziachuang where a memorial of Dr. Kotnis has been built but he could not come due to certain unavoidable circumstances. However, the Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China deputed two officials Zhao Qing Mao Commercial Consul and Bao Yihong a senior official of Mumbai Consulate to participate in the function. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU was specially invited by the Municipal Corporation to participate in the observation of the Day in Solapur.

In the morning the Mayor of Solapur Ms. Nirmala Chande along with Chinese representatives garlanded the bust of Dr. Kotnis in Civil Hospital in which senior medical officers of the hospital participated. Senior officials of

Municipal Corporation and leaders of different political parties in the city also garlanded the bust of Dr. Kotnis.

All the daily newspapers of Solapur published special articles on the contributions made by Dr. Kotnis in China while giving medical treatment to wounded soldiers fighting a heroic guerilla war against Japanese aggressions. Dr. Kotnis Memorial Hospital run by the Central Railways observed the day by holding a blood donation camp to mark the occasion. Floral tributes were given to the photograph of Dr. Kotnis by Doctors and nurses of the hospital. Activists of the National Railway Mazdoor Union decorated the hospital with Red chain flags of the union. A meeting to commemorate the memory was also held in the Railway women's fitness centre. Senior Divisional officials of the Central Railway participated in the function.

The Chinese delegates along with representatives of political parties and social organizations visited the ancestral house of Dr. Kotnis.

A meeting was held in Mayor's office which decided to expedite

the establishment of Memorial in the residence of Dr. Kotnis. The Mayor promised that all efforts would be made to acquire the house for the Memorial.

The Mayor of Shizia Czuang has invited a delegation from Solapur under the leadership of Mayor to visit China. The Mayor of Solapur accepted the invitation and a five member delegation would visit China in summer next year.

In the evening a well attended hall meeting was held in Hutatma Smarak Mandir which was presided over by Mayor of Solapur. All senior officials of Municipal Corporation, leaders of political parties and social activists participated in the meeting.

After garlanding the photograph of Dr. Kotnis by leading personalities of the city the Memorial meeting commenced. At the outset Beria gave a life sketch of Dr. Kotnis highlighting his contributions in the anti-fascist war of liberation and the role played by medical mission sent by Indian National Congress in 1938.

Dharmanna Sadul former mayor of Solapur and Member of Parliament from Solapur

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elaborated the contributions made by Dr. Kotnis in developing India China friendship. Remembering his visit to China he explained how people of China love Dr. Kotnis for the valuable role in played in helping Chinese soldiers in their hour of trial.

Zhao Qingmao Commercial Counsel of the Chinese Embassy in India read out message of Ambassador and paid homage to the memory of Dr. Kotnis. He pointed out the historical bonds of friendship between the people of China and India and their common struggle against imperialist domination. He emphasized that both the countries need development and there is urgent need for economic cooperation

between the two countries.

Prof. Wareskar paid his tributes to Dr. Kotnis who made city of Solapur known to the world.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU remembered how in 1943 he as a student arranged a meeting of Dr. B.K. Basu, a member of medical mission to China when he came to Solapur from China to visit family members of Dr. Kotnis. People of Solapur came to know about the remarkable contribution of Dr. Kotnis through Dr. Basu for the first time. Pandhe observed that friendship between India and China is extremely important in the world today to fight U.S. hegemonism. He stressed the need for more economic co-operation between the two largest populated

countries for mutual benefit.

The Mayor of Solapur paid glowing tributes to Dr. Kotnis and endorsed the proposal to make Solapur and Shiehiaruang as twin cities to strengthen the friendship between two Asian countries. She noted that 4 martyrs of Solapur were sent to gallows by the British Government in 1930 freedom struggle. Dr. Kotnis became the fifth Martyr of Solapur giving the status to this great city as a city of Martyrs.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Municipal Corporation gave a vote of thanks for making the 60th Death Anniversary observation successful.

PRESENT CRISIS IN TEA PLANTATIONS

The current situation of the Tea Industry has resulted in a crisis for the Tea Garden workers. There are various reasons for this. The globalisation, and liberalisation policy of Government is creating havoc. The loss of Russian market is also one of the factors. Reckless import of tea from Kenya, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Indonesia and from the SAARC countries has also created crisis for the domestic producers. Low auction prices benefit mainly the big companies like HLL who own very few Tea estates. High taxes in the plantation sector along with additional payment of Agricultural

tax green leaf cess etc have added to the crisis.

The cost of production has also increased substantially. Moreover, overwhelming production of tea by small and medium growers with no quality control particularly in South (Tamil Nadu) and North (West Bengal) added to the disadvantage. The plantations have not been able to increase production to the level to one billion kg, as was planned in 80's. The failure to replant 2% of the land every year has resulted in aging of tea bushes leading to low yields on one hand and tremendous pressure of work load on the workers. Tea production remained

virtually stagnant for last 3 years, and the rate of increase in tea consumption is higher than the rate of increase in production. There has been slow down in the expansion of area under Tea cultivation in the organised sector. The Bought Tea Leaf Factories, producing low quality tea. All this has resulted for the crisis.

Many workers in Kerala and North India have not received wages for the past 20 months. In Kerala 7 worker has died due to famine 10 estates and 10 factories has closed resulting unemployment to 25,000 workers. In Bengal 21 Estate closed resulting

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unemployment to 35,000. Assam 2500, workers were thrown out of employment. Downsizing measures were being introduced by big companies like Tatas, Harrison Malayalams, A V Thomas Co. and Assam Tea Corporation.

The role and concentration of the multinationals in the Tea Sector has to be noted. Hindustan Lever is purchasing 45% of the tea from market though they have only 15 estates. The prices of tea is intentionally lowered in the auctions place by the foul play of the brokers with the help of the multinationals, this results in crisis for the direct producers and

workers. One notable factor is that there is no fluctuation of prices in the retail market. Direct touch with the consumer and producer is the need of the hour. That will save the tea plantation workers of India.

In this situation it is the paramount duty of the government to create a relief fund and disperse it to the workers, of sick gardens. If the management fails, the management of the plantations must be taken over by the government. For that legislation must be made by the State and Central government. The present nature of import and export policy must be changed and for both the

quality of the Tea must be checked then only allowed to export or import. The present auction system must be changed so that the maximum price must be assured to the producers. The present tax system must be restructured. Legislation must be made to control to brought leaf factories. As it is a predominantly workers occupied industry, participation of workers in the management is a must. To enable it proper legislation must be passed. Government must be strict to see the existing benefits of the workers are protected and Plantation Labour Act strictly implemented by the managements.

(Report from P. Lalaji Babu)

ANGANWADI WORKERS PLAN ACTIONS

The anganwadi workers and helpers in the country have decided to intensify their agitation for the release of the GO on the enhanced honorarium, as promised the former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha in Parliament, in the course of his Budget speech and for its implementation from 1st April 2002.

The Working Committee of the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers (AIFAWH), which met in New Delhi on 7-8 December 2002, has taken up a phased programme of action to achieve this. Neelima Maitra, President, chaired the meeting. 31 members from 13 States participated. Hemalata, General

Secretary, presented the report of activities after the last Conference and a plan of action. The meeting also discussed the problems arising from the implementation of Take Home Rations programme, filling up the vacant posts in ICDS Scheme on contract basis and handing over the management of the anganwadi centres to the Panchayats. The Committee decided to educate the beneficiaries about the dangers of the Take Home Ration and oppose the programme. It was also decided that the same would not be implemented by the anganwadi employees.

The meeting decided to stage action programmes for the release

of the GO on increased honorarium including collection of signatures of MPs, project level agitations and March to Parliament on 25th February 2002, and one day strike under the banner of SSS. The Federation decided to participate in the programmes of the Central Trade Unions by courting arrest in large numbers in the mass satyagraha on 8th January 2003, and through massive participation in the March to Parliament on 26th February 2003. In planning next years' activities, the committee decided to focus on cadre development. The broad plan for the year 2003 will include:

a) Campaigns and struggles on local demands, against

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appointments on contract basis, take home ration and handing over the management of the anganwadi centres to the Panchayats- during January - June 2003.

b) Identification of cadres

during the struggles and campaigns and holding trade union classes at State, District and Project level during July- October 2003.

c) Organisational Workshops at State and District levels to

consolidate organisation during November- December 2003.

It has been decided that the Centre will print a booklet of the Central and State GOs on the benefits to the anganwadi workers.

MASSIVE STRIKE AT BOKARO STEEL PLANT

Around 30000 workers struck work at Bokaro Steel Plant on 3rd December.

At the initiative of Ispat Mazdoor Morcha, the CITU affiliated union there, a joint front of almost all the unions were formed to fight against denial of bonus/ex-gratia to the workers and the joint front have been agitating since long. The management refused any payment to the workers on the plea of financial problem despite the fact that the Bokaro Steel Plant has made profit. The management agreed to give some advance to be recovered in monthly installment from the salary, which the workers flatly rejected.

In the face of such arrogant refusal

of the management, the joint front decided to go in for one day strike and prepare for multiple days strike thereafter.

On 2nd December 2002, a massive rally of the Steel workers was held in the Plant in which 20000 workers participated. On 3rd December, the Strike was almost total despite opposition by the INTUC and AITUC leadership. The CITU Working Committee which was in session that time at Hissar, Haryana sent telegram to the Steel workers at Bokaro congratulating them for successful strike action.

Few days after the strike, on 10th December, the Bokaro Steel management had to retreat from

their insistence for monthly recovery and had to announce payment of Rs 4000 to each worker to be adjusted with the future earning from the productivity scheme recently finalized with the recognized union. On 11th, the joint front of the unions met and decided to serve notice for three-days strike on 26-28 December 2002 demanding negotiated settlement with the fighting unions on the scheme and other issues.

Meantime, in Durgapur Steel Plant also, the CITU, AITUC and INTUC unions jointly served strike notice for one-day strike on 27th December against recovery of the installments for the payment made in lieu of bonus.

JOINT TRADE UNION CONVENTION IN DELHI

On 14th December 2002, the joint State level Trade Union Convention held at Speaker's Hall, Constitution Club, New Delhi called upon the working class of Delhi to ensure massive mobilization in the Capital city of Delhi on the occasion of the programme of mass Satyagraha to be observed countrywide on 8th January 2003 to protest against the

anti-national, anti-worker policy of the NDA Govt. The Convention also called for preparing in a big way for the massive March to Parliament on 26th February.

The Convention was attended by all the major Central Trade Unions, viz., AITUC, CITU, INTUC, HMS, UTUC, UTUC-LS, TUCC and AICCTU but also by various independent federations of

employees from Bank, Insurance, Telecom, Postal, Sales and Medical Representatives, and also by the Federations of Railway workers.

Among those who addressed the Convention were Tapan Sen, Secretary, CITU, Gurudas Dasgupta, General Secretary, Harvajan Singh Sidhu (HMS) Rajan Shastri (TUCC).

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS ON BASE 1982=100

State	Sr. Centre No.		Month		State	Sr. Centre No.		Month	
			Sept.' 02	Oct.' 02				Sept.' 02	Oct.' 02
Andhra Pradesh	1	Gudur	458	463	Maharashtra	38	Mumbai	563	563
	2	Guntur	481	484		39	Nagpur	499	500
	3	Hyderabad	471	476		40	Nasik	518	518
	4	Visakhapatnam	473	475		41	Pune	532	534
	5	Warangal	506	514		42	Solapur	499	497
Assam	6	D.D. Tinsukia	403	409	Orissa	43	Barbil	439	434
	7	Guwahati	482	492		44	Rourkela	420	424
	8	Labac-Silchar	381	383	Punjab	45	Amritsar	429	428
	9	Mariani-Jorhat	417	425		46	Ludhiana	442	445
	10	Rangapara-Tezpur	421	436	Rajasthan	47	Ajmer	478	478
Bihar	11	Monghyr	449	456		48	Jaipur	454	452
Chhattisgarh	12	Bhillai	426	431	Tamil Nadu	49	Chennai	523	526
Gujarat	13	Ahmedabad	482	481		50	Coimbatore	481	479
	14	Bhavnagar	498	497		51	Coonoor	478	488
	15	Rajkot	455	453		52	Madurai	464	470
	16	Surat	491	493		53	Salem	464	472
	17	Vadodra	472	473		54	Tiruchirapally	548	550
Haryana	18	Faridabad	492	491	Uttar Pradesh	55	Agra	447	444
J & K	19	Yamunanagar	459	456		56	Ghaziabad	489	483
Jharkhand	20	Srinagar	550	546		57	Kanpur	471	467
	21	Jamshedpur	443	445		58	Saharanpur	439	446
	22	Jharia	378	388		59	Varanasi	499	498
	23	Kodarma	399	399	West Bengal	60	Asansol	463	465
	24	Noamundi	415	417		61	Darjeeling	420	411
	25	Ranchi-Hatia	440	445		62	Durgapur	567	571
Karnataka	26	Bangalore	458	457		63	Haldia	590	592
	27	Belgaum	524	523		64	Howrah	550	554
	28	Hubli-Dharwar	480	481		65	Jalpaiguri	427	429
	29	Mercara	463	459		66	Kolkata	538	543
Kerala	30	Alwaye	483	486		67	Raniganj	425	424
	31	Mundakayam	486	482	Chandigarh	68	Chandigarh	525	522
	32	Quilon	498	501	Delhi	69	Delhi	562	563
	33	Thiruvananthapuram	544	545	Pondicherry	70	Pondicherry	516	521
Madhya Pradesh	34	Balaghat	432	445					
	35	Bhopal	516	517					
	36	Indore	491	491					
	37	Jabalpur	472	488					
ALL-INDIA								485	487

Additional Series of Labour Bureau

State	Centre	September 2002	October 2002
Andhra Pradesh	1 Kethgudem	504	511
Himachal Pradesh	2 Himachal Pradesh	464	462
Rajasthan	3 Bhilwara	480	484
Madhya Pradesh	4 Chhindwara	445	450
Tripura	5 Tripura	444	446
Goa	6 Goa	580	580

(CITU district committee at Visakhapatnam could make a breakthrough among the Coffee plantation workers through sustained grassroot level campaign and had been able to organize more than week long strike against the management and their henchmen making them concede to the just demands of the workers. The workers, before CITU's intervention got totally frustrated and demoralized owing to pro-management role of the existing union there. CITU's intervention brought them back to confidence...)

Coffee Plantation Workers Win Confidence

"Sorry sir, we have seen the unions work for the last 20 years. You are a newcomer, what will you do for us? Please leave us to our fate." This was the response to the CITU leaders who went to do a survey of the coffee workers at the coffee plantations of APFDCL which cover an area of ten thousand acres in Peddabayalu Chintapally, R V Nagar and Anatagiri mandals, Visakhapatnam District.

But the same workers, after a period of a ten day-struggle, unanimously told the management "We will not come to work until the CITU leaders tell us to join duty." The change came about due to the work of the CITU district committee, which conducted the struggle at the coffee plantations. Coffee Karmika Sangham's (CITU) initiative begins with a thorough survey of the conditions of the workers and a workshop to decide the course of action.

Mainly women are engaged in this plantation and they have been ruthlessly exploited for many years. Recently the wage rate was reduced arbitrarily from Rs. 66.50 per day to Rs. 61.45 and in reality only Rs. 60 was actually being paid. Coolie-rate for plucking the coffee fruit was reduced from Rs. 1.49 per kg to Rs. 1.25 per kg. The management never took care of the victims of any accidents occurring while on duty. While weighing the collected fruits, it is a common practice to deduct 2 or 3 kg from the actual weight. The innocent Girijan (tribal) workers were thus cheated in many different ways. The workers live in inhuman conditions with no basic civil amenities and are denied all social security benefits, national holidays, weekly off, maternity benefits etc.

The Karmika Sangham submitted charter of demands on all above issues through huge demonstration and blockade of the office of the

divisional managers followed by indefinite strike action which was total. Rasta Roko was also organized in solidarity of the striking workers.

The management only offered an increase of 15 paise on fruit collection and assured implementation of VDA. The workers unanimously rejected the offer and decided to continue the strike struggle.

Meanwhile the management signed an agreement with the APFDC Coffee Workers union (not affiliated to CITU) on the terms they had offered on 6th December and issued a statement by the union calling off the strike. But the workers refused to listen to them and decided that the strike would not be called off without signing agreement with the CITU union.

At this juncture, the management realised their mistake and started negotiation with CITU union. After long discussions an agreement was reached on the following terms: 1)VDA will be added to the wage, 2)147 paise will be paid for fruit plucking, 3)The other statutory benefits will be discussed in front of the DCL and will be implemented, 4)The management will pay upto Rs. 1000/- for medical expenses in case of accidents., 5)Local villagers will be given preference for jobs on the plantation. The workers returned to work on 14th December after the CITU leaders addressed them giving a detailed account of the agreement arrived at. In one voice, they all reaffirmed their faith in CITU.

The workers were very happy that they had been involved in every discussion and movement during the struggle and its preparation. Moreover, the CITU leaders and cadre from the plains lived with the workers and forged close links with them. This style of functioning impressed the workers and they vowed to remain with the CITU.



(The mass rally at Hissar on 1st December, 2002. Inset: M K Pandhe. Report on page 6 - 8)