



Vol. 30

No. 10

June 2000

Price: Rupees Four

# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## CITU GENERAL COUNCIL AT KOZHIKODE



A view of the audience at mass rally - Inset: M.K. Pandhe addressing.

**GLORIOUS COUNTRYWIDE GENERAL STRIKE  
11TH MAY 2000**

## RED SALUTE TO COMRADE BENOY CHOWDHURY

The veteran freedom fighter and a stalwart of the movement of the toiling people, an outstanding revolutionary, **Comrade Benoy Chowdhury** passed away in Calcutta on 6th May 2000.

Comrade Benoy Chaudhury, born on 15th January 1911, plunged into the freedom movement in his teens. He was first arrested in the civil disobedience movement in 1930 and has undergone frequent imprisonment during the British rule besides long years of underground life and externment. While in jail, he joined the Communist consolidation group and after his release in October 1938, he joined the Communist Party. He was a leading figure in the historic Canal Tax Movement in Burdwan and in the Ranigunj Paper Mill strike in 1938-39. He was a leading figure of the massive peasant uprising in Bengal, the 'Tebhaga movement'. In 1952, in the first General Elections in free India, he was elected to the West Bengal legislative assembly from the Burdwan constituency defeating the Maharaja of Burdwan. During the entire course of his revolutionary life he spent more than twelve years in jail, arrested both by the British before independence and the Congress government after independence. His underground life spanned more than ten years. He was elected to the West Bengal State Committee in 1951 and to the secretariat in 1962. He played a leading role in the struggle against revisionism and was one of the key figures in the formation of the CPI(M) and its consolidation in Burdwan and West Bengal. He was elected to the Central Committee of the CPI(M) at the 10th Congress at Jullander and elected to the Polit Bureau in May 1990.

Comrade Benoy Chaudhury was an outstanding leader of the kisan movement in Bengal and the country. He served as the President of the All India Kisan Sabha and for several terms served as the vice-president of the organisation. He was also elected in the working committee of CITU in its foundation conference in 1970 and served there for one term. Comrade Benoy Chowdhury is one of the architects of the militant peasants' struggle for land reform in West Bengal. And it is under his stewardship as Minister for Land Reforms, Panchayats, Community development and Rural Development in the Left Front Govt of West Bengal from 1977, that the implementation of the land reforms in West Bengal, was supervised and completed. The famous "Operation Barga" (recording the rights of sharecroppers) was pioneered by him. One of the most efficient of panchayat raj institutions in India and the devolution of power to the grassroots was also undertaken under his able leadership.

The entire life of com Benoy Chowdhury was a saga of sacrifice and dedication for the cause of the country and the people. His simple life style and accessibility to all was worth emulating for all. In his death the left in the country has lost an outstanding revolutionary; and the void created in the democratic movement is difficult to cover up.

Comrade Benoy Chaudhury had donated his eyes and his body to the Nilratan Sarkar Medical College and Hospital for medical research.

The CITU and the working class dips the red banner in respectful homage to the departed leader and convey heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family members and the comrades.

# THE WORKING CLASS

CITU MONTHLY

**JUNE 2000**

SOMEONE HAS SENT  
A SACHET OF  
DRINKING WATER  
TOWARDS THE PM'S  
DROUGHT RELIEF FUND...



*Courtesy: The Hindu*

## EDITORIAL BOARD

**M K Pandhe**  
(Chairman)

**W R Varada Rajan**  
(Working Editor)

**P K Ganguly**  
**Jibon Roy**  
**Tapan sen**  
**S Dev Roye**

## EDITORIAL

# STOP NOT TILL THE DISASTROUS POLICIES ARE REVERSED

**May 11, 2000!**

The countrywide general strike at the call of the National Platform of Mass Organisations on that eventful Thursday, evoked such a massive response that it delivered a powerful blow to the policy makers in governance at the Centre. The strike, which transformed into a bundh in at least six States, and paralysed all sectors of the economy, was the widest in its reach and participation, in the past one decade of initiation of the disastrous economic reforms.

The strike outside had its echo inside the two chambers of the Parliament as well. The entire opposition, barring the sole exception of the Congress Party, declared their support to the strike through a joint signed statement on the eve of the strike. The MPs belonging to these parties also staged a dharna before commencement of the Parliament session on the strike day.

The main opposition party - the Congress - was also forced to voice opposition to the NDA Government policies, that are hitting the people hard, at least during the debate in the house.

Yashwant Sinha, had a sigh of relief when he had the Finance Bill, 2000 passed, without any roll-back, with the allies murmuring and the opposition staging a walk out. But he must have been the most disturbed man, to find that the people of the whole country register their indignant protest with a banging against the very policies he trying to push forward to please his masters in the multilateral institutions.

11th May also witnessed a unique feature. Sections of industrialists, traders and employers, particularly those from the small scale sector, bleeding with grievous injuries caused by the disastrous economic policies, openly declared active support to the struggle in various parts of the country.

The anger of the people at the grass root expressed by the strike of May 11th, and before in its preparatory stage, could force a big section of the polity otherwise supporting the liberalisation policies to join the chorus of protest against those disastrous policies.

May 11th strike sends this unique message to the working class and toiling people about the intrinsic strength of a united people's action.

The momentum that has been gained now, has to be pushed forward vigorously. People are out to assert that the ruinous economic policies and the communal designs of the BJP led Government must decisively be defeated. It is for the working class and the trade union movement to seize the opportunity to initiate a sustained struggle. **Stop not till the disastrous policies are reversed.**

# MASSIVE COUNTRYWIDE STRIKE ON MAY 11TH

**V**irtual bandh was observed in six States - Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Tripura, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and also in many industrial districts of Tamil Nadu and Orissa, on 11th May, 2000.

Lakhs of employees of State Govt. and local bodies went on strike at the call of the All India State Govt. Employees Federation.

In the financial sector, including Banking and insurance, the strike was total all over the country. The strike in the Postal dept.s and Defence industries all over the country was complete. In other Central Govt dept.s and also in the telecom sector, strike was massive in various parts of the country.

In the coal and iron ore mines throughout the country, the overwhelming majority of the workers struck work.

Over 50000 medical and sales representatives mostly working in Multinational and Indian monopoly drug companies participated in the strike.

**Assam:** Report received from Assam state that strike was total in oil sector including ONGC, Refineries, Banks, LIC, Telecom, NF Railway Headquarters, State Secretariat and other State government offices throughout the State as well as central government offices. No train could move out from Guwahati and the incoming trains were regulated at different stations. Vehicular traffic went off the roads of the capital city of Guwahati. All educational

institutions remained closed. Thousands of volunteers including women activists courted arrest. In a place called Rangia some anti social elements attacked some volunteers and injured them.

**Bihar:** The State witnessed massive strike particularly in the major industrial centres. In Jamshedpur, at the call of Chamber of Commerce and Small Industrialists Association, a successful 'Industry Bandh' was observed and around 1800 factories in and around Jamshedpur remained completely closed.

The Bokaro Unit of SAIL observed unprecedented strike as compared to the recent past strikes. While overall strike was around 60%, in many plants/shops, 100% workers observed strike.

In Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi 80% workers went on strike. The Central Coal Field Ltd (CCL) witnessed complete stoppage of production and despatch. As per report, around 75% workers participated in the strike.

**Delhi:** In the industrial areas of Delhi, response to strike was overwhelming. In the GT Karnal Road, Wazirpur, Kirtinagar industrial centres, there was a total Bandh. In Nagloi area, strike was partial. In the factories of Kwality and Hindustan lever, production was nil. In Mayapuri, Jhilmil Industrial area and Okhla, overwhelming majority of the workers joined the strike and held massive procession. In

Noida industrial centre, strike was massive. In Ghaziabad, Sahibabad, out of 400 factories, 390 factories covering 65000 workers took part in strike.

Report from **Punjab** reveals that in Ludhiana, Amritsar, Rajpura, Mohali, Ropar, Batala and Nangal, strike was almost total. In Rajasthan, the industrial areas of Jaipur and Ganganagar, Kota reported massive strike.

In Maharashtra, report of massive strike action was received from Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Solapur, Kolapur, Nagpur, Ichhalkaranji, Pune, Thane Wardha and Mumbai.

**Tamil Nadu:** The Strike in the State was completely successful. Thousands of activists of all the mass organisations courted arrest. The Industrial centres like Tiruppur, Avinashi, Sivakasi, Chinnalapatti observed complete bandh with shop keepers also supporting the strike. In Pondichery it was complete bandh with all the shops closed and factories and transport totally stopped. Employees in Central and State Govt. also joined the strike with 70% of staff staying away. In Banks & Insurance sectors, the strike was total.

The strike issue figured in the Legislative Assembly where, after a heated debate, MLAs belonging to the TMC, AIADMK, CPIM, CPI and Indian National League staged a walk out. Strike was also reported from

various industrial centres of UP such as Kanpur, Lucknow, Raibareilly, Saharanpur. In Kanpur, thousands of workers, women, students and youth organised rasta roko in the Zarib Chowki Chowraha of Kanpur blocking two national highways. In Karnataka, total strike was reported in BEML and KGF. In other PSUs strike was partial. Workers staged massive demonstration and rally in Bangalore. In **Himachal Pradesh**, the workers in the hydel power

projects took part in strike in a massive way. Anganwadi workers all over the State struck work and held procession. In the industrial district of Solan, and also in Sirmour, Mandi, Kinnour, Kangra, Hamirpur etc. strike was observed by majority of workers. In Shimla, workers in Hotel and other industries took part in strike and took out massive procession in the city. In **Haryana**, massive strike was reported from Sonapat, Hissar, Gurgaon, Rohtak and Faridabad. In Gohana

subdivision of Sonapat, police lathicharged on the workers' procession injuring many including women.

In **Madhya Pradesh**, complete bandh was reported in Satna, Rajnandgaon. In Bailadila iron ore mine, 80% workers participated in strike. In Satna, police arrested more than four hundred workers. In the industrial areas of Gwalior, Raipur, Indore and Bhilai etc massive strike was reported.

## NPMO CONGRATULATES PEOPLE

The National Platform of Mass Organisations congratulated people from all walks of life for their magnificent response to the call of countrywide General Strike on May 11th against the disastrous and anti-people, anti-national policies of the Vajpayee Govt.

The massive General Strike all over the country, which attained the character of virtual bandh in many states like Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and many industrial centres in the country, vindicated the determined opposition of the mass of the people from all sections of society against the policy of the Vajpayee Govt to put the country's economy on auction to the multinational companies and the Indian monopolies as their junior partners. The massive response to the strike also demonstrated the wrath of the common people at large against the anti-people move of the NDA Govt to rob the common people by way of cutting subsidies on food, fuel and fertilizers and pay the rich capitalists and landlord class and also the gamblers in the share market by way of huge concessions, tax relief etc even beyond the budgetary proposals.

This magnificent countrywide strike witnessed the active involvement of people from all sections of society. While the workers cutting across affiliations have been on strike squatting on the picket line, the peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth and women have been on the streets in several thousands in demonstrations, dharnas, rasta-roko agitations and also human chains all over the country in support of the strike. Railway movement got disrupted in various parts of the country. In many places, the Small Scale Industries' Associations came forward actively in support of the strike against liberalization policies.

All the political parties except the NDA constituents and congress has extended support to the strike call in a joint statement on 10-05-2000. And on 11th May the leader of the Congress party had to state in Loksabha expressing solidarity to the struggle outside the parliament against the Govt's policies. Organised expression of people's anger down below is also forcing changes in the positions of various political formations.

NPMO congratulate the MPs of various political parties for their support to strike and holding dharna before the Parliament on May 11th.

NPMO will further heighten the struggle against the Govt policies and decide on next course of action soon, after a thorough review of the situation.

## General Council Meeting at Kozhikode

### CITU CHARTERS FURTHER CAMPAIGN

The General Council of the CITU met at Kozhikode, Kerala, on 20-22, April 2000. The venue of the meeting, the Centenary Hall in Kozhikode city, was named Com. Vimal Ranadive Nagar and a real life image of Com. Vimaldi provided the backdrop to the stage.

The session commenced with the hoisting of the CITU flag by E. Balanandan, President and homage at the Martyr's column. M. Dasan MLA, Chairman of the Reception Committee, extended a warm welcome to the participants. Resolutions on condolence to deceased leaders and homage

to martyrs were read out by Tapan Sen, Secretary and the Council observed two minutes silence. E. Balanandan delivered the Presidential Address. As an immediate priority task, the CITU General Council, by way of an unanimous resolution, called upon all affiliates to mobilise the working people and masses of the country to make the 11th May countrywide general strike a resounding success. A mass rally was held in the afternoon, which was participated by tens of thousands of workers, including a large number of women. It culminated in a public meeting at Com EMS Nagar, in the

### INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN PROGRAMME

As a follow-up of the 11th May strike and in the run-up to the CITU Conference, the General Council chalked out a schedule of intensive campaign programme. The campaign will commence from the CITU Foundation Day, i.e., 30th May 2000 and culminate in the CITU Conference at Hyderabad. The programme decided is as under:

1. Holding of State Committee meetings of CITU (Bigger States may hold full Secretariat or working committee meetings) **by 20th May 2000.**
2. Public meetings at Area/Industrial Unit/District levels **on 30.05.2000**
3. **From 10th June,2000 to 31st July,2000:** Group Meetings/Street Corner/Gate meetings and Simultaneously signature campaign on petition to the President of India.(Draft Petition has since been sent from the CITU centre)
4. **From 10th August, 2000 to 31st August,2000:** Conventions to popularise the issues and alternative policies at a) Local level b) District level and c) State level
5. **By 10th September,2000:** Torchlight Processions/ Human Chain Programmes.
6. **By 30th September,2000:** Padayatra/Jathas at District level to culminate into Massive Demonstration before the office of the District Magistrate/Collector.
7. **By 31st October,2000:** Rally in the State capitals (may be adjusted/combined with the State conference rally wherever necessary)
8. All India Jathas on regional basis to start from the places where the previous All India Conferences of CITU were held i.e., Calcutta, Mumbai, Chennai, Kanpur, Patna, Cochin and additional one from Delhi. The departure and routes to be planned ensuring arrival at Hyderabad **on 26th December, 2000.**

The CITU centre will publish a series of pamphlets on the issues to be highlighted in the campaign. The General Council also decided on the subjects to be covered in these pamphlets.

This is the independent campaign programme of the CITU. This programme will have to be intensively carried out by the CITU, as our own independent initiative to keep up the tempo and momentum of the resistance struggle to the economic policies and communal offensives of the BJP-led Govt. at the Centre.

Kozhikode beach. E. Balanandan presided. Among those who addressed the buge gathering were : E.K. Nayanar, Chief Minister of Kerala, E. Balanandan, M.K. Pandhe, Chittabrata Majumdar, K.N. Ravindranath and T.P. Ramkrishnan (General Secretary of the Reception Committee). M.K. Pandhe introduced the General Secretary's report. Ranjit Basu, Treasurer, placed the statement of accounts. Kanai Banerjee, Secretary, introduced the conclusions of the CITU Workshop on Organisation, held in New Delhi on 13-15, March 2000. In two separate spells of sessions, the Report and the Workshop conclusions were debated by the General Council Members.

The meeting also decided to hold the 10th Conference of the CITU at Hyderabad, in Andhra Pradesh, on 27-31, December, 2000.

After reply by M.K. Pandhe, the report and the statement of accounts were approved by the General Council.

The General Council deliberated on the conclusions of the workshop on organisation and provided useful inputs for the CITU centre to prepare an action plan for further effective implementation of the Bhubaneshwar document. (Report on Organisation).

By a separate decision, the General Council approved placing of an amendment to the CITU constitution, before the next CITU Conference, to increase the affiliation fees from 50 paise to Re. 1 per member, with a minimum of Rs.40.

With the adoption of the report of the credentials committee, 60 new unions with a membership of 16040 were granted affiliation.

R. Umanath, in his address to the General Council, recalled the emphasis laid by Com. BT Ranadive on the priority task of mobilising the unemployed youth and exhorted the CITU, at all levels of the organisation, to take up the task of organising the unemployed.

The General Council chalked out a campaign programme as a follow up of the 11th May strike (*see box on page 8 for detailed information*)

The other resolutions adopted by the General Council were : i) Against Vajpayee Government's surrender to imperialist machinations; ii) On working women; iii) Against Sathyam Committee Report on Textile Industry and iv) Against the Electricity Bill 2000.

The General Council session ended with the concluding remarks of the President, E. Balanandan, who also thanked the Kerala State Committee, Reception Committee and the volunteers for making the General Council session an important landmark in the onward march of the CITU.

As a curtain raiser to the General council meeting, the Reception Committee organised 5 seminars on different subjects, viz. Impact of Globalisation and Agricultural Sector, Globalisation and Unemployment, Secularism and Indian Democracy, Liberalisation and Tasks of Working Class and on Globalisation.

These seminars were addressed by eminent experts and leaders of the CITU. These seminars received considerable attention of the people in Kozhikode and wide media coverage.

## PENSION CASE IN SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court case against the Government Pension Scheme (EPS-95) was to be heard on 2.5.2000. Earlier, on 4.4.2000, the Supreme Court Bench had adjourned the hearing to 2.5.2000, at the request of the Additional Solicitor General (appearing for the Government) to enable the appropriate authorities to consider the question of employees being given the option to opt out of the EPS-95 and place the Govt. response in the light of what the Cabinet decides.

On 2.5.2000, the counsel for Government of India submitted to the Supreme Court Bench hearing the case, that the Government of India was not considering any option benefit. With the Government making its stand clear, the Supreme Court will now have to give their final verdict after hearing the case.

Unfortunately, the Bench was preoccupied with the hearing of some other case and the Pension case hearing was adjourned to 31.8.2000.

# INDIAN LABOUR CONFERENCE: A STERILE DEBATING EXERCISE ON LABOUR ISSUES

W R Varada Rajan

The Thirty Sixth Session of the Indian Labour Conference was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on the 14th and 15th April, 2000. The CITU delegation to the ILC Session comprised M.K. Pandhe, W.R. Varada Rajan, N. Padmalochanan (Delegates) and Badal Saroj, Ranjana Nirula, Mohanlal (Advisers). Satyanarain Jatia, Minister for Labour, chaired the session, which was also attended by the Minister of State for Labour, Muni Lall.

For the first time after assuming Prime Ministership, Atal Behari Vajpayee, chose to attend the ILC session, through briefly for an hour. He inaugurated the session, prefacing his address with a forewarning that he could not be expected to attend every future session of the tripartite forum.

The Prime Minister was at the ILC session, perhaps, to ward off the opt-repeated criticism that he found no time to spare for labour, while attending, every other day, meetings organised by the employers' fora, like the CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, etc.

## PM BELIES EXPECTATIONS

In the backdrop of recent strikes at the advent of the new millennium - by the UP electricity workers, port & dock employees, Government staff in Rajasthan/J&K, public sector workers etc. - the Prime Minister choosing to address the labour conference

raised some expectations. It was hoped that the Labour Ministry would have done some home work with the Prime Minister's Office, which could have paved the way for Vajpayee to make some policy announcements in favour of the workers, to soothe their growing discontent and disenchantment with the BJP led Government.

But that was not to be. The Prime Minister just came, spoke and left. He had, of course, some platitudes. He affirmed that it was "the duty of every civilised society to take care of the needs of labour". He sermonised: "we must look upon our labour force as a source of strength - and never as a liability". He was ecstatic about "the collapse of many walls and the demolition of many dogmas" in the past couple of decades. He declared his belief that there could **never** be "any inherent antagonism between labour, capital, management, society and the State".

As is his wont, the Prime Minister sang hymns and praises to the "imperatives of liberalisation and globalisation". He claimed to "have devised our own sovereign response in the form of economic reforms". He urged the trade unions "to adopt a positive and supportive attitude towards the programme of economic reforms" and exhorted: "we would like you to be partners in the reform

process".

Vajpayee called for "change, urgent change, radical change". But he ruled out any change in his Government's policies, which are wrecking the economy, people's lives and the country's self-reliance.

## LABOUR LAW CHANGES

The PM, however, emphasised the need for "changes in labour laws", as according to him they "have not kept pace with changes in the rest of the economy". He loudly proclaimed that "the nation cannot reap the full benefits of economic reforms unless we reform both the labour laws and the administrative machinery that implements them".

Why? "Legislative and administrative rigidities have often become hurdles in the path of new investments, without which faster growth is not possible," he added. He also identified "inflexibility in labour deployment in the face of changing market conditions", as one of the reasons for industrial sickness.

But the reality starkly in the face. Vajpayee had to admit that

"Ours is a labour abundant economy. Yet, new industrial investment is showing a marked preference for projects that least depend on labour". He also, perhaps grudgingly, referred to the "greed and incompetence of many private managements", which led to vast productive

resources, worth tens of thousands of crores, lying idle in the sick industrial units. But his Government had no spine to act against such greedy and incompetent managements. The PM revealed, what some other speaker in the ILC forum

later called the "paralysis of governance". He could only announce that : "Last Week I have reconstituted the Group of Ministers which would make recommendations on wage related matters and also on how best to safeguard the interests

of the workers employed in sick PSUs." This is sheer procrastination and callousness. as the Surface Transport Minister in Vajpayee's Cabinet, Rajnath Singh, had committed to the Port & Dock employees to resolve the issue relating to

## CITU's CRITICISM OF GOVT. INACTION

M.K. Pandhe, speaking on behalf of the CITU, deplored that the so called actions taken by the Government on the decisions of the last session of the ILC were very much unsatisfactory. On the ethos of tripartism, the report dealt with the State Governments only and nothing was mentioned about the steps taken by Central Government. The sessions of the highest tripartite body, the ILC, are not attended by the Ministers in charge of employing Ministries of the Government of India. Only junior level officers, who cannot make any commitment, are in attendance. He wondered whether the Indian Labour Conference was being reduced to an annual carnival.

The last three sessions of the ILC had urged removal of the income ceilings prescribed in different labour legislations. No action had been taken in this regard. Almost 95 per cent of the workers, including those in the unskilled categories, were already outside the purview of the Payment of Bonus Act. The same income ceiling is continued for the past 10-15 years, though the prices had gone up enormously. Stock phrases like "under consideration", "being processed" are used to describe the action taken.

In Export Processing Zones, no industrial legislation is being implemented. Trade Union representatives are not allowed to accompany the officers of the Labour department, while on inspection, despite a clear decision of the tripartite today.

Pandhe was critical of the manner in which the Second National Commission on Labour was constituted. The last ILC decided that "the terms of reference should be clearly formulated after in depth consultation with all concerned interests". The Government had blatantly violated this decision. It was shocking to find that the only full time member of the Commission was a former Secretary of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, an employers' organisation.

The vacancies in the Industrial Tribunals/Labour courts are not filled up. Where Presiding Officers are appointed, the supporting staff are not appointed, as a result of which, the Tribunals could not function. When there is so much unemployment in the country, why the Government could not fill up those vacancies? Until such time a new Presiding Officer was appointed, the present incumbents in office should be continued and not retired.

The recent Exim Policy announced by Commerce Ministry, would lead to deindustrialisation and massacre of jobs in the country. If import of beedies, curry powder, pickles etc. are freely allowed, what will happen to our small scale industries here? Where will the much promised '1 crore jobs a year' come from? Government must review the Exim Policy.

The plight of women workers, who constituted a big chunk of the informal sector, is most horrifying. The Equal Remuneration Act is nowhere in implementation. The Supreme Court directive for enacting a legislation to prevent sexual harassment at work place is not acted upon. The Government has not ratified the ILC convention on Maternity Benefits to women workers.

Reverting to tripartism, Pandhe pointed out that out of 40 odd tripartite committees under the Ministry of Labour, over 30 such committees had not met even once during the last year. If the Labour Minister is unable to attend these tripartite committees, he should authorise the Secretary or Additional Secretary to chair these committees.

period of wage agreement by 31st March itself.

It has become fashionable for anyone in the Government to talk about the plight of unorganised labour for whom the existing laws had very little to contribute. Vajpayee also bemoaned the lot of the poorest and neglected sections of our society - the farm workers. But on the Agricultural Workers' Bill, which was for legislating on minimum wages, protection of service conditions and social

security for this section, Vajpayee only regretted that "we have not been able to reach a consensus on this vital subject so far". Vajpayee's address at the ILC was sweet music for the employer's lobby and the MNCs. The bourgeois Press gleefully hailed his speech with the headlines - "PM gets tough with labour". The FICCI greeted the PM's announcement with a call for "making necessary changes to impart flexibility to the legislative framework and the

administrative machinery that implemented the laws". Shekhar Bajaj, President of Assocham, called for "an imaginative and enabling employment policy" and suggested that "the Industrial Disputes Act be discarded" (The Hindu, Business Line, 16 April, 2000)

#### **WIDENING IN EQUALITY**

Satyanarain Jatia, Minister for Labour, in his speech had to admit the harsh reality. While the PM talked of fading away of antagonism between labour and

## **CITU COMMENTS ON INDUSTRIAL SICKNESS**

W R Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU, in a brief intervention on the debate on industrial sickness, pointed out as under:

"The phenomenon of industrial sickness was getting accelerated due to the policies of liberalisation and globalisation, relaxation of import restrictions and unhindered dumping of products of foreign countries.

While the trade unions have their own reservations and criticisms on the functioning of the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), it would be wrong to conclude that the BIFR had outlived its utility. The talk of repealing the Sick Industrial Companies Act (SICA) and winding up of the BIFR and its Appellate Authority, without creating a more effective alternative mechanism for revival of sick industries, would have disastrous consequences. Trade Unions can not agree to such a move, as it would be an act of throwing the baby out along with the bath water.

The Government Financial Institutions which are usually appointed as Operating Agency (OA) or Monitoring Agency (MA) are not effective. The approach of the Banks, to opt for one time settlement under the rehabilitation package and discontinue their exposure to the sick unit concerned, is hindering the process of revival.

As the BIFR could sanction a rehabilitation package only if a consensus emerged, the trend, in recent times, is to go in for winding up or liquidation.

In most cases, the promoters of the sick companies registered with the BIFR were merrily enjoying the protection offered to them under section 22 of the SICA. The BIFR must be granted authority to direct payment of statutory dues by relaxing the immunity under section 22.

The cases of willful default and diversion of funds by the management of sick companies must be dealt with severely. The SICA must be amended to provide for exemplary punishment in such cases.

The Government should consider the suggestions made by the trade unions for amending the SICA, with emphasis on revival/rehabilitation.

The sick small scale industries have no mechanism for rehabilitation. A separate mechanism should be evolved to revive the SSI units which are sick.

The Government should create a restructuring fund for revival of sick public sector companies and a similar fund for revival of sick SSI units. The State Governments, which have taken efforts for revival of State PSUs and for provision of relief to the workers affected by industrial sickness/closure must be extended financial help by the Government of India".

capital, his colleague Jatia, approvingly quoted the late lamented Ambedkar who said in 1943: "The first contradiction is between fabulous wealth and abject poverty, not in its simple form but in its aggravated form in which we see it, wealth for those who do not work and poverty for those who do. The second contradiction lies between the political and economics systems. In politics equality, in economic inequality". What Vajpayee, Jatia and company, in the NDA Government are doing is just not only to perpetuate this inequality but ever widen it. Jatia also noted that "as a result of economic policy, trade liberalisation and adjustment, eventual adjustment and displacement of the workers is the apprehended fall out of structural adjustment". He turned philosophical to declare that "God has created man not because he should work hard throughout his life and in the end be compelled to die a death of hunger and frustration".

The Trade Union (Amendment) Bill, subsequently introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 28th May, the reported decision of the Vajpayee Cabinet to change the definition of "workmen", debarring those with a salary of Rs.10000 from seeking protection under any labour legislation, and proposed repeal of Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, are all aimed annulment of the hard won trade union rights! When it comes to oblige the employers' lobby, Vajpayee Government is one that works faster!

### TAME EXERCISES

The PM's speech was, however, preceded by two brief addresses - one by H.B. Dave (BMS) from the workers' side and Arvind Doshi (Council of Indian Employers) from the employers' side. H.B. Dave pleaded for reconsideration of the economic and industrial policies of privatisation, consumerism and open market, which have led to large scale closure of industries and butchering of jobs. Arvind Doshi called for a political commitment to implement administrative and legal simplification towards a flexible labour policy. He also congratulated the Labour Ministry for holding the ILC session on a holiday (Ambedkar Birthday) and went on to suggest to review "whether we can afford this luxury of holidays".

The working sessions that followed later in the day and the next forenoon was a tame story of the three sides - workers, employers and governments - ventilating their viewpoints, which at best served only the purpose of record.

But one thing was notably uniform - criticism of the action taken report, which going by its contents, was of the opposite of its nomenclature.

The agenda item on industrial sickness was briefly discussed in the plenary session. But, the other two items viz, workers participation in industry and workers education were remitted to group discussions, splitting the ILC in two different groups. The groups on workers participation was participated by N. Padmalochanan and Badal

Saroj and the other on workers education by Ranjana Nirula and Mohanlal. These group discussions just turned out to be a lack lustre exercise of tabling respective view points by the three sides.

### STERILE "CONCLUSIONS"

The plenary session resumed around noon on 15th April, where the "conclusions" on the agenda items were placed. These "conclusions" could not be adequately deliberated upon to make them really reflective of the consensus view, due to paucity of time. Even the suggestion to refer the conclusions to the special tripartite committee for finalisation was not agreed to by the Labour Minister.

The Government agenda on industrial sickness was apparently financial sector reforms oriented. The emphasis was more on liquidating the Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) of the banks by creation of an Assets Reconstruction Company, rather than on revival of sick companies. As the employers' side was not agreeable to provide for workers participation in management through legislation, the issue was relegated for further discussions. On workers education, the conclusions, *inter alia*, recommended observance of the year 2001 as workers education year and setting up of a national task force to study the status of labour education.

With this, the two-day talking shop exercise, came to an end with no concrete remedies to the problems afflicting the workers and the industries.

*(N P Singh, Member, BIFR (Ministry of Finance), was a participant in the 36th session of the Indian Labour Conference. He made a presentation in the ILC - for the first time on behalf of the BIFR. His presentation covered various aspects of industrial sickness and the views of the BIFR thereon. We publish his presentation, in full, as it unmasks several hidden facts, with a stamp of authenticity.— Editor)*

## INDUSTRIAL SICKNESS: THE BIFR VIEWS

### INTRODUCTORY

Every second or third industry coming to the BIFR for registration of its sickness has been mentioning Government policies as one of the primary reasons for its sickness. When asked to elaborate, most of the industries has been clarifying that **too drastic a reduction in the rates of customs duty over too short a period along with the absence of a matching reduction in the rates of excise duty on the locally manufactured products has been making their survival, at the present juncture, extremely difficult and leading to their sickness. This situation is now likely to accentuate further in view of the Govt of India's decision to remove all quantitative restrictions (QRs) on imports within the next 12 months.** Out of some 3,000 internationally traded items, QRs for nearly half the products had already been removed and of the balance 1429 items, QRs in respect of 714 items were removed w.e.f 1st April, 2000 and those on the balance 715 items will be removed w.e.f 1st April 2001. Thus, the overall situation is that a large number of units in the domestic manufacturing sector are going to be hit adversely by the on-going, unrestricted pace of economic liberalisation and globalisation. In turn, the closure of these industries is bound to affect/destroy the jobs of the employees working in these units.

The Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 (SICA in brief) **was enacted in pursuance of the Directive Principles of the State Policy** (vide Section 2 of the Act). **The basic objective of SICA is the revival of sick industries and this objective has been considered by the Parliament to be in keeping with the Directive principles**, which are amongst the basic features of the Constitution and cannot, therefore, be either repealed or even substantially amended. Hence it should be concluded that **SICA not only continues to be relevant in the age of**

**globalisation, but its relevance is all the more at a time when the Indian Industry is feeling the assault of globalisation/economic liberalisation most adversely.**

### CONSEQUENCES OF REPEAL OF SICA

While no case is thus made out for the repeal of SICA, it should be noted that in case such a suggestion were to be implemented without simultaneously putting a substitute legislation or other improved mechanism to look after the interests of the sick industries in place, **nearly 10-12 lakh workers working in over 1500 units currently under the purview of the BIFR would face immediate retrenchment**, since with the repeal of the Act, the Banks and FIs would single-mindedly pursue their recovery processes in the Debt Recovery Tribunals/High Courts and all of these units would face certain colosure. Repeal of SICA, if resorted to, at this juncture, would therefore seem to be particularly inopportune and untimely.

### THE VRS SCHEME: IS IT A PANACEA FOR ALL ILLS?

Some quarters have proposed Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) as the way out to soften the impact of the suggested repeal of SICA on the industrial workers. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that **while the Central PSUs have access to the VRS funds under the National Renewal Fund (NRF) Scheme, the PSUs in the State sector and a much larger number of units in the private sector do not, at present, have access to the same.** The availability of VRS funds for the Central PSUs itself is also found to be somewhat inadequate. It is, therefore, not known as to **where the much larger quantum of funds for implementing VRS in the private sector units will come from.**

**VRS benefits, even if granted, will not ensure the availability of alternative jobs to the workers.** While in the development countries

alternative jobs are always available to the workers losing their jobs in old establishments, this is not the case in developing countries like India. Hence, It is felt that in our situation, Govt. must necessarily intervene to protect the sick and weak units in the interest of employment and productive use of economic resources.

#### **NPAs IN THE BANKING SECTOR: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?**

It has been the common refrain of many Banks and FIs that BIFR is solely responsible for their mounting NPAs. However, according to RBI statistics, out of gross Bank NPAs of Rs 50,815 crores as on 31.3.1998, less than 20% (Rs 9,862 crores) were related to the non-SSI sick industrial units, with which alone the BIFR is concerned. BIFR does not hold up recoveries in the case of non-SSI weak units. Similarly, delays in recoveries in the case of loans advanced to the SSI units as well as those given to agriculture, rural development, social welfare and services sectors are not attributable to the procedures of the BIFR, since the Board is not at all concerned with such cases. Besides, all revival schemes approved by the BIFR invariably include recoveries of FIs/Banks' dues. Hence, it is factually incorrect to blame the BIFR solely or even largely for the mounting NPAs of the FIs/Banks.

#### **DELAYS UNDER SICA**

It is true that due to the quasi-judicial character of the proceedings before the BIFR, delays do sometimes occur in the finalisation of the revival packages. However, the delays occur largely as the BIFR does not enjoy any over riding powers over the secured creditors in regard to grant of various reliefs and concessions to the sick industrial companies. Further we have ourselves suggested to the Ministry of Finance that a statutory time limit of 1-1 1/2 years for finalising and sanctioning revival packages could be imposed by amending SICA, so that if no agreed revival package can be finalised and sanctioned within the specified period, the sick companies could be sent for compulsory winding up, thereby enabling the workers to claim their dues through the Labour Courts and the secured creditors to do the same through the DRTs, etc.

It may also be pointed out that compared to the

delays under SICA, those occurring in the Official Liquidators' courts in the High Courts are far more severe. According to ADB Study (1993), 59% of all liquidation cases were pending in the various High Courts for 10-50 years and only the remaining 41% were pending for less than 10 years. This is so even in respect of many cases where the BIFR has already recommended the winding up of sick companies, since the same were not found to be viable.

#### **TIWARI COMMITTEE**

Enactment of SICA was itself based on the felt needs of the FIs and Banks in India in view of the problems encountered by them in the recovery of their dues from sick and weak units. According to Tiwari Committee set up by the RBI, the FIs and Banks were not only in need of a platform where all the creditors of a weak/sick unit could come together to negotiate and agree to a common concession package, but a legislative back up to facilitate the formulation and enforcement of viable recovery plans was also considered to be necessary. The logic and conclusions of Tiwari Committee would appear to be valid even today and unless a better mechanism can be found and put in place to replace SICA, abolition of the existing mechanism of BIFR would only make things worse, since this would do away with the only instrumentality under the Govt to deal with the problems of industrial sickness in a concerted and professional manner. The existing Act suffers from the basic lacunae that while the promoters of the sick companies coming to the BIFR enjoy automatic protection under Section 22 (1) of the Act, no reciprocal obligations are cast upon them under law, either while the rehabilitation packages are under preparation or after these have been approved and are under implementation. The Act needs to be amended to remove this lacunae.

We also welcome the step taken by the Gujarat Government in creating a State level Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction for SSIs. This step along with the creation of State level funds for revival of weak/sick SSI units, needs to be emulated by other State Governments in the country.

# LABOUR ISSUES IN PARLIAMENT

## BHARAT GOLD MINES: GOVT. ULTIMATUM ON VRS

The Bharat Gold Mines Ltd. (BGML) in Kolar, Karnataka, is a sick public sector undertaking. It is before the Board for Industrial and Financial Restructuring (BIFR). The officers and workers of the BGML submitted a revival package to the BIFR. The BIFR did not even refer the same to the Government of India for examination. Instead, it issued a show cause notice for winding up. Meanwhile, the employees were issued an ultimatum to opt for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) by 31st March, 2000, failing which they would be liable for retrenchment.

Dipankar Mukherjee, MP raised this issue in the Rajya Sabha through a question. Rita Verma, Minister of State for Mines and Minerals, replied to the question on 26.4.2000, as under:

" Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) is a

goodwill gesture extended by the Government to the employees to exercise their option by a specified date. The Government had made a submission before BIFR that it would have no objection if Bharat Gold Mines Limited (BGML) was wound up under Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, (SICA), 1985, and that it was prepared to offer the benefit of VRS to all the employees on its roll as on 31.3.1999, and that the offer of VRS would be kept open till 31.3.2000. Further, the Government intimated BGML, inter-alia, about the implications in respect of employees not opting for VRS by the dateline. The intimation was in the nature of a clarificatory letter." Whether this is intimation or intimidation, it is for any one to judge! The BIFR hearing on winding up notice was scheduled for 16.5.2000.

## "UNAMBIGUOUS POLICY" TO THROW AWAY PSU SHARES?

Dipankar Mukherjee, a member of the CITU working committee and MP, raised a question in the Rajya Sabha enquiring the names, revalued asset value and replacement cost of the Public Sector Units (PSUs), proposed to be disinvested this year.

Arun Jaitley, Minister of State, in charge of the Department of Disinvestment, replied Dipankar Mukherjee on 06.03.2000. In his reply, he was delightfully vague and refused even to divulge the names of the PSUs. But what is shocking, the Minister revealed that the Government "does not collect this information", viz., the revalued asset value and replacement cost of the PSUs to be disinvested.

This clearly indicates that the present NDA Government is bent on selling the shares of the PSUs at throw away prices, without even assessing the current asset value.

Dipankar Mukherjee has, in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vaipayee, on 18.04.2000, urged that the disinvestment process be kept on hold, at least till the revaluation of assets of these PSUs. He referred to the PM's statement at a conference of the Chief Executives

of PSEs on 1.4.2000 claiming Government of India's policy towards the Public Sector to be 'clear and unambiguous' and wrote:

"The Minister for Disinvestment has refused to divulge names of Public Sector Undertakings which are being disinvested this year. More astonishingly, he informed the House that the Government of India does not collect information regarding the revalued asset as well as the replacement cost of PSUs proposed to be disinvested.

"Apart from the lack of clarity and ambiguity, I am afraid the above is an attempt of the Government of India to deny the Constitutional obligation of the Members of Parliament to protect and safeguard the public investment in the CPSUs. It is distressing that while the Government is talking of amendments in Constitution, the Constitutional rights of Members of Parliament are being denied so blatantly.

"I would, therefore, urge you that no further process of disinvestment/sale of PSUs should be initiated without revaluing assets and without making a due diligent study including replacement cost."

## MINIMUM AGE FOR EMPLOYMENT

Answering an unstarred question in the Rajya Sabha, Muni Lall, Minister of State for Labour, said:

The Government propose to enact a Central Legislation fixing a minimum age of 14 years for admission to employment and work in all occupations but excluding agriculture in family, and small holdings producing for own

consumption. The proposed Legislation will also fix a minimum age of not less than 18 years for admission to any type of employment and work, which by its nature of circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons.

The proposed legislation will apply to private sector and public sector employment and work.

*(Dipankar Mukherjee made a special mention in the Rajya Sabha on 25.4.2000 on the sale of public assets without any revaluation exercise. Here are excerpts from his speech - Editor)*

## ON SALE OF PSU ASSETS

"A press report in the Telegraph (19.4.2000) "PMO Pushes Through Sale of PSUs", that is, the sale of public sector units. It is no longer disinvestment. It is sale of public sector units and public sector assets.

Before I mention my main points, I would like to draw the attention of the House to what the father of these economic reforms, Narasimha Rao, had to say. In article in the Times of India dated 5th March. He says. "to put it bluntly, sale is certainly not the next generation of disinvestment. Let us not delude ourselves. Sale is a totally different species, not any generation of disinvestment. It is expropriation of the nation, pure and simple". If that is what the father of reforms says, I don't know what the follower of these reforms will have to say about it.

Though we have been opposed to the disinvestment process as a whole, what is really bothering us is the modality of disinvestment. There has been a question asked by none other than a very respected Member of Parliament here, Nanaji Deshmukh. He has put the question whether there is a Cabinet Committee headed by the Prime Minister on disinvestment on the sale of Public assets. The answer is, "Yes, there is a Cabinet Committee". "Have they given any recommendations?" The answer is, "We are not aware", which means, there is no recommendation. Then the question is, "which public sector companies are being privatised"? The Government does not say which companies are being privatised. Yesterday, I had put a

question as to which PSUs were going to be privatised. I thought the public sector was under Parliamentary control. It is still not under private control. It is under the Parliamentary control. It is the duty of the Parliament as a whole to safeguard this public investment, which is two lakh crores of rupees in the public sector. Are the Parliamentarians supposed to know about the sale of public assets through newspapers? Should I have a journalist card, to go and attend Pramod Mahajan's press conference, after the Cabinet meeting and find out which companies are going to be sold, whether it is RCF or NFL, or whatever? As Members of Parliament, are we not supposed to know which are being sold? The sovereignty of Parliament is being challenged, going by the way it is sold.

As far as the sale of SAIL units are concerned we found that the Minister could not say specifically whether the assets were being revaluated. There has been no clear-cut answer. So many questions were put. The Government is not in a position to say anything. How are you selling the public assets? Are you evaluating the assets? Is the replacement cost of these units worked out before you are selling it or before you take a decision?

Parliament has a right to know whether the assets are being revalued when a public asset is begin disposed of. Have you done revaluation of the assets? Have you assessed the replacement costs? Not even a single millimeter of public asset

can be disposed of before doing that, I would like you to direct the Government to come clean about the modalities of the disinvestment procedure, how public assets are being disposed of, and what are

the public sector companies which are being disposed of beyond 51%. These should be made very clear to this House before this exercise is done through the PMO or any other office."

*(Jibon Roy, Secretary, CITU and MP, made a special mention in the Rajya Sabha on 25.4.2000 on the lot of pensioners/retirees. Here is an extract from his speech—Editor)*

## THE LOT OF PENSIONERS/ RETIREES

"I would like to draw the attention of the House and the government to a press news item that appeared in the Hindustan Times, dated 22nd April, 2000. It was a leading news. It says that the Fifth Pay Commission made some observations regarding the rate of pension to the Central Government retirees. The report has observed that some anomalies were there in the rates. The rate is less for those employees who retire before the completion of 33 years. But there is no increment for those who retire after 33 years of service. Therefore, the Fifth Pay Commission has recommended that for each year of service of the employees, who retire before the completion of 33 years, they should be paid extra pension of 0.5 per cent for every six months, one per cent for those who retire after 33 years of service. This was a concrete recommendation. When all the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission have been implemented, why have the pensioners been left out?

My concern is that the pensioners are under serious constraint because of price rise. Between

1991 and 1999 the prices have gone up by more than 114 per cent. During the last 8-9 years the rate of interest has gone down from 13 per cent to 11 per cent. The Finance Ministry is proposing to further bring it down to 7-8 per cent. The prices are going up. The rate of interest is going down.

They have reduced it in the PPF and in GPF. They have reduced it in post office savings also. The condition of pensioners and retirees has become wretched. The position of the retirees has become as it had become of retirees in Russia, where many people are begging after the market economy has been introduced. The Government has not paid any attention to that problem. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to take care of the retirees. They have served the Government, they have pulled the wheels of the administration for 33, 34, 40 years. If the State forgets them, if the system forgets them that is very pathetic. It is an unpardonable offence. So I urge upon the government to be sympathetic to the pensioners and retirees.

## SELL-OUT OF SAIL!

**A**bani Roy, a Left MP(RSP), raised a question in the Rajya Sabha whether the Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) proposed to float separate subsidiaries for its loss making units before hiving them off.

Dilip Ray, Minister of State for Steel, on 24.4.2000 answered that "as part of its restructuring programme, Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has identified certain units for conversion into joint ventures/subsidiaries.

The excerpts from subsequent debate that followed the supplementary questions raised, is reproduced below:

Abani Roy: For the last few years the units of SAIL have been suffering losses worth crores of rupees. The Government has not taken any effective steps to check these losses.

Dilip Ray: This is regarding those eight units of the SAIL which are getting hived off. The SAIL is a Navaratna PSU. It is the tenth largest steel manufacturer in the world and is one of the largest PSUs in India. It had been making profit since 1984. Unfortunately, from 1998-99 it made a loss of Rs.1574 crore and in 1999-2000 again it made of loss of Rs.2000 crore. The reason for this is mainly the economic slowdown all over the world.

It was not only peculiar to India. The cost of steel went down throughout the world. There was an increasing cost of inputs like coal. And, particularly in the SAIL, we took up modernisation of Rourkela, Bokaro and Durgapur Steel Plants costing about Rs.12,000 crore. We had a huge interest burden of Rs.2017 crore just for a year, that is, 1998-99 and we had high depreciation cost of Rs.1,104 crore. This hiving off of these units is a part of the business restructuring programme because the McKinsey Report said that we should concentrate on core strength, that is, carbon steel making only and not on anything else.

Abani Roy: You had mentioned that the SAIL had identified for divestment in the next financial year i.e. 2000-2001, including IISCO, Salem Steel Plant, Captive Power Plants in Rourkela, Durgapur, Bokaro and the Oxygen Plant in Bhilai. Also, in 2001-2002, the disinvestments of Alloy Steel Plant at Durgapur, Fertilizer Plant at Rourkela and the VISL would be taken up. Now, on this, will you please bring out a White Paper with regard to disinvestment?

Dilip Ray: We are working on the White Paper. We are working on it for all the eight units. They are not five units but they are eight units. We are working on it. We have issued advertisements for different things.

Jibon Roy: The question is whether you will bring out a White Paper.

Dilip Ray: I am coming to that. I do not think that a White Paper is required.

Vayalar Ravi: My point is, after clearing the decks and after clearing the loan, you are making it more viable and then selling these plants. May I know from Minister the whole purpose of waiving of loan and making available a package of Rs.3,000 crore for VRS. Whether to retain it in the public sector or to sell them out? Are you going to keep them with you or not?

Dilip Ray: As I said, we want to concentrate on the core sectors. These are not the core sectors. Power Plant is not our business; this should be hived off.

Vayalar Ravi: Why? Rourkela Plant is running on power consumption and WESCO disconnected your electricity supply to that company; Even then, you want to sell the Captive Power Plant?

Dilip Ray: We are also negotiating with another

public sector undertaking, NTPC, to give it to them, to run this power plant.

Vayalar Ravi: Power is a raw material; you are selling the raw material. What is it that you are doing?

S.Viduthalai Virumbi: As far as the Salem Steel Plant is concerned, the workers and the Government of Tamil Nadu had requested the Central Government to retain the Public Sector status as it is.

Dilip Ray: The total strength of the SAIL employees is, 1,74,736. We should bring it down to somewhere about 50,000-60,000 from 1,74,000. So, as far as the protection of the interests of the workers is concerned, the Government is very clear about it.

Jibon Roy: According to the McKinsey Report, as I understood from a newspaper report, you are going to hive off three major plants, and hiving off some of the power plants. I oppose it. Whether you are going to sell them on the basis of the capital you employed or, on the basis of current asset valuation. This is most important. I would also like to know whether you are hiving them off on the basis of current asset evaluation, or, on the basis of the capital you employed initially. So far as IISCO is concerned, IISCO's subsidiaries the Manohar Mines or the Chiria Mines are Asia's biggest mines. One can upgrade and modernise those mines. So, when you have decided to hive off IISCO, I would like to know whether you have taken the entire cost of the mine and the plant, the present asset value, into consideration; so also in the case of the Salem Steel Plant. That is my question.

Dilip Ray: Like in the case of most of the units, which we are going to hive off, we have got the book value of this plant and a Financial Adviser is working out the market value.

Jibon Roy: No. What is the basis? Is it the current asset value or the book value?

Dilip Ray: It will be on the market value.

Dipankar Mukherjee: It is re-evaluated cost. Have you re-evaluated the assets?

Jibon Roy: whether evaluation of assets was done or not ...

Dilip Ray: No. That has been done, but not on market value.

## SHIFT TO ANTI-PEOPLE POWER POLICY

The terribly harmful and injurious effect of the current power policy of the BJP-led NDA Government will attain horrifying ruinous height with the enactment of the Electricity Bill, 2000. It will be the final blow to eliminate the age-old power policy under the state-sector but for which the gigantic achievement in this vital basic infrastructure sector would not have been possible.

The Union Power Ministry got a draft legislation prepared by a non-government agency is a single new Act to replace three existing Acts viz., the Indian Electricity Act, the Electricity (Supply) Act and the Electricity Regulatory Commission Act.

### STARTLING REVELATION

On going through a communication dated 25th November, 1999 from the Country Director (India) of the World Bank, to the Secretary, Union Ministry of Power, any patriotic person shall be shell-shocked as to how the Government of a sovereign country is dictated on policy matters by this imperialist agent. The communication laid bare that 'power sector reform' is carried out by the Govt. at the dictates of the World Bank.

On the issue of reform of the SEBs the World Bank observed; "Were the state power reform process more advanced and spread across India, the Government could create a competitive wholesale power market and at the same time realize, very quickly, extremely high privatization proceeds by selling off NTPC plant by plant." According to the Bank prescription, "it would also give major boost and added credibility to the Government's overall PSU disinvestment program." According to the definition of the Bank the power sector reforming states are those. "implementing comprehensive state power reform programs as those being pursued in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, involving complete distribution privatization and independent regulation." Thus it is evident that the mad drive of the Fund-Bank loyal State Governments like those in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan to dismantle the SEBs, unbundle the functioning of electricity

sector and privatise separately the different segments is nothing but implementation of the World Bank prescription.

### THE RETROGRADE LEGISLATION

To one's utter surprise, shame and concern, the draft Electricity Bill, 2000 contains proviso to take care of the total requirements of the Bank prescription. An investigation to find out the degree and nature of involvement of the World Bank in drafting the Bill may be revealing.

The Bill has proviso to dissolve the SEBs compulsorily, segregate different functions of power sector, establish function-wise companies and for subsequent total privatisation. The Central and the State Governments will have no effective control or say on power matters. The two Commissions - The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) and the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC) have been vested with whole sale powers.

Explaining the necessity of the new legislation, the preface of the draft Bill noted; "the policy pronouncements and partial restructuring" steps so far taken by the Government in 'reforming' the power sector have failed to attract private investment as expected by the Government. Hence the retrograde Bill to 'motivate' the private and foreign investors. With regard to the State Electricity Boards the observation by the authors of the Bill is; "the monolithic Boards are now widely perceived as structural impediments, adversely affecting the very flow of private capital ..." Therefore, whatever high-sounding arguments are advanced by the Governments to justify the destruction of SEBs, the actual reason is to woo the private sector.

### THE RESTRUCTURING

In the proposed set-up the Central Government and the State Governments have been stripped of all effective authority. The decision making and controlling powers of the Central Electricity Authority has also been snatched. The total control of the electricity industry has been vested on the two Commissions - the CERC and the

SERC. These Commissions have been empowered to exercise authority on matters like determination of tariff for inter-State sale of electricity, whole sale, bulk, grid or retail, regulate transmission, appoint private companies for transmission, bulk supply, trading or sale of electricity. They have been authorised to grant private sector role to electricity generation, transmission, distribution, pooling, trading and supply etc.

According to the technical structure as provided in the draft Bill, the electricity industry shall be broken into several segments with separate companies or commercial entities for each segments.

### **THE TARIFF DETERMINATION**

Section 77 of the Bill empowers the Commissions to determine the tariff for transmission, distribution or supply of electricity, grid, wholesale, bulk or retail. Commercial principles in respect of generation, transmission, distribution, trading and supply of electricity must be the guiding factor for fixing tariff. Further that cross-subsidisation among different classes of consumers is reduced. Statutory authority has been granted to revise the tariff once in a financial year ordinarily but can be more also.

### **HEAVY BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE**

The whole exercise is going to put heavy burden on the consumers-the common people. So far as the experience of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh is concerned, indications are amply clear, the power supplied by the privatised distribution set up is going to be costlier over three times and the common people have to bear the brunt. The subservient attitude of the Govt. to foreign capital is going to make things worse. The counter guarantee given to Enron has created such a position that the Maharashtra State Electricity Board is being compelled to purchase power from Enron's Dhabol Power Project at Rs. 4.54 per unit despite its availability at a much cheaper rate from NTPC or BSES. Common people are being made the victims of Govt.'s surrender to MNC's interest and things would go further worse after the Electricity Bill gets enacted.

### **COMPULSARY DEMOLITION OF SEBs**

Under Sec.138 read with the First Schedule the SEBs shall cease to exist on expiry of the six

months from the date the new Act comes into force. Under the provision of the draft Bill, the State Governments are bound to dismantle the respective SEBs and unbundle their functioning and establish a separate company to deal with each segment. Under Sec.7 (2) of the First Schedule, the property, interest in property, rights and liabilities shall have to be vested by the State Government in the Transco and generating company or companies or distribution company or companies.

The plight of the employees of the SEBs have been left out to the State Government concerned. Sec. 8 (1) of the First Schedule has empowered the State Government to transfer the employees to Transco, Genco or Distribution company. What is in store for the employees in the hand of the Fund-Bank loyalist State Government is visible from the activities of Chandrababu Naidu Government in Andhra Pradesh. Of course, the other example is the heroic fight of the UP SEB employees against this disastrous policy.

The National Working Group on Power Sector in their observation on the regulatory commissions noted; "The Regulatory Commissions would have no accountability. They are accountable neither to the legislature nor to the public" It further went on to say; "a variation in the tariff per unit of tenth of one paise implies Rs.70,00 per MW per annum (at 80% load factor) and as per the Enron PPA the one paise increase implies Rs.15,768 crore per annum for the 2000 MW that is being installed. It would be easier for the private sector to make money through favourable decisions from the Regulatory Commissions."

### **BLOCK THE PASSAGE OF THE BILL**

The new legislation shall completely eliminate the public sector and fix cancerous grip of the private sector in the country's electricity industry. The Enron experience has already shown as to how under private sector the consumers, for whom they shed crocodile's tear, are practically fleeced. The services of the the lakhs of SEB employees shall face serious threat once the SEBs are privatised. Therefore to save the electricity industry of the country from the grip of the the profit hungry private sector including the MNCs, the entire mass of the people must be mobilised by the working class to force the Govt. not to enact the Bill.

## REPORTS & EVENTS

### ELECTRICITY FEDERATION CONFERENCE

The 4th All India Conference of the Electricity Employees Federation of India (EEFI) met at Chandigarh from April 7 to 9, 2000.

On 7th Morning, a massive workers rally was held as a part of the conference. The rally culminated at Plaza Grounds where a public meeting was held and addressed by the various leaders of the EEFI. Delegates from different parts of the country and about 10,000 electricity workers participated in this massive workers rally.

The meeting began with a welcome address by S.S. Kooner, Chairman, Reception Committee. E. Balanandan, President, EEFI in his opening speech remarked that in the year 1991, Manmohan Singh, the then Finance Minister told him that "Balanandan you are seeing things in the old way. See Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia etc., they have become "Asian Tigers". Manmohan Singh is in Parliament today to see that the Tigers have become pussy cats and their economy has fallen flat. For a cup of rice soup, one has to be in the queue for the whole day in Korea. Economy is growing but it is "jobless growth". Unemployment is on the rise even in U.S.A. and all other developed societies.

"Today, electricity rates in Maharashtra for Industrial power is 11 cents per unit which is in ranking the 3rd highest in world besides Japan & Germany,

whereas prior to year 1990 power rates in India were lowest in the world. The implications of this are very serious." Balanandan said.

Cultural programme by a Bhandh, Punjabi's Bhangra Dance and a Drama by Jan Natya Manch were also staged.

There was an exhibition in the conference venue at Kisan Bhawan on the power scenario in the world.

A seminar was organised on "Power Sector Reforms & its impacts" on 7.4.2000 in the auditorium in Kisan Bhawan at Chandigarh. Balanandan chaired the seminar. N.S. Basant, Chairman, National Working Group on Power Sector, delivered the key note address. Prabir Purkayastha (Delhi Science Forum), Padamjeet Singh and M.S. Bajwa (All India Power Engineers Federation), Ved Prakash (AIEEF), S.C. Divedi and K.L. Gupta (BMS), D. Janakiraman (EEFI) and K. Ashok Rao (NCOA) spoke.

The conference proceedings began on 8th April morning with E. Balanandan the President of EEFI, hoisting the conference flag.

The conference was attended by 315 delegates besides 75 observers from all over the country, representing 19 States as well as fraternal foreign delegates. Foreign delegates included Kuzhichev Valery, President, Electro Union, Russia, Surin

Antoly, International Secretary and Interpreter, Award Fawi Mohmad Ismail Asstt. Treasurer of Egyptian T.U. Federation, Kamel Khedr, Interpreter, S.B. Shresht, Vice President, Nepal Electricity Authority Employees Union. All the foreign delegates narrated the power sector status in their country and underscored the importance of the unrelenting struggles against world imperialism and globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation in the power sector.

The delegates at the conference discussed at length the report presented by D. Janakiraman, General Secretary, EEFI. Delegates also discussed the new power policy and the Electricity Bill 2000 threadbare and questioned the proposed dismantling of the SEBS on the lines of the Orissa "Reforms" and privatising them under an aide memoire signed with the World Bank.

The conference decided that the EEFI should take all the steps possible to unite the Electricity employees as a whole working under different federations in the power sector and thus create a movement of the Electricity Employees.

The conference passed a number of resolutions on topical issues. The most important resolutions were on the call of NPMO for strike on 11th May, to resist the Electricity Bill-2000.

## REPORTS & EVENTS

implementation of the settlement of UP strike, withdrawal of the action against HSEB's Engineers, withdrawal of the unilateral changes in allocation of power from centre to state etc.

A 44 member working committee

and seventeen new office-bearers were elected with E. Balanandan as President, D. Janakiraman as Working President, and B.S. Meel as General Secretary.

In his concluding speech E. Balanandan called upon the

electricity workers to tirelessly work for unifying the entire workers in the power industry, who can oppose the new power policy effectively.

*(Report from D.K. Verma)*

### VOLTAS EMPLOYEES ORGANISE CONVENTIONS

At the call of the All India Voltas Employees Federation, the Voltas Employees Union, Delhi, organised a convention against the anti-worker economic policies of the Government of India and their

impact on Voltas Employees, at the Khandelwal Vaish Sewa Sadan, on 29.4.2000. R.P. Tiwari, General Secretary of the union presided. W.R. Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU, and K.S. Subramanya, President, Voltas

Federation addressed the convention. In a declaration adopted by the convention, it was announced that all the constituent unions of the Federation would join the strike on 11th May 2000, called by the NPMO.

### MAY DAY CELEBRATED IN TAMILNADU

May day was observed all over Tamilnadu, with massive rallies and meetings. CITU and AITUC had jointly decided to observe the day along with other fraternal trade unions and organisations. The main theme of the May Day rallies were Anti-Globalisation and 11th May general strike.

There were flag hoistings and celebrations in union offices and factory gates in the morning. In

the evening, massive processions were taken out. Joint processions and meetings were held in 65 centers and in many other centers May Day rallies were organised separately.

In Chennai, a massive procession was taken out. In addition to CITU and AITUC, various middle class trade unions and other organisations participated. There were large number of women in the procession. A Soundararajan

(CITU), R. Nallakannu (AITUC) and A.M. Gopu (AITUC) addressed the rally. T.K. Rengarajan, General Secretary of State CITU addressed the rally at Trichy along with S.S. Thiagarajan, General Secretary of State AITUC.

The preparations for the 11th May General strike was reflected well in the rallies, as slogans and placards carried by the workers were on the NPMO demands.

### NPMO RALLY IN PORT BLAIR

May Day 2000 rally was held in the Municipal Park at Port Blair, under the banner of the NPMO, Andaman & Nicobar. The rally decided to make the 11th May countrywide general strike a grand success. Besides the 23 points charter of demands put

forth by the NPMO, the meeting highlighted the undernoted long pending genuine demands of workers and employees of Andaman and Nicobar Administration, viz:-

i) Restoration of Andaman Special Allowance and Compensatory

Allowance on percentage basis,  
ii) Grant of island Allowance,  
iii) Grant of HRA at par with B-1 City and  
iv) Regularisation of Casual and Contract workers.

## REPORTS & EVENTS

### IDPL WORKERS DEMONSTRATE

About One thousand workers launched a day long demonstration inside the office of the Chemical Ministry on 8.5.2000 demanding revival of IDPL. Workers, including a large number of women came from the plants of Gurgaon, Hyderabad and Rishikesh to participate in the demonstration. The entire passage of the office was blocked. Among those who addressed the

workers were K.L. Mahendra (AITUC), P.K. Ganguly (CITU), R. Mital (HMS) and others.

Later, a delegation met Suresh Prabhu, Minister for Chemicals and Secretary, Arvind Verma.

The delegation brought to the notice of the Minister that since the BJP Govt. came to power several revival schemes came up, but not a single meeting was called with the trade unions, which was

a sharp departure from the past. The Minister assured that after the two-member committee submitted its report, which was overdue, he will call the meeting. The delegation, however, urged that the IDPL had to be revived and the unusual delay was threatening the plants. The workers decided to intensify the movement till IDPL was revived.

### CITU APPEAL FOR DROUGHT RELIEF

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses grave concern at the alarming drought situation in large parts of the country. Besides the States of Rajasthan and Gujarat which are worst affected by the natural calamity, drought conditions are also reported in parts of Orissa, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh.

In Rajasthan, 26 out of 32 districts are in the grip of severe drought affecting more than 26000 villages. In Gujarat also over 8000 villages and 43 cities are without any source of water supply and most of the reservoirs and dams got dried up. In other states also, conditions are miserable.

The worst affected are the rural and agricultural workers and the daily wage labourers who are facing a situation of virtual starvation. The damage of crops and cattles may lead to a near famine like situation, if not tackled on war-footing. Despite appeal by all concerned, the Central Govt has betrayed most callous attitude in respect of relief to drought affected people. While crores of people in the drought affected areas are crying for food, fodder and drinking water and proper means of livelihood, the steps being taken by the Govt could not yet touch the fringe of the problem. CITU demands upon the Vajpayee Govt to treat the situation as a national calamity and provide required relief measures and funds to mitigate the miseries of several crores of drought affected people on top priority basis.

CITU appeals to the working class all over the country to stand in support of the drought affected people and rush relief to the affected areas.

CITU also appeals to all the State Committees and affiliated units to raise funds for the relief of the drought stricken people and calls upon the concerned Committees in the drought affected States to organize relief to the affected people. Other State Committees are requested to send the collected funds to CITU Centre for onward dispatch to drought affected states.

## REPORTS & EVENTS

### COAL WORKERS SCORE A MAJOR WIN

The unions in Coal mining industry viz, the CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, UTUC(LS) and AICCTU jointly gave a call for observance of a 7 days strike from 8th to 14th May 2000.

The major demands included the following:

- \* Stop privatisation of Coal Mines, either new or existing ones, including exploration and excavation.

- \* Withdraw the proposed Amendment of the Coal Mines Nationalisation Act, 1973.

- \* Restore the rate of custom duty on imported coal to the level of 1989-1990 and stop import of coal to PROTECT THE INDIAN COAL MINING INDUSTRY.

- \* No railway freight concession for the imported coal should be allowed and in case it is given, the same concession should be given to the Indian Coal Industry without any discrimination.

- \* Reorganise the Coal Industry to make it an unified single company with full autonomy.

- \* Restore budgetary support to the Coal Industry and sanction

immediate investment of capital for revival of sick coal units or companies.

- \* Stop selling of coal mines to any outside consumers.

- \* Stop closure of Miens having coal reserve and no retrenchment or forced retirement under VRS.

- \* National Coal Wage Agreement - VI should be settled immediately.

- \* Deduction towards CMPF contribution @ 12% should be started immediately.

The Unions jointly served the strike notice on 14.4.2000.

In the background of preparations for the seven day all India strike in coal industry, by all the trade unions from 12th May 2000, the Union Minister for Mines and Minerals had to convene a meeting on 28.04.2000 with the concerned Central Trade unions. After detailed discussions it was agreed as under:

"1. Regarding re-structuring of the coal industry with the view to make it viable, the Minister of Mines & Minerals agrees that joint discussions will be held with Central Trade Unions working in

JBCCI with a view to finalise it within 6 months pending which the Bill introduced in Parliament will not be taken up for consideration by the Government.

2. It is agreed that the rate of CMPF contribution will be revised from 10% to 12%.

3. Department of Coal will take up with the Ministry of Finance revision of import duty on coal to provide a level playing field for domestic coal.

4. All other issues raised in the notice will be jointly discussed." Inview of the above understanding, the unions agreed to call of the proposed strike from 12th to 18th May, 2000.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions congratulated the coal workers all over the country for their magnificent unity which compelled the Government to defer consideration/processing of the Bill for privatisation of coal mining.

CITU considered above development an achievement of the all in unity of the coal workers and their determined opposition to privatisation.

### STRIKE BY NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES

The Manisana Wage Board met in Delhi from April 17 to 20,2000, and started discussions on the points raised by both the parties — employers and employees — on the tentative proposals.

The discussions are, however, inconclusive and the Boards are again meeting from 9th May onwards.

While the Boards were in session, members of the Board were served with a notice of a Writ Petition

filed by the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) on the tentative proposals in the Delhi High Court. It was notified that the petition will come up for discussion on 9th May.

The newspaper employees, both

## REPORTS & EVENTS

the journalists and non-journalists, went on a countrywide strike on 8.5.2000, to protest against the newspaper owners attempts to stall the wage board recommendations.

The CITU Secretariat in a statement issued on 9th May said: "The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) congratulates the journalists and non-journalists in the newspaper industry, as also

*those in the PTI & UNI, who went on a nationwide strike yesterday (8-5-2000). These employees have been denied wage revision for several years now. The newspaper managements had been indulging in dilatory tactics and resorting to vexatious litigation to stall the wage boards entrusted with the task of making recommendations in this regard. The pre-verification by the Labour*

*Ministry, which has resulted in this inordinate delay, is very much deplorable.*

*The CITU urges the Prime Minister to urgently intervene and settle the demands of the employees in the newspaper industry".*

Meanwhile the Delhi High Court has adjourned the hearing on the petition filed by INS to 21st June 2000.

## PASSING OF MAJOR PORTS BILL DENOUNCED

The Govt. of India got the Major Port Trust Amendment Bill passed in Rajya Sabha on 10.5.2000 after 5 PM, just after the entire opposition staged a walk-out from the house protesting the statement made by L K Advani, Home Minister on Jammu-Kashmir issue. By trick, the Govt. got the bill passed in a opposition less Rajya Sabha where it is

otherwise in minority position. The Major Port Trust Amendment Bill is designed to ensure privatisation of the Indian Ports and in particular this will lead to handing over the control of the port operations to a large extent to the multinational companies, much to the detriment of the national interest. Besides, privatisation of ports with MNCs

having major control would also be dangerous for country's security.

CITU condemned such a desperate move for privatisation of Indian Ports and calls upon the working class to unitedly resist such anti-national move threatening self reliance and national security.

## AFFILIATION FEES : ATTENTION STATE COMMITTEES

The General Council Meeting of CITU held at Kozhikode recently has decided to hold the 10th Conference of CITU at Hyderabad (A.P) from 27 to 31st December, 2000.

The General Council has decided after consulting the host committee, that a total number of 2500 delegates in all would be attending the Conference. The number of delegate of each state committee will be decided on the basis of the paid up membership of the affiliated unions for the year 1999. The outstanding dues of the previous years, if any, should also be cleared.

The General Council has also decided that all our affiliated unions must submit their annual returns and affiliation fees to the centre, latest by 30th June 2000. The Centre will update the records and during July will send a statewise position. On the basis of this only the state delegation will be finalised. This will give the states ample time to select/elect their delegate. Therefore, it becomes very important that each of our unions must deposit their affiliation fees and annual returns upto the year 1999 within 30th June 2000.

CITU State Committees may please treat this as urgent and act accordingly.

## REPORTS & EVENTS

### ANGANWADI WORKERS MARCH TO PARLIAMENT

On the 28th of April, 2000, Delhi witnessed one of the biggest rallies of working women in recent times. Thousands of anganwadi workers and helpers from all over the country participated in the rally held at Jantar Mantar near the Parliament. They were demanding regularisation, enhancement of honorarium, welfare benefits and opposing privatisation of the ICDS projects and handing them over to the NGOs or Panchayats. The call for the rally was given by the Samyukta Sangharsha Samity of the Anganwadi employees, comprising of the organisations affiliated to CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMKP and NFTU.

The All India Federation of Anganwadi workers and helpers erected a temporary camp at Ferozshah Kotla Ground from 27th to accommodate the women who came to participate in the rally. Anganwadi women from Karnataka started coming in several batches from the 26th. By 27 night the camp was full. Anganwadi employees from far off States like Kerala, Pondicherry in the South, Assam in the East and the districts of Himachal Pradesh bordering China, participated in the rally, spending more than two days in travelling. On 28th morning the women, dressed in their traditional dress, marched in a procession from

Ferozshah Kotla ground to Jantar Mantar where they were joined by the AIFAWH contingents from other States and other constituents of the SSS.

Neelima Maitra, President of AIFAWH, Snehalata (AITUC), Kiran Arora (HMS), Jaya Jaitly (HMKP) presided over the rally. Hemalata, General Secretary, AIFAWH, introduced the resolution on the demands which was supported by all the speakers. Varalakshmi from Karnataka, Jagmati from Haryana, Pushpalata Das from Assam and Shanti Mishra from Bihar addressed.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU and Jibon Roy, MP and Secretary, CITU, greeted the gathering and supported their demands. Brinda Karat, General Secretary, AIDWA also spoke in support of the struggle of the Anganwadi employees.

A delegation representing all the constituents of the SSS met the Women Welfare Minister, Sumitra Mahajan and presented a memorandum. Hemalata and Hargobind Kaur participated from AIFAWH. While the Minister gave a patient hearing, she gave no concrete assurance. She said that at present there was no proposal to privatise ICDS or hand it over to NGOs/Panchayats. She assured that her Ministry would write to the different departments utilising the services of Anganwadi employees telling

them to pay extra money for their work. Otherwise, the Anganwadi employees will not carry out their work. Similar letters will be written to the State Governments also. She told that some proposal for welfare benefits and job security for the anganwadi employees was under consideration. She said that anganwadi employees could not be regularised as per the ICDS scheme. Regarding enhancement of honorarium, the Minister said that even a small enhancement will require a huge amount of money because of the large number of employees and that the Government had no money for this.

The SSS considered the reply of the Minister and decided to carry forward the struggle at the local level. It was decided to intensify the campaign for extra money for extra work.

The working committee of AIFAWH which met on 29th April, reviewed the rally and decided to continue and intensify the struggles for major demands and extra payment for extra work. It also decided to observe Vimaldi's death anniversary on 24th July by holding meetings at various levels, inviting other fraternal organisations. Other decisions regarding Demand's Day on July 10, membership and trade union classes were also taken by the Working Committee.

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

Sr. No	Centre	Jan 2000	Feb 2000	March 2000	Sr. No.	Centre	Jan 2000	Feb 2000	March 2000
1	Gudur	427	426	434	45	Amritsar	378	379	382
2	Guntur	420	419	426	46	Ludhiana	382	380	383
3	Hyderabad	401	403	412	47	Ajmer	421	423	429
4	Visakhapatnam	430	431	432	48	Jaipur	392	395	398
5	Warangal	438	432	424	49	Chennai	458	462	467
6	D D Tinsukia	393	382	381	50	Coimbatore	423	424	422
7	Guwahati	453	450	451	51	Coonoor	424	429	434
8	Labac-Silchar	370	360	366	52	Madurai	431	430	433
9	Mariani Jorhat	423	422	421	53	Salem	420	421	431
10	Rangapara-Tezpur	401	401	402	54	Tiruchirapally	481	470	472
11	Jamshedpur	402	397	397	55	Agra	396	399	407
12	Jharia	367	365	360	56	Ghaziabad	439	441	446
13	Kodarma	368	369	370	57	Kanpur	424	428	430
14	Monghyr Jamalpur	424	423	421	58	Saharanpur	392	392	399
15	Noamundi	388	387	396	59	Varanasi	468	463	470
16	Ranchi-Hatia	414	413	418	60	Asansol	404	399	401
17	Ahmedabad	430	432	434	61	Calcutta	434	430	434
18	Bhavnagar	460	458	458	62	Darjeeling	384	372	369
19	Rajkot	414	415	427	63	Durgapur	457	451	448
20	Surat	437	437	442	64	Haldia	469	471	482
21	Vadodra	409	416	413	65	Howrah	480	474	477
22	Faridabad	432	432	437	66	Jalpaiguri	394	395	392
23	Yamunanagar	399	397	403	67	Raniganj	377	370	369
24	Srinagar	480	480	477	68	Chandigarh	449	448	452
25	Bangalore	416	414	415	69	Delhi	490	491	512
26	Belgaum	471	469	470	70	Pondicherry	471	463	467
27	Hubli-Dharwar	428	426	429					
28	Mercara	453	460	460		All India	431	430	434
29	Alwaye	431	436	437		Additional Series of Labour Bureau			
30	Mundakayam	453	455	453					
31	Quilon	447	452	454	1	Kothagudem	424	424	426
32	Thiruvananthapuram	488	488	490	2	Himachal Pradesh	415	415	418
33	Balaghat	381	379	373	3	Bhilwara	429	430	432
34	Bhilai	382	378	381	4	Chhindwara	419	416	415
35	Bhopal	444	442	449	5	Tripura	399	394	396
36	Indore	426	426	436	6	Goa	504	506	505
37	Jabalpur	433	439	443					
38	Mumbai	484	489	491					
39	Nagpur	438	435	447					
40	Nasik	442	445	446					
41	Pune	466	469	483					
42	Solapur	461	458	467					
43	Barbil	401	397	394					
44	Rourkela	405	401	400					

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

*(The Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) held its 6th All India Conference at Thiruvananthapuram, 6-9, April, 2000. A.K. Padmanabhan, Secretary, CITU, greeted the Conference on the inaugural day (6.4.2000). Here is an extract from his speech - Editor)*

## CITU GREETINGS TO DYFI 6TH CONFERENCE

It is a privilege for me to be here with you all, carrying the warmest and Revolutionary greetings from the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU). I am here to greet you all, the representatives of the heroic youth of the country, on the occasion of your 6th national conference. These greetings comes to you from more than 30 lakh workers, from all the sectors of productive activity, from all nooks and corners of the country. CITU notes with great satisfaction, that both of us. CITU and DYFI, have been cooperating with each other in many areas of activities. Both of us are constituents of the National Platform of Mass Organisations, the umbrella organisation of class and mass organisations, which during the eight years of its existence has conducted many country wide struggles and campaigns.

You can be proud of the fact that DYFI is the largest organisation of youth in this country with more than 11 million members. You have achieved this within a period of 20 years. Not only by membership strength but also with multifarious activities on issues of national importance. DYFI has carved out a distinctive place for itself. DYFI, has grown into an organisation with the correct perspective and vision.

With more and more challenges ahead, the youth of this country have great responsibilities.

Last ten years have seen the process of speeding up the process of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. This three way fast lane, has imposed many a burden on the masses of the country and this attack is continuing with the so called second generation reforms in process. We are facing many more cruel attacks.

You have raised the slogans of education and employment for all. We are all aware that in the Indian situation today, we have to build up unity of all democratic forces to attain this. Whatever we have gained during the last 53 years of independence is being taken away. It is here that the CITU and DYFI can play an effective role. Our

organisations will be able to cooperate with each other to build up the unity of various sections of Indian masses both from rural and urban India.

CITU, in addition to taking up the demands of the present workers has been taking up the issues of the future workers, the unemployed, youth in this country, whose number has already reached 15 crores.

It was the founder President of CITU, the late Com. B.T. Ranadive, who pointed out the weakness of the Indian trade union movement, of not taking up the issues of unemployed the volatile section of the youth.

I assure you that the CITU will do all that is possible, to mobilise the working people of this country to discharge our duties. I do expect that in this sixth national conference you will discuss and chalk out programmes of action of harnessing the youth power, so that we can jointly move forward. Our immediate task will include the successful observance of the country wide strike on 11th May and preparatory campaign.

Let the sacrifice of our great martyrs be the guiding spirit. Let us move forward by defending all that we have attained and move towards the cherished goals of our freedom movement, the goals of social justice and progress, which are yet to be attained. Let us move forward and expand our areas of operation and cooperation.

Let this conference be a conference of a new beginning in the history of Indian youth, in their fight against social oppression and economic exploitation!

READ AND SUBSCRIBE

THE  
VOICE OF THE  
WORKING WOMEN



CITU General Council, Kozhikode - A view of the procession & President address by E. Balañandan