



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

CALL OF CITU WORKING COMMITTEE

RAISE MASS STRUGGLES TO NEW HEIGHTS

P.K. GANGULY

The Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Bhilai from November 2 to 4 gave a clarion call to all mass organisations to raise the struggle against the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government to new heights and defeat both the reactionary forces led by the Congress (I) and the communal forces led by the BJP and ensure the success of the emerging left, democratic and secular forces in the forthcoming elections. The CITU and all other trade unions have to play a big role in this direction, said the report of the General Secretary after analysing the situation created by the reforms in four years in pursuance of the economic policies.

The meeting started after adopting a condolence resolution on the sudden demise of Com. Sudhir Mukherjee, the Chairman, Reception Committee, and other leaders of the Working Class movement, who died during the period. Com. Sambal Chakraborty, the President of the Reception Committee read out the welcome address.

E. Balanandan, in his Presidential address made an in-depth probe into the developing capitalist crisis in the world, which was manifested by rising unemployment, reduced GDP and growing social tension in all the advanced capitalist countries. There was an intensified trade war amongst them for capture of markets despite the GATT agreement and the formation of the WTO.

He pointed out that the capitalist planning and the mode of exploitation was changing according to the needs of the imperialist bourgeoisie with the deepening crisis in the system. With the structural adjustment programmes, coupled with the new technological innovations, the public sector was being dismantled and the organised sector squeezed, and the products were being off-loaded to the informal sector and the home-based units. The advantage

was that of low working capital, cheap labour and scuttling of all labour laws, social security and safety measures. This was a new mode of exploitation not only of the individual worker, but of the whole family and garnering huge profits by the monopolists. In American itself more than 45 per cent of the workforce were now in this sector.

This was becoming a feature in the world capitalist system with the philosophy of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation with the objective of establishing a new imperialist world order by transnationalising the world economy. The imperialist countries led by the USA were trying to integrate the working class in such a global system and exposing it to ruthless exploitation. Balanandan pointed out that we were growingly experiencing this aspect in our country too.

He highlighted the achievements of the left front Government of W. Bengal in agriculture, small scale sector and other spheres of economic activities, despite limited power of the states, which had become a model in the country in contrast to other states. Within the constraints of the Central Policy, he said, the left front government was trying for industrial regeneration utilising the limited opportunities available under the new environment. Concluding, he urged upon the working class to intensify united struggles and utilise the coming opportunity to dethrone the Congress (I) from power and defeat the designs of the BJP as well, and ensure victory of the left, democratic and secular forces in the election.

M.K. Pandhe placed the General Secretary's report. Analysing the economic policies, the report pointed to the doldrum that these policies had brought the Indian economy to. It referred to the retarded economic growth, growing debt burden and trade deficit, privatisation of public sector through disin-

vestments, falling rupee value, rising prices and growing unemployment. In referred to the corruptions and scandals that rocked the country. The report criticised the ordinance on pension scheme, the new DA formula, the amendment to Bonus Act, etc., which were far from satisfying the workers' demands.

It also briefed some of the notable struggles launched by the CITU independently and jointly and by other trade unions, like in IISCO, Telecom, Bank, Insurance, Cement, Textiles, Pharmaceuticals, Coal, Electricity, by Contract Workers, Unorganised Sector workers, etc. It also referred to the CITU's activities among working women, about the CITU-ILO Child Labor project, the celebrations of the 25th Anniversary of the CITU and efforts made to develop the Hindi speaking States. It briefed the growing international connections of the CITU. The report also reviewed the implementation of the report on organisation adopted by the CITU. It further informed the members about the possession of the land for BTR Memorial Trust and renewed the call for contribution of one day's wage by the workers. It put emphasis on increasing the membership of CITU to thirty lakhs by the end of the year.

The report at length emphasised on development of trade union unity and campaign for the formation of a confederation for further consolidation of trade union unity and united struggles.

Pandhe concluded with the call for the success of the programme of mass demonstrations called by the National Platform of Mass Organisations on 15th December all over the country.

Twenty-eight members participated in the discussion on the report. They briefed about the struggles launched in the states in various industries against the effects the economic policies. The struggles against privatisation, closures, reduction of workforce by VRS, price rise and unemployment were highlighted by the members. They also reported about struggles launched against the communal designs by the BJP in various states. The struggles including strike actions on economic demands were also highlighted by the members. The celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the CITU were further briefed by the members from all the states. A number of members also made valuable suggestions to enrich the report of the General Secretary. They explained their experience of trade union unity and expressed their confidence of giving it the shape of a confederation in the coming future. They demonstrated their preparedness for further intensification of the united struggles along with other mass organisations and

giving a rebuff to the Congress (I) and BJP in the coming elections.

Besides the General Secretary's report, there was a separate discussion on the pension scheme and the ordinance. A separate resolution was adopted reiterating the CITU's stand of pension as the third retirement benefit and seeking a number of amendments to improve the scheme.

After reply by M.K. Pandhe the report was adopted unanimously with the amendments.

Resolutions

The meeting first adopted the resolution endorsing the National Platform's call for mass demonstrations on 15th December. The other resolutions adopted were against the sell out of the Bailadila mines; on solidarity with Cuba; on amendment of the Bonus Act; endorsing the call of the Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers for the 12th December Jail Bharo programme at Delhi; on wage revision of Central Govt. employees and the Fifth Pay Commission; on Beijing Conference on Women; on Bhilai Steel Plant accident, on Bank employees' strike; on indefinite strike in Jute industry; on solidarity with Insurance employees' struggles; against privatisation of Shahpur Kandi Barrage Works of Punjab; on US-Pakistan Arms Deal and on Fishermens' struggle.

The working committee also responded to the appeal made by the WFTU to help the refugees and suffering people in Yugoslavia caused by the fratricidal war going on there. The appeal was made on behalf of the Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Yugoslavia. A donation amounting to over Rs.50,000/- were announced by the State Committees.

Cultural Programmes

The M.P. State Committee also organised progressive cultural programmes during all the three days of the meeting at night. The programmes were organised with the help and guidance of noted groups led by Pardeshi Ram Verma and Mumtaz, and performed by Jana Natya Manch of Raipur, DMC Team, Dev Das Banerje's Team, Usha Badle, Ashok's Team, etc.

Mass Rally

An impressive mass rally was held on 4th evening. Over five thousand workers from Bhilai and the adjoining areas marched past the streets of the Steel town, which culminated in a public meeting. The meeting was addressed among others by E. Balaraman, M.K. Pandhe, Samar Mukherjee, Sailendra Sastry and Sambal Chakraborty.

□

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

E. BALANANDAN

Comrades,

We are meeting in our Working Committee today five months after the General Council held at Howrah from 31st of May to 2nd of June, 1995. During this period after the Working Committee, many important events have taken place in the country which are dealt in detail by our General Secretary in his report. Therefore I only wish to take up certain issues to draw your attention.

Before I proceed further let us pay our respectful homage in memory of Com. Sudhir Mukherjee one of the important Trade Union leaders in Madhya Pradesh. He was the Chairman of the Reception Committee constituted for the hosting of this Working Committee. In the midst of the campaign for the successful holding of this Working Committee he suddenly fell ill and had to be hospitalised. He was on his way for attending the Reception Committee on July 4th. In spite of the best efforts of the doctors, he could not be saved and the fateful death embraced him on 26th September 1995. The loss of Com. Sudhir Mukherjee cannot easily be fulfilled by anybody. However we pledge ourselves to take up the unfinished jobs left over by him. Once again I pay our homage in the cherished memory of Com. Sudhir Mukherjee.

We have to express our strong protest against the murder of six coal mine workers at Dugdha Coal Washery under the Bharat Coking Coal Corporation (BCCL) on 21st August 1995. The workers were observing dharna as part of the one day coal workers' strike. A contractor's truck overrun them killing six on the spot and seriously injuring ten others. The company should take proper steps against these murders and see that the guilty are punished without delay. We pay our respectful homage in the memory of the six comrades who were killed at Dugdha.

Another calamity happened in the Gaslitand coal mines wherein 77 workers have been drowned in water in the coal pit. The Coal India's negligence to keep the safety mechanism properly was the cause for this human loss. The senior managers did not visit the coal field for many weeks and therefore they did not take any precautionary measures for the torrential rains which was flooding those areas. We

demand that an enquiry should be conducted in this disaster and the guilty should be punished. We pay our homage in the memory of the death of these workers and send our message of condolence to the bereaved families.

Comrades, Last time in our General Council at Howrah, we had a general review of the world economic developments. Though marginal changes have taken place in some countries, the slow growth and crisis of economy is still continuing. The problem of increasing unemployment is haunting every one of the developed countries. I do not wish to go through the same in detail. I am confining myself to certain issues only.

CUBA

In the last General Council we had elaborately discussed about Cuba and gave a call for contribution to the Cuban Solidarity fund. I warmly congratulate you for rising to the occasion and contributing generously to the cause.

In total disregard to the world opinion and the three consecutive resolutions of the UN General Assembly, the US has not only refused to lift its thirty three years of economic blockade against Cuba, but on the contrary passed the most retrograde Helms-Burton Bill, which has not only further tightened the economic blockade, but also is a direct attack on the sovereignty of Cuba and the rights of other countries to have free trade with Cuba. The Bill further sets a pre-condition to lift the blockade that Cuba should pay 150 billion dollars as compensation to the private undertakings which were taken over by the Cuban revolution. It is an audacious blackmail to force Cuba to give up socialism and embark upon the path of capitalism under the dictates of the USA. The heroic people of Cuba under the leadership of Com. Fidel Castro and inspired by the slogan of "Socialism or Death", have shun the US machinations and are carrying forward a relentless and grime struggle to defend their independence and socialism.

In this background, the Asia-Pacific Conference on Solidarity with Cuba held at Calcutta on September 22 to 24 acquired significance. The conference was attended to by Com. M.K. Pandhe and Com. Chittabrata Mazumdar from CITU. The conference

conveyed the message that the Cuban people are not alone. They have the support of the World Community, of all the democratic forces in the world. The conference has set further tasks for us. Their struggle has to be seen as the struggle of all the democratic and peace loving forces of the world against the forces of reaction led by the US imperialists. It is the bounden duty of the CITU therefore to extend active support to the struggle and also to continue to render material help. The Cuban Solidarity Conference gave a call for observing November 27 as the Cuban Solidarity Day, demanding withdrawal of the economic blockade by the USA. I appeal to all State Committees, Unions and Federations to observe the day in a befitting manner.

The Developing Capitalist Crisis

289 In their drive for hegemony and capture of world markets serious contradictions are developing amongst the advanced capitalist countries themselves as seen in the trade war within the G-7 countries themselves.

295 The trade balance of US with Japan has increased to 63 million Dollars which is mainly in the car trade. United States wanted Japan to buy their cars and they have threatened the invoking of Super 301 US law against Japan. A crisis situation has developed between Japan and United States in which other European powers were not supporting the United States. And finally, with maximum pressure, some kind of a temporary agreement has been arrived at. Still the relation between US and Japan is not friction free.

300 All this is happening despite the GATT agreement and formation of WTO after a seven year long struggle. In its mad drive for global control, the USA has come at the head of all conflicts trying to impose its own laws and dictates on others. Simultaneously, the military build up has taken the form of an escalating arms race and regional wars.

305 The crisis in the advanced capitalist countries under OECD that we analysed in the last meeting has further aggravated with more unemployment and less GDP in each of these countries. The most striking examples are being seen in the EEC countries and in America.

310 The World Bank itself in its World Development Report of 1995 has admitted the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes in terms of employment, wages of workers and creation of new jobs, despite development of ever new technologies.

315 The unemployment that is measured by the capitalist Governments, however tacitly curtails the real situations in those countries. According to ILO's World Labour Report, 1995, the partial or part time

workers that overwhelm the working force, the low income group, the underemployed and the under utilised skills among the workforce are not accounted for in the unemployment statistics. In the case of Japan the following quotation from an article published in the London Economist dated 14th October with the Title, A STRIPTEASE IN JAPAN prove this fact: "The official unemployment rate of 3.2% is the highest in 50 years, but still low compared to 5.6% in America. It is also a lie. A leaked government survey suggests the, counting people who want jobs but who are not registered as unemployed, Japan's unemployment rate was 8.9% in February 1994-higher than America's 8.8%, counted the same way. Since things have grown tougher over the past 18 months, one in ten Japanese may now be jobless."

"Japan needs to admit that its tradition of lifetime employment at big firms has failed to keep down joblessness. Middle-aged, male managers have stayed in work, but this is only because the young, the old, and female workers have done all the suffering. This is wasteful as well as unfair."

This unemployment, coupled with high rate of inflation, attack on trade union rights and growing closures have escalated the social tension in all the OECD countries.

Though the G-7 countries had two summit discussions on the question of employment, it had no perceptible effect on the question. It is again proposed to hold another meeting next year to consider the same problem. A report released in early September by the Economic Policy Institute of US highlighted the shrinking wages as the chief threat to economy in their study. It was found that the profit of companies are going up and the real wages of workers are declining. While the profit has increased averaged by 25%, the American workers are forced to work more for less wages. Today the wages of blue collar workers and white collar workers are below the rate of inflation. MediUm income for male workers has fallen from 11.98 dollars an hour to 11.24 dollars, a decrease of 6% between 1989-95. For male workers without a high school diploma wages dropped to 8.74 dollars an hour. While this is the average wage decrease as shown above, the wages of Black workers are further lower than stated above. The Economic and Political Weekly in a report published on September 23rd have given the following about the decrease in wages and income of the American workers which is quoted below:

"It has been repeatedly highlighted how the typical American family has been working more and earning less. Even as growing company profits have fuelled a stock market boom, corporations have

destroyed jobs, slashed employee benefits and reduced real earnings. Estimates suggest that inflation adjusted wages fell by 10.5 per cent between 1983 and 1993. Hourly earnings of temporary workers have been eroded in real terms by about one-fifth. Even women taking up jobs in increasing numbers and men picking up second jobs have not fully compensated for the general loss of earnings. Medium family income sank by \$1,300 between 1989 and 1993. But as middle-income wage earners get a beating, the average income of the richest one per cent of American families rose by a whopping 63 per cent in the 1980s. While corporate chiefs have slashed jobs and wages, their own average salary went through the roof \$1,54,000 a year in 1979 to \$4,29,000 in 1989."

It can be seen from the above that in the US though the profits of the capitalists are going up, worker's jobs are being eaten away and the number of people below the poverty line is on the increase. The Black families are the worst hit ones.

The following details given out by the "Washington State Labour Council" is illustrative:

"Real wages fell by 2.3 per cent between March 1994 and March 1995, while productivity increased by 2.3 per cent in 1994, 1.5 per cent in 1993 and more than 3 per cent in 1992.

The average American is now working more hours per year, about 160 hours more than in the late 1960s the equivalent of another full month of full-time work.

Since 1969, the number of vacation days, sick days and paid holidays for American workers have fallen by 15 per cent.

Nearly one-fifth-18 per cent -of US workers with full-time jobs have annual earnings below the official poverty level."

Without going to further details it can be seen that all the diseases like unemployment, underemployment, growth of poverty etc., which have been regarded as traditional phenomena largely affecting the developing countries so far, are growingly becoming the features in the developed countries as well. The resultant social tension can be seen from the massive strike struggles by different sections of the working people that swept across Germany, France, Italy, Britain, America, Canada, etc. during the period.

Comrades, I wish to invite your attention to the recent demonstration of one million Black men held in Washington on 16.10.95. The demonstration of Black people was led by Mr. Louis Farrakhan, who is said to be a Muslim Black extremist. But the reason for such a demonstration by the Black people shows

the present plight of American society. Today out of the 260 million population of United States 13% are the Black, that is 32.1 millions. For the development of America these black people brought from African continents centuries before have made big contribution. This is a fact recognised by everybody in the world. Even today the Blacks are living in separate ghettos (inner cities) and they are not getting proper education, health care, employment, equal wages etc. The Times of India in its editorial on 18.10.95 said the following among other things:

"One in three blackmen in their 20s are either in jail, or on parole or probation. Unemployment and poverty rates for blackmen are two and three times higher than white men. While the blacks constitute 13 per cent of regular drug users, they account for 35 per cent of the drug arrests and 74 per cent of drug related prison sentences. This explains the widespread support to the 'million-man march' called by the extremist leader Mr. Louis Farrakhan."

The American society which is supposed to be the model for capitalism where the Black populations do not get the minimum human treatment, they are discriminated in every field by White man supremacy. Even in law and justice they do not get equal treatment.

INFORMAL SECTOR

Comrades, I wish to draw your attention to the changing scenario in the informal sector. Since all these years in our struggle against capitalist exploitation, we have been stressing on the organised sector of industries and the public sector, and we have led very many struggles of these workers. The capitalist planning and the mode of exploitation however, is changing according to the needs of the imperialist bourgeoisie with the deepening crisis in the system. The capitalist development strategies were largely oriented towards modern large scale industries. The informal sector was largely ignored. But now the informal sector has ceased to be the earlier small scale sector existing on the fringes of its parent, the robust organised sector. It is now threatening the very existence of the parent. With the structural adjustment programmes, coupled with the new technological innovations, the organised sector and the public sector are being squeezed and the products are off-loaded to the informal sector and the homebased units, to the families for manufacturing. The home based units consist largely of women and children. You will be surprised to note that more than 45% of the American work force is in this sector. This trend is now being growingly exported to the developing countries. The advantage is that of low working capital, cheap labour and scuttling of all labour

laws, social security and safety measures.

This is a new mode of exploitation of not only the individual worker, but of the whole family and garnering huge profits by the monopolists. The composition of the working class is also changing thereby. While the squeezed high-tech organised sector consists of largely reduced number of highly skilled white collar workers and technicians, the classical blue collar proletariat is crowding over the informal sector with poverty level wages and deprived of labour laws and social security measures. The sustenance of the capitalist system is largely from this change in the mode of production. No wonder that ILO finds it difficult to collect data regarding the number of work force, their employments, wages and so on.

Comrades, you will see that the philosophy of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation with the objective of establishing a new imperialist world order by transnationalising the world economy has got its effect on the working class. This is fast becoming a feature in the world capitalist system, trying to integrate the working class in such global system and expose it to ruthless exploitation. You have to consider this aspect seriously and evolve strategies to counter it, because we are growingly experiencing this aspect in our country too. While our workers in the organised sector, have to take the leading role in waging struggles against such structural adjustment programmes, we must work more systematically to organise the workers in the unorganised sector and bring them in the common struggle, which will give a new turn to the trade union movement in the country.

SOCIAL EMERGENCY FUND

Let me bring to your notice as a so called precautionary measure which is being taken against the recurrence of MEXICO type crisis by the G-7 countries. They have decided to set up a 50 Billion dollar "Special Emergency Fund," under IMF auspices. It shows that they are not confident and that the crisis like Mexico will not be repeated rather they are expecting many more of the type. Though decided to raise the so called Fund, its 'modus operandi' is yet to be finalised and the contribution of each partners.

From the above, it is evident that the claim is made by the biggest capitalist power, United States, that they will be able to build a sustainable system in the name of "a new world order" under capitalism, claiming that socialism is dead and it has no validity hereafter. But the experience of life shows without doubt that crisis-free capitalism is a pipe-dream and capitalism world over is faced with serious crisis as shown above which can only be resolved by changing the system.

FRENCH NUCLEAR TEST

A reference is to be made here that while tall talks of non-proliferation treaty by U.S. are on, France has decided to conduct nuclear tests which was strongly contested by Japan and Canada. However, the French went ahead with three nuclear tests inviting vocal protests from many areas of the world especially from Australia, and New Zealand which caused dissensions among the western partners, which shows that in the case of imperialist powers they go their way individually inspite of the so-called consultations and alliances they are supposed to follow.

I do not wish to deal with the US military presence, in various parts of the world. Their continuing suppression of Iraq in the name of UN sanctions, continuing threat against Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, etc., and their keeping up of their high military expenditure inspite of the serious economic difficulties being faced by them point to their designs of global dominance with military threat.

NATIONAL SCENE

Before going to refer certain issues on the national scene I must bring to your notice that by revoking the Pressler amendment the US have decided to resume military supplies to the Govt, of Pakistan. Naturally this will upset our defence balance with Pakistan and we will be forced to spend more on our defence. They have already declared the supply of sophisticated weapons worth 368 million dollars. This action of US has evoked big resentment in the country and a general demand is being made for the annulment of the Indo-US agreement on military and defence cooperation entered into between Mr. William Perry and the Minister for Defence, Mr. Mallikarjun on 12 of January 1995. In this agreement they have agreed for civilian to civilian and service to service contacts and cooperation in Defence research and production. When this issue came for discussion before the Parliament we from the Opposition strongly presented and criticised the Agreement but the Govt. strongly defended this by saying that it is part of the new relationship developing with the US and India in the so called "changed environment".

The Govt. did not take into consideration the hostile attitude of the United States in so many issues. We know that when conflicts arose between Pakistan and India, the US were always on the side of the fence. When we have tried to improve our technological and military capabilities, the US came in opposition to it and tried to scuttle it by various means.

Stopping Russia from supplying Cryogenic en-

gine is one example. We know that there was arrangement with US for the development of Low Combat Aircraft (LCA) which they did not honour. In the Kashmir issue they were always supporting Pakistan. They were also instigating the divisive forces inside the country which is also a known fact.

All these facts did not deter the Rao Govt from entering into defence "Cooperations" with the United States. However in the light of Mr. Hank Brown amendment to the Pressler law the US has already resumed military supplies to Pakistan as indicated already by me, which will definitely aggravate the Kashmir problem and belligerence of Pakistan. This attempt by the United States has to be seen in the light of their policy of "keeping under their thumb" the Asia Pacific Region in which they are out to rope in India too. Proper response against this is not yet coming forth from our spineless rulers since they are crawling before the IMF-World Bank overlords. However we should register our strong protest against this weak kneed policy and demand immediate scrapping of the said Indo-US Cooperation deal.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY OF WEST BENGAL

Comrades,

In the background of the New Economic and Industrial Policy of the Central Govt., the Left Front Govt. of West Bengal has declared a policy statement in regard to the industrial development of the state. The Congress and the Central Govt. have launched a campaign that while assailing the Central Policy, the State Govt is also following the same policy in the state. This campaign is being launched deliberately to confuse the people and the workers. Therefore, I would like to make a few observations to clarify the facts versus fiction.

To understand the situation, we must recall the attitude of the Central Congress Government over the years towards W.Bengal, the bastion of the left forces. A deliberate policy of discrimination was perpetrated with a view to deindustrialising the state, so that its development gets stagnated, employment generation scuttled, and the left forces are crippled.

The political discrimination became pronounced after the installation of Left Front Government in 1977. W. Bengal suffered seriously due this discriminatory attitude of the centre with respect to approving license for new industries, investment in public sector, in providing funds for modernization and expansion of the existing public sector units and so on. Industrialists were discouraged to invest in West Bengal. A powerful campaign was launched by the Centre, the bourgeois press and the anti-left forces that so long left front gov't remains in West Bengal, no one should invest in the state. Driven by this cam-

paign, there was flight of capital from W.Bengal to other states.

This frantic bid to deindustrialise the state can be seen from the fact in 1981 the share of West Bengal in public sector investment was 8.2 per cent and that of Maharashtra was 8.6 per cent. But in 1991-92 West Bengal's share was reduced to 7 percent and that of Maharashtra went up to 16.3 per cent. In case of new licensing, in 1975 West Bengal's share was 74 industries out of the all India total of 1026. West Bengal had the fourth position in the country. In 1984-85 West Bengal's position came down to eighth and in 1991 it came down to fourteenth.

After assuming power in 1977, the left front Govt identified certain sectors for development like the Haldia Petro-Chemical Project, Power Plants, Electronic Complex at Salt Lake, modernisation of the Calcutta port, ship building industry, etc. But the centre refused any investments in these sectors. Long drawn struggles were launched. After eleven years only the Centre gave permission for the Electronic Complex.

Now with the new economic policies of 1991 the Central Govt has surrendered to the dictates of the IMF and World Bank. The results are devastating, which needs no explanation. It is more so for West Bengal, where alone 20 PSUs have been referred to the BIFR, out of which five have already been recommended for winding up. More than 1.25 lakh workers have been affected. The six wagon factories in the state are starving for orders. The Centre is importing railway engines with higher costs, whereas these can be manufactured in the Chittaranjan Locomotive factory. The Centre has refused to make any investment to modernise the IISCO. Grants and aids to the states were reduced. Here again West Bengal's share came down from 3.59% (fifth position) in 6th plan to 2.24% (tenth position) in the 8th plan.

Immediately after the new economic policy, the W.Bengal Govt made a scathing criticism of it and suggested several alternative proposals. The proposals were land reforms, decentralisation of powers, unearthing the huge black money, modernisation and expansion of the PSUs, seeking help from the NRIs instead of indiscriminate entry of MNCs, development of indigenous technology and Rand D, etc. All this could boost a self-reliant economy. But the Centre rejected the proposals and went ahead with the prescription of IMF and World Bank and then signed the GATT agreement making these an overall policy for the country.

The proposal for an alternative path is applicable at national level only. Since the centre did not accept the alternative proposals given by W.Bengal, it had to

adopt an approach of utilising the limited opportunities available under the new environment.

The present approach of the West Bengal Govt. towards industrialisation of the state has to be seen in this background.

The approach certainly reflects its deep foresight to industrialise the state as best as possible. It has already created the base for industrialisation by developing the agricultural and small scale sectors, occupying the top position in the country in both and concentrating to improve the infrastructural facilities.

Successful implementation of land reforms, establishing the legitimate rights of the share croppers, wage increase of agricultural labourers, expansion of minor irrigation facilities, help rendered to the marginal farmers, etc have helped the state to achieve a remarkable growth in agricultural production. The decentralisation of power, both economic and political, through 3-Tier Panchayat Raj system has become a model in the entire country. In fishery, social forestry, creation of permanent assets, expansion of rural roads, community centres, preventive health care, drainage, etc. W. Bengal tops the list in the country.

In employment generation also, according to Planning Commission, W.Bengal occupies the first place in the country.

In small scale sector and cottage industries impressive growth has been recorded. It contributes to 45% of the industrial output and 40% of exports from the state. The number of people below the poverty line has come down from 58.3% in 1977-78 to about 30% now, while it has gone up in the rest of the country.

The market has been created for industrial goods and the purchasing power of the people has been increased. This has to be used for industrial development.

In West Bengal most of the foreign investments, are direct investments, most of them are in joint sector too. While building new industries, W.Bengal is modernising and reviving the old units also.

While striving for rapid industrialisation within the limited powers, W. Bengal has underlined the key role of the public sector in the core areas. With this objective it is doggedly opposing the Centre's policy of dismantling the MAMC, HFC, IISCO, Burns, NTC mills, etc. In its path of industrialisation, emphasis has been correctly given to improve and expand the infra-structural facilities, which are a pre-condition for industrial development.

An important factor has to be noted here is that, while striving to speed up industrialisation, the left front gov't. continues to defend workers' interests and

their trade union rights, and consult with them on this process of industrialisation. The policy of the centre is just the reverse.

Comrades, The state is trying its best for industrial regeneration within the constraints of the central policy and with in the limited powers of the state.

I would urge upon you, comrades, to study the West Bengal's policy in an in-depth manner and see the difference between the Centre and the State at its different facets. We must launch a campaign in support of the policy to counter the bourgeois campaign against it.

THE BARTERING AWAY TO PUBLIC SECTOR

Comrades,

I do not wish to explain about the big fight which we have been carrying on against the policy of liberalisation and privatisation pursued by Narasimha Rao Government. Though we have succeeded installing certain proposals of the government, they are bent upon handing over the public sector to private capitalists, Indian and foreign.

The shift in government policies to favour the private sector can be seen in the policy of reduction in customs duties, excise levies in various sectors and products besides denial of credits and budgetary support for the public sector. The machines of world standard, cheaper in price, produced in the public sector is purposely ignored and foreign machines are preferred resulting in huge erosion of foreign exchange. In the railways their own machines are ignored and they are asked to go for foreign imports. The BHEL power machines are ignored while encouraging foreign power machine importing at higher costs.

Indian banking and insurance sector which are comparatively best in the world, are also going to be opened up for Indian and foreign capital. The disinvestment programme of the public sector shares are in full swing. The story of the last five years is given below:

1991-92	-	3,038 crores
1992-93	-	1,961 crores
1993-94	-	(-) 48 crores
1994-95	-	5,237 crores
1995-96	-	7,000 crores
Total		17,288 crores

The total paid up capital of the central public sector by 31st of March 1996 is calculated to be around 59,000 crores, out of which ownership of about one-third has been transferred to private hands at throw away prices. At this rate by the next year or so the majority ownership of public sector will be in

the private hands. Among these the best profit making companies in the world are also included. The eight companies are the Oil and Natural Gas Commission, Bharat Petroleum, Videsh Sanchar Nigam, Indian Oil Corporation, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam, Steel Authority of India, Hindustan Petroleum and National Fertilizers, which collectively earned a pre-tax profit of Rs.6,023.34 crores out of the 11,817.17 crores for the total public sector enterprises for the year 1993-94.

The total money thus received by this sale are not invested for any developmental activities are for the development of the concerned industries. The whole money has been spent for the budgetary expenditure in order to meet the deficits.

It can be seen from the above that the wealth created by the people by the sweat and labour is sought to be transferred to the private capitalists, Indian and foreign at throw away prices. The Steel employees cannot forget the resistance they have put up against the selling out of Indian Iron and Steel Company and nobody can forget the scandalous proposals for transferring the best iron ore mines "Bailadila" to private hands which has been temporarily stalled by public resistance.

Therefore, the working class with their organisational and political loyalties must note the heinous anti-national character of these policies and once more close their ranks and pledge themselves to fight back and get these policies reversed.

THE NEXUS OF CRIMINALS, POLITICIAN AND BUREAUCRATS

I wish to draw your attention to the serious damages being done to our administrative and political system by the heinous policies being pursued by the Congress (I) rulers.

Corruption charges of unprecedented nature are haunting the Congress (I) party in a big way. Many of its leaders and ministers including the Prime Minister are under the shadow of the charges of corruption. The security scandal, the sugar scandal, Hawala scandal etc. are among the many. The Vohra Commission report which explained the nexus between the politicians, bureaucrats and underworld criminals exposed the Congress (I) Raj in its true colours. The following is stated in the report among other things.

3.2In the bigger cities, the main source of income relates to real estate, forceably occupying lands/buildings, procuring such properties at cheap rates by forcing out the existing occupants/tenants etc. Over time, the money power thus acquired is used for building up contacts with bureaucrats and politicians and expansion of activities with impunity.

The money power is used to develop a net work of muscle power which is also used by the politicians during elections.

3.3 "CBI has reported that all over India crime syndicate have become a law unto themselves. Even in the smaller towns and rural areas, musclemen have become the order of the day. hired assassins have become a part of these organizations. The nexus between the criminal gangs, police, bureaucracy and politicians has come out clearly in various parts of the country." And in point 3.4 he has also stated" In case where a crime syndicate is big business, it would be necessary to conduct detailed investigations into its assets, both movable and immovable."

Emphasis added, this report has been submitted to the government on 5th October 1993. But the government did not take any action against this. When the parliamentary pressure increased this report has been placed before the Parliament. Mr. Srivastava Babloo, a notorious criminal fell in to police net, had confessed the involvement of Chandraswamy with the notorious underground don Dawood Ibrahim who was responsible for the Bombay blast. It is well known that many Congress (I) ministers, and leaders are devotees of Chandraswamy including the Prime Minister who has "special relations" with him. However nothing has been done to bring before the court of law. The minister who has shown courage for ordering his arrest, Mr. Rajesh Pilot has been removed from his post. Thus the bourgeois politicians, criminals dons and the bureaucrats nexus is running their own - parallel rule of their own. Parliamentary system of governance is becoming a casualty under Narasimha Rao Raj.

Comrades, We have seen the results of the local bodies elections in the state of Tripura and Kerala where the Left Democratic forces have come out victorious in flying colours. I congratulate them on your own behalf. I need not remind you that we should take upon ourselves to ensure left and democratic forces in the coming Parliamentary elections early next year.

You know that this is the new opportunity opening before the working class for defeating the Congress (I) party and the BJP, the reactionary communal outfit which is bent upon dividing the nations in to Hindus and Muslims. This is the only way to preserve our independence, democracy and ensure progress.

Comrades, we must close our ranks to see that the emerging Left and Democratic and secular forces come to power at the centre.

Long live working class unity.

2-11-1995 BHILAI

RESOLUTIONS

OnForthcoming programmes of National Platform of Mass Organisations

The Working Committee meeting of Centre of Indian Trade Unions being held on 2-4 November, 1995 at Bhilai extends full support to the decision of the National Platform of Mass Organisations to stage massive demonstrations in the country on 15th December, 1995 to reiterate the opposition of the people of the country to the disastrous Economic Policy being pursued by Govt of India at the dictate of IMF and World Bank.

The Working Committee notes with satisfaction the successful observance of District level rallies/demonstration all over the country on 15th September, 1995 at the call of National Platform against NEP, and various other preparatory programmes undertaken by the mass organisations from all walks of life which is now going to culminate in the state rallies on 15th December, 1995.

The Working Committee urges upon all its affiliates and the working class in general to take serious note of the fast changing situation in socio-political front in the background of the pursuance of NEP by Govt of India and also the rising struggle of the working class and democratic people from all walks of life against the fall out of such policies both at micro level and on national plane in which the National Platform of Mass Organisations and the working class in particular played the most vital role. The situation demands intensification of the struggle with the aim of further consolidating the united platform to cry a total defeat to the proponent and the patrons of the disastrous policies. Massive success of the rallies on 15th December '95 in the current phase of struggle will definitely create condition for lifting the struggle against NEP to a new height in the coming days.

The working committee calls upon all its units to prepare and take initiative alongwith other constituents of the Platform to make the state rallies on 15th December '95 a resounding success.

ON SELL OUT OF BAILADILA MINE

This meeting of the Working Committee of Centre of Indian Trade Unions being held in Bhilai on 2-4 November, 1995 condemns the decision of the Govt. of India to transfer of IIB deposit of Bailadila group of Iron ore mines at Madhya Pradesh presently owned by NMDC, a public sector unit to M/s Nippon Dendro Ispat Ltd., belonging to Mittal group of industries, at

throw-away price. The manner and the terms at which the ownership and control of Bailadila Mines rich with precious natural resources have been sought to be handed over to private hands, of course with a nauvice camouflage of joint venture, speaks of scant regard of the persons in governance towards protection of the interest of the people as well as public property.

In their desparation to ensure that the mine goes to the predetermined taker, the Government bade goodbye even to the basic procedural requirements like tendering, competitive bidding, transparency etc. The Working Committee deplores such scandalous deal involving national property and resolves to oppose it with full determination.

The 11B deposit of Bailadila mine is one of the few best quality ore producing mines with 67% ferrous content. Its handing over to private ownership would expose our public sector steel producing plants and particularly the Vizag Steel Plant, to uncertainties in getting regular supply of quality iron ore. On the contrary the deal, if materialised, would provide monopolistic advantage to a private firm at the cost of public sector steel plants.

The Working Committee rejects the argument being put forward by the Steel Ministry that the transfer of IIB deposit to NDIL would make indigenuous steel competitive and deter drainage of precious iron ore outside the country. Such argument by the Steel Ministry, it being the initiator and the most active agency in clinching the scandalous deal, is a calculated ploy to confuse common people against the desperate bid of plattering of the mine for selfish ends.

The Working Committee condemns the shabby manner in which the mine containing 104 million tonnes of precious high quality iron ore has been sought to be transferred to private party at much less than even one tenth of its total net value at current price in exchange of only Rs. 16 crores stated to be on cost basis. And while calculating such so called 'Cost basis' the cost of infrastructure developed by NMDC in the entire area to be enjoyed by the private taker has never been taken into account. The shady deal of transfer of the mine also bluntly violated the 'Mineral Concession Rules' in vogue, which stipulates a return on the basis of an agreed sum per agreed unit of the ore or mineral extracted in case of any transfer by mining lease from the hand of a State

Corporation. In consideration of the estimated deposit of 104 million tonnes of iron ore in 11B to be extracted in twenty years time the Finance Ministry made an assessment based on Mineral Concession Rules, which shows that the new company will earn accumulative net profit of Rs.1764 crores and annual average profit of Rs.88.21 crores. And such a potential mine, as desired by Steel Minister, is to change hands in exchange of only Rs.16 crores on the surface, and those under the surface are not yet known. The Working Committee also deplores the prudence and promptness of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs to clear the shady deal authored by the Steel Ministry overriding the observation made by the Finance Ministry, which in its wisdom opined for development of the mine by NMDC itself which has the expertise and capacity to mobilise resources. The meeting is of the opinion that if at all the mine is to be taken away from NMDC, it should be allowed to be taken over by the public sector Vizag Steel Plant, commissioned at huge investment of public money, which like many steel plants does not have a captive mine.

This Working Committee opines that the transfer deal of Bailadila mine to private hand almost free of cost is nothing but a crime to the country's economic interest and common people, besides being a conspiracy against the public sector steel industry and deplores the Govt and those responsible for such shady deal squandering public wealth. The Working Committee notes with satisfaction the opposition voiced against such scandalous move by the Govt of India from all walks of life including in both houses of the Parliament. It welcomes the move of the working class to unitedly oppose such move and calls upon the working class and democratic people to close ranks to oppose and stall such anti people move by the Govt. to squander public wealth, by way of handing over the iron ore mine to a private group.

ON AMENDMENT OF PAYMENT OF BONUS ACT

The Working Committee Meeting of Centre of Indian Trade Unions being held on 2-4 November 1995 at Bhilai notes the adoption of Payment of Bonus (Amendment) Act raising the ceiling on payment of Bonus and entitlement for Bonus payment to Rs.2500/- and Rs.3500/- respectively. Inordinate delay in bringing this amendment to Bonus Act was due to Govt of India's subservience to the pressure of the Employers. The just demand of the entire trade union movement for removal of all ceilings on Bonus

payment/entitlement was ignored by the govt of India by this action of amendment.

The Working Committee opines unequivocally that imposing ceilings on bonus of the workers is totally ridiculous in view of their inability to impose restriction of the profit of the employers class. When the profitability of the industry has gone up substantially, particularly after the liberalisation and liberal concessions to the employers, larger and larger section of workers are pushed out of the purview of Bonus payment owing to imposition of unrealistic ceiling on Bonus.

It is a cruel joke that the so called 'improvements' of the ceilings on Bonus now made are identically same as had been proposed by the then Labour Minister of India in 1980, which however was not accepted by the Government. Now with the passage of time, and phenomenal price rise, these ceilings have become absolutely meaningless as overwhelming majority of the workers in public sector and also organised sector will be out of the purview of Bonus Act inspite of such so called improvement, which is nothing but a mockery on the concept of Bonus as a deferred wage.

This Working Committee session of CITU demands that :

- 1) All ceilings in the Payment of Bonus Act be removed.
- 2) Minimum Bonus should be raised to 10% of the annual earnings of the workers.
- 3) Revise the Bonus Formula linking Payment of Bonus directly to gross profit and scrap the concept of prior charges of the employers.
- 4) Exemption granted in the Payment of Bonus Act be withdrawn.
- 5) Trade Unions should have the right to challenge the Balance Sheet of Employers.
- 6) Amendment accepted the Bonus Act should be applicable to all irrespective of the member of employees in an establishment.

CITU calls upon the workers of all affiliations to unite and launch nationwide struggle on these demands to compel the government to accept the most reasonable demands of the trade unions on payment of bonus.

RESOLUTION ON BEIJING CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

The Working Committee of CITU held in Bhilai from 2nd to 4th Nov. 95 expresses its satisfaction at the limited success of Beijing conference held in the month of Sept. '95 and appreciates the work done by

democratic and progressive women's organisations all over the world when all attempts were being made by USA and other imperialist countries to hijack the conference for its narrow end as they did so at earlier conference. It also expresses its satisfaction that the G7 countries could not succeed in their machination to divert the world attention on unreal issues as they thought to sabotage the work of the official and the NGO's conferences held in Beijing and at Harao. All the propoganda made in the media about the failure of the conferences was fully exposed and both the conferences carried their work peacefully despite heavy odds.

The Working Committee also expresses its happiness about the laborious arrangement, the Chinese Govt has made for more than 40,000 NGO delegates, and for the official conference. Those who participated in the NGO'S conference were very happy about the cordial atmosphere and the help given by the women in China to make the conference a success.

It is to be noted, that there were massive demonstrations against Hilary Clinton when she visited the forum. The NGO forum, the progressive women's organisations including AIDWA could make a dent on the various issues concerning women while criticising the official conference which could not do justice to the women's cause, though they had to include many recommendations such as the recognition of women's' unpaid work, adverse impact on women of SAP and so on under the compulsion of the present economic situation. It was surprising though, despite the worse situation of women on the question of crime, child rape, and molestation etc, our HRD Minister made a speech of self praise on behalf of the Indian government.

The working committee of CITU calls upon all the CITU unions to take steps to ensure the implementation of the Beijing Declaration so that the struggle for womens rights, including the rights of working women are advanced through united movement.

ON SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA

This Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Bhilai from November 2 to 4, 1995 condemns the Government of USA for continuing the inhuman economic blockade of Cuba for more than three decades, defying the opinion of the world community and the three resolutions of the UN General Assembly demanding lifting of the blockade.

It is reprehensible that instead of acceding to the universal demand, the USA has passed a most

retrograde Helms- Burton Bill, which further tightened the blockade and unleashed an offensive not only on the sovereignty of Cuba, but also on the rights of other countries willing to continue trade relations with Cuba. The Bill further is a black mail to force Cuba to abandon its independent path of developing its own society.

This meeting demands of the US administration to respect the world opinion and withdraw the blockade from Cuba, as well as the Helms-Burton Bill forthwith.

The CITU warmly congratulates the people of Cuba for their determined struggle to defend their independence and sovereignty against the US designs and reiterates its unequivocal support to their struggle.

The meeting congratulates all the state committees and unions of the CITU for generously contributing to the Cuban Solidarity Fund and extending other material help to the heroic people of Cuba.

The meeting unanimously supports the decisions of the Cuba Solidarity Conference of Asia Oceania Region held at Calcutta on September 22 to 24, 1995 and calls upon the CITU unions to continue their material help to the Cuban struggle and launch countrywide campaign demanding withdrawal of the economic blockade by the USA. As decided in the conference, the meeting calls upon all State Committees and unions to observe November 27, 1995 as Solidarity Day against the US blockade, by holding rallies and demonstrations all over the country.

ON WAGE REVISION OF CENTRAL GOVT EMPLOYEES AND THE FIFTH CENTRAL PAY COMMISSION

This meeting of the Working Committee of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions held at Bhilai on 2-4 Nov. 1995 express extreme dissatisfaction with the existing system of wage revision of the employees of the Central Govt by sitting up Pay commissions at inorginality long intervals. While rise in prices of essential commodities has never known any despite during the pas decades, and while the workers and employees in the res of the organised sector are having wae settlement every fur or five years, the Central Govt. employees have to wait for ten to thirteen years for a pay panel being set upto review their wages vis a vis the price situation and recommend change their in. The system therefore acts as an built in wae depressor for employees of the central govt. This meeting unequivocally demands replacement of this system by the system of wae settlement through collective bargaining at reason-

able intervals as obtaining in other establishments in the organised sector.

This meeting also expresses deep concern about the work of the fifth Central Pay Commission which is currently engaged in reviewing the present wage structure of the central employees with a view to evolving a new wage structure appropriate to the present price situation.

The meeting notes with deprecation that the Govt not only took more than six months to appoint the commission after the argument was reached with the staff side, it has imposed on the commission besides usual examination of the existing wage structure vis a vis relevant economic factors, an additional task of examining work method and work environment rationalisation and simplification etc of works with a view to promoting efficiency in administration reducing paper work and optimizing the size of Govt machinery - a task which by no means come under purview of pay Commission and can only delay and dilute the work of the pay body. The meeting is concerned to note that through the employees unions and associations demanded publication and implementation of the commissions recommendation within 18 months, it is still engaged, even after the elapse of 18 months, in collection of inut in the form of oral evidence. The meeting emphatically demands separation of the task relating to work method etc. and exclusive concentration of the commission on pay related task for expeditious submission of its report.

This meeting further notes with concern that the commission in their interim report have not only done gross injustice to the employees at lower pay range by recommending 10% of pay as interim relief against the staff side demand for Rs.460/- backed by irrefutable justification, but, has also rejected out right the principle of wage parity on the basis of which the demanded amount of interim relief as well as their basic wage demand put forward before the commission was worked out. Fore shadowing as this rejection the parity principle does the final outcome of the exercise now being carried out by the commission, it has already caused disappointment among the central employees and may seriously jeopardize the industrial relations in the Govt Sector. This meeting reiterates CITU's unqualified support to the central employees just demand for wage parity with public sector undertakings and urges the commission to honour the principle while making their recommendation.

This meeting assures the central govt employees and their organisation wholehearted support of CITU in their struggles for expeditious settlement of just demands.

Resolution in support of the decision on launching indefinite strike in Jute Industry from 29th Nov., 1995 by all Central Trade Unions operating in Jute Industry.

This meeting of the Working Committee of the CITU extends its whole hearted support to the decision to launch an indefinite strike in the Jute Industry called by All the Central Trade Unions from 29th November 1995. This strike will embrace more than two lakh workers.

After the expiry of the 3 year period of tripartite agreement in March 1995 the Central Trade Unions submitted a fresh charter of demands and urged for a negotiated settlement.

The Labour Minister of the Government of West Bengal called a tripartite meeting on 21.8.95 in which the employers refused to come to an industry-wide tripartite agreement. This attitude compelled the Central Trade unions to take a decision to resort to an indefinite strike.

The Jute Industry is under the control of the Government of India. The Government of India gets a huge amount of money from the Excise Duty as well as Foreign Exchange of more than Rs.400 Crores from exports. But does not take steps to protect the Jute Industry, the workers and the Jute cultivators.

The Working committee urges upon the Government of India to intervene immediately and prevail upon the Jute Industrialists to bring about a settlement in favour of the just demands of the workers.

12TH DECEMBER JAIL BHARO BY TEXTILE WORKERS

This Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Bhalai from November 2 to 4, 1995 expresses serious concern over the situation in the Textile Industry.

In the Private Sector 132 Mills have been closed down rendering about two lakhs workers jobless. The Mills which are open, are further closing down their weaving sections and switching over to powerlooms, affecting thousands of workers. Many more Mills are in the sick list with the threat of closure.

In the Public Sector NTC mills, although after long drawn struggles by a Joint Action Committee, the 8-point unanimous agreement on modernisation of 79 Mills was approved by the Cabinet, yet the BIFR has not cleared the agreement, and the modernisa-

tion process has not started. This delay is causing further losses to the Mills, and the Workers' wages are not being paid regularly.

In the Handloom Sector the conditions of the Weavers have become deplorable due to lack of supply of hank yarn and a other raw materials at subsidised rates and paltry wages below poverty line.

In the Powerloom Sector, despite producing about 80 per cent of the cloth, the workers are fleeced. They have to work for 10 to 12 hours without any proper minimum wages or labour laws and social security measures.

Despite continued struggle launched by the JAC comprising of the CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, BMS, NLO, ATUC and TUCC, and repeated representations made by it to the Government and the Prime Minister, the Government has taken no steps to concede the demands of the JAC for amelioration of the above situation, or formulation of a new Textile Policy in consultation with the Trade Unions so as to ensure a balanced development of all the three sectors.

In the above background, the JAC has given a call for Jail Bhara Action at Delhi on 12th December 1995.

The Working Committee Calls upon all State Committees and the Unions in Textile Industry to mobilise workers from all the three Sectors namely Mills, Handlooms and Powerlooms, to join the Jail Bhara action in maximum.

RESOLUTION ON US - PAKISTAN ARMS DEAL Demand immediate scrapping of the said Indo-US Cooperation deal

The Working Committee Meeting of CITU being held at Bhilai from 2-4 Nov. 1995 register strong protest against the U.S. decision to resume military supplies to the Govt. of Pakistan and demand immediate scrapping of the Indo-US co-operation deal.

After revoking the pressler amendment the US has resumed military supplies to Pakistan and decided to supply sophisticated weapons worth 368 Million Dollars. Naturally this will upset defence balance with Pakistan and India will be forced to spend more on our defence. This action of US has evoked big resentment in the country and a general demand is being made for the annulment of the Indo-US agreement on military and defence co-operation entered into between Mr. William Perry and the Minister for defence Mr. Mallikarjun on 12th of January 1995. When the opposition criticised the agree-

ment in Parliament, the Govt. strongly defended this by saying that it is part of the new relationships developing with the US and India in the so called "changed environment".

The US has taken the hostile attitude in so many issues. When conflict arose between Pakistan and India, they were always on the other side of the fence. When India tried to improve her technological and military capabilities, the US came in opposition to it and tried to scuttle it by various means. In the Kashmir issue they were always supporting Pakistan. They were also instigating the divisive forces with a view to disintegrate our country. The present US move will definitely aggravate the Kashmir problem and belligerences of Pakistan.

Despite all these experiences no proper response against this is yet coming forth from our spineless rulers since they are crawling before the IMF- World Bank overlords. Hence the Working Committee calls upon all the patriotic forces in our country to register their strong protest and anger and demand for the immediate scrapping of the Indo-US Co-operation deal.

RESOLUTION ON FISHING WORKER STRUGGLE

The Working Committee of CITU meeting held at Bhilai from 2nd to 4th Nov. 1995, expresses full support to the struggles and campaigns of the workers in Fishing Industry against operating foreign fishing vessels in the India sea coast.

Fishing Industry in India is facing a serious situation, after the foreign companies have been given licences for fishing in Indian Waters. With the modern trawlers involved in fishing, Indian fishermen, using traditional boats and the small mechanised boats are not getting enough catches which has resulted in severe poverty among the lakhs of fishermen all along Indian sea-shore.

With many concession including fuel at much reduced rates being given for the trawlers of foreign companies, the marine wealth of the country is being looted. And also our country is losing foreign exchange heavily.

Workers in Fishing Industry have been agitating against such policies of the government of India. There was very good response from the workers for the National Strike call.

It is in these circumstances, a joint convention of Workers in Fishing Industry is going to be held on 11th November at Ernakulam. The Working Committee of CITU extends full support to this convention

and calls upon all Unions to prepare for the struggles to be decided at the Ernakulam Convention.

ON BANK STRIKE

The Working Committee Meeting of the CITU held at Bhilai from Nov.2 to 4, 1995, congratulates the Bam employees for staging an All India one-day strike on Aug.31, and a two-day strike on September 26 and 27 for their demands of proper relativity of waes pension etc. and extends its support and sympathy to their proposed indefinite strike from Dec.19, 1995.

The Working Committee strongly condemns the policies of Govt. of India and IBIA in discrimianting against the employees while revising the wages by not keeping relativity the wages of the workers and the officers. This discrimiantion is to drive a wedge between the officers and the workers who are waging a united struggle against privatisaiton.

The Working Committee condemns the action of the Government in declaring the stirke of the employees illegal, launching prosecution against the leaders of the strike and declaring deis- non in the service of the workers and demands withdrawal of all such victimisationincluding criminatl proceedings an deis-non.

The Working Committee demands that even at this state the Governrment of India and I.B.A. conceed the just and reasonable demands of the bank employees, give up the policy of privatisation and accept relativity between the wages of the workers and officers.

On Accident in Bhilai Steel Plant on 2nd Nov. 1995

This session of the Working Committee of CITU held from 2nd to 4th November 1995 at Bhilai expresses shock over the fatal accident that took place at Bhilai Steel Plant on 2nd November 1995 at 3.30 PM owing to explosion of Gas-tank in the Mixer shop killing one yound workers shri Ghanashyam aged 27 eyars and injuring 12 others. It is reported that out of the injured, condition of 6 workers is quite serious. The deceased and the inugred in teh accident, as reported are all Contract Workers working under sub-contractors of H.S.C.L. working in the Mixer shop of B.S.P.

The Working Committee offers its heartfelt condolence for the death of Shri ghanshyam and expresses anxiety for those severely injured in the accident. it also expresses concern over the alarming increase of accidents in various Industrial Units including Steel Industry reealing negligene and unconcerned atti-

tude of the employers/Management towards safety. It also notes with anguish that in many of such accidnets the contract workers aree made the victims who are thorn open to most hazardous and risky jobs without anyntraining to satisfy employers craze for minimising cost.

The Working Committee condemns such attitude and demnads full compensation to the family of the deceased worker and also those hurt in the accident. It also demnadsthorough enquiry into the root cause of the accidnet and the lacunae in the safety arrangmenet including indulgence of the officials for unsafe work practices. It also urges upon the B.S.P. Management to ensure that the Contract Workers who are usually exposed to most hazardous and risky jobs for a pittance are not deprived of adequate compensaiton and proteciton.

RESOLUTION ON PENSION SCHEME

The Working Committee meeting of Centre of Indian Trade Unions held on 2-4 November, 1995 at Bhilai expresses its strong resentment at the unilateral promulgation of Ordinance enabling itself to divert the employers' contribution to the Provident Fund to the tune of 8.33 percnet on the plea of providing a Pension Scheme for them. This was done despite strong opposition of the trade union movement who demanded pension as third retirment benefit and a thorough discussion on the pension scheme including its funding and administration before finalisation of the scheme.

The Working Committee notes that side by side with promulgation of the Ordinance a draft pension scheme was circulated by the Labour Ministry, which though contains some changes, compared to their earlier scheme, has fallen much short of the expectation of the workers and the trade union movement. The draft scheme is burdened with so many restrictive clauses and conditionalities, so as to provide meagre return to the retiring workers compared to the benefits being taken away from them by way of diversion of Employers' contribution to PF. This will virtually withdraw the contributory provident fund system without adequate compensation for the losses.

It is also noteworthy that the said draft scheme does not form a part of the Ordinance as an annexure which only empowers Govt to take away nearly half of the workers provident fund generation with a mention that a pension scheme would be subsequently formulated.

The Working Committee notes with concern that such hasty action of Govt of India to promulgate

Ordinance bypassing Parliament and disregarding valid suggestions of the trade unions is nothing but a step of political expediency of taking a prolabour camouflage and would in no way take care of the interest of the workers. The draft pension scheme circulated by the union labour ministry also, if scrutinised in real perspective, would mean much less benefit to the workers than what is being taken away by way of Ordinance.

The CITU has all along been demanding pension scheme for the workers as a third retirement benefit in addition to the existing provisions of contributory provident fund and gratuity benefits. On the other hand the Scheme Circulated by the Labour Ministry suffers from various limitations meaning perpetuating loss to the workers in general. The manner in which "pensionable service" "pensionable salary" and "eligibility" are defined, a big chunk of workers particularly in the unorganized sector would be deprived of any worth the name benefit under the scheme inspite of foregoing the 8.33 per cent employers' contribution to their provident fund.

While under the proposed pension scheme, the contributory provident fund scheme is being converted as General Provident Fund Scheme comprising workers contribution only like the Central Govt Employees, the pension so formulated is much less than their central govt counterpart. Besides, the pension formula under the proposed scheme is not having any linkage with price index and loses its meaning in continuously aggravating inflationary situation.

It is all the more alarming that the proposed pension scheme is supposed to be administered by the Provident Fund organisation, which has already proved its inefficiency in the administration of the Family Pension Scheme leading to accumulation of Rs.6500 crores in the Family Pension Fund a good part of which is the undisbursed amount to thousands of those already retired and expired.

In view of the same, the working committee of CITU declares its firm opposition to the unilateral action of the govt of India in promulgating the ordinance and also to the proposed pension scheme.

The Working Committee also demands that the Ordinance should be modified and pension scheme should be formulated by thorough discussion with the central trade unions which, inter alia, must ensure,

1) Pension Scheme should be optional for all workers including those who are covered by the

Family pension Scheme.

2) Pension scheme must ensure full return of capital.

3) Increased and additional contribution should be made by Govt of India and the employers in the pension fund without any ceiling.

4) Pensionable salary should be last pay drawn and not the average of 36 months.

5) Pensionable Service should ensure no deduction of pension amount for the worker under premature retirement.

6) Quantum of Pension should increase alongwith rise in prices.

7) Administration of the pension scheme should be done by a separate agency constituted by equal participation of the workers representatives alongwith others and administrative expense of the pension scheme should be borne by the Govt.

8) Rate of interest on pension corpus should be enhanced.

CITU, while reiterating its demand for pension as a third retirement benefit demands upon the govt of India to refrain from its unilateral action and modification of the concerned Ordinance forthwith and finalisation of the pension scheme in consultation with all the Central Trade Unions at the earliest instead of giving unilateral gimmicks.

The Working Committee also appeals to all the trade unions to be united and make efforts to so ensure that substancial improvement can be brought about in all the aspects of the pension scheme including its funding to make it meaningful and beneficial to the workers.

CITU REITERATES OPPOSITION TO GOVT DRAFT ON PENSION SCHEME AND THE ORDINANCE IN THE MEETING WITH LABOUR MINISTER

November 10, 1995 in the meeting with the Union Labour Minister Shri G. Venkataswamy, alongwith other Central Trade Unions, CITU while expressing its resentment against the promulgation of the Ordinance enabling the govt to divert employer's Contribution to PF to so called pension fund and also reiterating its demand for pension as a third retirement benefit, pointed out that the as per Govt draft on pension scheme workers would get much less return as pension than they have to forego by way of diversion of nearly half of PF generation to so called pension corpus.

CITU pointed out various defects and short comings in the Govt draft on pension scheme and put

forth concrete suggestions to recast/improve upon the whole pension scheme, which are inter alia: (1) Increased and additional contribution by the Govt and employer to pension fund (2) Provision for full return of capital, (3) Linkage of the pension amount with cost of living index (4) Redefining pensionable salary and pensionable service to increase the pensionary amount and coverage. (5) special provisions for the workers facing closure and non payment of salary due to sickness etc. (6) Enhancement in the rate of interest on pension corpus to ensure higher return (7) commutation facility (8) Administration of the Scheme by a separate agency constituted with equal participation of workers representative 9) Administrative expense to be borne by Govt and many others.

CITU urged upon the Labour Minister that above scheme should not be imposed on the workers and it should be made optional for all workers including those members of family pension fund. Other Central Trade Unions present in the meeting viz INTUC, HMS, AITUC, BMS, UTUC, TUCC, UTUC (LS) NLO, NFITU etc. put forward various suggestions for improvement of the scheme. Minister assured to give due consideration to the suggestions made.

At the outset CITU demanded that govt must consider the suggestions for changes/improvements in the scheme, and finalise the scheme in consultation with trade unions instead of unilaterally giving effect to the scheme and Ordinance. CITU was represented in the meeting by Dr. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary and Tapan Sen, Secretary.

AGITATION SPREAD ALL OVER AGAINST PENSION SCHEME AND THE ORDINANCE

Information is being received from various places all over the country regarding spontaneous agitation by the workers against the promulgation of ordinance withdrawing employers' contributions to PF and the Govt.'s draft on pension scheme as well. The trickery underlying the scheme started getting exposed all over.

Bombay city witnessed massive demonstration of workers joined by unions of various affiliations. CITU took the lead to organise the programme. Philips Employees' union which earned appreciation for their consistent effort to expose the real face of the whole exercise also joined in a big way in the protest.

Employees of Bharat Electronics Ltd., Ghaziabad joined enmasse crossing all barriers of affiliation in the mass signature campaign against the particular scheme which could already procure signatures of the overwhelming majority of the BEL workers.

The employees of the Bharat Heavy electrical Ltd. (BHEL) demonstrated in a massive way consecutively for three days from 13th to 15th November at their plant at Hardwar under the leadership of BHEL Kamgar Union (CITU), which had drawn workers from all other unions.

Reports have been received on similar spontaneous agitation also from other BHEL units at Trichy, Jhansi, Bhopal etc. In the BHEL factory gate at Jhansi, workers enmasse joined in a massive demonstration against the pension scheme and ordinance on 22nd November, at the call of CITU union there.

BHEL Kamgar Trade Union (CITU) at Bhopal decided to hold mass demonstration on 29th November to denounce the Ordinance and the so-called pension scheme.

Both at Bhopal and Jhansi, BHEL workers have decided to organise mass signature campaign on a representation addressed to President of India, demanding withdrawal of the Ordinance and protesting imposition of the scheme on the workers. In BHEL (R&D) unit at Hyderabad, the overwhelming majority of workers through a mass representation demanded scrapping of Pension Scheme and the Ordinance.

At Durgapur, the leaders of all the CITU unions in Steel Industry met on 22nd November to decide agitation programme against pension scheme and ordinance. The Unions of the Industrial belt of Durgapur also met on the same day. It was decided from those meetings to send two lakhs post cards signed by individual workers to the Govt Labour Minister denouncing the pension scheme. Along with programmes for mass signature campaign and demonstration have been planned to be observed during next fortnight span.

CITU also published a booklet titled 'Real Face of the Pension Scheme' which got circulated in several thousands among various industrial centres. □

Editorial Board

M. K. Pandhe (Chairman)

P. K. Ganguly (Working Editor)

Niren Ghosh, M.M. Lawrence,

Vimal Randive, Ranjit Basu

Fisheries Workers To Go On Conuntrywide Strike

An All India Joint Trade Union Convention against Anti-National Foreign Fishing Vessels was held on 11th November at Ernakulam Town Hall. About 800 delegates were present. M.M. Lawrence (CITU) presided over the function and V.P. Marackar (INTUC) inaugurated the Convention. The Presidium composed of V.P. Marackar (INTUC), M.M. Lawrence (CITU), A.M. Gopu (AITUC), Saji Narayanan (BMS), John Lukose (HMS), and Thomas Kocherry (NFF) conducted the convention. Thomas Kocherry(NFF) presented the Draft Paper and Agitational Plan for discussion. Prof. K.V.Thomas (INTUC), Chitharanjan (AITUC), Venugopal (BMS), Thampan Thomas (HMS), Ramesh Dhuri (NFF) and Chandran Pillai (CITU) and 18 other leaders representing Central Trade Unions spoke in support of the action plan and the paper.

The convention took the following decisions:- 1. It was decided to hold an All India Fisheries strike on 18th January 1996. It was decided to request the unions of Port workers and all the workers in ancillary industries in Fisheries to join the strike. 2. It was decided to hold united campaign from 1st December 1995 to 15th January 1996 for the success of the strike. 3. It was decided to constitute an 18 member National Action Committee against Anti-National

Foreign Fishing Vessels comprising of M.K. Pandhe, M.M. Lawrence, T.J. Anchalose (CITU), A.B. Bhardan, A.M. Gopu, K.P. Rajendran (AITUC), S.N. Rao, V.P. Marackar, K.V. Thomas (INTUC), R. Venugopal, K. Lakshama, P.T. Rao (BMS), Vireshwar Tyagi, Thampan Thomas, Lekhaya Shetty (HMS), Hare Krishna Debnath, Ramesh Dhuri and Thomas Kocherry (NFF).

T.J. Anchalose M.P. welcomed the gathering and K. Vijayan Pillai proposed the vote of thanks. The NFF cultural team presented a street theatre and songs. It was decided that the Action Committee would meet immediately at the close of the convention. The convention was unique and historic. It was the powerful expression of the organised and the unorganised sectors and the trade unions coming together. The Action Committee met and took the following decisions: a) Thomas Kocherry was elected Convenor of the Action Committee. b) All decisions should be on the basis of consensus. c) Each member union has the right to replace any member from its respective union to the Action Committee. d) It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Action Committee to work out the details of the campaign and the strike on 23rd November at 5 PM at the HMS office, 120 Babar Road, New Delhi - 110001.

TRADE UNION SCHOOL FOR THE STEEL WORKERS

A Central trade union school was organised by Steel Workers Federation of India on 18-20 September, 1995 at Shramik Bhawan, Calcutta. Fifty leading workers from various steel centre like Durgapur Steel Plant, Alloy Steels Plant, Salem Steel, Vizag Steel Plant, and also from steel plants at Bokaro, Rourkela, Bhilai, and Central marketing Organisation and Calcutta office of Bokaro steel participated in the trade union school. Among the participants there were both permanent workers and contract workers.

Three-day long school was divided into eleven sessions to take up various subjects related to trade union movement and social and economic developments. The subject dealt in were inter-alia Political economy, Historical evolution of human society, aspects of market Economy and Globalisation and its impact with particular reference to steel industry, Evolution of steel making process and present scenario of Indian steel technology, History of steel workers movement, Labour legislations and standing orders operative in steel industry, Organisation and present status of steel workers movement, present situation and the task of trade union with particu-

lar reference to steel industry etc.

Among the faculties who dealt on the various subjects were Com. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU and president, SWFI, Com. Patitpaban Pathak, Veteran trade union leader, working committee member of CITU, and Minister of Industry, Govt of West Bengal, Com. Jibon Roy, Secretary, CITU and Vice President SWFI, Com. Mrinal Banerjee, General Secretary SWFI and Com. A Dakshi, Vice President, SWFI, and Com. Bikash Bhattacharya renowned Advocate and a leader of democratic Lawyers Association, Com. Somesh Bose, Secretary and Com. Subichar De, Working Committee Member of SWFI.

One feature of trade union school was that, there was interaction and discussion among the participants on the various subjects taken up in different sessions during these days.

It was also declared that similar school will also be organised in various plants and steel centres and SWFI should chalk out the programmes in the days to come

□

Government Guillotined for Casual Approach to Labour Problems

P.K. Ganguly

The 32nd session of the Indian Labour Conference witnessed an unprecedented uproar over the utterly non-serious and lackadaisical attitude of the government towards the serious problems faced by the working people as fall out of the New Economic and Industrial Policies.

The government was taking to task by and large by all the three sections of the participants, viz. the trade unions, the state governments and the employers for its total inaction over the decisions of the last conference held on 3rd and 4th January, 1995, which was reflected in the Action Taken Report itself. The last conference unanimously decided to constitute an Implementation Committee to monitor the implementation of the conference decisions. But the government did not constitute any Implementation Committee. On the contrary, in the Action Taken Report it stated that such committee is not considered necessary, as implementation of the decisions receive "Highest Consideration" of the government and they are "regularly monitored by the Secretary of the ministry as well as the Labour Minister".

Another point on which the government was grilled was non-holding of any meeting of the Standing Labour Committee after the last conference. The government's plea was that it was not possible to fix a date suitable for all. The Standing Labour Committee in fact is to meet every six months in between two ILCs and monitor the implementation of the ILC decisions and discuss other vital problems faced by the workers. The SLC is to finalise the dates and agenda of the ILC also. But this time the SLC was not held at all, and the Labour Ministry unilaterally decided the dates and agenda of the ILC. Naturally, vital issues faced by the working class and other toiling masses like unemployment, closures, sickness, price rise, disinvestment of public sector and privatisation, the mounting discontent and struggles against the NEP, the bank strikes, telecom strike, jute strike, insurance strike, and the industrial strike in Delhi on 23rd November itself, did not find any place in the agenda. These strike struggles alongwith many others during the period where stark realities that coun-

tered the government's misleading propaganda of an apparent peace in the industrial and other sectors over the New Economic Policies.

It is to be recalled that there was a period when the government did not convene any ILC for long 14 years. Due to consistent pressures from the trade unions, it called the ILC in 1988 after 1974. But now, with the continuous erosion of popularity of the ruling party among the masses, and more so after the four years of the New Economic Policies, it hastened to convene the 32nd session of the ILC within only ten months of the 31st session to give some gimmicks to the working class on the eve of elections. The gimmicks that were announced by the Labour Minister in his speech were the so called Pension Scheme, which also was not in the agenda, and the increased rate of compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act. But the fraud of the Pension Scheme was exposed by the CITU, which was supported by some other trade unions. The Labour Minister was compelled to announce modifications and call a meeting of the trade unions on 25th of November. The conference started with the inaugural speech by the Labour Minister followed by the Minister for Rural Development, Shri Jagannath Mishra. The Labour Minister greeted the Director of ILO, Ms. Josephine Karavasil and the Deputy Director, Ms. Lyella Tregmo-Reddy, who attended the conference as Special Invitees. In his speech the Labour Minister mentioned about the Gastlikand Tragedy in Dhanbad, in which 77 workers died recently due to the flooding of the mines, but did not express any condolence. However, accepting the suggestions made by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary CITU, the tragedy was condoled and two minutes silence was observed in standing.

After the Labour Minister's speech, the general discussions started, as usual with the INTUC. Sanjeev Reddy, the INTUC President the government for not holding the meeting of the SLC. He said that the agenda will not satisfy the working class who are facing a lot of problems. He demanded an Employment Policy, functioning of the BIFR so as to revive the sick units instead of liquidating them. He of

course extended his whole hearted support for the Pension Scheme.

A.B. Bardhan, General Secretary of the AITUC assailed the government for not including the vital issues in the agenda like the strike struggles in the various industries. He also criticised the government for bringing in the Pension Scheme through an Ordinance without prior discussions with the trade unions. He called upon the Labour Minister to make modifications in the scheme by 27th November instead of giving the threat of its withdrawal by that time. He also criticised the ordinance on construction workers legislation and pointed out that it was virtually the same that had to be withdrawn earlier. He urged for consideration of Hannan Mollah's Bill which could satisfy the construction workers' demands.

R.K. Bhakt, President of BMS supported the Pension Scheme. He opposed exclusion of employees of hospital and other institutions from the purview of the IB Act. He urged for the implementation of the modernisation process of the NTC Mills and wanted the bonus ceilings to be removed.

Shanti Patel of the HMS called for employment generation, for removal of bonus ceilings, for implementation of agreement on NTC, housing problems of workers and for revamping the BIFR for revival of the sick units.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU made a scathing criticism for canceling the Standing Labour Committee Meeting after postponing twice. He pointed out that this has become a feature of government's functioning, either not to call any tripartite meeting at all, or postponing it and then canceling it altogether. This was happening in all the tripartite committees. Same was the fate of the committee on ILO convention, although the trade unions rejected the inclusion of social clause in multilateral trade but demanded ratification and implementation of the ILO conventions. He pointed out that even the decisions of the first Special Tripartite Committee were not implemented. He also cited the example of the NTC Agreement, which was reached after protracted debate, but still not implemented even after the Cabinet's approval. The utterly callous attitude of the government had compelled the textile workers of the country belonging to all trade unions to decide for a Jail Bharo Action on 12th December at Delhi.

On the issue of Child Labour he made severe criticism of the government's announcement that it will eradicate child labour from the hazardous industries by 2000 AD, while its economic policies are

progressively multiplying the child labour due to growing poverty in the unorganised sector. He made further criticism of the government of not involving the trade unions, but depending on the bureaucrats and the NGOs on the elimination of child labour. At this stage the Labour Minister intervened to comment that the trade unions had done nothing for child labour and the unorganised sector in the last fifty years. Pandhe and all other trade unions protested at such irresponsible comment of the Labour Minister and asserted that the trade unions were struggling for poverty alleviation and betterment of the lot of the workers in the unorganised sector where child labour is prevalent.

Pandhe severely criticised the functioning of the BIFR and commented that in pursuance of the government's policies its only job was to close down the sick industries and throw out the workers jobless in tens of thousands. He demanded abolition both the ceilings on bonus and immediate resolution of the DA formula for the PSUs, on which also the government had made unilateral declaration, which was not acceptable to the trade unions. He further demanded collective bargaining rights to the insurance employees and resolution of the Charter of Demands through negotiations forthwith. On the question of the indefinite strike call given by the bank employees and jute workers he demanded negotiated settlement without delay.

He stoutly opposed the retrograde pension scheme and reiterated the demand of the CITU for pension as a third retirement benefit, apart from the full contributory PF and Gratuity. He made several suggestions to improve the scheme and implementation of pension as third benefit in a phased manner. Pandhe also demanded trade unions rights for workers in the Export Processing Zones.

Achinta Sinha of the UTUC-LS, Sunil Sengupta of the UTUC and D.D. Shastri of the TUCC also opposed the Pension Scheme and demanded improvement in it. N.M. Barot of NLO also said that constructive suggestions to improve the Pension Scheme should be accepted.

The employers' representatives in general were in tune with the Labour Minister's speech and supported the structural adjustment programme in pursuance of the NEP. They supported the Pension Scheme, obviously so, because complete relief to them from making any contribution. It was to their glee that several trade unions had supported it. They opposed abolition of bonus ceilings and the bill on

workers' participation on management. They also defended the policy of squeezing the organised sector, although shed crocodile tears for the unorganised sector, growing poverty, unemployment and child labour.

Among the State Government representatives, West Bengal and Tripura opposed the government policies, which they asserted, were creating more unemployment and closures. West Bengal Labour Secretary mentioned about the letter of Shri Santi Ghatak, the Labour Minister, who could not come due to illness, opposing the Pension Scheme. Several other State Government representatives like Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra made several criticisms of the government's policies in general. Haryana, Goa, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu Government representatives stressed for betterment of the conditions of the workers in the unorganised sector and linked child labour with the growing poverty in this sector.

The entire conference was conducted in such a casual manner, that the general discussions took about one and a half day. The agenda-wise discussions of the specific issues became a casualty and a matter of formality. The drafting committee to draft the conclusion was already constituted before going in for the agenda-wise discussions. M.K. Pandhe of CITU was taken in the Drafting Committee along with the representatives of INTUC, HMS, BMS and one from the employers and one from the Karnataka Government.

Under pressure from the trade unions, only half an hour was allotted for each of the seven agendas. From CITU, Kali Ghosh spoke on Restructuring of Employment Exchanges. He suggested amendment of the Employment Exchange Act so as to give employment through the Employment Exchanges. A.K. Padmanabhan spoke of Vocational Training and demanded that vocational training must be employment oriented and lay stress on women's employment and training of teachers also. Ravindra Shukla spoke on workers participation on management and reiterated the CITU's demand for workers participation in decision makings upto Board level with equal representation and to be elected by secret ballot by all workers. P.K. Ganguly spoke on Social Security for unorganised sector. He gave data of how the government's policies have progressively increased the number of workers in the unorganised sector since 1969 and further increased it since the NEP from 1991, expanding poverty and child labour

in the process. He demanded social security and labour laws in the entire unorganised sector including the home based units in beedi, handloom, powerloom etc. and need based wages and free compulsory schooling for the children.

E. Balanandan intervened in between in the general discussion, as well as in the specific agenda and made valuable contributions. His suggestions for constituting a Monitoring Committee to oversee the implementation of the ILC decisions was supported by all and accepted by the conference. He also gave examples of how in Kerala due the struggles the lot of the unorganised sector workers were being improved and so also child labour was much less in the state.

Heated debate on Pension Scheme

Although not in the agenda, yet the pension issue erupted a heated debate and became the focus of the conference after the draft conclusions, which actually were drafted by the Labour Secretary in the name of the Drafting Committee, were placed before the conference. Disregarding the views of the CITU, the draft conclusion said that the conference welcomed the Pension Scheme. In its over enthusiasm to win the hearts of the workers, the government wanted the stamp of approval of the Pension Scheme by the apex tripartite body to sell the fraud to the workers before the elections. It was a scene not seen for many years, at least since the New Economic Policies were launched and the trade unions got united against the policies, that the government, the employers and a section of the trade union movement stood on one side and the CITU with a few others stood on another side. The section of the trade union movement forgot that the fake Pension Scheme was evolved with fraudulent stuff only to hoodwink the workers with miscalculations and to benefit the employers at their cost, which exactly was the basis and objective of the New Economic Policies against which the trade union movement was developing unitedly. The CITU however stood its stand doggedly, supported by UTUC and UTUC-LS. When the government reluctant even to record the CITU's objections to the words "Welcome the Pension Scheme", despite having called the meeting of the trade unions on 25th November, as there was no consensus on the conference, E. Balanandan asserted the right of dissent in the conference. Ultimately the Labour Minister and all other had to agree to record the CITU's reservations on the issue alongwith UTUC and UTUC-LS.

The conference also unanimously accepted

Balanandan's suggestion for a Monitoring Committee for implementation of the decisions, and convening of the SLC. The SLC date was fixed as September 13, 1996 and the Review Committee (Monitoring Committee) dates were fixed to be held in August. The next ILC would be held on October 24 and 25, 1996. The conference ended after summing up by the Labour Minister.

Conclusions of the 32nd Session of the Indian Labour Conference (ILC): Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi: 23rd and 24th November, 1995

The 32nd session of the Indian Labour Conference met at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on the 23rd and 24th of November, 1995 under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Union Labour Minister Shri G. Venkat Swamy, considered the various issues of concern to labour and industry apart from the items listed in the formal agenda and reached the following conclusions:-

ILC and its bodies and tripartism

1. The principle of tripartism having been the very essence of industrial relations in the country all along, the meetings of the ILC should invariably be preceded by SLC meetings; in order that the ILC decisions are followed up with action in an orderly manner, there should be regular tripartite review committee meetings also; there should be two such review committee meetings, apart from the meeting of the SLC before every ILC meeting; in a year, then, there shall be four tripartite meetings - two of the review committee, one of the SLC and one of the ILC; the meetings of the SLC and ILC should be scheduled well in advance; the next SLC meeting shall take place on 13th September, 1996 and the next ILC meeting on 24th and 25th of October, 1996.

2. The conclusions reached in the ILC should be construed as matters of continuing importance until they are disposed of by appropriate follow up action; and such of the conclusions of the 31st session of the ILC which have not been so far implemented should be pursued including through review committee meetings.

Industrial Relations

3. Considering the economic implications of major industry-wide strikes in sectors such as banking, coal, textiles including Jute etc. Labour Ministry should facilitate prompt and effective negotiated settlement

of disputes in such sectors proactively.

4. The working conditions of labour in Export Processing Zones should be subjected to detailed study so that the workers concerned are given full labour protection as applicable under the various labour laws.

5. Industrial adjudication is being seriously handicapped on account of delays in filling up of the vacancies of Presiding Officers and in providing them adequate secretarial staff support; procedures should be simplified such that these vacancies are filled up promptly and secretarial staff provided adequately.

6. The scope for introduction of uniform minimum wages in the country should be investigated further so that drastic wage disparities do not contribute to flight of industries and sudden unemployment in pockets.

7. Eligibility and calculation ceilings for bonus under the Payment of Bonus Act should be scrapped. (Employers have expressed reservations and wanted total review of bonus, while Trade Union Organisations of workers are unanimously in favour of scrapping the above mentioned ceilings, considering that they militate against skilled workers who are normally in comparatively higher wage segments).

Public sector enterprises

8. The revised DA formula which has been brought under implementation for the benefit of the employees of public sector enterprises should be further discussed.

9. The managements of public sector enterprises should be given full functional autonomy including on issues relating to wage settlement.

Economic reforms, industrial restructuring and social dimensions

10. The scheme for NTC restructuring should be implemented; the situation of payment of idle wages and depreciation of machinery needs to be emergently terminated.

11. Financial support for jute mills restructured on cooperative basis should be extended without delays.

12. The BIFR should be restructured with experts from the areas of management and labour; the BIFR procedures should be significantly simplified to cut down delays in the restructuring of sick enterprises inordinate delays that occur now in disposal of winding up and liquidation proceedings should be cut down by necessary simplification of laws.

13. Detailed and comprehensive studies of sick-

ness in industrial enterprises should be undertaken for evolving appropriate remedial and pre-emptive measures.

14. The delivery of essential commodities through the public distribution system should be streamlined with special emphasis on ensuring adequacy of supplies.

Social Security

15. While the pension scheme for subscribers to the provident fund under the Employees' Provident Fund Act is welcome, it should be further modified, taking into consideration the various constructive suggestions that have emerged in the series of consultations which the Labour Minister has had with various interest groups; the details of the pension scheme should also be widely publicised removing the apprehensions that are being entertained in various quarters; the steps efficient management of the pension fund and for prompt and accurate disbursement of pension dues should be taken. (CITU, UTUC AND UTUC(LS) have expressed their reservations, while INTUC, AITUC, HMS, BMS, NLO and TUC have unanimously welcomed the Scheme)

16. There are serious cases of default of gratuity payments; measures should be taken to ensure pre-emption of such defaults apart from settlement of defaulted dues.

17. Vigilance machinery in the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation should be tightened up particularly at the cutting edge level so that the subscribers receive delivery of services without let or hindrance.

18. The scope for introduction of unemployment insurance should be investigated so as to give protection against job losses.

19. The Labour Ministry should present a status paper on the existing social security schemes under implementation in the country, particularly reflecting the experience of various states and bring the matter for consideration in the SLC; the scope for extension of the existing social security laws and systems applicable to the organised sector as well to the unorganised sector should also be gone into.

Employment

20. Detailed studies should be undertaken in various sectors in respect of the employment generation; the progress in promoting employment in agro-based industrial sector should be studied too; and special measures including in terms of reviewing the existing laws and amending them where appropriate should be taken to enhance employment of women.

21. The issue of modernisation of and restructur-

ing of employment exchanges should first be examined in a special meeting of the State Directors of Employment and thereafter in the next meeting of the State Labour Ministers; subsequently, the matter should be brought for consideration before the SLC and ILC.

Vocational Training

22. The vocational training system should be modernised; new courses relevant to employment market should be introduced; such courses should have more practical orientation; and special emphasis should be laid on multi-skilling the trainees; the proposals presented on the agenda for the restructuring of the vocational training system should first be discussed in the National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) and then brought before the Standing Labour Committee.

Environment and Labour Protection

23. The measures for environment protection have wide ranging implications for labour. So the workers' organisations should be given adequate representation in Government bodies in charge of establishing and regulating environment standards.

Child Labour

24. Trade unions should be more extensively involved in implementation of schemes for elimination of child labour; child labour elimination schemes under implementation should also be brought under tripartite review; the Child Labour Advisory Board should meet more regularly; special incentives for parents of children removed from employment should be provided; and State Govts. may be empowered to prohibit employment of children in non-hazardous occupations as well (outside the scheduled hazardous employments and processes), keeping in view the local circumstances.

Legislation

25. The issue relating to the notification of section 2(j) of the I.D. Act being one on which employers and workers are not agreed (employers are for notifying this provision and workers are not, and a few State Govts. want notification after alternative grievance redressal systems are established), it may be taken up for detailed consideration before the Standing Labour Committee.

26. The employers are opposed to the Workers' Participation Bill and they are for bipartite participatory mechanisms; workers want the legal framework; the Bill, the amendments that have been proposed by various quarters and the report of the Parliamentary Committee will be discussed further in the SLC after consideration in the review committee.

27. The proposal for the enactment of law for giving protection to agricultural workers should be presented for tripartite consultation in the SLC.

Concluding Statement of Labour Minister

I want to conclude by saying that I had a very pleasant interaction with all State Labour Ministers, my trade union colleagues, the representatives of the employers and the officials of the State Governments and Central Government over the last two days. Though the agenda for the Conference was structured to cover amendments of I.D. Act exempting certain categories of services/employment from the purview of the I.D. Act, Social Security for unorganised sector, Restructuring and Vocational Training and Employment Exchanges and discussion on the participation of the Workers in the Management Bill 1990, deliberations were held on all aspects directly related to working class. Useful suggestions have been received in respect of the problems of sick industry, enhancing the scope of social security to unorganised sector, making the mechanism of tripartism more effective, elimination of child labour, restructuring of vocational training and employment exchanges etc. which will be examined and action taken to make them effective, wherever found feasible.

I have also agreed to have a Review Committee of ILC which will review of the progress of implementation of the decision taken in the deliberations held during the ILC. Regarding the proposal to exempt certain categories of services/employments from the purview of the I.D. Act, a decision has been taken to postpone its consideration to the next SLC meeting and will be included as a part of the comprehensive amendment of the I.D. Act. Problems relating to the beedi industry arising out of certain concessions granted to mini cigarettes have also been discussed. I propose to hold discussion with representatives of workers employers and Governments on this subject at a later date.

On the issue of restructuring employment exchanges, certain suggestions have been made by representatives of employers, which I have agreed to discuss in the next SLC meeting with representatives of Trade Unions, State Governments and Employers.

CITU REITERATES OPPOSITION TO GOVT. PENSION SCHEME: URGES FOR MAKING IT OPTIONAL

Following the sharp difference surfaced over the

Govt. draft on pension scheme and the related Ordinance in the Indian Labour Conference, the Union Labour Minister called a meeting of Central Trade Unions on 25th November 1995 to discuss the matter.

In the meeting while CITU expressed firm opposition to the Govt. proposal alongwith UTUC(LS) and UTUC and reiterated their demand for pension as third retirement benefit, all other trade unions present welcomes the Govt. pension scheme and the Ordinance impounding almost half of the P.F. generation to the so called pension corpus to ensure a meagre return as pension.

CITU put forth concrete suggestions to restructure the pension scheme to ensure benefit in real terms for the workers as a whole. CITU also urged upon the Labour Minister that if at all Govt. is keen to implement their own scheme the same should not be forced on the workers and be made optional for all the workers so that common workers are allowed to decide whether they would accept the scheme. CITU also proposed that let the workers be allowed option establishmentwise of the scheme in a particular establishment and decided by the option of the majority of the workers of the said establishment.

CITU expressed its dismay over Labour Minister's refusal to accept even the just proposal of CITU in the given situation and his insistence for imposing the scheme on the workers which would put mass of the workers into utter loss.

CITU calls upon the working class all over the country to arise their powerful voice against design of the Government.

□

Book Post