



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

ELECTIONS 1998

CITU APPEALS TO THE WORKING CLASS

*** DEFEAT THE BJP AND CONGRESS COMBINES!**

*** VOTE THE UNITED FRONT TO MAJORITY!**

*** ENSURE STRONG AND INCREASED LEFT PRESENCE IN PARLIAMENT!**

More than 40 crores voters will participate in the forthcoming Parliamentary elections, which will decide the future destiny of our country. The working class, as an important segment of this vast electorate, must play a significant role in this electoral battle.

Never before the country has witnessed such unprincipled attempts, by bourgeois political parties, to capture power. Naive arguments are advanced to cover up their rank opportunism. Systematic attempts are made to hoodwink the masses and divert their attention from the real issues. Religious, divisive, parochial and fundamentalist slogans are hurled at the people. False promises are galore, meant only to be forgotten soon after the polls.

The working class must see through this game. It must evaluate the present situation, recount the experience of the recent past and set its vision for the future.

DISMAL ECONOMIC SCENARIO

What is the state of the economy today?

The policies dictated by the IMF and World Bank have led to a steady deterioration of our economy. In the name of liberalisation and globalisation, our economic self-reliance and development is

gradually undermined. The public sector, the backbone of our economy, is under severe attack with the ongoing thrust for privatisation and disinvestment drives.

The financial sector is sought to be opened up for foreign capital, the insurance sector facing an imminent threat.

The multinational companies are occupying a dominant space in the Indian market. Indian companies are being thrown out, one after another, alongside with the take over, fully or partial, of Indian companies by the MNCs.

Indian industries are heading for chronic sickness, resulting in increasing number of closures owing to pro-MNC policies.

The small scale sector is systematically ruined. Unemployment is mounting. Job security is under constant attack.

Behind the brave talks of comfortable forex reserves, the balance of payment situation on the export-import trade

front is becoming more adverse. The value of rupee is fast declining.

Share market has become a regular scam market in the grip of speculators, reaping a bonanza of profits.

Black money accumulation goes on merrily acting as a parallel economy with enormous authority. The VDIS has made a mockery of its recovery, despite the much trumpeted success stories.

Prices are increasing by the



Courtesy by The Times of India

day. Essential commodities are becoming luxuries. The living standards of the common people are steadily eroded.

The rural poor are languishing in misery. Peasantry is getting impoverished. The agricultural workers are denied even minimum subsistence.

Women's rights are trampled under foot. Atrocities against weaker sections are perpetrated brazenly.

Child labour is rampant despite the copious crocodile tears shed for them. Trade Union and democratic rights are under constant attack.

On top of this dismal economic scenario, corruption by political big-wigs is eating into the vitals of our economy. Bourgeois political leaders are amassing huge wealth. Huge resources are pilfered from public exchequer.

Criminalisation of politics has made the situation worse for the country and its people.

The country is passing through a serious recession which is likely to accentuate if the present policies are continued.

The recession in South East Asia and in the world will only aggravate it further. The struggle against elimination of poverty and destitution will suffer a serious setback under these circumstances.

The working class cannot remain a silent spectator in the present situation. It must cast its lot with the left

democratic and secular forces which alone can give a better deal to them and other toiling sections of the people.

THROW OUT THE BJP AND CONGRESS

The Congress party which has brought the country to the present ruinous situation has no right to seek

vote from the people. Its top leaders are deeply saddled in serious corruption scandals. Its economic agenda is a sell out to the interests of multi-national companies. It has strengthened the big business and landlords who are mainly responsible for the growing poverty of the vast masses of our people. Internal conflicts have irreparably damaged that party's image. It is desperately dependent on Sonia Gandhi to bail it out in the electoral arena. Her involvement in the campaign will, however, not give the congress any gain. Working class and the toiling people must see that the Congress party is squarely defeated in the election!

The other combination is led by the BJP which is seeking to capture power by resorting to all opportunist and dubious means. Its Hindutwa plank is not gaining a wider appeal and hence it is resorting to deceptive appeals to minorities and lower caste voters. Its false promises cannot hide its semi-fascist and fundamentalist agenda which seek to divide the

by Cong.(I). Now in the face of election, BJP is trying to confuse the electorate by taking anti-MNC posture and making self contradicting statements on economic policy every other day. Such an opportunist dangerous and reactionary force must be squarely defeated by the working class and toiling people, if the democratic and secular fabric of the country is to be preserved.

Both the above combinations are two sides of the same coin and their coming to power would spell disaster for India and its people. The foreign powers and big business are extending them open support, moral and material, which makes them more dangerous.

VOTE THE UNITED FRONT

In view of the above, the CITU is firmly of the opinion that the United Front is the only secular and democratic force that could keep both congress and BJP out of power. It is the only combination which, if it gets a clear majority, can give a stable government at the centre. The UF Government could not continue its

term for 5 years due to betrayal by the Congress. Hence the working class should see that the UF is again voted to power with a majority of its own, not requiring the support of the Congress party.

LEFT, THE ONLY GUARANTEE

The working class of the country should actively work to ensure that in the new Lok Sabha, the Left parties have an increased

and strong presence. The experience of the past has shown tht it is only the representatives of the Left Parties in Parliament, who had defended the interests of the workers, agricultural workers, peasants, middle class employees, the poor and weaker sections of the society, women and



Courtesy by The Hindu

Indian population on religious lines and pit Hindus against minorities. This party had shamelessly come out in support of liberalisation, in favour of multi-nationals, big business and landlords. When the liberalisation policy was introduced, the BJP claimed that its policy was hijacked

the minorities and saved the situation from becoming further worse. A strong block of Left MPs will alone be a guarantee for pro-poor pro-working class policies to be followed by the future Government at the centre. Hence it is imperative that the working class, while casting their vote decisively in favour of the United Front to emerge with clean majority in the elections, must ensure that the parties of the Left Front have a dominant presence in Parliament. The working class while supporting the UF should also campaign against the policies of liberalism and globalisation and advocate that the

new UF Government should fight for a self-reliant economy and oppose the IMF World Bank dictated policies. The electoral success of the UF will shatter the nefarious dreams of both the congress and the BJP. The fight is going to be very stiff and workingclass must campaign resolutely for the UF candidates. A powerful political campaign to explain the dangerous character of congress and the BJP and to expose their mischievous propaganda is the need of the hour. If the working class and the toiling people realise their historic responsibility, they can play an

important role to shape the destiny of the country. The CITU calls upon the working class of India, irrespective of affiliation, to rise to the occasion and leave no stone unturned to defeat the Congress and BJP in the coming elections. Vote the United Front to a great victory to take the country forward at this crucial phase! Elect the Left Parties' candidates in large numbers to reflect the aspirations of all the toiling people. Let the working class contribute all its might to achieve this historical task, to save the country, its economy, the people and our class! *

Without Comments

WHITHER COMMUNAL!

The BJP promises the entire country that it is committed to Secularism in the genuine sense of the word as conceived by our constitution, and come what may, we are not going to swerve from this commitment - L.K. Advani, President, BJP in Tirunelveli on 3rd January.

(Asian Age 4.1.98)

* BJP spokesperson Sushma Swaraj declared that BJP manifesto would list the party's stand on all the controversial issues such as temple construction at disputed site at Ayodhya, Article 370 of the constitution and uniform civil code. The party's stand on all these issues would be the same as those in the manifesto for 1996 Lok Sabha election.

(Business Standard - 3.1.1998)

* BJP will introduce common civil code if voted to power - L.K. Advani at Shimoga, Karnataka.

(Asian Age 5.1.98)

* Ayodhya Dispute will be clinched through negotiation or legislation and Kashi & Mathura temples are not in agenda of BJP - L.K. Advani in an interview to Asian Age 4.5.98

* Addressing a rally, at Andul, West Bengal, the President of Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Ashok Singhal reiterated the demand for construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya and said that Kashi and Mathura are also on their Agenda.

(Times of India, 5.1.98)

* Hindutwa has come to the Centre stage of Indian

Politics. H.V. Shesadri of RSS.

(Hindustan Times - 5.1.98)

* One of the biggest challenge posed by communalisation of politics has been on the education front, with the Syllabus of Schools & Universities drastically changed overnight, personalities of doubtful credentials being depicted as role modelsin the BJP ruled states including Rajasthan. - Deliberation in 34th Annual Convention of Rajasthan University and College Teachers Association as reported in 'THE HINDU' dt. 4.1.98

* What stands out in the legislative council result of the two electorally significant states (Maharashtra and Karnataka) is that there is a wide enough space for the secular democratic forces to fight the communal elements which are brazenly employing religious idioms and symbols for political mobilisation.

(Editorial: The Hindu - 3.1.98)

* To listen to L.K. Advani, Atal Behari Vajpayee and other BJP leaders, that they are going to behave and not break any more mosques... It is like watching an adolescent step into adulthood...it almost renews one's faith in that dreaded monster.....The warm glow dissipates fairly quickly as we turn to Ashok Singhal, the VHP continues to be part of Sangh Parivar. Can BJP transcend itself?That, it is too prone to extreme religious rightwing pressure, and so will any Government it may eventually form, is not in doubt. Editorial : The Statesman- 5.1.98

WTO PACT ON FINANCIAL SERVICE

WHO CHEERS!

SAROJ CHAUDHURI

The chieftains of the crucial financial sector - banking, insurance, securities and other numerous financial services - in the advanced industrialised countries led by the US - will have one of the best ever New Year 1998. The wave of jubilation in these circles clearly points to this and they have very sound reason for it. The reason is nothing else than the ground breaking success in achieving the pact signed at Geneva on December 13 at the behest of W.T.O. This international agreement involving 132 countries after 15 years of now-on-now-off negotiations marked by bickerings, walkouts, internal conflicts is the source of this jubilation, warmth of success and achievement.

GLEEFUL WELCOME BY THE WEST

The pact complements the agreement of February 1997, settlement on basic telecommunications, followed by yet another in March 1997, on information technology trade that free upto 500 billion dollar trade. Mr. Renato Ruggiero, Director General of WTO - a former trade minister of Italy - claimed that the pact was a giant stride towards a liberalised trade regime encompassing 95 percent of world market in financial services. Financial sector lobbyists, negotiators from Western countries, diplomats, political leaders and trade Ministers went into extravagant praise of the pact, they had reasons for it. President Bill Clinton, with unconcealed glee, declared in Washington that the pact would ensure expansion of business activities "in which the United States led the world". Chief-tains of financial services hailed the pact as a milestone in the march towards globalisation saying it would open new markets for companies in mega-billion dollar sector. According to the US based International Insurance Council President, Gordon Cloony, the pact brings 98 percent of world's insurance business in over 60 countries within a system of binding foreign trade principles. Giving himself upto the hilarious euphoria the Reuters correspondent titled his story 'WTO Razes Financial Prisons to the Ground'.

"This is a remarkable achievement for liberalisation of the world economy", said the European Union Trade Commissioner, sir Leen Britan and more examples are unnecessary.

AN ABJECT SURRENDER

On behalf of India, Commerce Secretary, P.P. Prabhu signed the agreement. He justified the abject surrender, buckling before the Fund Bank threat of commendatory terms. All signatory countries are to ratify in their

respective Parliaments/Legislative bodies by January 30, 1999 and the terms would come into force from March 01, 1999.

The agreement enjoins the responsibilities to allow opening of 12 branches each year of foreign banks on 'non discriminatory' terms. This also heralds the opening of insurance and securities market, though not a word has been breathed about insurance. Foreign investors will be freed from whatever little restrictions still remain and operate absolutely freely so as to advance their arm of wholly controlling the Indian financial market and, through it, the economy.

Not much need be said about banking. Already, the objectives of state take over have been successfully and smoothly scuttled through the mechanism of the Narasimham Committee. The nationalised banks are being deliberately pushed to the brink of disaster. What, however, is being done through the "much acclaimed" WTO agreement is far more dangerous, rendering it into a patent threat of complete dilution of economic sovereignty. Despite the sordid role of some foreign banks, in the infamous share market scandal, these are being allowed to open 12 new branches every year. Indications are that these banks may be allowed to take decision on location of these branches without any further reference to the R.B.I. Permission for opening new private sector banks will be granted liberally as being consistent with liberalisation.

AGAINST PARLIAMENTARY CONSENSUS

Whatever the equivocation, the Indian Government has agreed to open up the insurance sector as recommended by the Malhotra Committee. This report was not placed in the Parliament; the IRA Bill as placed was withdrawn on the assurance of the Prime Minister that attempts will be made to arrive at a national consensus in view of very widespread opposition to the proposal of opening up the insurance sector. Since the movemental aspect and the nature of popular support as also the grounds of opposition have already been widely discussed, they, need no repetition. Suffice to add that if there is any consensus already prevailing, it is wholly against opening up of insurance market, either to foreign or domestic private capital. There is neither Parliamentary nor popular sanction behind the Government action of signing the pact. It is contrary to both.

The pact confers near total-almost 99 per cent - control of the 1.2 trillion dollar (approximately 1.3 lakh crore foreign

currencies, mainly dollar) daily transactions. The total assets of world banking are estimated at 20 trillion dollar and insurance premium 2 trillion dollar. These mind-boggling sums will be at the beck and call of giant US Multinationals or European Union and Japan and Canada. It has been claimed that 98 per cent of insurance business of about 70 countries will be carried out according to the rules of international trade as defined and regulated by the WTO which is clearly under the thumb of US.

THIRD WORLD PRESSURISED

The Service Sector is the most rapidly expanding sector in world economy today representing increase to the extent of half of all employments in several industrialised countries, while many other sectors stagnate with some in positive distress. This explains the desperation displayed by the USA over the last few years in getting this sector opened. The much-touted WTO (World Trade Organisation) which has come to replace the GATT has acted as the US agent. Even the IMF and the World Bank moved away from their assigned tasks and "persuaded" (read pressurised) countries to fall in.

Initially, the third world countries put up a stiff opposition to the terms. But when the South-East Asian countries which are over head and ears in financial turmoil withdrew gradually, it became an open field for the advanced countries led by the US. All these countries have been bailed out by the IMF with billions of dollar - the last one to receive 17 billion US dollar bail-out package from IMF was Malaysia. All this precluded the possibilities of withstanding the US pressure for they may need more such assistance.

This situation, it is now felt, was created by a combination of imperialist machinations - the IMF, World Bank, the currency speculators and the Fund-Bank trained officials at crucial points with the approaching WTO negotiations in mind. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and South Korea - the former Asian Tigers, now squeaking like mice - are glowing examples.

It is not the search for continuously rising profits - though very important - but also search for capital, the main ingredient of economic expansion, capital, that has propelled the US. Once the financial sector comes within the grip of US, the particular country loses the power to oppose any move by US and gradually becomes a client state. It is clearly established that the collapse of the economy was facilitated by financial market liberalisation which allowed foreign countries' capital and speculators play unhindered. The Asian Tigers of the yesteryears today epitomize the designs of FUND-BANK policies.

The US does not seem to be satisfied with just economic domination, but wants to expand it to political sphere. Even relatively small Egypt, with a weak economy had the

courage to express opposition, but not India. Indeed the collapse and dismantling of Indian opposition hastened the collapse of Third World countries and retreat. It is indeed shameful.

The policy makers at New Delhi are congratulating themselves to be too clever! They are in no mood to draw lessons. The campaign and opposition to the WTO pact that seriously threatens nationalised insurance, threatens indigenous banking and further compromises national sovereignty must, therefore, continue. *

COM. B.P. KASHYAP

Com. B.P. Kashyap, Vice President of Maharashtra State Committee of CITU and a veteran freedom fighter and trade union leader died on 31.12.98 following sudden heart attack at Nagpur. He was 75.

Com. Kashyap joined freedom movement during his student life and faced imprisonment. He also took active part in the Goa-liberation struggle.

He played an important role in organising the trade union movement in Nagpur district and led many struggles.

CITU Secretariat while condoling the demise of Com., Kashyap noted that his sudden death is a great loss to the trade union movement.

'The Working Class' pays homage to Com. Kashyap.

Quarry Workers Cont. from page 6

lift in the trucks plied by the employers to commute to the hospital in Faridabad.

During rainy season mining operations are closed. The workers are left to fend for themselves. They borrow loans from the employers to sustain themselves during this period. For other social obligations also loans are taken by the workers. Thus the workers are indebted and continue to work for their employer - creditors. The loan is deducted in installments from the pittance of wages the workers get.

Not very far away from the capital city of Delhi, these quarry workers sweat, toil and wail, while the country celebrates the golden jubilee of independence. Surely, Hamara Bharat Mahan! *

ATTENTION ALL AFFILIATED UNIONS

Please send affiliation dues along with copies of the annual returns immediately.

(Dr. C.S.K. Singh of the National Labour Institute led a team in conducting a quarry workers' camp at Pali, Faridabad in Haryana. The report emerging from the camp is a tale of cruel exploitation abetted by the bureaucracy colluding with the employers. Here is a narrative. - Editor)

QUARRY WORKERS OF FARIDABAD

A tale of woes and agony

The quarry workers, men, women and children are inter-state migrants. They had come to Haryana from UP, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh etc. They were poor peasants pushed out from their home states due to fragmentation of land. They have migrated with their hearth and home. The production process in the quarry mines is highly labour intensive. The workers are unorganised. They are covered by the minimum wages notified by the central government. But the workers are not paid the prescribed minimum wage. On an average, only 40% of the wage prescribed in the notification is paid to these workers.

Even the minimum wage prescribed is only a piece rate. The wage payable is Rs.143 per truck load of 200 cubic feet. From this wage no deductions whatsoever should be made, on account of the cost of explosives, detonator, removal of soil, dewatering charges etc. The employers must supply material for blasting drilling of holes dewatering facilities in mines. But in actual practice, deductions are made on these accounts, up to 60% of the total wage.

Unpaid Work

Blasting operations are to be carried out only by trained blasters. But the workers engaged in stone braking and stone crushing are forced to carry out blasting operations also. The labour time spent on blasting is unpaid. Use of explosives for blasting without safety measures, endanger the lives of the workers. There have been several instances of injuries sustained by workers during blasting.

There is yet another aspect to blasting

operations. If there is delay in blasting, workers cannot start the work of breaking or crushing stones. During this period workers suffer wage loss. This is exploited by the jamadars who supply the explosives and detonators, to extract illegal money from the workers for timely supply of explosives etc. This is called "Chhut" and collected from the workers at the rate of Rs.5 per worker. The workers are at the mercy of jamadars, as it is they (Jamadars) who supply labour to quarry employees. These jamadars also collect "Chhut" from the workers for getting included in the labour supply list.

These workers are also engaged for preparation of the mines for quarrying. For this preparatory work no wage is paid. The workers give in to this practice of unpaid labour for preparation of the mines. Their only hope is once the mines are prepared and quarrying will commence, they will get employment. This hope also can elude them, if after that preparation of mines, quarrying is leased out and the lessee refuses to engage the workers who performed unpaid preparatory labour.

Workers Cheated

The wages being related to truckloads also is a cause of worry for the workers. After working hard, the workers do not get their wages unless the stones are sold and loaded on to trucks. So if the sales are at standstill or delayed the workers have to keep their fingers crossed.

The employers do not conform to the permissible size of the truck. This results in under measuring the truck load and the workers are cheated on this score as well.

The employers always withhold wages for one week work, to force the workers to continue to work under them. The workers are thus tied down to the same employer. But the employer can choose not to engage them for work.

Horrible Conditions

Workers are not supplied protective and safety equipments such as helmet, shoe, spectacle, whistle etc. In addition to injury caused to the workers, there is also a high in stake of silicon for want of protective measures. Some time back, six workers were afflicted by silicosis. They returned to their village in UP where they died. Though there have been several instances of injuries and deaths, no compensation has ever been paid in any of the cases.

The quarry sites do not have provisions for drinking water, toilet, first aid etc. They drink stagnant water not safe for drinking.

The majority of these workers do not have ration cards. Even if the ration card is obtained, one kilo each of rice and wheat is the only quota they can avail. Even then, the workers are keen to get a ration card so that they can at least buy the kerosene oil.

Living or Sustaining?

The workers are forced to reside in hovels. The hospital in the area is unattended by doctors. School is not attended by any teacher. Even otherwise, the workers are not motivated to send their children to schools as the family can survive only if the children also sweat and earn, may be a paltry amount. There is no transport facility either. In case of sickness and major injury, the workers have to try their luck for a

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TRADE UNIONS DENOUNCE DISINVESTMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR SHARES

NATIONAL MEET AT BANGALORE CALLS FOR UNITED STRUGGLE

The National meet of the trade unions operating in Central Public Sector Trade Unions took place on 21-22 December 1997 at Bangalore. Five Central Trade Unions viz CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS and INTUC jointly convened the National meeting. The main agenda of the meeting was to examine in depth the implication of Disinvestment process of shares of public sector units initiated by the Cong(I) Govt since 1991 and subsequent exercise by Disinvestment Commission appointed by the UF Govt and steps taken thereafter.

A paper containing an in depth examination of the implication of disinvestment already made in PSUs, both before and after the constitution of Disinvestment Commission and the critical analysis of the recommendations made by the Disinvestment Commission and its real implication on the PSU network and also on country's economy has been presented in the National meeting of trade unions, on the basis of which deliberation took place in the meeting.

The meeting was presided over by a presidium consisting of S Suryanarayan Rao, Vice President, CITU, H Mahadevan Dy General Secretary, AITUC, A Venkataram, National executive member, BMS, Samir Roy, HMS, Michael Fernandez, Convenor Joint Action Front, Bangalore and M Udayraj, public sector trade unions coordination committee, Hyderabad.

Tapan Sen, Secretary, CITU, presented the paper for discussion. The paper after detail scrutiny of the disinvestment of shares of PSUs made so far and the recommendations of Disinvestment Commission till date contained in its five volume report concluded that the entire exercise of Disinvestment of PSU shares is slated to wipe out the PSUs from the industrial map of the country, in most faithful demonstration of the obligation to the Fund/Bank dictated policy of liberalisation embraced by the Indian rulers of which privatisation is the main plank. The entire analysis of performances of various PSUs and projections made by the Disinvestment Commission while justifying Disinvestment/Privatisation are based on absolutely wrong and distorted propositions to facilitate the pre-decided conclusion of Disinvestment and privatisation of profitable PSUs and closure of the sick PSUs.

127 delegates representing the various CPSUs in the country referred to Disinvestment Commission participated in the National meeting. Twenty delegates

took part in discussion on the paper presented in the meeting and also on the impact of disinvestment and also the Govt policy on the respective industries/sectors they represented. Among the speakers were Comrade Jibon Roy, Secretary CITU, Michael Fernandez (JAF, Bangalore), R Venoogopal, Working President, BMS, M N Jha, BMS, Bibhotimath (BEL) I Deenbandhu (CEL), Shri Bareque (Bongaigon Refineris), V V Chandrau (BHEL), H Mahadevan (AITUC) Shri Gope (ITDC-AITUC) SN Rao (CITU) and also comrades from Hindustan Shipyard, Hindustan Latex and other CPSUs.

Com.S Deb Roye, Secretary, CITU placed before the meeting the 'Declaration' of the meeting, while explaining the urgency of united action on the part of the entire trade union movement to stall the dangerous move of dismantling the entire public sector network to oblige the multinational companies and the monopoly houses. Deb Roye also said that while recommending for disinvestment of PSU shares, the Disinvestment commission has transgressed its terms of reference and also suggested the design of restructuring of PSUs which instead of strengthening them would generate severe weakness in their operation.

The Declaration, unanimously adopted in the meeting envisages:

- 1) Observance of "All India Defend Public Sector Day" on 27th January 1998 through Dharna/demonstration in the State capitals and industrial centres & PSU locations all over the country against Disinvestment and anti-PSU policy of the Govt and in defence of economic sovereignty of the country.
- 2) Industry wise study by the trade unions on the impact of hostile govt policy towards PSUs.
- 3) National Convention on "National policy and practices relating to public sector" around end of March 1998 to decide on further course of countrywide joint trade union action.
4. Appeals to all political parties to take serious note of the united views of the trade union movement and spell out their stand for defending public sector and self reliant economic development of the country.

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Women Workers Organise in Monica Electronics, Delhi

A.R. Sindhu

Monica Electronics is an electronics company of T.V. at Badarpur, Delhi owned by Onida group where the assembling work is done. Out of around 350 workers almost 80-90% are women. Their working conditions are poor and the management very often adopt many anti-labour policies. The management used to fix wages at their own whim without having consideration of the minimum wages declared by the NCT of Delhi. The management forced the workers to sign on blank paper and attach them to wage settlement. There is no promotion policy or regulations. Workers who question this continue to be in the same post for 10-15 years. A few people who support all the anti labour policies, get promotion inspite of their short service.

Even though more than 300 women are working, there is no creche facility. There is one board of 'creche' to show the outsiders and foreign delegates who come from Japan to inspect the labour conditions. Even pregnant women are asked to load and unload TV sets, which is not actually their job. If any of the workers protest, they are threatened and harassed. Often the male supervisors use very offensive language.

The women wanted to organise a union and started collecting signatures for the purpose. The management was thwarting the attempts to organise the trade union by hook and crook.

This year, the management unilaterally decided to cut down the 'Deepawali' bonus. All the workers annoyed by this announcement, stopped the work one day. Threatened with termination they started the work next day. But the management verbally announced the remaining part of the bonus to be paid in

January 98.

MANAGEMENT DESIGNS FRUSTRATED

Then, coming to know about the workers forming a trade union, the management began to harass the workers. Threat of termination, transfer and even lock out were made. The women who were in the forefront were questioned for hours. They were not allowed even to go to the toilet. They were offered promotion, loan without interest etc. They were asked to surrender the papers. Having failed to persuade the workers the management took such drastic steps like breaking the personal lockers of the workers. Further even the handbags of women were thoroughly searched in their absence. But they could not prevent the workers from going forward with their determination and form the union.

The general body meeting of the workers held on 9.11.97 elected a 22-member executive committee with Sindhu as President and Anuradha Shankar as General Secretary of the union. This comes under the Delhi Offices and Establishment Employees Union (CITU). The management and the Asst. Labour Commissioner were intimidated officially the formation of the union and requested to prevent the victimisation of the leaders and treat them as protected workmen. A complaint regarding the anti-labour policies of the management was submitted to the Labour Commissioner and National Commission for Women.

The management under the pretext of solving the issues of the workers called a meeting of the workers from different section and promised to do something on the workers' demands. But in fact they tried to break the CITU union. The managers called the

leaders one by one and advised them not to form their union. Not only that, they were even threatened of dire consequences if they did. They were asked not to contact outside unions and, if they so desire they should join some pro-govt union but not CITU. They are even trying to create North-South regional conflict between the workers.

Lastly, the management called the meeting of the workers in small groups and elected some leaders. Different reasons were given to different groups. At the end the leaders were told that this is a new 'working committee' to discuss their problems. Enraged by this attempt to break the union, the workers protested.

CITU GIVES THE LEAD

Under the leadership of Delhi State CITU and South Delhi Area Committee of CITU, the workers are now bravely facing all these tactics. A general body was held on 14.12.1997 at Sarita Vihar which was addressed by Mohan Lal President, Delhi State Committee CITU, and M.S. Banerjee, Secretary, South Delhi Area Committee, CITU. The meeting decided to face these attempts of the management to break the union and keep the workers united to move forward confidently.

The experience of Monica Electronics Workers is only one example of the result of the economic liberalization and globalisation, started in India. The Electronics industry, which has shown considerable growth rate in the beginning of 90s is now in a stagnant position. In Delhi, many employers close down factories and with the same establishment start new ones to get five years infancy period concessions.

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WHITHER PUBLIC SECTOR!

FROM THE REPORT OF DISINVESTMENT COMMISSION

The extent of eventual disinvestment in a particular PSU will depend on the classification of PSUs as Strategic, Core and no-core. Since public sector units were set up with objectives relevant at different times, it has become necessary to review whether their continuation in public sector is justified at present ...

... [For Core Group Units] disinvestment be limited to a maximum 49%. However it may be noted that composition of 'Core' industries may change over a period of time ... and PSUs may not be required to play a special role. The question of disinvestment beyond 49% may be considered at that time.

... [For non-core group units] it would be desirable to disinvest up to 74% or more ... The existing public sector in these industries may not have any unique or special responsibilities (vol.- I)

ELECTION MANIFESTO OF THE LEFT PARTIES

As against policies of total deregularisation of the economy, giving full play to the market, rampant privatisation, dismantling of the public sector, indiscriminate entry of foreign capital ... the left parties advocate and alternative path of self-reliant economic development ...

The left parties will fight for : Revival of sick units, ending of disinvestment in profitable public sector units ... should be the part of an overall thrust to rejuvenate the public sector and revive industries which are essential for self-reliance ... Increased public investment in infrastructure is essential. Review of power and telecom policies, adequate public outlay should be provided for expansion of power-generation, communication, road etc.

The left parties want ; Strengthening of the public sector in the core and strategic areas. The public sector be streamlined and fresh investment be channelled into key sector. The public sector will have to play ;the crucial role in meeting some of the basic need of the people like mass transport, health services, education etc.

FROM THE DECLARATION ADOPTED IN THE NATIONAL MEETING OF TRADE UNIONS IN CPSUs SPONSORED JOINTLY BY AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS & INTUC

The Disinvestment Commission also recommended in

ELECTION MANIFESTO OF CONGRESS (I)

The Congress believes that it is time to redefine fundamentally the role of the public sector given the growth of entrepreneurship in the country and pressure on public expenditure for more essential social sector like education and health ...

The Disinvestment Commission has been making far-reaching recommendations on a number of PSUs. The United Front has ignored these reports. The Congress will seriously and systematically implement the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission. The Commission itself will be given Statutory Status and made into a professional executive body ...

reality, off loading of entire share holding in respect of most of the so called non-core PSUs which account for 80 per cent of the total PSUs . And for core sector it prescribed for sale of 49% shares leading to virtual dilution of PSU management even in core sector units representing the most vital and sensitive area of the country's industrial economy.

...The Disinvestment Commission has come to certain weighty and far-reaching conclusions based on false premises and distorted superficial analysis of the performance of different PSUs ...

The Disinvestment Commission recommended closure of the sick PSUs except those which can be sold out after some investment for their face-lift...

The Commission has made exercise and recommendation much beyond its terms of reference ... Its recommendations, represent a comprehensive blue print for enblock privatisation of the public sector industries ... in favour of the monopoly houses and multinational companies.

....The national meet ... appeals to various political parties of the country to take serious note of the all-out opposition to the pursuit of the anti-public sector policies and spell-out their policy for defending the public sector and self-reliant economic development. *

STAND OF BJP

The current election manifesto of BJP is not yet published. But in the poll manifesto (1996) the BJP had promised to complete the ongoing economic reforms(of liberalisation and privatisation) process and go beyond Dr. Manmohan Singh.

(The Economic Times dated 17.1.1998)

RID FACTORY GATES OF COMMUNAL & CASTE DIVIDE

JIBON ROY

It is a matter of great concern that the process of communalisation of politics and divisivism have together been displacing 'economics' from politics and 'the agenda of the ensuing election. Under the cover of communal slogans the issues concerning the economy has been receding in the background during 1991 and 1996 elections. Result of 1996 elections, followed by the communal polemics during the post election period has further accelerated the process of communalising Indian polity. Shift towards communalism in a society with dominant feudal influence strengthens anti-national forces and imperialism and reduces labour into slavery. The mid-term election of 1998 is set under this socio-political perspective. No election in the past had been so crucial than 1998 for the Indian working class - for the survival of the TU movement.

NON ISSUES TO THE FORE

Communalisation of politics and divisivism during 1996 elections greatly benefited both the Congress and BJP, both having their identical economic platform. As a consequence, the policy of liberalisation which was forced on the Indian economy by Narasimha Rao Government never came under real scrutiny by the electorate. All the malices perpetrated on the economy was drowned in the passion of communal frenzies thrown open in a calculated move.

The agenda of liberalisation was thus never debated - neither during the 1991 election, after which it was introduced, nor during 1996, when its consequences left deep scar on the whole body of national economy and the people. The matter of social equity

which had been regarded so long as the fundamental of Indian constitution has been given go by unceremoniously. Which ever social control had been there within the system was scuttled and the decision to transfer all the social wealth, created during decades, to private hands was taken for a song.

But people in the ground level could hardly realise that the causes of their added miseries lie on this policy reversal. This has given wide mileage to IMF, World Bank and their proteges in India to carry the sorrowful process of liberalisation, which constitutes demolition of public sector, state's withdrawal from direct economic activities, systematic transfer of welfare activities of the state to private initiative. And yet the protagonists of such disaster still command respectability in the society.

The social justice plank which formed powerful election platform in parts of India gradually receded, pushing non issues to focus in the elections in the biggest democracy. The consequence has been disastrous for the economy and specially for the working class. The economy though having grown at a rate of 6% on an average, the manufacturing and mining have virtually made limping steps. Whichever growth have taken place it was mostly because of the blessings of monsoon and spilling out production of electricity from the projects undertaken during the pre-reform period. Otherwise, the thrust of India's industrialisation is shifted from self-reliance to screw-driver economy. So far labour is concerned, gradual reduction of labour force and its casualisation are the greatest contribution of reform. Permanency

in the labour status is now becoming system of the past.

The UF Govt. came in to being as a broader platform against rising communal forces. And it could last just 18 months with one change of guard. However, presence of left in the U.F. had definitely acted as a brake in slowing down the process of privatisation. It also considerably restrained the Government from taking firm anti-labour position.

Despite the serious crisis precipitated by the Congress, the U.F. did not fall apart despite extreme provocation. It could maintain unity of the country in a most difficult situation. It has showed remarkable courage by risking its Government by refusing to drop Tamil Nadu ministers and thus averted the possibilities of rousing Tamil chauvanism under the background of Jain Commission Report. U.F. Government could make remarkable contribution in strengthening federal character of the country and at the same time strengthened centre's role.

However, greatest question posed before the Indian working class is whether it would be able to make use of the 1998 General Election to consolidate its position and rebuild the anti-privatisation and anti-reform platform which had been considerably damaged at the rise of communal forces. This could be done through a determined working class intervention to ensure total rout of BJP and defeat of congress.

DEFEAT FASCIST MANOUVRES

The BJP is a political conglomeration which aspires for political power in the country but represents the same class and the same economics represented by Cong.(I). It can in

no way project itself as the natural alternative to a ruling polity and hence it takes recourse to the most unhistorical, barbaric and perverted mobilisations. A civilisation, which has reached the present height assimilating many of the richest cultures of the world, is sought to be fragmented on religious lines. It is using all such issues like Article 370, civil code and religious monuments as the dividing lines between communities. It seeks to establish a Government in the name of majority community, as in Pakistan, on the philosophy of private economy. The party is playing all the cards so as to separate followers of Hindu religion from all other Indians on one hand and fomenting upper caste elitist ego against backwards on the other. In the name of fighting the backwards it has begun building private armies. The Ranbir Sena of Bihar which is responsible for the cold blooded murders of sixty people in Jehanabad is credited to BJP.

GUARD AGAINST COMMUNAL DIVIDE

Defeating the communal and divisive forces has emerged as the focal point in 1998 election. It is more important for the workers than for others. For the working class it is not only a matter of blocking BJP from capturing power, but the elimination of communal influence from working class and the masses. While facing the 1998 general elections, workers should not forget that feudal-communal influence had been the major instrument in dividing the working class movement. They cannot maintain the workers unity unless factory gates and workplaces are completely free from these influences.

The working class will be able to meet this onslaught only when trade union movement takes effective leadership and correct historical position to explain all the issues that are being

raised by communal forces. It should be able to explain the process how Indian culture has developed alongwith the advance of history, the inseparability of Hindus, muslims and other communities from that of the Indian culture.

Indian Trade Union movement should also be able to expose the masks that are being used by BJP to hoodwink the masses. While Atal Behari Vajpayee is conducting campaign wearing the mask of pragmatism, BJP's ally Samta party is playing with secular mask; Advani is using the BJP election platform; Viswa Hindu Parishad, an important wing of RSS is speaking about what BJP will do in religious front if it is given mandate to rule.

DUBIOUS ROLE OF CONGRESS

Communalism entered the national scenario through the pitholes of Cong. (I) policies of transition from mixed economy to private economy, one party autocratic rule, strangling of federal characteristics, refusal to extend trade union and industrial democracy, gradual surrender to fanatic and parochial demands. It was the Cong.(I) Government, in its desire to placate Hindu communalists, had opened the door of Babri Masjid for Hindu worship during Rajiv Rule. It was Rajiv and Narasimha Rao Governments which pampered this dangerous species in Indian polity for advancing narrow interests of Cong.(I). The reluctance of Cong. (I) to fight communalism has helped the widening of the Hindu communal base and in fact Congress has now turned into a supply line for BJP.

STRENGTHEN THE LEFT

Left Parties which advocate alternative economic policy opposed to that of the Cong.(I) and BJP, have consistently supported the working class and toiling masses both in the Parliament and outside in their struggle for survival. Left parties are

ideologically and organisationally committed against all kind of communalism and divisivism. They are for the extension of trade union rights and industrial democracy. Working class should, therefore, come forward in massive support of the left candidates and should see largest number of candidates nominated by left parties are sent to 12th Lok Sabha.

Workers in their own interest should see that in no way BJP or Cong.(I) gets to power at the centre. The meaning of BJP's coming to power is installation of the most cruel Government at the centre, inviting fragmentation of the nation, distortion of our history and enforcing slavery on working class through more regimented pursuit of the policy of liberalisation. Installation of Cong. (I) Government means enforcement of privatisation, multinationalisation of Indian industries, and casualisation of labour. Trade Union movement should be able to convince the workers that the so called stability under either BJP or Cong. (I) means more rigorous perpetuation of such gloom on the working class. Only by preventing BJP and Cong.(I) entry into the Government and voting the United Front to victory with greater representation of Left parties in Parliament, working class can effectively advance its struggle for defending the unity of the class and the people and self reliance of country's economy. *



Courtesy by The Pioneer

A Pedantic Rhetoric of Anglo Saxon Jurisprudence

Har Dev Singh

Bar-at-Law,

Supreme Court of India

The judgement of a full bench of Kerala High Court: Bharat Kumar and another vs State of Kerala & others (AIR 1997 Kerala 291) calls for indepth scrutiny. Subsequent rejection by the Supreme Court of the challenge to this judgement in a special leave petition by a laconic order of affirmance, really is not of much consequence because of want of reasoning (please see JT 1997 (9) SC.101).

The Kerala High Court in a public interest litigation initiated by two persons carrying on avocation (understandably as trader) and nine Chambers of Commerce in the State of Kerala has made a declaration that the "calling for a bandh by any association, organisation or political party and enforcing of that call by it, is illegal and unconstitutional." The State and the law enforcement agencies have been directed to do all that is necessary to give effect to this declaration.

The challenge to the legality of bandhs has been founded primarily on the plea that bandhs impinge upon the petitioners' right to free movement and carry on avocation in as much as a bandh involves a threat, express or implied, to a citizen not to carry on his activities or practice his avocation on the day of bandh. How such a matter may be raised as a public interest has not even been adverted to by the High Court.

THE (UN) REASONING

The High Court's reasoning may be set out below: Even if there is no express or implied threat of physical violence to those who are not in sympathy with the bandh, there is clearly a menacing psychological fear instilled into the citizen by a call for bandh which precludes him from enjoying his fundamental freedoms or exercising his fundamental rights.

There is no legislative definition of the expression 'bandh' absence of which does not deprive a person to approach the court to seek relief against bandh if he is able to establish that his fundamental rights are curtailed or destroyed by calling of bandh.

The political parties and the organisations that call for such bandhs and enforce them are really liable to compensate the government, the public and the private citizen for the loss suffered by them for such destination.

QUESTION OF COMPETENCE

First of all, the question arises about the competence of the courts to entertain the kind of petition that has led to

this decision. In a public interest litigation what is sought to be enforced is a fundamental right, purportedly to carry on trade and move freely; declaration is sought that anything done by a person or a body of persons in exercise of their fundamental rights be declared unconstitutional because of the possibility that it may curtail the petitioners' right. The apprehended curtailment of the petitioners' rights may result from the omission on the part of law enforcement agencies of the State in the event of untoward occurrences, such as violence.

On the premise thus stated, the High Court proceeds to declare that "calling of a bandh" is illegal and unconstitutional. Least that one may say, with due respect, is that it is preposterous. It is certainly not the domain of the courts to entertain such imaginary challenge that too in a public interest litigation and make a declaration nullifying with one stroke the fundamental rights of the people generally, and their representative bodies.

PROTECT ONE, NULLIFY ANOTHER?

Further question that arises for consideration is the nature of rights that can be enforced by the courts and the nature of relief or the manner in which they may be enforced. Can a person seek a declaration that on the possibility of his rights becoming incapable of being exercised or curtailed, a declaration will issue against whole body of people nullifying their rights? Such a position is clearly not maintainable and outside the domain of courts.

The next question is what rights are enforceable and against whom.

The Constitution recognises a whole set of fundamental rights, such as the right to life and liberty (in all its accompaniments), justice, equality, fraternity, speech, expression, association, free movement, practice profession. These and other rights are available to the people regardless of differences in their status, sex, religion, caste, creed or belief. By their very nature most of these rights are available against the State though some may be enforceable against other citizens or persons as well, such as slavery, untouchability, environmental pollution, etc.

It is quite evident that exercise of rights by a citizen may in some manner compete with the rights of another. In a situation of competing rights, fundamental in nature, of different persons or people, it is an extremely delicate task to give precedence to one set, against the other, by judicial

pronouncements.

The question arises whether and in what cases judicial pronouncements can nullify or curtail rights of a person or a section of people while granting relief to a petitioner? The general approach in any case must be to balance the exercise of competing rights, that too when it is clearly demonstrated that the enjoyment of rights by one is possible only upon denial or curtailment of rights of others.

OUTSIDE COURT'S DOMAIN

In any event the right of the people viz., to call a bandh that have been nullified by the declaration, can only be restricted under Articles 19 and 21, by validly enacted law that must be tested on the doctrine of reasonableness. Even if a restriction imposed by law is not reasonable, it would be struck down. But here we have a High Court which ventured by one stroke of pen to declare the "calling of bandh" as unconstitutional and illegal. Besides usurping the legislative role, the High Court has made a declaration of the widest sweep, without qualifying what, even according to it, is offence or objectionable. The declaration made by the High Court is wholly arbitrary.

It is, therefore, not understandable as to how on the hypothesis in this petition, Kerala High Court could have made a declaration that calling of bandh is illegal. The whole subject matter is outside the province of the court and by every nature pertains to other organs of the State. This is besides the fact that such a declaration is incapable of being enforced. One cannot escape the conclusion that the declaration made by the Kerala High Court is itself unconstitutional.

The High Court doesn't stop at that. It goes further to foist liability on an organisation or political party for "loss" resulting from bandh. This lays down principles of liability, hitherto unknown anywhere, even in the texts of what is inherited from the English system, built upon the Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence.

Let us now look at the state of things and historical background in our country. We have undergone prolonged period of subjugation preceding 50 years of independence. Our people with diverse cultures, languages, religions have together protected their rights and interests. They have together protested against oppression and fought for freedom. The people adopted varied forms while doing so, including non-cooperation, processions, demonstrations, strikes, bandhs etc. The people defied all attempts to curtail their rights - whether by executive action, legislative enactments or judicial pronouncements. The right to protest, organise into associations and unions, strike, demonstrate and call bandhs are part of rights won during long drawn struggle and formally recognised in the Constitution. The struggle against all repressive laws, be it Rowlett Act, or spate of laws akin to TADA, have

met with stiff resistance when used to curtail democratic rights of the people.

RIGHTS, ONLY FOR THE PRIVILEGED?

In our social set up, the people who own or control means of production and distribution are vested with the capacity to control exercise of fundamental rights by the underprivileged. The underprivileged are, therefore, dependent on the privileged for enjoyment of their fundamental rights, including basic human rights such as food, shelter, health, education, employment, etc.

Very often than not, one who controls the means on which others are dependent, act to deny their enjoyment of rights. Common people have been subjected to bloodshed and carnage by hordes imbued with religious fanaticism. Religious places are razed to the ground by frenzied calls, in response to which hundreds of thousands of miscreants assemble. Working people are denied bare means of livelihood and essential food commodities. Public health is bartered for pieces of gold and silver. Hatred, spite and discord is spread in wantonly organised manner, sanctified by the decorated personages in the society. Corruption, has become rampant, judiciary being no exception.

How is it that no court has come out to make a declaration that any of such acts that are patently destructive of fundamental rights of the people and are unconstitutional and illegal? It is, perhaps, too much to expect that learned justices would come to view matters of such grave nature in a perception where the scale tilts not against the working people.

BIAS OF JUDICIARY

This approach of the courts to competing rights of the people, to be precise of classes of the people, though an enigma, is no surprise. That is so because of the bias with which the judicial system works. The dice is loaded against the common people, the working masses, the underprivileged.

Even towards the end of twentieth century, willy nilly, the "enlightened approach" of the Kerala High Court in the case of Bharat Kumar may be epitomised in the words of Anatole France: "The majestic egalitarianism of law which forbids the rich and the poor alike to sleep under the bridges, to beg in the streets, and steal bread".

"Whereas the approach, envisaged to work out the constitutional scheme is to disarm the strong and arm the weak, would be to change the social order which it is my job to preserve, Justice is the means by which established injustices are sanctified".

The Kerala High Court judgement in this case may only be termed as pedantic rhetoric, repetitive of middle age Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence. It is unfortunate that the Supreme Court did not go into the questions of grave public importance involved in the challenge to this judgement.*

M.P: NIGHTMARE OF BJP RULE

BADAL SAROJ

Last month, in an interview to the Hindi daily "Hindustan" the RSS Chief (Sarsangh chalak) Rajendar Singh alias Rajju Bhaiyya, commented on the Central Government decision on the Fifth Pay Commission Report that "the UF Govt is a weak govt and therefore it has succumbed to pressure and agreed to all the demands of the employees' unions." This statement reveals that the RSS chief wants a "strong" govt which will not be pressurised by employees and will have the strength to resist their demands.

A week earlier, the leader of the RSS, (which claims to limit its activities to cultural advancement) exhorted the Swayam Sewaks. a strong govt. "It is not enough to vote for a good candidate - you must vote for a good party." He is obviously referring to the Bharatiya Janata Party. And because in the forthcoming elections the BJP is fielding the largest number of corrupt, criminal, mafia candidates, the RSS chief had to make an appeal that the candidates image should be ignored. He also denied that the Sangh finds the BJP alliances with jewels like Jayalalitha, Bansi Lal, Kooka Pare and Harishankar Tiwari inappropriate in any way. "There is nothing the BJP has done, with which we do not agree."

All the stars of the Sangh Parivar were present, but only one person was allowed to address the gathering, apart from "Rajju Bhaiyya," This was the chief guest - a prominent industrialist who owns the Vicco laboratories, Shri Gajanan Pandarkar. The "13 day wonder" Vajpayee govt's Defence Minister Pramod Mahajan's involvement in the scandal in the leasing of the Chadrapur Coal mines (which the BJP ex MP Banwari

Lal Purohit described as the biggest scam since independence,) has also made quite clear the priorities of the future 'stable' govt.

These are just the tip of the ice-berg of the fascist ideology and anti-working class approach of the BJP-Sangh Parivar. But to know more what the behavior of the BJP led stable and strong govt. will be towards the toiling masses, one has to remember some facts about M.P. There was a BJP govt in MP for about 33 months from the beginning of 1990 to the end of 1992. This period is still remembered by the people of MP as a nightmare.

BJP: Anti Worker to the Core

The BJP had not completed a year when the working class leader Shankar Guha Niyogi was murdered on 28-9-1991. Those suspected of involvement in the murder were accused of having met Patwa before the incident. This closeness was evidenced by the fact that when BJP leader Sarang's wife and son-in-law wanted to start a business in Bhopal with Govt help, the owner of a liquor factory in Bhilai, Kukhyat Kedia's, son-in-law was party to their court affidavit. Niyogi's widow had accused this very Kedia of murdering of her husband. No action was taken against the murderers but 4000 workers were thrown out of work for protesting the murderous act. Owners refused to pay minimum wages. When the workers started an agitation, the Patwa govt resorted to police firing on 1-7-1992 killing 16 workers.

In the same way, thousands of workers protesting against the illegal closure of the Hukam Chand Mill in Indore were jailed, and brutally beaten by the police. One worker, Laloo Yadav, was killed. Actually,

the Patwa govt had announced its arrival with the shooting of workers of a factory in Abhanpur. In Anuppur also a worker was killed in firing.

* In spite of a promise to abolish professional tax, it was increased five fold.

* The practice of giving compassionate appointment to dependents of those who die while in service, was stopped.

* Instead of regularising daily wages and work charged employees as promised, their annual increments and DA were stopped.

* Over 90,000 State Govt employees were transferred and heavy bribes collected for retransfers.

* INTUC and other pro-management unions had been imposed on the workers by the MP Industrial Relation Act, which was not touched by the BJP Govt.

* The owners of JC Mills were given a discount of Rs 50 crores on electricity bills, and then the electricity was cut and the mill closed.

* The bank guarantee given for Hukam Chand Mill, Indore was withdrawn, leading to the unemployment of 5,000 workers.

* A total of 27000 textile workers were rendered jobless

* The closure of sewing centres for the Bhopal gas women victims snatched away the livelihood of 2300 women.

* Thousands of workers in irrigation, public works, forest, agriculture and public health depts were retrenched and the work handed over to contractors.

* Govt refused to fill 2 lakh vacant posts in the govt departments and undertakings.

* Tendu leaf workers were denied bonus and there was a Rs 250 crore swindle in the tendu leaf trade

* Census workers were denied

employment.

* Dubious programmes were designed to appoint Sangh supporters in various posts.

* Three big govt electricity projects were handed over to capitalists

* Police intervention and repression T.U. movements and workers know no bounds. According to the govt's own admission in 33 months the police lathicharged 34 times and fired 12 times.

* In Patwa's own constituency, a bonded labour family fled to the jungle to escape from slavery, with three children died of hunger in the jungle.

* Even the nearly Rs 20/- daily wage which the beedi workers won through their struggle, was not implemented because of support to the employers by the Patwa Govt.

* The Administration took no initiative to ensure minimum wages

to agricultural workers.

This is a short list of BJP Govt. record in 33 months and an exhaustive one!

SAFFRON GOONDA RAJ

After making the administration irresponsible and fanatical, the BJP, VHP and other Sangh sections took to the streets unleashing mob violence to crush any form of dissent. Those attacked include VP Singh, Former Prime Minister, Mulayam Singh, Chief Minister of UP, Shabana

MADHYA PRADESH : BJP's TENDU LEAF SCAM

The Tendu Leaf Enquiry Commission, presided over by retired Chief Justice of the High Court, K.K. Dube has concluded that "the changes in the procurement policy of tendu leaves, during the BJP rule, were inappropriate. Changes were made in the tendu leaf policy in order to benefit some traders. Due to these, the administration suffered a direct loss of Rs.212 crores and large amounts as accumulated loss".

Tendu leaves which are used to make beedis are available in large quantities in Madhya Pradesh, constituting 60% of the total in the country. In 1989 the state govt had formed a three level cooperative organisation for this procurement. The BJP govt., in 1990 not only overturned this policy, but also stopped the payment of Rs.112.50 crores to be distributed to the agricultural workers for procurement. The K.K. Dube enquiry commission was set up to investigate this.

The Enquiry Commission opined that "the labour of tendu leaf gathering agricultural workers generated an income of Rs.290 crores. They suffered losses because they were neither paid the incentive amount nor full wages".

The commission held the Sundar Lal Patwa Govt., Finance Minister Ram Hit Gupta, Forest Minister Nirbhay Singh Patel (now deceased), Chief Secretary Forest, and Forest Produce Union President responsible for this.

It should be noted that during this period the BJP state president was Lakhiram Aggarwal, who himself is a big beedi baron and tendu leaf trader. It is obvious that he was the foremost beneficiary in this scam. Last month this report was placed in the Vidhan Sabha. The matter has been handed over to the CBI for further enquiry.

Property Acquired by the Sangh Parivar

Land	In the Name of	Purpose	Price paid	Market Price
1. 1.5 acres Arora Colony Bhopal	BJP	Office Cum complex	Free	Rs.1.5 Crore
2. One acre, Jawahar Chowk Bhopal	ABVP work & Study centre	Office space	Re.1/-	Rs. 1 Crore
3. 18,000 Sq.ft. Maharana Pratap Bhopal	Forest Welfare Board	Office, Hostel, Library & Cultural centre	Re.1/-	Rs.1.44 crore
4. 12,000 Sq.ft. Jabalpur	BJP	Commercial space	Rs.7.25lacs	Rs.96lacs
5. 30 acres Satna	Deen Dayal Research Institution	Institution Building	Free	Rs.23 lacs
6. 200 plots of 5000 Sq.ft.	Vidya Bhawan run by RSS	Schools	Ranging from free to concessional rates.	Rs.10 crore

(Courtesy: India Today)

Azmi and Habib Tanvir. They stripped the ex-Adivasi Commissioner B D Sharma and paraded him. The saffron gangs tendered offered and beat up IAS officers and other employees who did not support their activities. In all these attacks the police aided and abetted the BJP goons. In this fascist outrage, writers, artists, and cultural workers of international renown were humiliated. They tried to strangle every progressive and humanist voice. A film about the plight of Adivasis was not allowed to be made. People and intellectuals in the movement against the Sardar Sarovar project were tortured. The Indian Historians National Conference was not allowed to be held in Ujjain. Artists were attacked while performing plays. In Ganj Basanda a woman professor was beaten up. The riots in Bhopal and Ujjain tore away all the masks of the Sangh parivar and exposed their totally fascist nature.

Even in the opposition.....

The people of MP had punished the criminal regime of the BJP by removing it from power. The hatred

towards workers and strong pro-capitalist-landlord bias continues to be hallmark of the BJP, even while in opposition. A few examples are enough to illustrate their role in the more recent past.

* When after protracted struggle by the CITU, the 20 lakh beedi workers in MP, compelled the State Govt to announce dearness allowance for them, 6 MLAs of the BJP gave a written memorandum demanding its withdrawal.

* A BJP leader and ex minister, were themselves instrumental in getting a public sector industry privatised.

* BJP MP Gyan Singh played the chief role in breaking the strike of coal workers in Hansdev and getting the leadership dismissed

* When Left MLAs raised the questions of closed textiles mills, termination of 28,000 daily wage employees, problems of beedi workers and other issues affecting workers, in the Vidhan Sabha, the BJP raised various narrow or communal issues and created a situation in which these important issues could not be discussed.

* Bijwari Bai a leader of the Bhilai Contract Workers movement, was raped and murdered inside the Steel plant - the main accused was the General Secretary of the BJP in Risali Block.

* On the 12th of January 1998, the Congress State Govt fired on peacefully demonstrating farmers in Betul Dist, in which more than 2 dozen were killed and 150 injured. At that very time the "able" Prime Ministerial candidate of the "stable" Govt. was giving an election speech only 50 km away. After the incident he toured the state for 3 days, but was unable to find the time to meet the victims of this gruesome incident.

* Fascist hatred for the organised working class was evidenced in the cowardly attack on the CPI(M) and CITU office in Gwalior on 27.9.1996. This is the track record of BJP governance in Madhya Pradesh!

People of Madhya Pradesh will surely punish the BJP brigade in this elections as well. But the working class of the country must be aware of the antics of this saffron brigade and trounce them in the elections. *

OF BOFORS CONNECTION!

Let Bofors Kickback-takers be named in public: Sonia Gandhi at Bangalore.

From the National Dailies.

Let Ms. Sonia Gandhi reveal the connection of ottavio Quattoroichi with "10 Janpath", who has already been named publicaly in Bofors Kickback deal.

BJP Spokesperson Sushma Swaraj in The statesman, 17.1.98

The lady has raised the Bofors issue herself and BJP would do well to find out why she is so cocky.....It will be remembered, while busy covering up his tracks, Rajiv was challenging the opposition in Parliament and all and sundry outside.....It resulted in the Shankaranand-led Joint Parliamentary Committee which in turn was led by the nose of Rajiv Gandhi's PMO. No wonder, it came to conclusions which were

demonstrably false. At the same time Rajiv also personally spoke to Sweedish Prime Minister and behind the back of his embassy to call off their investigation.....

The last lot of Bofors document awaited are said to relate to the Hinduja connection. Have the Hinduja reactivated their contacts with Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee in a very meaningful way recently?If the Hinduja have done so, it is bound to be a part of well Co-ordinated move to Scuttle the investigation into Bofors.....will there be an answer from the man projected as the next Prime Minister?

Editorial: The Statesman 17.1.98

Is it a strategy of offensive by the offenders and the patrons themselves?

(ILO has recently called for action against youth unemployment. Here we reproduce excerpts from an ILO Press Release datelined 28th November, 1997. If this is the alarm bells rung by ILO, in respect of the G-7 countries, one can imagine what fate awaits the youth in developing countries! - Editor)

ILO SOUNDS ALARM ON UNEMPLOYMENT

Warning that youth unemployment and other forms of social exclusion have reached "intolerably high" levels in several G-7 countries, the Director-General of the International Labour Office (ILO) has called for the urgent adoption of special policies targeting workers trapped in low-paid jobs or long-term unemployment.

In a speech delivered at the G-7 Jobs Conference in Kobe, Japan, Michel Hansenne underlined "the capital importance of the objective of full employment" and of public policies therefor "that promote sustained economic growth and preserve clear incentives for enterprise growth and job-creation. These must "be complemented by social and labour policies that actively support the reintegration of the unemployed and increases the employability of the low-skilled".

"If we fail to contain the social costs of the economic transformations wrought by globalisation and technological change, "we risk being swept into a perilous zone of social and political turmoil".

Unemployment Rates Up

With the notable exception of Germany, unemployment rates for workers between the ages of 16 and 24 in the G-7 countries are typically the highest among all demographic groups and twice as high as the overall average, according to an ILO background document. The situation is particularly dramatic in Italy, where the youth unemployment rate has surpassed 30% since 1983 and in France, where it stood at 25% in 1995.

These figures do not take into consideration persons engaged in part-time work. Such "hidden unemployment", affects "a higher proportion of young people than prime-age workers in the United States, Japan, France and the United Kingdom".

"Despite the general rise in school attendance, the proportion of 22-year-olds who were neither in school nor working increased between 1984 and 1994 in most of the G-7 countries. Particularly sharp increases occurred in Italy and the United Kingdom, where 28.8 and 26.8 per cent, respectively, of 22-year-olds fell in this category in 1994".

Youth unemployment represents an obvious waste of human capital with long-term negative consequences for the individuals concerned and for those around them. It is often associated with rising crime. "It is clear that in all countries, proportionally more young people are without a job today than two decades ago".

Older Workers

Similarly, at the other end of the spectrum, increasing

numbers of older workers are being excluded from the labour market.

But not all withdrawals from the labour market are voluntary. The wave of enterprise restructuring and downsizing which occurred in the late 1980s "is believed to have increased age-specific dismissals concentrated on older workers" whose wages are the highest.

"Hidden unemployment" also affects a growing number of older workers, many of whom are simply dropping out of labour market. Between 1970 and 1994, the non-employment rates of older workers in the G-7 countries showed the sharpest increase among all age groups. In Canada, France and Germany, the rates doubled over the period.

"The basic public policy dilemma", "is the conflict between the use of early retirement as an instrument for alleviating unemployment among younger workers and the longer term financial viability of pension systems in ageing societies".

Concerns about the future financing of pension and health-care systems are not the only reason why attempts are

WHITHER GLOBALISATION! IMF TO BAIL-OUT OR SELL-OUT

* The IMF has come in a lender but at what cost? They come in with their bail-outs but they impose strong conditions... At that stage country begins to pay for short-term capital mobility and in my judgement, you lose your independence. Look at Mexico.....

Mexico has effectively lost its independence. It is in danger of becoming 51st or 52nd state of the US.....

* When Prime Minister goes to Davos forum here.....Can you imagine the PM of a reasonably successful country going to these second rate forums, trying to stroke all these third order people, saying, 'please come and invest.' You have lost your self-reliance right away.....

* There is the Chicago notion that if you've done something wrong, then market will correct what is wrong. I think current crisis shows there is no such necessary relation. Markets may do something when you've done nothing wrong, and you may have to do, something wrong in order to convince the markets that you are doing something right....

Jagadish Bhagawati, leading economist of international fame and Professor, Colombia University in an interview to Times of India dt. 31.12.97.

CENTRAL TUs ON IISCO MODERNISATION

In a joint letter to Prime Minister on 30th December 1998, the five central trade unions Viz CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS and INTUC demanded early decision on modernisation of Indian Iron and Steel Co.(IISCO) within PSU framework and reiterated their opposition to any contemplated move for privatisation.

The Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) and the Union Steel Ministry have proposed modernisation of IISCO with the steel Development

Fund. The proposal was reported to have been negated by the Cabinet last month, although Prime Minister on an earlier occasion committed before the Chief Minister of West Bengal for clearance of the above proposals.

After vehement protest from different quarters, and the trade unions in particular, the matter again came up for discussion in the Cabinet and the same was referred to a Cabinet Committee comprising the Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Steel

Minister and the Minister for Agriculture for a decision.

The trade unions jointly demanded expeditious decision on the long pending issue of IISCO modernization, since further delay would create more complication.

Dr. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU, R. Venugopal, Working President, BMS, G.L. Dhar, Secretary AITUC, S.S. Chouhan, Secretary INTUC and R.A. Mittal, Secretary, HMS are the signatories to the joint letter.

TOTAL BANDH IN BURDWAN

Total bandh was observed on 16-1-1998 in Burdwan district of West Bengal demanding immediate step for modernisation of India Iron and Steel Co.(IISCO) the premier public sector steel plant, and revival of other sick industrial units. The Bandh was called jointly by all the left Trade Unions viz. CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, TUCC and other mass organisations.

Workers of IISCO, Burnpur and Kulti works responded overwhelmingly to the Bandh call. Barring few collieries, in the entire Coal belt, the attendance

of the workers was bare minimum. The Durgapur industrial belt also registered a magnificent participation of the mass of the workers in the strike. BOGL, MAMC, ABL, HFC, Birla Cement, and other industrial units were a deserted look on the Bandh day. In Durgapur steel plant, in spite of the opposition from INTUC, steel workers participated in the strike in a massive way.

Besides the industrial area, the bandh call has left widespread impact in the village and also in towns. Transport within the district was completely

paralysed. Even the peasants responded to the strike call. Right from Kakra to Ketugram, Kalna, Katwa, Memari, Galsi and other important agricultural centres, no work was done. The offices and establishments, Banks etc. in the interior-most part of the district were practically closed.

In many places in the district striking workers held massive rallies. Chittabrata Mazumdar, General Secretary, West Bengal CITU congratulated the working class and democratic people in the district for the massive successful Bandh.

POLICE REPRESSION ON DALLI - RAJHARA MINE WORKERS

The Cong(I) Govt. in Madhya Pradesh resorted to inhuman barbarity on the peaceful movement of the poor iron-ore mine workers at Dalli-Rajhara on 17-1-1998.

Since last six months, the iron ore mine workers in Rajhara working in loading/shifting operation have been demanding protection of their jobs sought to be taken away by

thoughtless mechanisation by the management. Management has brought 22 POCLAINS and five Pay-loaders, which has rendered several hundreds of loading/unloading workers-predominantly tribals-jobless. The Sangharsh Samity and the Chhatisgarh regional committee of CITU are in the forefront of the struggle against such thoughtless

mechanisation. Even the company is not gaining anything by such process of mechanisation and displacing several hundred workers.

In fact on 27-12-1998 the massive rally of the workers at Rajhara had declared indefinite strike. At the request of management, the Sangharsh Samity agreed to defer their strike, expecting a negotiated

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settlement.

But on 17-1-1998 when workers were sitting in peaceful Dharna, a big police force jumped on the workers and brutally lathi charged injuring several workers including women. Not only that. As reported by Sambal Chakraborty, Vice-President, M.P. State CITU and P.G. Panikkar, Secretary, Steel Workers Federation

of India from Rajhara, the police also carried out brutal raids on the workers colony near Gandhi Chowk and ransacked the office of Sangharsh Samity. The lathi-weilding policemen also assaulted the residents of the colony and took away 150 cycles to police station and arrested 366 workers. The whole operation by the police and local administration

exposed the desperate design to create an atmosphere of terror in the locality at the behest of Rajhara mine management and suppress the struggle.

The General Secretary of MP state CITU, Badal Saroj condemned the police atrocities on workers and demanded immediate release of the arrested.

C.S.E.U. Celebrates Silver Jubilee

The Cochin Shipyard Employees' Union is holding its Silver Jubilee Celebrations in a grand way from December 1997 to February 1998. The celebrations include a National Seminar on Ship Building Industry, Trade Union Seminars, Socio-Political seminars and cultural programmes and release of a Souvenir.

As a part of these Celebrations the CSEU has decided to honour the distinguished persons who struggled and strived hard for the establishment of Cochin Shipyard, an important Shipyard of our country in the core sector.

The Cochin Shipyard came into existence in March 1972 and the Cochin Shipyard employees union was formed immediately thereafter in April 1972, just within a month. The CSEU commands the overwhelming majority support of the workmen. The CSEU also Co-ordinates among the trade unions representing different segments of workers (including Officers and Supervisors) for the betterment of the workers and the Shipyard. This is a healthy and promising trend in the trade union front.

The CSEU has prepared a study report on the problems faced by the Indian

Shipping and Ship Building Industry in the year 1985, which was submitted to the government. Its recommendations for a National Shipping Policy, capital restructuring and other recommendations are still relevant. They agreed for diversification during lean period. The construction of Ship No.009 is fast progressing. However, they feel that the shadow of uncertainty of further production and development of the yard is haunting this shipyard. They are highlighting these problems during the celebrations through discussions/deliberations.

(Report by U.P. Menon)

SAVE CEMENT CORPORATION: TUs CALL

Save Cement Corporation of India (CCI) Convention was held at Delhi on 28-12-97 jointly by the AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS and INTUC attended by representatives of the affiliates of all the five central trade unions functioning in different units of the CCI. The convention resolved to fight back at all costs the ongoing attempt to sell out or wind up CCI - the only central public sector company in Cement Industry established with important national objectives. The Corporation has been referred to BIFR as a sick company some time back. A presidium

comprising Anirudh Singh (INTUC), R A Mittal (HMS), Keshobhai Thakkar (BMS), H Mahadevan (AITUC) and Kanai Banerjee (CITU) conducted the proceedings. M K Pandhe, General Secretary and Jibon Roy M.P., Secretary, CITU addressed the convention.

The resolution adopted by the Convention noted with grave concern the following grim facts:

* The CCI is not allowed to stand to its objectives such as (a) to emerge as a growing and important leader in the production of Cement in the country (b) to emerge as the largest seller of

cement in the country (c) to develop and enter export market (d) to occupy a position of both dominance and eminence in the R D in Cement technology and (e) to develop confidence in the Customers etc.

* On the contrary due to reasons like under-utilisation of available capacity, frequent stoppages and closures due to non-provision of raw materials, power, coal, mismanagement and inefficient administration etc., the CCI is made to suffer huge losses.

* Instead of taking the needful and appropriate measures to run the

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company viably, it is proposed to sell four units of the CCI to private sector.

* The financial re-structuring of the CCI proposed during 1994 had been kept in cold storage and the Govt. assurance that CCI will not be privatised or sold is sought to be negated.

* The reported corruption and corrupt practices/activities at the helm of affairs of the company has added to the denigration of the CCI affecting its credibility.

* A viability study report was prepared on behalf of the IFCI. But it is based on many assumptions and wishful thinking unrelated to the factual situation prevailing in different units of the CCI and without any discussion with the unions.

* The continued neglect and indifference on the part of the

management and the Govt. is making the CCI further sick. By not paying the wages and dues to the workers and curtailing the benefits and facilities, the entire workforce is sought to be demoralised.

The convention asserted its determination to save the CCI and put it on the viable track by bringing workers' participation in management and driving away the corrupt elements and vested interests.

A "Save CCI Action Committee" comprising the 5 Central TUs and the CCI unions was formed. The committee will conduct an in depth study in the various units of the CCI on what ails CCI, and what remedial steps are to be taken. An alternative plan for the revival of the CCI will be placed before the Govt. Parliament and the public.

The convention called upon CCI workers to participate in the "All India Defend Public Sector Day on the 27-1-1998 as a part of the action programme to save CCI and to launch Direct Actions including Delhi Chalo after the formation of the new Parliament/Government.

The management of CCI and Govt. of India were urged to effect payment of all wages and statutory dues to the employees of CCI, restore the welfare facilities and take back the victimised employees.

The Convention also appealed to various political parties of the country to take serious note of the united view of the entire Trade Union Movement is opposition to the pursuit of the anti-public sector policies and spell-out their policy for defending the public sector, including the CCI.

FMRAI RALLY IN MUMBAI

This is the biggest ever rally organised by any single Federation" observed P.K. Ganguly Secretary, CITU while addressing the rally organised by Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Association of India (FMRAI). More than 15,000 Medical and Sales Representatives (field workers) from 270 cities and towns covering Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and Gujrat to Assam staged a massive morcha at Mumbai on 29.12.97 protesting against "Attacks on profession, Attacks on Job security, Attacks on trade union rights, Attacks on existing facilities of the field workers and demanding reduction of drug prices

and against amendment of Patent Act, against dismantling of Public Sector etc.

This all India rally was preceded by similar mass mobilisation at zonal level in Chennai, Mumbai, Calcutta and Delhi.

The field workers from different parts of the country assembled at Azad Maidan in the morning and unanimously adopted a resolution against Organisation of Pharmaceutical producers of India (OPPI) and Indian Drug Manufacturers Association (IDMA) for their attacks on the profession of the field workers and in support of 3 days all India strike by the field

workers.

The rally then proceeded towards Kalaghora. On way to Kalaghora the rally demonstrated before OPPI's Office. A delegation of FMRAI leaders handed over the resolution adopted earlier at Azad maidan at the OPPOI office.

Chittabrata Majumdar and P.K. Ganguly, both all India Secretaries of CITU, K.L. Bajaj, General Secretary and P.R. Krishnan, Secretary of Maharashtra CITU and other prominent leaders of FMRAI and fraternal trade unions addressed the rallyists at Kalaghora.

(Report from D.P. Dubey)

HMS CONFERENCE

The Hind Mazdoor Sabha held its 27th Biennial Convention in Pune from 28th to 30th November, 1997. A massive procession was taken out on the inaugural day. Dr. Shanti Patel

presided. M.P. Veerendra Kumar, Labour Minister inaugurated. M.K. Pandhe greeted the HMS conference on behalf of CITU, besides J. Chittaranjan (AITUC) Patwardan

(BMS) and others. Manohal Kotwal was elected as President and Umraomal Purohit reelected as General Secretary of HMS.

EMPLOYEES' RALLY AGAINST HVP-BJP GOVT.

Over a lakh of state govt. employees of Haryana including employees of autonomous bodies and boards, held massive rally at Hudda Maidan at Jind city on 4.1.1998 and denounced the anti-worker policy of the HVP-BJP Govt of Haryana, which is basically aimed to privatise all the vital sectors and services of State administration.

The rally was organised by Sarva Karmachari Sangha affiliated to All India State Govt. Employees' Federation.

From the very day of its assuming the power, the HVP-BJP govt pursued a brazenly anti-worker policy and danced to the tune of big business-landlord class. It has already declared its resolve to privatise the Electricity Board and half of the excellently run Road-Transport Sector, besides planning to handover the health service also to private sector.

The HVP-BJP Govt. has also resorted to drastic retrenchment of on its employees in various deptts, besides refusing to reinstate the dismissed workers of HLRDC, it has retrenched 200 workers of Tourism deptt., and

155 workers of public health dept. Mass scale retrenchment in Electricity and irrigation dept. is also planned. Already 27000 workers of Electricity Board and 1400 workers of Public Health deptt. were declared surplus exposing the cruel design of retrenchment.

The mounting unrest of workers against such actions of the HVP-BJP govt. manifested in numerous sector wise struggles by the Haryana Employees. HVP-BJP Govt. sought to crush this by repression. The repression let loose the 80 days-long strike of the Haryana Municipal Workers through massive arrest of thousands of workers including 800 women workers, lathi charge on workers during rallies and false and foisting fabricated cases against the leadership and various other means. But the struggling workers demonstraing monumental unity and determination, the govt. was compelled to negotiate with the union, settle the issues and reinstate all dismissed workers.

On the issue of pay revision of the employees, the HVP-BJP govt has

proved itself a bluffer of worst kind. The Govt. has all along stated that the Fifth Central Pay Commission award, if implemented by the Central Govt. would also be implemented for the Haryana State Govt. employees. But after the Central Govt. implementation, the Haryana Govt. made a volte-face.

4th January rally of lakhs of workers of Haryana state denounced in clear terms the brazenly anti worker role of HVP-BJP govt which seeks to become a champion of the eiberalisation policy of IMF and World Bank. The massive rally of the workers was addressed by Master Sher Singh, President, R.C. Jaggi, General Secretary Sarva Karmachari Sangha and Sukdev Singh, Vice President, All India State Govt. Employees Federation etc. They stated that the true anti-people character of BJP and HVP stood exposed by the misdeeds of the Govt and they should be totally rejected by the working class. They called for united struggle of the workers against the State Govt. policy of privatisation and retrenchment.

Demonstration before US Embassy

The CITU and AITUC along with Basle Action Network, which includes international organisations like Green Peace, held a demonstration before the US Embassy at New Delhi on 21-1-98. The demonstration was held to protest against the export of hazardous wastes by the OECD countries led by the USA to non-OECD countries including India. Protest was lodged against the decision of the US Navy to send their toxic-laden ships to

India, Bangladesh and Pakistan for breaking. The ship-breaking operations in India are done at Alang, Gujarat, one of the largest ship-breaking yards in Asia. It is reported that every week about 3-4 workers die there due to the horrendous conditions under which the highly contaminated ships are broken.

The Basle Convention had adopted a recommendation banning export of hazardous substances like Poly Chlorinated Biphenyles (PCB),

Asbestos, Lead Battery Scraps, Zinc Ash, Waste Oils, etc from OECD countries to non-OECD countries. It had banned sending of toxic laden ships by USA to non-OECD countries for breaking. However, the USA has not ratified the Basle Ban Convention. The Government of India also, surrendering to the dictates of USA and other OECD countries, are allowing these toxic laden ships to come to India, and also breaking them at Alang Yard. The Supreme Court

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also had called upon the Government to take steps to stop such imports. A delegation met the First Secretary, US embassy and submitted a memorandum to him. The memorandum demanded immediate ratification by the US Government of

Basle Ban Convention and stop sending the contaminated ships to India and other non-OECD countries. The demonstration, which was accompanied with a street play, was later addressed by Nityanand Jayraman (Green Peace), P K

Ganguly (CITU) and Amarjeet Kaur (AITUC).

On 22nd January, the joint delegation met the Union Minister for Environment, Sri Saifuddin Soz, and demanded implementation of the Basle Ban convention by stopping toxic imports.

JAPAN

YAMAICHI SECURITIES CO. TO CLOSE

The Yamaichi Securities Co., one of Japan's "Big Four" securities companies announced Closure. About 7,500 Yamaichi employees will be losing their jobs.

National Council of Securities Workers Unions, Zenshorokyo criticized the Yamaichi and other major securities companies management for taking an

irresponsible attitude and it denounced the Ministry of Finance (MOF) for being an "accomplice." Securities-related workers in Japan have gone down from 170,000 at peak to 110,000 now and it is expected that they will be reduced to 50,000 when a Big Bang begins to operate: as a result of which Japan's some 280 securities companies will be merged

into 30 to 40 companies.

The National Council says it will fight against any dismissal of the Yamaichi workers, saying "We will take urgent action, to negotiate with the MOF, the Ministry of Labour, the Securities and Exchanges Surveillance Commission so that the workers' employment be maintained and the clients' interests secured."

PART-TIME WORKERS DEMONSTRATE

A gathering of part-time, extra and casual workers was held on December 1 in Tokyo.

The gathering, organised by Zenroren, was the first such national gathering to invite these workers outside Zenroren and it took place on

the final day of the officially organised "Part-time Workers Month", during which many gatherings and study meetings were held in many places throughout the country.

Before the gathering, the participants

petitioned the Ministry of Labour, submitting over 110,000 signatures demanding revision of the Part-time Work Act to make it effective for protecting part-time workers, and they urged Diet members to work for their demands.

JAPANESE GOVT ATTACKS ON HOSPITAL WORKERS

The International Labour Organization (ILO) recently made a recommendation which supports the claim of the Japan National Hospital Workers' Union (Zen'iro) that the refusal of Japan's Health and Welfare Ministry to take part in collective bargaining with the union and their various attacks on the union are illegal.

The 35,000-strong Zen'iro announced the ILO recommendation on December 5. According to the union, the H&W Ministry which is in charge of the management of national hospitals has refused to undertake

collective bargaining with the Iroren, has put unreasonable restrictions on union activities, imposed transfers on employees who are union leaders, punished union members who took part in strike action, and made various attacks on the union.

The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has said:

"The Committee requests the Government to ensure in future that representative of the Japan National Hospital Workers' Union (Zen'iro) are supplied such facilities in the workplace as may be appropriate in order to enable them to carry out their

functions promptly and efficiently and to ensure that full-time union officials are granted reasonable access to the workplace.

The committee requests the Government to ensure that the competent authorities refrain in future from having recourse to measures which would restrict the reasonable exercise of trade union rights by the Zen'iro members and officials employed at national medical institutions in the country".

(FROM ZENROREN NEWSLETTER)

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Mass Protest Against Govt.

A grand mass rally was held in Tokyo on Nov 19-11-97 to protest against the anti-labour policies of the Japanese Government. More than 10,000 people participated and raised their voice against successive revision of medical service and pension scheme, drastic revision of labour laws, restructuring of business which causes dismissals, import liberalisation of agricultural, stock building and marine products, reduction of subsidies to private

schools, new guidelines for Japan-US Defence Corporation building a haliport off shore Okinawan. They also demanded immediate withdrawal of all US bases in Japan and total abolition of nuclear weapons.

In November, the National Confederation of Trade Unions (Zenroren) launched a sit-down action in front of the Labour Ministry and Welfare and Health Ministry against revision of labour laws.

With drastic revision of labour

legislation the Japanese government and employers are trying to seriously threaten the existing wage system. The sit-down action received support from two other national TU centres - Rengo and Zenrokyo.

Zenroren also organised a sit-down action in front of the Diet building jointly with the Central Council for promotion of social security to oppose changes in the medical service and existing pension scheme and review of the insurance scheme for the care of elderly persons.

Against Reforms and Deregulation

Trade union federations from mass communications, public services, transport, retail service, telecommunication and postal services held a rally jointly with Zenroren in November in Tokyo to oppose administrative reforms and deregulation.

A fiscal structural reform bill is now under discussion at the Diet, which is designed to reduce expenditure on all programmes related to people's living conditions over the next three years.

Addressing the rally, the Zenroren President Yoji Kobayashi pointed out

that the administrative and fiscal reform should switch its priority in politics from the US and big business to the people by wiping out corruptive relations among political, administrative and financial circles.

Prior to the rally more than 3000 transport workers demonstrated in front of the Transport Ministry and opposed deregulation measures in truck, taxi and port business and demanded to reinstate 1047 Japan National Railway workers to their former jobs.

The National Council of Dock

Workers' Union (Zenkokukowan with 50,000 members) and the All Japan Federation of Dock and Transport Workers' Union (Koundomei with 5000 members) demanded that the recent agreements of port trade associations with the Transport Ministry be scrapped as they are illegal and represent improper government intervention in a labour management agreement. Dock workers belonging to these two unions account for almost half of the country's longshoremen.

Joint Programme for Spring Struggle

The Joint Struggle Council for 1998 People's Spring Struggle has agreed to an action programme aimed at the following:

i) To win substantial wage increase, establish a national minimum wage

system and cut annual working hours down to 18000 (ii) To secure stable employment and oppose rationalisation with dismissals, (iii) To oppose the plan to drastically revise labour legislation and establish

a fair working rule (iv) to oppose the reduction of social security expenses, especially the plan to revise medical service for a consequent time three year period; (v) To oppose the new "Guidelines for Japan-US Defence Cooperation."

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) negotiated more than 750 Enterprise

Bargaining Agreements (EBA) delivering an average weekly wage increase of 5.8% to the workers,

despite a hostile environment in which the Australian Federal Government and employer groups are

Workers Win Better Wages

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attempting to erode award conditions. In the face of this attack on TU rights, the wages campaign has, in addition to wage increase, led to improvements in long service leave and sick leave and greater access to paid trade union leave.

A significant number of plants have raised their wages even better. in

Queensland Banlderstone Hornibrook at Mount Isa, a deal for 11% wage increase has been signed. In NSW Schindler Lists the workers got 14% in Misbird 18% in Bradbury Poulsen 15%, in Faliquip 13% and in Sanders Prince Bisby 13%. Almost all these agreements included trade union training leave.

Industrial action by the workers of GEC in Brishane resulted in a 10% wage increase. Although the company declared a lock-out, the workers forced the management to accept their demand largely due to the picketline workers maintained during the lock-out.

FIGHTING HEALTH HAZARDS

The National Secretary of AMWU, Dong Cameron has called for the formation of an international alliance to fight against Rio Tinto, a multinational mining company operating in 40 countries and employing 51,000 workers.

In a letter to the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Cameron has pointed out to the continued obduracy of the company at Hunter Valley No.1 mine where the

company is resisting all attempts to settle disputes with its workers.

Due to environmental destruction, industrial intimidation and heartless uncaring approach of the company a large number of its workers have lost their lives.

The company also operates in South Africa, Namibia and Indonesia through its subsidiaries or joint ventures, where it mines copper and uranium. As a result of environmental

pollution the local communities in these countries are having high incidence of TB, bone diseases, kidney diseases, stomach diseases and cancer.

The workers and their unions are waging struggles against the high-handed attitude of the company management so that their exploitative and divisive methods are brought to a halt.

ALL EUROPEAN PORTS PARALYSED

In solidarity with the struggle of the Dockworkers of Liverpool in UK, against retrenchment, privatisation and deregulation of ports, European portworkers have embarked on stopping work for two hours in all European ports on 30-1-1998.

The meeting of International

Dockers' Conference held in end - November 1997, participated by 50 representatives from 30 European ports, decided to hold a Europe wide workstoppage in all the ports from 9.00 AM to 10.00 AM and from 5 PM TO 6 PM, on that day.

The conference also decided to form

a All Europe Co-ordinating body of the Port Workers - Named European Dock Workers' Council to expand the horizon of struggle against privatisation, deregulation and casualisation of port work which is a common phenomenon all over Europe.

CITU Demands abrogation of Sanctions against Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

In a communication addressed to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the General Secretary of CITU has drawn his attention to the devastating social impact of the unjust sanctions imposed against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the UN Security Council through the implementation of its Resolution Nos 748 (1992) and

883 (1993).

The communication says, "The contents of Document No. S/1996/404 submitted to the Security Council reveal that the implementation of these two resolutions between April 15, 1992 and Dec 31, 1996 has caused a financial loss of over 23.5 billion US dollars to the Libyan exchequer

and has deprived the common people of Libya of a number of basic necessities the country used to import before the sanctions were imposed.

"The CITU, therefore, appeals to you and through you to the member states of the United Nations to take urgent steps to abrogate the sanctions imposed on Libya. *

Consumer price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers

(Base 1982=100)

State	Sr.No.	Centre	Oct'97	Nov'97	State	Sr. No.	Centre	Oct'97	Nov'97
AP	1	Gudur	366	368	PB	45	Amritsar	322	320
	2	Guntur	361	361		46	Ludhiana	325	326
	3	Hyderabad	336	338	RAJ	47	Ajmer	360	359
	4	Visakhapatnam	353	350		48	Jaipur	349	350
	5	Warangal	345	359	TN	49	Chennai	389	397
ASM	6	D D Tinsukia	327	326		50	Coimbatore	355	365
	7	Guwahati	366	365		51	Coonoor	375	385
	8	Labac-Silchar	316	317		52	Madurai	367	383
	9	Mariani Jorhat	346	345		53	Salem	359	369
	10	Rangapara-Tezpur	354	351		54	Tiruchirapally	403	
411									
BHR	11	Jamshedpur	348	345	UP	55	Agra	337	336
	12	Jharia	307	305		56	Ghaziabad	357	357
	13	Kodarma	311	311		57	Kanpur	355	354
	14	Monghyr	337	336		58	Sharanpur	329	326
	15	Noamundi	337	340		59	Varanasi	371	374
	16	Ranchi-Hatia	353	353	WB	60	Asansol	332	331
GUJ	17	Ahmedabad	359	358		61	Calcutta	375	373
	18	Bhavnagar	380	379		62	Darjeeling	313	315
	19	Rajkot	355	354		63	Durgapur	384	389
	20	Surat	378	378		64	Haldia	399	391
	21	Vadodra	357	348		65	Howrah	373	370
HRY	22	Faridabad	369	370		66	Jalpaiguri	323	316
	23	Yamuunanagar	339	338		67	Raniganj	321	320
J&K	24	Srinagar	357	355	CHD	68	Chandigarh	359	357
KAR	25	Bangalore	370	370	DEL	69	Delhi	397	393
	26	Belgaum	385	388	PON	70	Pondicherry	434	436
	27	Hubli-Dharwar	368	374					
	28	Mercara	387	395			ALL INDIA	365	366
KER	29	Alwaye	373	382					
	30	Mundakayam	396	400			Additional Series of Labour Bureau		
	31	Quilon	389	391					
	32	Thiruvananthapuram	420	424					
M P	33	Balaghat	352	349	AP	1	Kothagudem	374	376
	34	Bhillai	327	328	HP	2	Himachal Pradesh	350	349
	35	Bhopal	387	383	RAJ	3	Bhilwara	356	356
	36	Indore	357	359	MP	4	Chhindwara	367	366
	37	Jabalpur	355	356	TRI	5	Tripura	344	353
MHR	38	Mumbai	413	411	GOA	6	Goa	423	422
	39	Nagpur	366	366					
	40	Nasik	384	385					
	41	Pune	401	407			Government of India		
	42	Solapur	370	375			Ministry of Labour		
ORI	43	Barbil	345	344			Labour Bureau		
	44	Rourkela	353	352			Shimla		

WFTU CALLS FOR WORLDWIDE ACTION

Global economic security, both in terms of macroeconomic stability of national economies as well as security of jobs and wages and incomes of the working people, is severely strained by the anti-social neoliberal economic policies. The economic and social crisis is now being destabilised further by the rampant speculation in currency markets, the financial scandals involving the big banks, big business and their political allies, the misuse of public funds, corrupt practices, the bankruptcies and closures of productive enterprises.

All these have led to millions to people losing their jobs. In Germany, the Institute of Economic Research estimates that unemployment would increase to 4.51 million (11.8 per cent) this year, the highest since the world war II. In France, the unemployed now number 3.11 million - 12.4 per cent of the workforce in the official register while union estimates exceed 5 million. In Spain, 21 per cent of the labour force are unemployed. Such high levels of joblessness continue also in other industrial countries and all the more severely in the developing countries which suffer from acute unemployment and underemployment estimated at over 800 million.

In the wake of the recent financial turmoil, the Indonesian rupiah has now lost three-fourths of its value in terms of the dollar and the currencies in most other ASEAN and east Asian countries have suffered huge deprecation in the value of their national currencies.....

Similar trends in other parts of the world have led the IMF to revise its estimates of growth of the world economy downwards. The stringent IMF conditionalities passed on

as "rescue plans" impose more closures and more loss of jobs.

The trade unions in all countries are organising protest actions, seeking to defend jobs and putting forward concrete demands to reduce the high levels of unemployment and underemployment..... These are opposed by transnational big business and financial oligarchies who continue with their plans of massive job cuts to maximise profits.

These dangerous trends which hold back balanced economic growth and social development were denounced by the world's trade unions at the Trade Union Forum held within the framework of the World Summit for Social Development convened by the UN in Copenhagen in 1995. The World Federation of Trade Unions believes that the time has come to reconvene the Trade Union Forum held in Copenhagen at the time of the World Summit for Social Development three years ago - and to demand with one voice that the Member States of the United Nations implement their 10 commitments, in particular, the commitment to work towards a full employment policy. The WFTU therefore invites all international, regional and national trade union organisations which participated in and supported the Copenhagen Trade Union Forum, to take immediate steps to reconvene the Forum as early as possible, to assess the current challenges and dangers and to propose common actions to safeguard jobs and living standards as well as to promote a democratic strategy for economic growth and social development, and to insist that Governments and Parliaments truly implement the Copenhagen Commitments. (WFTU Press Release)

MULTILATERAL AGENCY FOR UNILATERAL BENEFIT!

* While there are clauses in various WTO Agreements providing for special and differential treatment to developing countries, in practice many of them are not implemented in spirit, if not in letter.....The new trading system set up by World Trade Organisation had made the position of developing countries, weaker than even before.... Repeated use of anti-dumping provisions against imports from developing countries had created concerns regarding fairness of multilateral system of rules.... while the developed countries use the letter of law to press open markets in developing countries, they are at the same time not averse to creating non tariff barrier to prevent flow of imports (in their countries)... Social standards and environmental concerns were being used to deny to the developing countries whatever competitive advantage they may have in respect of trade in some goods. At the same

time no allowance was made for the wide gap in levels of technology and there was no positive effort to transfer technology at reasonable cost to developing countries.One of the most disconcerting features of the new trading system is that the countries like India have been required to give up the policy options and choices, the developed countries have enjoyed until a few years' ago, (like subsidisation of manufactured export, maintenance of system' of process patents in sensitive sectors etc.) There was no reason to give up legitimate policy options which constituted the bulwark of the Nation's sovereignty and self-reliance.

-K.R. Narayanan, President of India in the seminar of International trade Law Association, as Reported in Financial Express 4.1.98