



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## Forward To Countrywide Preparation for Historic Bharat Bandh on September 9

*M.K. Pandhe*

The clarion call given by the national convention of mass organisations held in New Delhi on April 15 was a historic decision since all mass organisations of workers, peasants and agricultural workers student, youth, women, artists, scientists etc have rallied round this mammoth struggle against the economic policies of the Govt of India and communalism.

Never before such a considerable unity had been achieved in the past. This unity must be strengthened and carried forward in all states so that immediate activities are initiated throughout the country to make the Bharat bandh of 9 September a great success. As called upon by the Delhi convention all states must immediately prepare for a state level convention involving all mass organisations so that the message of Delhi convention is carried forward in all corners of the country and masses are prepared in a big way to implement decisions of Delhi convention.

The trade unions have a special responsibility in discharging this important task. They should take initiative in organising such state level functions and prepare state level movements according to the plans chalked out by the Delhi Convention so that in all the states a series of activity is launched to mobilise millions of masses of all affiliations against this draconian policies of the Govt of India and the menace posed by communal and divisive forces in the country.

The Govt of India is going ahead non-challantly with its anti-national policies despite heavy damage done to the cause of self-reliance. Unless resistance to these policies is increased, the govt will not be forced to leave these policies. Therefore, the task before all mass organisations is to exert their all strength to ensure that a powerful struggle is launched all over the country by various forms of mass actions such as

strikes, padayatras, rallies and processions in all the states so that larger and larger masses which are not involved so far in this struggle are brought into the framework of movement so that the weight of this struggle is increased substantially than what it was before.

The program given by Delhi convention to court mass arrests on 19th August is an important landmark in the programme of struggle chalked out by Delhi Convention. This programme should be one in which millions of people from all walks of life participate in large number and court arrest which alone will create effective impact on the Govt of India and the advocates of IMF and World Bank dictated policies.

The working class must be prepared for an industrial strike much bigger than 29th November 1991 and 16 June 1992 and hence much bigger unity must be achieved on 9th September from the side of the working class. The students should get their classes and colleges closed while women, youth and peasants should also be brought into the struggle. Programmes such as rallies, Rasta Roko should be planned in advance so that the country comes to a stand still.

Any slackness in preparations will be harmful to the united movement of the mass organisations. Therefore, question of immediate preparation for implementing decisions of the Delhi Convention should be on top priority so that mass enthusiasm is generated all over the country.

The CITU State Committees, unions and industrywise federations must take up this task in right earnest and organise immediate programmes throughout the country so that 9 September Bharat

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## CITU President Opposes Privatisation of IISCO in Parliament

Com.E Balanandan, MP, President, CITU spoke under special Mention in the Parliament against the move of the Government to gift away the premier steel company in the public sector-IISCO to a private party who even does not have the necessary expertise in the field.

We reproduce the speech of Com.Balanandan which should further crystallize the position of CITU on the issue:

"Sir, through this special mention I wish to invite the attention of the Government to a serious issue of privatisation of the Indian Iron and Steel Co., Burnpur. This company was one of the two premier steel companies of India. This company was taken over by the Government of India in 1972. Sir, after that 21 years have already passed and yet the Government of India, to our bad luck has not invested a single Rupee for the development of that company. Now, the latest position is that the Government is taking steps to privatise it. The trade unions were called for a meeting by the Minister of Steel and they were told that the Government was intending to privatise it. Two or three years back, there was a discussion with the trade unions for effectively running this industry. They had exchanged views and they came to the conclusion that this company would continue with 2.15 million tonnes of production. Two hundred crores of Rupees had been set apart for development. That amount has been spent for preliminary work. But nothing serious has been done.

Now, the total worth of the company, the share capital, comes to nearly Rs 400 crores. Now, the share value is reduced to Rs 134 crores. And the value of the assets comes to Rs 16,000 crores. Through the mechanism of a committee, that has been brought down to Rs 980 crores and this company is going to be transferred to a construction company which does not know anything of steel. Only a scrap contractor, the Mukund company, is going to be given the favour of obtaining Rs 16,000 crores worth of public property, property of yours and mine. So, a major iron and steel company is going to be transferred to them and the share value has been reduced to Rs 134 crores from Rs 400 crores. And they are not investing anything. They are not going to invest even Re 1 for the next two years. They will only be managing the affairs. Efficiency will be improved. That is the thing. Then, they

will try to raise Rs 3,000 crores by way of shares. This is the proposal. The various trade unions, including the INTUC and AITUC, jointly decided to observe a day of this month as the 'protest day' and they will be going on an indefinite strike. Not only the workers of this steel industry but the workers of all the steel companies in India will go on strike to see to it that SAIL is given the option to take over this company as it can only manage the whole affairs properly. But SAIL was not even given permission to make quotations when global tenders were invited for modernisation plan. SAIL is a company which can compete with any company in the world. They have well maintained standards in their production. They are also efficient. Therefore, this steel company can be managed well by SAIL. So, Sir, I request, through you, the Finance Minister as well as the Steel Minister—our Steel Minister is an efficient man in many other things but I do not know about his talent in managing the steel industry—to give permission to SAIL to manage the affairs of the company. We people—we may not be a majority in Parliament here and a majority of the workers throughout the country, including the INTUC and AITUC, want that the steel industry in the public sector should not be handed over to Mukund company. I do not know as to how much of money they are going to share. Properties worth Rs 16,000 crores of rupees are going to be given for Rs 980 crores. For what? And the share value has unscientifically been reduced from Rs 400 to Rs 134 to accommodate Mukund company. This kind of a back door business by which a public sector unit is being destroyed is not good for the country and this practice should be stopped. Mr Vice Chairman, I hope that you, who are a man of excellence, will talk to the Minister about this and plead that this company be not handed over to Mukund company.

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Bandh will reflect the powerful voice of all the toiling millions of the country. The success of this action will be a great contribution to the advancement of the democratic movement in the country and therefore the leading role of the working-class in this battle must be carried prominently so that the working-class can play the historic role in the present critical juncture facing the country.

# Jointly to Oppose Privatisation of IISCO

Following statement was issued jointly by CITU, INTUC, AITUC, BMS, HMS and others on 11th May, 1993.

Representatives of Central Trade Union Organisations, INTUC, CITU, BMS, AITUC, HMS and their unions in IISCO and the Steel Executive Federation of India and its organisation in IISCO categorically rejected the Government proposal of privatisation of Burnpur in a joint meeting called by the Steel Minister today.

They made it clear that any move of privatisation of Burnpur Works after twenty years of nationalisation be considered as a National breath of trust.

They charged that the Government had grossly neglected IISCO and had done nothing for its modernisation. They pointed out that Burnpur Works could not be delinked from SAIL and there must not be any fragmentation of units of IISCO which had been nationalised by an Act of Parliament.

Regarding offer by private bidders like Mukund and Usha Rectifiers it was pointed out that they were absolutely disqualified as they had no experience of managing integrated steel plant and obviously their intentions were to grab assets and ruin IISCO ultimately.

The union representatives recalled the statement of Labour Minister in Industrial Tripartite Committee on 4th May that IISCO had improved its situation and so the IISCO issue was withdrawn from BIFR. They were surprised at the helpless attitude of the Steel Minister only a few days later suggesting privatisation as the only alternative.

Representatives of the Steel Executive Federation of India pointed out the commitments of viability of IISCO as assured all along by SAIL and the Government. They insisted that Burnpur Works should be modernised under the premises of SAIL like other units of SAIL.

The IISCO collective had been deprived of the modernisation of the plant because of indecision on the part of government for the last two decades. Twenty years had gone by and in 1993 the Government of India was thinking again of handing over IISCO to another private party. They made it clear that IISCO will not be severed from SAIL.

They have suggested only SAIL has the necessary expertise infrastructure and capital base to under-

take the long awaited modernisation of Burnpur works in a phased manner and the whole affair should be judged by a Technical Committee consisting of experts in Steel management and finance etc.

The Steel Minister explained his situation and added that the points raised by the representatives of employees and officers would be forwarded to the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister.

In a joint meeting later the representatives expressed serious concern at the insistence of the Government for privatisation and decided with firm resolve to face the challenges in all means.

It was decided that the employees and officers of all the steel plants would observe 25th May as IISCO Day expressing concern and demand modernisation of IISCO through SAIL.

It was further decided to call one day token strike sometime early June in all the Steel Plants if the privatisation move was not abandoned.

## ACFTU Delegation Visits India

A five member delegation of All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) visited India from April 10 to 18 at the joint invitation of CITU, AITUC, HMS and INTUC. The delegation was headed by Com. Zhang Ding Hua, Vice Chairman of ACFTU and Member of the Central Committee of CPC. The other members were Li Gongzhong, Vice Chairman, Liansing, Chairman, Provincial Trade Union Council, Xu Hongfu, Dy. Director, International Liaison Department, Pang Yihna, Division Chief of the General Division of Administration Office and Xie Ding, Assistant Research Fellow, International Liaison Department (the only woman member of the delegation). The delegation visited Delhi, Calcutta, Dhanbad and Agra during their stay in India. At Delhi they had bilateral discussion with central trade unions.

The leaders of ACFTU and CITU had free and frank discussion and exchange of informations and opinion. Com. M K Pandhe narrated about the Fund-Bank dictated New Economic Policy of the central Govt, its impact on the country's economy and the united resistance movement launched by the trade unions and the initiative taken by the CITU. The

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# Loot of Public Wealth — Fact Behind IISCO Privatisation

The process of privatisation does not simply mean transfer of ownership. In real sense, privatisation means transfer of public wealth to the hand of capitalists and the very term 'privatisation' is sought to be undertoned with a philosophical flavour to cover massive loot of social property for private interest. Apparently, privatisation looks like transfer of ownership of a Public Sector Unit on payment of its due price from the transferee, but what is actually going on under the cover of such process is nothing but transfer of public property in private hands free of cost. The scheme of privatisation of IISCO presently being toyed by Government of India is the glaring testimony of transferring social wealth to private hands almost free of cost. It symbolises the general mechanism designed by the World Bank/IMF caucus to gift away all social wealth created during last four decades to the capitalists.

The Ministry of Steel has almost finalised the terms of transfer of IISCO to M/s Mukund Steel. The terms, inter-alia, are as follows:

1. The present equity of IISCO would be devalued to Rs 134 crores from its current value of Rs 392 crores.

2. M/s Mukund will take over IISCO through outright purchase of 75% of such devalued equity and thus become the owner of the company having total asset of Rs 16,000 crores at current prices including its land, township and mines etc.

3. The Government is generous enough to allow M/s Mukund to be the owner of IISCO without any immediate payment since the transfer cost of 75% of equity to Mukund will be treated as loan to Mukund by SAIL at concessional rate of interest.

4. For facilitating transfer of IISCO, the Shankara Committee constituted by Government of India to decide on the offers made by different contenders has fixed the value of land, plant and machineries and captive mines together at Rs 988.91 crores only. It has fixed only Rs 2.67 crores as the prices of all land including number of precious Iron Ore and coking coal Mines which yield world's best quality raw materials. Can extent of undervaluation of public property go further or in otherwise Government's interest to the private bidders?

Extent of undervaluation of the properties of

IISCO can be further understood from the fact that the same Shankaran Committee has fixed Rs 500 crores as price for retransfer of mining right to SAIL in respect of the single iron ore mine under IISCO, viz Chiria Mine. Words cannot qualify the nature of loot as being designed in IISCO privatisation plan.

That is not all. The interest free loan of Rs 392 crores earlier given by SAIL to IISCO would also be transferred (or gifted) to the new private owner of IISCO. And they would start repayment of this loan to SAIL after the end of 15th year of privatisation.

The Government of India had taken the plea of privatisation of IISCO on the ground that it had no money to fund the modernisation of IISCO which is a must for its viability and survival. And hence, the proposal for handing over the IISCO to private hands for facilitating quick modernisation of IISCO. But the terms for transfer of IISCO to Mukund Steel do not practically envisage any concrete modernisation plan. As per the said terms Mukund will not invest anything in IISCO for two years after transfer. And from the 3rd year Mukund proposes to mobilise Rs 3000 crores for modernisation programme through sale of equity, debentures etc and also through loan from financial institution. Hence, no question of immediate modernisation of IISCO, which was the main plea before the Government to justify privatisation.

In essence IISCO is proposed to be handed over to M/s Mukund free of cost. The two years' time is being given to Mukund to extract the money required to pay for the purchase of 75% of equity of IISCO (that too extremely undervalued) from the property of IISCO itself. From the third year same undervalued equity would be sold by Mukund in market at a much higher price. Can this be called anything but a gift to public property to private hand by some individuals who happen to be in the Government? Can this be called anything but loot or plunder of social wealth amassed through shedding of blood and immense sacrifice of the workers and the common people?

But, do they, in Government have the right to auction the people's property like this and do the people remain onlooker? Or do they the people accept the same as inevitability or fait accompli?

The entire workforce of IISCO right from Offi-

cers, Technicians to generality of workers came together to express strong opposition to such design of privatisation of IISCO. The entire Trade Union movement of the country irrespective of faith and affiliation condemned such design of legalised loot of public property by some private individuals in the industry and the Government of India.

Not only that, the trade unions have long been demanding modernisation of IISCO and they themselves volunteered to undertake many sacrifices to facilitate modernisation of IISCO. In 1989, all the functioning unions in IISCO signed agreement with SAIL management providing terms for restructuring of work to facilitate modernisation process which included reduction of manpower and increased workload and made many other sacrifices so that the plant could continue production and also modernisation and expansion programme can be carried on smoothly. About Rs.200 crores were spent for ground leveling and other arrangements. Around 5000 workers lost their jobs by that time, but modernisation of IISCO which was committed and supposed to be undertaken within SAIL framework did not move even an inch due to bungling at Government level. And, now in 1992 Government proposes to take out itself from the process by gifting away IISCO to a small fabricator company in the private sector.

The Shankaran Committee which was constituted by Government of India go into the offers of different contenders of IISCO keeping in view its need for modernisation, it appears, were given the decision in advance to be recommended by the Committee. The only member in that committee having technical knowledge of steel making who could judge the capacity of the contender to modernise IISCO, and its feasibility under private hands, Shri K C Khanna, Ex-Chairman, SAIL had to dissent with the recommendation of the committee to allow IISCO to be gifted to private party.

In the meeting with Steel Minister held on 11th May 1993, all the trade unions of IISCO and all the Central Trade Unions of the country and also the Steel Executive Federation of India, while expressing strong opposition to privatisation plan of IISCO proposed that let SAIL be offered to modernise the IISCO in the same terms as offered to M/s Mukund since the same would not strain the Government Exchequer at the moment. In the 8th plan already Rs.300 crore was allotted for IISCO. And even by handing over IISCO to M/s Mukund, no money is coming either to Government or SAIL for at least coming two years, rather handing over IISCO to

Mukund would mean immediate revenue loss to SAIL as well as the Government. Then, why not SAIL be allowed to mop up resource from the market to fund the modernisation as proposed by Mukund. And also 9th plan can take care of further necessities. Can Mukund be any comparison to the giant public sector like SAIL so far as expertise & capacity are concerned? The same proposal was also placed before the Finance Minister by the West Bengal MPs on 12th May. But, both the Ministers showed cold feet to the same exposing their resolve and commitment to favour M/s Mukund with the gift.

Further it has been reported that a delegation of Left-Front MPs met the Prime Minister on 14th May and submitted a memorandum wherein it has been said that SAIL has already earmarked an amount of Rs.600 crores to undertake the modernisation work of IISCO and budget provision of Rs.300 crores has also been made for the purpose. The delegation has pointed out to the PM that with policy support from the Central Govt SAIL would be able to mobilise the required fund for the entire job of modernisation. The MPs have pointed out to the PM that Steel Ministry has been suppressing many facts including the recommendations/comments/suggestions of the experts of MECON and SAIL in the matter with the intention to materialise the motivated move to favour M/s Mukund. The PM has assured the delegation to look into the matter on the basis of the facts furnished in the memorandum.

The trade unions resolved to oppose privatisation of IISCO tooth and nail. In a joint meeting on 11th May 1993 all the Central Trade Unions and Steel Executive Federation have decided to observe IISCO day on 25th May all over the Steel Industry and also decided for strike in the Steel Industry throughout the country in early June '93.

Privatisation of IISCO, if materialises would open floodgates of privatisation in the entire public sector. It is to be understood in the proper perspective. It is not merely a privatisation but a loot of public wealth by private capital with Government aid. It can not be justified by any logic, nor even for "quick modernisation" or viability. It is a part of Fund/bank doctrine restructuring programme designed to hasten the process of deindustrialisation of Indian economy. Working class and the patriotic people must unite to stall such disastrous move, must cry a halt unequivocally to this operation of loot and plunder under the cover of much propagated new economic philosophy of the ruling polity.

# International Congress of Miners

*M.K. Pandhe*

The Third International Congress of The International Miners Organisation (IMO) held in Algiers (Algeria) from 9 to 12 May was a land mark in the international miners movement. It was in this Congress that complete proposal for world wide unity of the international miners was worked out and united efforts were made to arrive at a common understanding for world wide unity

of the miners.

The Congress was attended by 102 delegates from 32 organisations and 6 international organisations. In addition to that over 50 observers attended the congress.

The International Miners Organisation was a remarkable achievement in the sense that affiliates of both the ICFTU and WFTU have come together before a common organisation of the miners in view of the special problems faced by this section of the workers all over the world. The initiative was taken by National Union of Miners, Great Britain and CGT affiliated to miners organisation in France. The Australian Miners Union also played an important role in this united effort despite its affiliation to the ICFTU. This organisation is functioning since 1985 and is going from strength to strength. A section of the ICFTU refused to join this new organisation and they continued to function in the Miners International Federation (MIF) which continued the disunity in the international miners movement. During the course of discussion between the leaders of the IMO and MIF the leaders of the MIF proposed humiliating conditions which were not acceptable to the leaders of the IMO. The conditions were exclusion of Miners Union of Cuba, Vietnam and CGT, France. Such conditions cannot build unity of the miners in the world and so the disunity could not be averted.

Another set back faced by the IMO was due to the dismantling of socialism in USSR and erstwhile socialist states in Eastern Europe. The Miners unions from erstwhile USSR disaffiliated from the IMO while several organisations in the former socialist countries in Eastern Europe except Poland walked out of IMO. This created difficulties in functioning of the IMO.

However, a recent development in former USSR was encouraging. A 1.2 million strong miners union from Ukraine joined the IMO and there is every

possibility of some other states in the former USSR also joining the IMO. The notable role played by the leadership of trade unions in UK, France and Australia also gave considerable help in overcoming the crisis faced by the IMO and despite the difficulties the IMO became stronger and more united to meet the challenge of the situation.

The opening session of the conference was presided over by Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Miners, Great Britain. In his opening address he emphasised the need for unity of the miners all over the world despite ideological differences. He also condemned the attacks of the multinational corporations, World Bank and the IMF which are trying to gain more and more control over the rich mineral resources all over the world. The Minister of Industry and Labour, Govt of Algeria participated in one session.

Alain Simon, Secretary General of the IMO presented a guideline paper before the conference. At the outset he denounced the new international order doctored by the United States Govt as an attempt to get control over the world and called upon the miners to oppose these policies of globalisation. He criticised the call for privatisation in the mining industry all over the world and attempt by the multinationals to exploit the third world countries. Simon stated in his report "The most obvious and hateful illustration of under-development is the debt. The overall Third-World debt (official aid, export credits, private flood) reaches 1300 billion dollars.

According to the OECD, between 1982 and 1990, the whole total floods of resources sent to the developing countries reached 927 000 million \$. But during the same period of time, those countries spend 1345 billion \$ in repayment of their debt to the creditor countries (interest and principal). Meaning a net theft of 418 000 millions \$."

Quoting from the Report of the United Nations Development Programme Com Simon noted "20% of the richer people own 82.7% and 20% of the poorer people only receive 1.4% of world total income. 10 million Belgian citizens GNP equals that of 500 million African citizens, i.e. 130 000 million \$. In 1930, Western Europe and tropical Africa were in a 30 to 1 ratio; it is 50 to 1 today. We see a degradation of the situation, tragic for those who experience it and

dangerous for peace. The under-development of some nowadays endangers the development of all".

Com. Alain therefore stressed the need for peace and disarmament in order to ensure proper development all over the world. Emphasising the need for unity of the miners and energy workers, Alain reported about the considerable progress with International Union of Energy Workers for merging of the two organisations. Unity should be on the basis of principles and over all interest of the miners and energy workers. He asserted that there should be no pre-conditions for unity of the miners and energy workers all over the world. 40 delegates participated in the debate and most of the delegates appreciated the growing unity of the miners all over the world. They criticised the policies imposed on the 3rd world countries by the World Bank and the IMF and the demands made by the multinational companies to exploit the rich mineral resources for their profit motives. They also expressed their concern at the closure of mines and reduction of manpower in several areas as a result of introduction of new technologies in several mines. They emphasised the need for better coordination of the miners movement to overcome the challenges posed by the World Bank and IMF dictated policies.

M.K. Pandhe, President of All India Coal Workers Federation while participating in the debate emphasised the need for world wide unity of miners to face the growing attacks of the multinational companies, particularly the IMF. He briefed about the united struggles conducted by the working-class in India including 2 nationwide strike struggles and a massive march to Parliament. He also explained the remarkable unity achieved in India of all the mass organisations which has given a call for one day Bharat Bandh on 9th September. When he mentioned the contribution of the working class and the people of India in support of Cuba by sending a ship load of foodgrains and medicines, there was a thunderous applause in the congress. Even the chairman of the meeting appreciated the gesture by the Indian people and requested others to emulate it. The meeting requested the ICFTU affiliated constituents to raise the voice of unity in the meeting of the Miners International Federation (MIF) which was scheduled to meet in Budapest in the third week of May.

The Congress elected a 15 member executive committee of the IMO with Arthur Scargill as President and Alain Simon as Secretary General. M K Pandhe has been taken on the committee from India. Several speakers especially from the Arab countries

spoke about the danger of fundamentalism in their countries who also emphasised the need for consistent struggle against these fundamentalist forces.

Com.Arthur Scargill, newly elected President while summing up the deliberations of the Congress gave a clarion call to the miners all over the world to launch a world wide movement against the multinational corporations and the IMF policies so that a new economic order can be established which will protect the interest of the working class and the toiling millions all over the world.

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visiting leaders spoke with facts and figures about the progress attained in the economic development of China. They also gave an account about the functioning of ACFTU and the role of the working class in the on going economic programmes. While staying in Delhi they visited the historic places in Delhi and Agra. On 13th April the delegation was given a public reception at the centenary hall of Calcutta university. The meeting was presided over by Niren Ghosh and welcome address was delivered by Com.Chittabrata Majumdar, the president and General Secretary respectively of the West Bengal Unit of CITU. The Labour Minister of the Left Front Govt of the State hosted dinner in honour of the delegation. They also visited the Kolaghat Thermal Power Station.

On 15th April the delegation reached Dhanbad from Calcutta where they were received by the leaders of the Sponsoring trade unions. Hundreds of workers were mobilised at the Dhanbad railway station to welcome the delegation. The visiting leaders were taken to the deep underground mines and shown the new technique used in underground coal mining. A public reception was jointly organized by the sponsoring trade unions in honour of the delegation.

On return to Delhi from Dhanbad the delegation visited the Asia-Pacific Regional office of WFTU and had bilateral discussion with its secretary Com.Deb Kumar Ganguli on the current scenario of the world trade union movement. They had also made a courtesy visit to the Union Labour Minister Shri P A Sangma.

On April 18 the West Bengal Chief Minister Com.Jyoti Basu invited the delegation at the CPI(M) headquarters, New Delhi. The ACFTU comrades were deeply moved at the gesture of Com.Basu and the delegation had very co-cordial and frank discussion there.

# Foil Game to Legalise Arbitrary Closure of Factories Mobilise in Thousands against the Anti-Workers Move to Change Labour Laws

*Jibon Roy*

Kneeling down before IMF/World Bank, the duo, which now commands the economic management in India in the Government of India, have finally decided to bring several changes in Industrial Dispute Act. With all available indications the Government has already decided to promulgate an ordinance echoing the desire of foreign multinationals and monopoly houses in India, which formed part of IMF/World Bank conditionalities for advancing loan to India.

## **DECEIT OF PARLIAMENT**

The very deceitful course of going for a decree instead of Parliamentary enactment reveals the substantive danger the proposed ordinance impregnates. It is all the more significant that the talk of ordinance have been floated just at the heel of closing down of budget session of the supreme legislative body in the country. Shri P A Sangma, the Union Minister of State for Labour in a speech at Thiruvananthapuram has detailed out the character of change, the Government of India is contemplating in the Industrial Disputes Act. It covers a wide range beginning from the procedure of forming a union and stretched to the level of formalities for closing down an enterprises.

## **EXIT POLICY - FREE FOR ALL**

The Central Government in its proposal of change in the legislation has provided open hand for the large scale exit of workers. This time no camouflage of NRF or any other deceitful rope walking - provision of Exit is straight. The Government has decided to delete Section 25(0) of the Industrial Disputes Act. The particular section stipulates that any entrepreneur who desires to close down a factory should seek permission of the appropriate Government at least 90 days in advance. The deletion of that section will allow any employer to close down a factory at his whims and at the same time automatically legalises the removal of 10 lakh workers locked up in the illegal closures throughout the country. Deletion of this clause will make BIFR also redundant. No employer will find it necessary to take the trouble of going TO BIFR.

## **RIGHT TO FLIGHT OF CAPITAL ALLOWED**

Right to free flight of capital has been one of the

primary demands of foreign capital against any investment in India. It is most important to the multinationals to take the best advantage of the ongoing competition amongst number of third world nations under IMF/World Bank. Competition is taking the turn to provide multinationals the cheapest possible labour and raw materials. The deletion of Section 25(0) of Industrial Dispute Act frees the multinationals to take the capital out of the country at its sweet will.

## **STRINGENT CONDITIONS FOR REGISTRATION OF TRADE UNIONS**

In his Thiruvananthapuram speech the Union Minister of State for Labour, the P A Sangma has revealed that according to the new provision, a trade union has to enroll at least 10% workforce in an enterprises before it applies for its registration. At present any seven workers can together form a trade union and seek registration.

If the new stipulation, as mentioned by the Hon'ble Minister is effected it will be just impossible to form a legal trade union in any big or a medium industry. According to the provision suggested by the Central Govt registration of a trade union in a modern steel plant employing 30,000 workers has to be qualified with a registered membership of 3,000 which could be mobilised by one go only by an employer sponsored trade union. It is all the more concerning in this context that conclusion of Ramanujam Committee Report in this regards which has provided that for the purpose of registration of an union the minimum membership requirement will be 10% or 7 whichever is less.

The New Amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act has restricted the number of outsiders in the leadership to two. It is a calculated attempt to keep the victimised workers out of the union leadership.

It is understood reliably, that the Govt of India has brought many other changes in the proposed industrial relations law further restricting the right to strike and collective bargaining. It has marginalised the role of the appropriate Government on the matter of industrial disputes.

All these proposals of changes are synonymous

with the letter and spirit of IMF dictates to marginalise the labour movement as the basic condition of a competitive economy and directed straight against the working class. While the Economic and Industrial Policy is aimed to prespectively reduce the labour cost, reduce employment potentiality and fragment labour in various categories, the new industrial relations law is aimed to throw thousands of workers out of employment and to marginalise their capacity to resist. In view of this serious threat posed against the working class and the organised trade union movement broadest possible unity of the working

class and the movement is the urgent need today.

It is not less than the Labour Minister himself who reiterated a number of times that the aim of the New Industrial Law is to harmonise it with the Industrial Policy. Therefore, it is the task of the trade union movement also to explain the workers where the new law come in line with the disastrous industrial policy. The answer will reach the single point. The economic policy frees the employer to flinch the labour, the industrial law enchains labour against its right to resist.

### TAMILNADU STATE CONFERENCE OF CITU PLEDGES TO:

## **Intensify Fight Against Twin Danger of New Economic Policy and Communalism**

Inaugurating the 6th State Conference of the CITU, Com.E.Balanandan, President, CITU underlined the basic difference between the CITU and other trade union centres and stated that while others are wedded to economism and limits to immediate demands of the workers, the CITU has declared socialism as its goal and fights for complete emancipation of the working class. He gave a vivid picture of the capitalist crisis and its impact in the advanced capitalist countries even. He also said that the people of the former socialist countries, who used to enjoy all the basic amenities of life under the socialist system, are now confronting severe miseries under the present pro-capitalist regimes. At the same time the organised struggle of the people are also getting intensified.

The Conference was held from 20th to 24th April '93 at Selam. The venue of the conference was named as "BTR Nagar" and the conference after the name of veteran leader K Anandan Nambiar. The first day of the conference was fully devoted for the 4th State Conference of the Working Women's Co-ordination Committee. Com.Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, CITU addressed this conference. It was also addressed by Com.R. Umanath and Com. Pappa Umanath. 210 delegates from 21 districts of the state participated in the working women's conference which elected a new co-ordination Committee with Com.Uma Maheshwari as Convenor.

Unleashing a scathing attack on the Fund-Bank dictated "New Economic Policy"(NEP) of the Narasimha Rao Govt Com.Balanandan quoted numerous facts and figures to show as to how the NEP has

pushed the country's economy into the debt trap and the common people are facing acute economic crisis. He said amid loud applause that no patriotic citizen of the country will forgive Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh for their crime against India. He urged upon the delegates to plunge into the preparation for the September 9 Bharat Bandh to make it a historic success.

Before the flag hoisting, the four "jathas" which were started from different centres of the state organised on the occasion of the conference and passed through various parts, reached the conference venue and CITU flags were received from the leaders of the respective jathas by the state leaders.

Com.K.Ramani hoisted the red flag and delivered the presidential address. In his brief speech he condemned the anti-people, anti-democratic role of the State Govt headed by Jayalathia with particular reference to the recent killing of 3 workers at Pagatur of Trichy district by policy firing. He called upon the CITU unions of the state to take initiative in organising united movement against the anti-working class Govt of the State.

The work report and organisational report were circulated to the delegates a week before the conference obviously to enable them to study the same properly and express their studied views on the reports. The discussions were held in two separate sessions. A total number of 98 delegates participated in the discussion. The speakers inter alia stressed the need for organising the struggle for right to work by mobilising the unemployed youth in co-ordination with the fraternal mass organisations. The reports

were adopted unanimously after the summing up speech by Com A K Padmanabhan and Com T K Rangarajan both Deputy General Secretaries of the outgoing State Committee. Com R Umanath intervening in the discussion on the reports cautioned the delegates that it will be suicidal to slacken our fight against the danger of communalism in the state believing the claim of the State Govt that Tamilnadu is free from communal menace. He also stressed the need to organise the working women under the banner of CITU.

Com M K Pandhe, General Secretary CITU delivered the concluding speech. He asked the delegates to intensify the fight against the twin-danger of New Economic Policy and communal and divisive secessionist forces. He said that the Central Govt would have implemented the dangerous "Exit Policy" and several PSUs would have been closed by now if the direct action including two one-day strikes would not have been launched by the trade union movement. He narrated as to how the CITU has been playing the key role in forging the unity of the work-

ing class and launching united movement. He noted that the 15th April convention of all mass organisations held at New Delhi has created the largest ever united platform of the working class and it is going to add new momentum to the fight against the NEP of the Narasimha Rao Govt. He told the delegates that the campaign for the 9th September '93 "Bharat Bandh" must be carried from village to village, door to door so that the Bandh attains resounding success. Com Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, CITU also addressed the delegates.

A mammoth public meeting was held at the Bose Maidan in the evening of 24th April to mark the conclusion of the conference. The meeting was preceded by a colourful procession participated by thousands of workers and their family members who came from different far and near districts of the state.

The conference elected a new State Committee with 93 members including 17 office-bearers. Com R Umanath was elected the President and Com. T K Rangarajan as General Secretary.

## 9th Punjab State Conference of CITU

The 9th conference of the CITU Punjab State was held from 26th to 28th March at Kishori Lal Nagar (Malerkotla) in the district of Sangrur.

Com. M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU inaugurated the conference. In his speech he dwelt in details the anti-national economic and industrial policies of the Narasimha Rao Government. He said the policies has not only pushed the country to the path of de-industrialisation but is also seriously threatening the economic sovereignty of India. He, therefore, urged upon the delegates to champion the cause of resistance against these policies by making all out efforts to involve more and more people in the movement. Com. Pandhe explained as to how the trade union movement is poised to be seriously effected due to the proposed retrograde changes in the labour laws at the instance of the monopoly capital of the country and foreign multinational companies. He appealed to the delegates that we must build up our organisation to meet the challenge before the working of the country created by the imperialist forces and their agents the IMF, World Bank and multinational companies.

Com. Balwant Singh delivered the presidential address and spoke on the international situation pointing out the rising revolt of the people of the former socialist countries against the capitalist path

pursued by the present regimes and the consequent economic hardship faced by the toiling masses. He also spoke on the communal situation and the danger to the secular democratic character of the country. He stressed the need to fight with determination against escalated assaults on democracy, secularism and rule of law by the Sangh Parivar.

Com. Chandi Prasad, President, Bihar State Committee of CITU greeted the conference. He highly praised the Punjab comrades of CITU for their heroic battle against the secessionist Khalistani terrorists and the great sacrifice of the comrades.

Comrade Chander Shekhar, General Secretary, State CITU placed the work report highlighting the intervention of CITU in the state on various issues starting from day to day economic demands to solidarity actions with fighting forces against the imperialists. The fight, according to report, against secessionism of Khalistani terrorists and against the anti national economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Govt remained the main plank of struggles, while the struggle against lock outs, lay offs, for partial economic demands and for implementation of minimum wages and labour laws was also carried out through out the period under report. The struggle against police repression and for trade union rights remained a continues feature. No doubt the achieve-

ments and struggles including two time all India strike actions were note worthy things even then weakness in strengthening of state centre, district centres, imparting required education and training, framing of a unified cadre policy etc were also noted despite the fact that notable progress in the past three years was made. The report noted with satisfaction that despite all difficulties, in the joint struggles, CITU remained the major force in the state and succeeded to involve other trade unions on common issues despite their vacillations and opportunistic approach. The report concluded with the tasks in future mainly to strengthen the state and district centres, imparting required training and education to the cadres, more emphasis on basic propaganda, intensification of joint struggle against anti-national economic and industrial policies, determined fight against communalist forces, proper training, wage and evaluation of the work of whole timers, strengthening of industrywise Co-ordination Committees, special emphasis towards working women and added attention to unorganised workers etc.

49 delegates participated in the discussion on the report and made valuable suggestion for improving the functioning of the state CITU. With the summing up speech of Com.Chander Shekhar the report was adopted unanimously.

The conference was attended by 364 delegates. It adopted resolutions inter alia on Economic Policy, against communalism, Punjab Problem, Pension, Gratuity, Bonus and recognition of trade union through secret ballot.

The conference was greeted by the leaders of Kishan Sabha, Agricultural Labour Union, and AI-TUC. Com.Mangat Ram Pasla also addressed the delegates and stressed on the need to fight the ideologies inimical to the working class ideology without which the CITU cannot achieve its objective.

A new state committee was elected by the conference unanimously with 75 members including the office bearers. Com.Balwant Singh and Com.Chander Shekhar were re-elected as president and General Secretary respectively.

On the opening day of the conference an open rally was held at Zakir Hussain Stadium and was addressed amongst others by Com H S Surjeet, Com M K Pandhe, Com.Md Salim, MP, Com.Balwant Singh, Com.Chander Shekhar and Com.Mangat Ram Pasla. The Dam Workers Union presented a draft for oRs 50,000/- to Com.Pandhe to BTR Memorial Trust.

## Karnataka State Beedi Workers' Conference

The Karnataka State Beedi Workers' Federation held its conference at Mangalaore on 28th and 29th April 1993. South Kanara district in Karnataka is the place wherefrom lakhs of beedi workers come. While the State Govt claims that there are only 3.5 lakh beedi workers in the state, according to unofficial estimate the number of beedi rollers in the district alone is about five lakhs.

Com.Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, CITU while inaugurating the conference spoke at length the need to organise the unorganised, who are great many in number in beedi industry. She narrated the special feature relating to beedi industry that the majority workers are women and particularly from minority community. She pointed out that there is no difference between beedi manufactured by men and women, through women are at many states denied equal remuneration. She pointed out that the 'Liberalisation' and globalisation policy adopted by Government of India is pushing the country practically to debt trap. She further pointed out that BJP govt in UP wanted women to be confined to home, just as the fascists in Germany wanted to do. She called upon the delegates to actively work to make September 9th Bharat Bandh a grand success.

Com.C Kannan, addressing the conference pointed out the need to fight for a National Minimum wage for beedi workers. He pointed out that the wage rate in Kerala for beedi workers is Rs 35.80 per thousand beedies. They get an additional day's wage if they work for 6 days and produce at least 800 beedies daily. This makes the wage to Rs 40.60 per thousand beedies. But the minimum wage in Karnataka is Rs 26.31 per thousand beedies. Thus the workers in Karnataka is justified to demand at least Rs 40/- per thousand beedies rolled. Speaking of his early experience in organising Beedi workers in Malabar and South Kanara, he wanted the militancy of those days to be reestablished, organisation and movement to be strengthened in Karnataka and elsewhere in the country. He reported to the conference the decision of All India Co-ordination Committee of Beedi Workers to hold All India Conference at Telecherry in Kerala.

Com.Md.Dastigar, outgoing General Secretary of the federation presented a printed report to the conference which contained national, international

[Cont'd on page 15 ]

## CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

(BASE 1992 = 100)

Centre	Dec.92	Jan.93	Linking factor for Old Base	Barbil	237	239	5.00
				Rourkela	224	223	3.59
				Amritsar	226	225	5.19
				Ludhiana	220	220	—
All India	241	242	4.93	Ajmer	243	244	5.01
Gudur	243	241	4.33	Jaipur	232	234	5.17
Guntur	242	242	5.60	Coimbatore	236	238	5.35
Hyderabad	228	228	5.23	Coonor	252	254	4.80
Visakhapatnam	246	256	—	Madras	247	249	5.05
Warrangal	235	237	—	Madurai	259	249	5.27
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	217	220	4.05	Salem	235	238	—
Gauhati	244	243	—	Tiruchirapally	248	245	—
Labac-Silchar	215	217	3.96	Agra	223	225	—
Mariani-Jorhat	231	221	3.95	Ghaziabad	232	235	—
Rangapara-Tezpur	224	233	4.29	Kanpur	243	245	4.69
Jamshedpur	228	230	4.68	Saharanpur	233	233	5.06
Jharia	221	216	4.63	Varanasi	259	261	5.12
Kodarma	216	217	5.43	Asansol	223	225	4.77
Monghyr	233	231	5.29	Calcutta	241	243	4.74
Noamundi	231	232	4.58	Darjeeling	223	223	4.55
Ranchi-Hatia	241	236	—	Durgapur	249	251	—
Ahmedabad	239	240	4.78	Haldia	253	254	—
Baroda	240	239	—	Howrah	252	255	4.12
Bhavanagar	235	230	4.99	Jalpaiguri	219	222	4.16
Rajkot	231	233	—	Raniganj	219	218	4.40
Surat	248	247	—	Chandigarh	242	243	—
Faridabad	231	221	—	Delhi	254	260	4.97
Yamunanagar	222	226	5.53	Pondicherry	264	266	—
Srinagar	247	247	5.47	<b>Additional series of Labour Bureau</b>			
Bangalore	241	241	5.66	Kothagudem	242	240	3.25
Belgam	252	249	—	Himachal Pradesh	231	232	3.75
Hubli-Dharwar	255	253	—	Bhilwara	244	244	3.20
Mercara	235	334	—	Chindwara	249	256	2.59
Alwaye	235	237	5.19	Tripura	241	242	4.37
Mundakayam	250	246	4.67	Goa	271	274	3.40
Quilon	252	255	—	<b>Other series of Labour Bureau</b>			
Trivandrum	255	260	—	Centre	Base	'90	1990
Bhalaghat	239	236	5.24	Ammathi	1960		
Bhilai	216	216	3.49	Chickmangalur	1960		
Bhopal	256	256	5.46	Kolar Gold Field	1960		
Indore	250	250	5.18	Sambalpur			
Jabalpur	257	259	6.41	Berhampur			
Bombay	260	263	5.12	Cuttack			
Nagpur	254	258	4.99	<b>Note:</b> Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number.			
Nasik	252	252	—	Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series.			
Pune	256	257	—				
Sholapur	261	256	5.03				

# 13th World Congress on Occupational Safety & Health Exposed Problems of Developing Countries

*P K Das*

Thirteenth world congress on occupational safety and health concluded at Delhi during 4th to 8th April 1993. The Congress was inaugurated by Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri K R Narayanan at Siri Fort Auditorium. Sri Naryanan emphasised on problems of safety and health with rapid growth of technology and massive technology transfer to 3rd World Countries. Monotonous mode of work, occupational diseases, environmental pollution, green house effect, depletion of ozone layer etc are common concern in most of the developing countries. The problem of child labour is also becoming more and more serious throughout the world. No individual country can solve these problems alone. A worldwide cooperation and consistent action can bring some improvement in all developing and developed countries.

Deliberations in the Congress made a revealing exposure of the rapidly aggravating situation all over the world with particular reference to third world countries. It did also expose the pitiable inefficacy of the Government and other institutions to offer protection to the victims of unsafe work and occupational hazards.

Mr Heribert Maier, Dy. Director General of ILO informed that 12 crores of workers received injury while on work and more than 20 lakh workers die every year throughout the world. An average 4 workers get occupational injury in every second and 3 workers die in every minute throughout the world. Alongwith this high rate of morbidity and mortality in factories, the incidence of injury and death due to road accidents are also alarming. Every year more than 5 lakh people are killed in road accidents all over the world alongwith 150 lakh injuries. In India, statistics reveals that road accidents find top position in the list of accidental deaths. There are around 60,000 deaths and over 2,60,000 injuries annually. These figures indicate an average eight hundred fifty casualties daily on road only.

The increasing use of chemicals and biological agents with a hazard potential are unknown to local people. Indiscriminate use of pesticides cause an estimated 30 lakh cases of poisoning in the world each year along with associated environmental

damage. Ever increasing use of chemicals in military and civil use stress the need of gigantic size of chemical industries with major accident risks that may lead to catastrophic consequences. Incidence of Bhopal was not an end of this possibility. It happens to be only an example with all possible chances of repetition of such disaster in future. Dangers are inherent in increased use of ionising, non-ionising radiations and fluorocarbons in our daily use. Far reaching effects of computer controlled technologies and alarming influences of stress at work in many modern jobs are few other important problems of today's life.

The global impact of and the occupational risks that are associated with the uncontrolled transfer of new technology are significant. It is vital that the possible implications for working conditions and environment be considered concurrent with the development of new technology and in the design and organisation of work which applies the new technology.

There are specific areas which require our concerted efforts in the coming year, in both industrially developed and developing countries. These areas reflect the critical gap which continue to exist between developments achieved in safety and health and actual conditions in different countries. This gaps are particularly significant in mining, construction and small scale enterprises in rural and informal sectors. These sectors pose high risks of fatalities and injuries. Worldwide trend of decentralisations of industries rapidly increase urban population at the rate of 8% per year during 1970-1980s with an upward trend and pose new problems of urbanisation. No land use planning, no ecological planning, no economical planning alongwith industrial waste mismanagement are pushing common men's health problems in an unmanageable level. To make the matter worse, industrial waste dumping in third world countries is considered to be a new danger with little mass awareness and effective resistance.

International labour organisation continue to warn about danger of ever increasing use of new chemicals in daily life. About 40,000 chemicals poses various risks on our health as well as danger of its

production in factories. ILO passed about 190 conventions and recommendations about various risks on occupational safety and health. Large number of countries neither ratified most of those conventions nor they implemented in practice as alleged by Dr Chandra Pinnagoda, Chief of Occupational Safety and Health of ILO.

The essential and important task of govt and other agencies to give full knowledge and information to common people on danger of use, handling and production of important chemicals are often grossly neglected.

Various steps taken by ILO during her 74 years of world wide service have limited impact on such serious problem of occupational safety and health.

Mr D D Hoskins, Secretary General of International Social Security Organisation emphasised the need of active co-operation among Government and over 300 social security institutions in 126 countries to fight this problem.

The Congress was attended by 800 delegates from other countries and 1000 delegates from India. This mammoth gathering was sub divided into three parts to discuss various problems in detail relating to technological, social, agronomical, and economical problems related to occupational safety and health.

Sordid state of exploitations and class conflicts in developing countries dominated discussions among the delegates as this congress is for the first time held in a developing country. India is one of the country where all sorts of above mentioned problems exist.

With rapid growth of industry and service due to mass consumerism of industrial products help rapid influx of child labour. This is very big social evil in developing and developed countries. Out of estimated 10 crores of child labour in the world, 4 crores are in India are worst sufferers in this class divided society. Ms Saily Kar, Chairperson, workers group of ILO explained the situation in most lucid manner to pinch the conscience of delegates. Babies and children, right from age of 6 to 18 have to earn their bread by doing most hazardous, unhygienic, unethical jobs throughout the world. Recent study by ILO at Philippines revealed that babies from the age of 6 engaged in waste picking job from city garbage cannot stand straight at the age of 14 onwards. Those children are under constant attack from their employers without any social or legal relief in sight. Most of them are employed in informal or unorganised sectors. Physical and sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancy, slave labour, poor working condition, malnutrition, roofless shelter, unhygienic living area, make this ten crores of children become permanent evil of this so

called modern society. Increased trend of market economy and highly decentralised nature of industries are bound to increase child labour in coming days. Major countries have no comprehensive law to ban employment of child labour. Even the countries, which have some law, never care to enforce in practice. The phenomenon is now not restricted to developing countries only. It is in rapid increase throughout developed countries as sophisticated and computer based technologies demand more and more tiny parts and accessories for which young women and child labours are found most suitable and economical. Principal motivation for production is profit at cheaper production cost at any cost. This is much advertised culture of capitalist mode of production. There is hardly any scope or chance to alleviate this evil in near future in the capitalist system. This is one of the worst social vice in this century.

Our special responsibility should always begin with protection of children. Inhuman torture, neglect and slave like treatment is bound to create total apathy to social order and value system among this ten crores of children world over. Naturally, ILO's first priority should be the protection of children. They are the most promising future of a country. A large number of aimless, illiterate, illhealth, exploited children only can multiply social worry.

Another important problem is women workers in developing countries. Most of them work in agricultural sector, unorganised sectors, assembly line, manufacture of small electronic parts. Unequal wage, long working hours and poor organisational capacity make them slaves. They become permanently unfit for any work other than assembly line or microchips production. Ms. Nelson Nicco of Denmark reported that unskilled female workers employed for microchips production developed low back pain within 12 months of work. As high as 41% to 63% of them continue to suffer after a year of service till culminate to Musculoskeletal health problem with no scope left for permanent recovery. These women workers at the age of 25 to 40 become crippled permanently. Management or Government do not consider those musculoskeletal problems as occupational diseases and never refer to workmen's compensation court. Irony of the fate is either to stay at home with family or find any unethical way of livelihood.

Off shoot of massive technological development and use of chemical formulations push up rate of ill health vis-a-vis occupational diseases. But often it become extremely difficult to differentiate between natural health problem to occupational health problem. Professor Tanaka of Japan categorically pointed

about relevance of threshold limit value (TLV) of various toxic substances. Toxicity of thousands of substances and its safe limit on human beings are marked by its TLV value. This determination of TLV mainly depends on application of particular substance on animal and on some assumptions. These methods have no relevance on human beings who are exposed to those toxic substances specially in developing countries with malnutrition and poverty. Even TLV varies considerably in tropical and sub-tropical countries. Determination of TLV with reference to its climate, standard of living, food habit, working hours etc are very important. Any kind of moral, organisational or legal relief is possible if accepted parameters are scientifically determined.

Another area of concern is construction workers. Delegate from CGT (France) emphasised on alarming health problem among construction workers. Apart from high rate of injury and death, 70% of construction workers suffer from back pain or lumber pain. A sample study by CGT revealed this vital information about physical disorder among construction workers. Speakers after speaker expressed their concern on developing countries. In spite of all well wish and noble objective to improve occupational health and safety, the hard reality is otherwise. No country is now able to improve its lot independently. The limitation of the capitalist system to ensure meaningful safety in workplace and the society was also exposed in the deliberations.

Mr Potgeter Inn of South Africa expressed that important issue of South Africa is poverty. In spite of all well wishes, question of safety and environment compels to fix next priority. South Africa is not facing the problem from inside only. Radioactive material dumping, disposal of dangerous wastes in and around S A are continuous threats on health and environment. All international trade is linked with international aid. Transfer of technology and industrialisation grossly depends on policy of developed countries. Naturally, problems of developing countries are linked with macro economic-political policy of developed countries. No country like South Africa can take any independent decision on macro economic, safety or environmental issues. Even issue of child labour, S A is unable to solve due to extreme poverty. No amount of legal pressure can refrain these little children to accept any job for a piece of bread or banana. Similar opinion was also expressed by Mr Aruna Aslam of Malaysia.

With growing attack of MNC and developed countries, some of the developing countries lost any hope for massive industrialisation in distant future. Mr Rahaman of Bangladesh alleged that IMF even directly intervenes on increase of wages. Workers can

organise themselves, form trade unions, unite trade unions, fight for better wage and safety—reach an agreement but can not implement in practice. IMF conditionalities lead the employers not to implement wage agreement in general. Legal protection is also very weak which mainly came from the days of British rule. There is practically no scope of bargain in labour front. This poor nation is constant victim of IMF-MNC exploitation, loan conditionalities, natural calamity and selling centre of MNC products.

Lot of technical discussions exposed diversified nature of problems on occupational safety and health. For obvious reason, major thrust area was generation of public concern or building public opinion to compel entrepreneur government—decision makers fixing priority on safety and health along with development strategies. In spite of all shortcomings and limitation on philosophical approach towards mode of development strategy and control over productive forces, the congress could amply draw attention on mounting significance of health and safety for future world where developing countries are the worst sufferers.

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[From page 11]

and state political developments. The report analysed the organisational strength and weakness of the federation and called for joining the struggle for minimum wage workers at all India level. Several delegates including women participated in the discussion. Later Com. Md. Dastagir replied to the discussions and the report was adopted by the conference.

Com. V J K Nair, General Secretary, Karnataka State Committee of CITU explained in detail the background of struggle of the unorganised workers being planned culminating in July 14th all India strike. He stressed the need for beedi workers to launch the struggle for need based minimum wages.

The conference adopted resolution demanding Rs 40/- per thousand beedies rolled as basic wages and 5 paise per point per day as VDA over and above 967 points Karnataka State Average Index (1960 Base). The Resolution also demanded payment of Rs 25/- per day as guaranteed wage on every day a worker reported for work and work was not assigned to him/her. The conference also demanded abolition of contract system in beedi and welcomed the decision to hold All India Beedi Workers Conference at Cannanore in November 1993.

The conference elected a 18 member state committee with Com. V J K Nair and Com. K Shankar as president and general secretary respectively. A colourful procession followed by a public meeting held at Bharat Maidan addressed by the leaders marked the end of the conference. ■

# A GLIMPSE OF PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE

*Saroj Chaudhury*

Ever since the Narasimha Rao government was installed in mid 1991, a well orchestrated campaign of calumny against the public sector, public ownership and parliamentary control has been rising in a crescendo. This is being spearheaded by Central Ministers, most notably the Finance Minister and has been carried to foreign countries as well contrary to norms. That public sector is wasteful, inefficient, slow, flabby and, in some cases, corrupt is the common refrain. Taking from the ministers, the main-line dailies have joined the chorus. Consequently, the news about achievements of public undertakings in the sphere of production, export, energy conservation, sales etc are being tucked away into small items inside so as not to attract much attention.

Despite the continuing canard, the public sector continues not only to be the biggest stable source of employment, but also goes on adding to national production and exports.

The following are just a few instances called out of recent press reports which throw interesting light.

## 1) IRCON'S RECORD TURNOVER

The public sector Indian Railway Construction company reported an all-time high turnover of Rs.317.66 crore in 1991-92 showing an increase of 29 per cent over the previous year's figure. It earned a pre-day profit of 11.98 crore and had been earning profits for the last 15 years in succession. The company is diversifying into new areas of construction, such as, hangers, highways, flyovers, industrial buildings etc.. During 1991-92, IRCON won contracts in Indonesia, Turkey and Bangla Desh.

The IRCON paid dividend of Rs.49.35 lakhs for 1991-92 which brings cumulative contribution by way of dividend to Rs.7.97 crore against a paid-up share capital of Rs.4.85 crore.

## 2) DLW'S PERFORMANCE

Varanasi-based Diesel Locomotive Works, a production unit of Indian railways, created a record by producing 151 locomotives against a rated capacity of 140. A record output of 168 engine blocks had been achieved. In the sphere of spare parts manufacture too new records have been set up. A release issued by the management stated: "The fact ...no locomotive is held up on the Indian Railways for want of

spare parts is an additional feather in DLW'S cap"

## 3) BEML : 14 PC RISE IN SALES TURNOVER.

Despite adverse market conditions, recessionary pressure, low availability of funds and government's withdrawal of funds from core sector, the Bharat Earth Movers Ltd achieved a sales turnover of Rs.915 crore during 1992-93 which is 14 pc higher than the sales of the previous year. The value of production recorded a jump of Rs.110 crore. The exports of BEML also bettered its last year's record. The company has launched a diversification plan on a big sale.

## 4) BURN STANDARD ACHIEVES NEW PEAK.

The public sector Burn Standard Co Ltd alongwith its subsidiaries Bharat Brakes and Valves and Reyrolle Burn Ltd has recorded highest production in 1992-93, an increase of Rs.31crore worth of production over the previous year.

## 5) BHILAI STEEL PLANT SURGES AHEAD.

The Bhilai Steel Plant during 1992-93 set up several new records in production, energy conservation and captive power generation.

During 1992-93, the BSP achieved highest labour productivity - 116 tonnes of crude steel per man-year. Hot metal production exceeded for the first time the four million tonne mark. In crude steel production and saleable steel production the plant achieved 99 per cent capacity utilisation. Captive power generation at 92 MW represented a plant load factor of 83.5 per cent.

## 6) ROURKELA STEEL PLANT'S RECORD.

Hot metal and ingot steel reached 95 pc of the annual production plan. RSP produced 94,285 tonnes of pipes and 36,090 tonnes of CRNO sheets which were the best ever. Energy conservation rates were the best too. The consumption of costly petro fuels was brought down by 17

## 7) CCL IMPROVES FURTHER.

Central Coal Fields Ltd (CCL) a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd achieved an estimated turnover of Rs.1,460 crore in 1992-93 showing an increase of Rs.220 crore over that of last year. The company surpassed its target of production of raw coal. It expects to improve upon its profits of Rs.35 crore of the previous year.

## 8) NALCO ACHIEVES RECORD PRODUCTION.

The National Aluminium Co Ltd achieved a landmark in alumina production by attaining the rated capacity of 800,000 tonnes in the current financial year for the first time since its inception. Almost 50 per cent of production is earmarked for export.

## 9) BOKARO STEEL FULFILLS TARGET.

Bokaro Steel Plant ended its financial year 1992-93 fulfilling targets with growth in all major areas. It produced 3.856 million tonnes of hot metal with 104 per cent target fulfillment and production of saleable steel exceeded target by 10 per cent.

## 10) HINDUSTAN ZINC ADVANCES.

Hindustan Zinc Ltd is poised to attain self sufficiency in the production of Zinc in 1993-94 with an estimated foreign exchange earning of Rs.450 crore. Zinc consumption in India has grown from 60,000 tonnes in 1960-61 to 140,000 tonnes.

### STRUGGLE OF WORKING WOMEN:

## Tamilnadu Politics and Arbitrary Attitude of Ministers.

In Tamilnadu we expected that the AIADMK party after coming to the power, will grant all the concessions to the ICDS staff. There are 32 lady MLAs. The Social Welfare Minister and the Chief Minister too are lady members. Therefore, we proudly hoped that there would be a better brighter future for us. but quite against the thoughts things were done adversely. We invited Chief Minister for our State conference taken place on 28.12.91 at Madras. Chief Minister had agreed to participate on condition that the invitation should bear the photograph of her and her nominees only be invited to participate. Hoping to fulfil the expectations of the employees we agreed for all the stipulations. On that occasion the Chief Minister had agreed to concede the following four vital demands.

1) There will be no compulsion for the family planning work.

2) There will be no two fold penal payment.

3) Withdrawal of suspension orders issued by the former DMK Government against Association leaders M Palaninathan and Ramamurthy.

4) Pongal gift Rs 500/- (Five hundred only)

All the 25,000 employees assembled there were

rejoiced.

But, the Chief Minister had not done even one among the above four. Hence at state capital Madras on 25.5.92, the Noon Meal Employees squatted in thousands called besiege demonstration. This in fact the attention of the Government but 15.9.92 the 'Fillin Prison' agitation in which large number of employees particularly about 60,000 women participated and the Government feared at our strength, declared two days holidays in a week, enhanced the pay of Rs 100/- Rs 50/- to organiser/helper.

But the Minister had a thought to take vengeance against us. The Social Welfare Minister made surprise visits and suspended 86 anganwadi workers in Madras city alone. On agitations against this total suspension, they were reinstated.

On the eve of the budget session, our association appealed for permission to discuss our charter of demands. The office bearers were permitted to discuss on 4.3.93 with social welfare minister. After the meeting was over, the next day the vice president of the association Rajeswari Murugesan was compelled to stay in the state capital for urgent association business.

The social welfare minister proceeded to Coimbatore on 5.3.93, made surprise visit to the Centre of Rajeswari Murugesan and suspended her on flimsy grounds.

The following are the predominant allegations. The portrait of the present Chief Minister and former Chief Minister MGR were not hung in the centre. The union members were agitated, a massive crowd of 2000 employees demonstrated on 12.3.93 in front of collectorate, Coimbatore shouting against the suspension of the state vice president Rajeswari Murugesan.

This is how the Tamilnadu Ministers bent upon to suppress the association out of sheer vengeance in conducting themselves.

### Editorial Board

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# AIRF Strike Ballot by July end for Indefinite General Strike in September 1993

The AIRF Working Committee which met at Indore on 4th and 5th May 1993 has called upon the railwaymen to prepare themselves for an indefinite general strike in September 1993. The exact date shall be announced by the Working Committee in its meeting to be held on 4th and 5th August 1993 in Mathura. The Working Committee has further directed the affiliated unions to take strike ballot, to be completed by 31st July 1993 and make total mobilisation of the railwaymen for indefinite general strike in September 1993.

The resolution adopted in the Working Committee meeting states: "After reviewing the situation the meeting concluded that in spite of all out efforts for negotiated settlement on pending demands there has been no progress in the matter of settlement of any major pending demands. The negotiating machinery has been rendered thoroughly in effective".

The resolution further states that the Working Committee is of considered view that the Government has been totally in different towards the long pending and justified demands of railwaymen and the central Government employees and have deliberately and will-fully floated all settled norms which were agreed between the Government of India and organisations of Central Government employees regarding settlement of demands etc.

The Working Committee has directed the general secretary to take all necessary steps for broad based unity for wider mobilisation of all the employees in central government services.

The charter of demand appended to the resolution includes 21 demands. Among the major demands are 20% ad hoc increase in wages pending appointment of wage review body, treatment of Dearness Allowance as Dearness Pay, 8 hour working day and 48 hours week, stop closure of stations, yards, carriage examination points, goods sheds, etc stop surrender of posts and fill up all vacancies, decanalise the casual workers, stop off loading of jobs repeal Article 311 (2) (b) of the Constitution and Rule

14(ii) of DA Rules 301 RI, etc.

## AIREC CAMPAIGNS IN FAVOUR OF BHARAT BANDH

The AIREC is carrying on intensive campaign to impress upon the railway workers the importance of joining the Bharat Bandh and Industrial on 9th Sept 1993 against the IMF dictated economic policies of the Govt as declared from the joint convention of central trade unions, and the various organisations of Kisans, agricultural workers, youth, students, women, cultural workers intellectuals etc, which was held in Delhi on 15th April 1993. Both AIRF and AIREC were participants of this convention.

As per decision of the central working committee of AIREC meetings of division level activists were held in most of the divisions of Indian Railways on 21st April. The purpose of these meetings was to prepare the union functionaries and activists to effectively carry on campaign among railwaymen in favour of joining the industrial strike and Bharat Bandh on the 9th Sept.

On May 7, zone level demonstrations or dharnas were held at the headquarters of zonal railways. At Fairlie Place in Calcutta which is the Zonal Headquarters of Eastern Railway and Garden Reach which is the Zonal Head Quarters of Southern Railway, several hundred railwaymen participated in demonstration. While the demonstrations were held to press the unattended demands of railwaymen, the leaders of the organisation explained how the attacks on railwaymen's job and their standard of life, the refusal of the Govt to concede railwaymen's demands are all directly related to the IMF dictated economic policies of the Government and spoke about the importance of railway workers joining the industrial strike and bandh in September. They explained the need for unity among the railway trade unions to effectively fight the anti-labour and anti-people economic policies of the Govt, unity is particularly required for ensuring participation of rail workers in

the ensuing strike and bandh. Samar Mukherjee, M P, Vice President CITU addressed the demonstrating South Eastern Railway workers at Garden Reach.

### AIREC ADDRESSES AIRF FOR JOINING 9TH SEPTEMBER STRIKE

The Secretary General of AIREC N S Bhangoo has addressed a letter to J P Choubay the General Secretary of AIRF regarding the participation of railwaymen in 9th September industrial and Bharat Bandh. Describing the 15th April convention of trade unions and the organisations of various other sections of people as a "step further in the united struggle...." Bhangoo pointed out that though Govt employees are worst hit by the Govt policies, "we could not actively participate in the united struggle of the working class in the last two strikes." No explanation for this non-participation "can convince the struggling people after joint decision was taken for struggle." Stating that "in the wake of these disastrous policies not even a single economic or basic demand of railwaymen is settled and JCM Forum is simply used to thwart the struggle of the workers and not to settle the demands" Bhangoo proposes that the organisation of railwaymen and other CG employees "should meet and discuss to actively participate in programme of National Convention of mass organisations which is culminating into industrial strike and Bharat Bandh on 9th September 1993". In conclusion Bhangoo has requested the AIRF General Secretary to convene such a meeting.

### RAILWAY TRADE UNIONS FROM ABROAD REPRESENTS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF VICTIMISATION OF INDIAN LOCOMEN AND OTHER RAILWAYMEN

In a letter addressed to Shri P V Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF), Britain urged upon the Govt of India to reinstate the 455 railway employees who had been dismissed in 1981 for taking part in the legitimate trade union activities.

At the initiative of Trade Union International (Transport) workers Asia-Pacific Regional Office, the Lankan Independent Railway Workers Union also represented for the withdrawal of victimisation.

### Jute Workers of West Bengal are on the path of Struggle

The jute workers of West Bengal are once preparing themselves to fight back mill managements vicious attack to snatch away the workers hard earned rights and gains which they have achieved through long struggle. In the last 52nd annual conference of BCMU unanimous decision was taken by the delegates, represents 59 jute mills of West Bengal to combat the onslaughts perpetrated by the jute mill employers and their association—IJMA and other mill managements sare drastically reducing the workforce in all the mills under various pretexts violating the 1992 Tripartite Agreements. Provident Fund of about Rs 100 crores and ESI contribution deducted from the workmens pay packets are not deposited to the appropriate authorities. Gratuity and the arrear bonus of several of several crores are not being to the workers concerned and thus depriving the workers of their legal benefits. Nearly Rs 200 crores of above said amounts are being utilised as their 'working capital' to run the mills and thus creating panic and resentment among the workers that the mills may go for closure or lockout any time. In some jute mills of Howrah Districts the workers are being paid less wages than the industrywise tripartite agreements/settlements. 7-mills, namely: 1) Budge Budge Jute Mill (2) Anglo-India Jute Mill (3) Bally Jute Mill No.1 and (4) Fort William Jute Mills of Howrah District (5) Ganges Jute Mill of Bansberia, Hooghly Dist(6) Caledonion Jute Mill of Budge Budge are and (7) Hukumchand Jute Mills of North 24-Parganas have already gone on lockout and due to this nearly 45000 workers rendered jobless. Workers protest and anger are simmering very fast all over the industry to fight against the trecherous design of the mill owners and their association-IJMA.

On the other the employers are playing game by putting a derogatory terms as a precondition to reopen the mill factory, just to frustrate and the gains so long earned by the workers through long drawn struggles and strike etc.

On 28th April, 1993 the workers organised a massive demonstration and mass deputation in every mills and submitted a memorandum of 11-point demands to the mill management and as well as to the IJMA. Campaign and preparations are going on, if normalcy and congenial atmosphere is not created in the industry by the mill owners then the workers will be forced to launch a greater trade union movements at a suitable time.

## CITU/CTUC WORKSHOP ON TRADE UNION EDUCATION

A workshop on Trade Union Education was organised on 27-28 March 1993 at New Delhi, jointly by CITU and commonwealth trade union council which was participated by 15 trade union leaders from different parts of the country, including Three Working women leaders.

The workshop was held in National Labour Institute and inaugurated by Com. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU. In his inaugural speech Com Pandhe stated that the need for trade union education cannot be overestimated, and should be given top priority, if we are to strengthen the TU movement in real sense of the term. He also stressed for the need of updating the education curriculum to include the subjects and issues coming up with greater relevance in the fast changing scenario. The trade union education programme should be directed towards enabling the working class movement not only to fight for its own cause but also to discharge its class duty to organise and lead the whole population for emancipation from exploitation, Com. Pandhe emphasised in particular.

Arthur Jhonston, the CTUC project co-ordinator explained the CTUC'S approach on TU education programme and also detailed about the CTUC'S planning on joint work with the trade unions in India on TU education. He appreciated the CITU'S initiative in organising the workshop for furthering the cause of TU education.

The two day workshop dealt on different aspects of TU education in India including its methodology. Representatives from different states representing different cross section of industrial workforce and service sector employees

deliberated on the priority areas where education programme is to be undertaken and also the subjects to be taken up for education programme. It has been identified in particular that in view of the already visible fall out of the disastrous economic and industrial policy of the Govt. deeper understanding has to be created among the Common Workers regarding the real face of the policies of the govt. In view of the desperate campaign of the ruling class through the media and other means to glorify capitalism and market economy counter offensive of campaign also to be engineered by the trade union movement to identify and popularise seal alternative before the class and the people, in the background of deepening crisis of capitalism. The trade union education programme should be designed with all these objectives in mind, as stated by the participants in the workshop.

It was also identified by the participants that low level of literacy among the workers particularly in the unorganised sector is also posing a serious problem in uplifting the consciousness of the concerned movement. Hence literacy campaign in the unorganised sector also should form the integral part of our education programme.

Organising trade union education programmes among the working women and also among the workers of unorganised sectors at regional \state level have been identified as priority in the workshop. The need for organising sperate educator-training programme, keeping these priorities in mind has been identified as a task to be undertaken by joint initiative of CITU & CTUC.

### CITU Calls for United Trade Union Action against Conditionalities On Wage Negotiations Imposed by the Govt.

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions(CITU) has issued the following statement to the press:

The CITU has noted with deep anguish that the circular issued by the Department of Public Enterprises(DPE) setting guidelines for wage negotiations in public sector enterprises are so designed that practically no meaningful negotiations, leading to any acceptable settlement, can be carried out within these guidelines.

The point that there shall be no increase in labour cost per unit of output **MAKES THE DUE** due wage revision something impossible. The proposal to expand the tenure of settlements from original 3 years to 5 years is aimed at suppressing wages for two years which is just not acceptable to the workers. Further a signal has been given to the managements to go for even unitwise negotiations which would create lot of anomalies and disuniformity in pay and

other service conditions even within same industry. This is nothing but doing away of age old practice of industrywise negotiations. In view of the fact that product mix of a public sector units and their locations have been fixed on the perspective of overall industrialisation and not on unit wise profit orientation, the argument of holding negotiations purely on economic performance is not logistic. In real sense, if the guidelines are implemented all the conditionalities together will snatch the very right of collective bargaining from a sizeable number of public sector workers.

The CITU rejects the anti-worker guidelines outright and requests the Govt to review the same so that effective and fruitful wage negotiations can be started immediately. It further calls upon the public sector workers irrespective of affiliations to prepare for a resolute united movement to demand the right to collective bargaining.

# One Lakh Workers March in Bombay Against Economic Policies & Communalism

*Ashok Dhawale*

The city of Bombay, which was lashed by communal riots and bomb blasts over the last four months, took a major step forward on April 8 to retrieve its old and glorious working class traditions. On that day, over one lakh workers and employees under the banner of the Trade Unions Joint Action Committee (TUJAC) led a massive and determined march to the Maharashtra State Assembly in Bombay. It was by far the largest working class demonstration in the city in recent years, with dailies like the "Indian Express" even estimating its size as being two lakh strong.

## ISSUES AND DEMANDS

In the April 8 march, the working class voiced its unbending opposition to the Fund-Bank dictated new economic and industrial policies of the Narasimha Rao Government that threaten national

sovereignty, and also to the fascist conspiracies of the communal and fundamentalist forces that threaten national unity. Significantly, the demonstration came on the heels of the meeting of the National Development Council (NDC) which, under the fraudulent guise of the so-called "austerity measures", had proposed a freeze on wages, dearness allowance (DA) and bonus and the rapacious new "pension scheme" that cuts into the provident fund contribution of the workers. It also came in the wake of the new Industrial Relations Bill now introduced by the Central Government in Parliament that seeks to implement the Exit Policy and to launch unprecedented attacks on the democratic rights of the working class. The April 8 March vowed to repulse these attacks on the workers' livelihood by fighting them tooth and nail.

The trade union organisations that jointly organised this march were the Kamgar Aghadi, CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMKP, UTUC, State Government Employees Confederation, Sarva Shramik Sangh, and unions of workers and employees in railways, banks, insurance, as well as university, college, secondary and primary school teachers. This demonstration was a follow-up of the trade union workshop for communal harmony held on January 30 and the mass working class rally held at the Nardulla Tank Maidan in Bombay on February 24, at which the call for this march was given.

Although the major mobilisation for the April 8 march was from Bombay, contingents of workers

and employees had also come from other districts of Maharashtra like Thane, Raigad, Pune, Nasik, Aurangabad and so on, and this included significant mobilisation of the CITU. All CITU centres in Bombay, viz. Bhandup, Andheri, Sion and Dadar had put in their full strength, mobilising several thousand workers with the CITU's red flags and banners. Thousands of posters and leaflets had been printed by the CITU and by other trade unions, and factory gate-meetings taken for a fortnight to ensure maximum mobilisation. Apart from the working class, middle-class employees also participated in a big way.

On April 7, the previous day, a TUJAC delegation had met the Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Sharad Pawar and had submitted a detailed memorandum outlining the major demands. After an hour-long discussion, the Chief Minister assured the delegation that he would hold a comprehensive discussion with TUJAC leaders next week to consider the demands that lay under the purview of the State Government.

The major demands of the April 8 demonstration were as follows:-

Scrapping of the move to freeze wages, DA and bonus, cancellation of the new proposed Employees Pension Scheme (EPS) which eats into the provident fund, scrapping of the New Industrial Relations Bill that gives a free hand for massive lay-offs, retrenchment and the Exit Policy, reversal of the policy of privatisation of the public sector, a curb on ultramodernisation and automation, immediate steps to restart closed mills and factories which number over 20,000 in Maharashtra, repeal of the D.C. rules that give permission to mill-owners to sell off their land, curb in rising prices and release of DA installment to State Government employees, abolition of the contract system and protection to contract workers, implementation of minimum wage in both industrial and agricultural sectors linked to the price index, inclusion of right to work as a fundamental right and unemployment allowance to the jobless, and repeal of the anti-democratic Maharashtra Universities Bill that seeks to further privatise education. The memorandum also calls upon the Government to take stringent steps against communal and divisive forces.

## CALL FOR STRUGGLE

The April 8 march which began in the evening

from Azad Maidan took over one hour to pass any one point and disrupted all traffic in the city's commercial centre of South Bombay for several hours. Giving full-throated slogans condemning central and State Government policies and against the communal danger, and carrying thousands of red flags and banners, the march reached the Samrat Hotel outside Mantralaya (Secretariat) where it was converted into a huge public meeting, the end of which almost reached the Churchgate Railway terminus.

The public meeting that culminated the demonstration was presided over by State Government Employees Confederation leader R G Karnik, and after the introductory speech by CITU State General Secretary K L Bajaj, it was addressed by CITU State President Prabhakar Sanzgiri, AITUC State General Secretary G V Chitnis, Kamgar Aghadi President Dr. Datta Samant, Sharad Rao (HMKP), Chandrakant Desai (HMS), Jaywant Chavan (SSS), Prof. K K Theekedath (MFUCTO), Suresh Dhopeswarkar (AIBEA), and Vijay Ganacharya (LIC/GIC union).

The speakers lashed out at various aspects of the new economic policies and their deleterious effects on all sections of the working people as well as on national sovereignty. They castigated the communal cancer in the form of the Sangh Parivar and the Shiv Sena which were disrupting the unity of the working people in the struggle against the Narasimha Rao Government and its policies of surrender to imperialism. They called upon the working class to defeat both these enemies, and for this to enlist the support of the peasantry and agricultural workers. They hailed the resounding victory of the left front in the Tripura assembly elections. And finally, they called upon the gathering to make the two major events in Delhi on April 14 and 15—one against communalism and for national unity and the other against the economic policies and for national sovereignty—a resounding success so that the nationwide battle of the working people of India against the exploiters can march on to victory.

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## CITU OPPOSES DA AND WAGE FREEZE

In response to an invitation, a four member CITU delegation was called for the meeting with Dy Chairman of Planning Commission, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, yesterday, the 26th April 1993. The meeting has been scheduled to discuss the set of austerity proposals recommended by Biju Patnaik panel which was endorsed by NDC. The proposal includes the freeze of DA and wages for a period of year and elimination of LTC and some other benefit hitherto been enjoyed by workers in both public and private sector and Government employees.

The CITU delegation while sharing the concern of planning commission about the growing fiscal imbalance in the state economies it has also expressed its grave concern at the general decline of economy as a whole. The delegation tried to impress upon the Planning Commission Deputy Chairman that if the Government really want to turn the corner it should agree to the need of effective involvement of people and mass organisations including trade unions in the planning process and its implementation. Accordingly, Central Govt should come out with effective proposals for such participation. The delegation has complained that in no level effective machineries for workers participation does exist. Few joint committees had been formed. But these could not function because of unhelpful attitude of the concerned ministries. Labour panel under Planning Commission does not function since decades.

The delegation consisted of M K Pandhe, General Secretary, Jibon Roy, Ranjit Basu and S Dev Roye. The delegation vehemently opposed the idea of imposing freeze on wages and DA in whatever form it may be, and withdrawal of any benefit hitherto being enjoyed by the workers.

The delegates suggested alternate areas for resource mobilisation. Instead of asking the salaried people for austerity, people in the higher income groups should be asked to sacrifice. Any sincere drive backed by firm political will in unearthing black money could constitute the biggest addition to support the development activities. Similarly, the delegation has suggested taxing of big agricultural firms and big landlords. At present the entire agriculture is left out of the tax structure. The delegation tried to impress further that decentralisation of planning process and through people's involvement many other new areas could be located for resource mobilisation. It has further impressed the necessity of formulating a national income policy. It has stated that CITU is not against austerity. But austerity should begin from the top level in the administration and from higher income groups.

The CITU delegation offered full cooperation to any purposeful move towards economic recovery. But at the same time any move towards freezing wages and other benefits of the workers would be resisted, the delegation asserted.

## Working Class Struggle all over the World

### Japan

Japanese working class are in the midst of grim struggle against the employers ruthless attempt to pass on the burden of recession on the workers. The monopoly bourgeoisie openly announced no rise in wage base and abolition of life long employment system. Simultaneous move was going on on the part of Japan's ruling class to re-orient labour legislation more in favour of the employer class. In such a background Japanese workers are rising into strike action in the 'Spring Labour Offensive'.

The workers of the Japan Railways West Trade Union (with membership of 4,300) and J R Tokai Trade Union(1,300) and J R Kyushu Trade Union(1300) staged 24 hour strike on 18th March and second round strike on 25th March against revision of working shift system of trainmen and for wage rise and better working condition. Besides strike action railway workers organised massive rallies in cities like Tokyo, Fukuoka, Miyazaki and Kyoto during March.

The Japanese Telecommunication workers under the leadership of Japan Telecommunication Workers Union responded massively in favour of strike action in a strike ballot where 97% workers voted for strike in the month of March.

On 24th March prefectural and municipal employees in Toyana staged 29 minute walk out and organised rally in the workshop. It was participated by over 10,000 workers. On the same day about 1400 workers of the Tokyo prefectural Liaison Council went in for strike demanding wage increase and protesting subcontracting of jobs.

On 17th March 1993 47 municipal employees' trade unions all over Japan organised massive rally as a part of their spring offensive struggle of 1993 and workers of 10 industrial federation went on strike. On the auspices of Japan Federation of medical workers unions, 2500 nurses in white uniform rallied in demonstration to the ministry of Labour in Tokyo.

On the same day 1000 taxi drivers alongwith their taxis paraded before transport and labour ministries demanding shorter working hours and better working conditions. The same day was also marked by massive strike by the metal workers and the industrial workers under the leadership of All Japan Metal and information machinery workers union and All Japan Transport and General Workers Union demanding wage hike and against so called

rationalisation of working condition.

On 21st March the city of Tokyo witnessed a massive rally of 20000 workers with slogan "Victory in the people's spring struggle" and "Get over the recession".

### Germany

Not even three years have passed since socialism got dismantled in East Germany and Germany got re-unified, the working class of East Germany started realising the pinch of capitalist restoration and consolidating themselves in struggle against falling living standards and discriminatory wage rates vis-a-vis their West German counterparts. The 40000 metal workers of East Germany launched continuous strike early this month demanding wage rise and parity in wages with West German workers.

Incidentally two years before East German employers entered into a pact with IG metal union to gradually raise the wage level of East German Workers to reach the wage level prevailing in West Germany by 1994. But in February last, the employers declared cancellation of the said pact of phasing in wage parity between the two parts unilaterally.

Against such unilateral denial to abide by the pact by the employer, 40000 metal workers of Eastern Germany started strike action from 4th May 1993. As the strike continued more and more industrial units in the metal industry started joining the strike action. On 14th May 1993 the IG Metal Union announced that further 15 plants besides the 90 plants already in strike action would join strike from 17th May 1993. In spite of all measures on the part of Govt to disrupt the struggle of the metal workers, the strike action was spreading.

In such a situation, as per latest report received employers had to start negotiation with 14 metal unions on 14th midnight which continued for seven hours and agreement was arrived at. Employers declared their commitment to earlier two year old agreement to phase in parity in wage level with West Germany by 1994 which led to immediate wage rise by more than 20% for the steel workers and 26% for other categories.

### Bangladesh

Three days strike by the industrial workers of

[Conte'd on page 24]

## OLIVER TAMBO PASSED AWAY

Oliver Tambo, the legendary figure of the African liberation struggle, the national chair person of African National Congress passed away at Johannesburg. A great pillar of the struggle of liberation, not only of the African people but also of the entire toilers of the world, during the post war period has fallen.

Com.Tambo's life is the living document of how an organisation like ANC got reoriented from a platform of petition, campaign and agitation to one engineering militant and organised assault on the apartheid system as a whole involving mass of the common people instead of addressing the elitist section of the African population and it is essentially through this process of reorientation of ANC activities under the leadership of Oliver Tambo, alongwith Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and others the South African people's struggles against Apartheidism and tyranny could come to the focus of the world events.

The emergence of few young leaders in the national movement of South Africa during the post second world war period with a new vision and approach of the struggle has acted as a motive force for such orientation. Oliver Tambo was one of them.

More words cannot assess the contribution of Com.Tambo to the liberation struggle of South Africa. Not only in giving a militant and mass orientation to the anti-apartheidism, in amassing and organising international support in favour of the struggle, Oliver Tambo played the most dominant role. And the role he played right from forming the ANC youth league in the forties to leading militant action of the African masses against the apartheid regime and opening missions of ANC in different countries to garner international support leading to virtual isolation of the apartheid regime all the world over.

The loss of Oliver Tambo is a irreparable loss not only to African liberation struggle but also to the struggle for democracy and against exploitation all over the world.

While mourning for the loss of such a stalwart of the liberation struggle, it is worth-remembering what Com.Nelson Mandela told at the funeral of his fellow-traveller.

"Oliver lived not because he could breathe.....He lived not because blood flowed through his veins.....he lived because he surrendered his very being to the people, he lived because his very being embodied love, an idea, a hope, an aspiration, a vision..... I say Oliver Tombo has not died, because the ideals for which he sacrificed his life can never

die.... I say Oliver Tambo has not died because there are many of us who became part of his soul and therefore willingly entered into a struggle with him for the victory of his cause..... While ANC lives, Oliver Tambo cannot die.....Let he or she who dares, stand up and tell us that it will happen that, while humanity survives, it will come to pass that Oliver Tambo will cease to be."

[From page 23]

Bangladesh demanding higher wages and better service condition ended on May 14, 1993. The strike was called by Shramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad(SKOP), a joint forum of eighteen central trade unions, which pushed the industrial sector of the country to a grinding halt. The last day of the strike was coincided with an eight hour long general strike by the opposition parties.

Bangladesh Government unleashed police attack to disrupt the united strike action by the working class of Bangladesh leaving few hundreds of workers severely injured.

This was the second round united strike action by Bangladesh workers within two months. Bangladesh has long been made the victim of IMF/ World Bank restructuring programme which deepened the economic crisis severely in the whole process and the workers were the most hard hit by the crisis.

Reports received so far revealed that the 3 days strike virtually paralysed the industrial activities throughout Bangladesh. Jute and Textile industries employing major section of the workforce were almost shut down and the road transport and tram service in Dhaka and adjoining districts were severely disrupted.

**Book Post**