



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Uphold the Banner of October Revolution

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions greets the working class of all countries of the world on the occasion of the 74th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The October Revolution led by Lenin and the Communist Party of Soviet Union (Bolshevik) founded the first working class ruled state in the world overthrowing the capitalist-landlord class under Czar. The working class led and guided by the Communist Party thereafter successfully built socialism in Soviet Union. The successive achievements in socialist construction were guided by the scientific doctrine of socialism and the communist party wedded to it.

Immediately after the inception of this first state of the working class, the imperialists, true to their anti-working class and anti-socialist character, conspired and militarily intervened to bring down this newly born state and subvert their endeavour to build socialism. But the working class under the leadership of Com. Lenin, countered all the nefarious designs of imperialism and laid the basis for making the erstwhile backward country into a most developed country of the world through successive achievements in socialist construction.

After the death of Com. Lenin, it was Com. Stalin, who upholding the Leninist principles defended the new born socialist state from all sorts of attacks from the imperialist and reactionary forces. The US and British imperialists who egged on the fascist Hitler to attack and destroy the Soviet Union, were forced to make joint front with the Soviet Union to fight against fascism, when Hitler turned against the European powers. The working class and the people of Soviet Union rose like one man against the Nazi hordes and not only gave Hitler a crushing defeat, but also hoisted the red flag over Berlin. History has recorded that twenty million people of the Soviet Union sacrificed their lives in the Second World War against fascism. Thus the first state of the working class saved humanity from the domination of fascism.

The historic victory of the Soviet working class over fascism led to the downfall of colonialism.

establishment of socialist states in Eastern Europe and victory of national liberation movements in a number of countries including India. It further led to the success of the Great Chinese revolution and the Cuban revolution. Socialist state was formed in North Korea, and the US predators were defeated in Vietnam leading to the establishment of a socialist state in this backward country. The working class became the ruling class in one-third of the world, liberating half of the world population from the yoke of imperialism bringing them under socialism. It changed the correlation of class forces in favour of the working class and the toiling people and pushed world capitalism into a phase of general crisis.

While successfully fighting against imperialism the trade unions and the working class at the same time were fully devoted in the socialist constructions. When the whole capitalist world was doomed under the great depression of the 1930s, it was only the Soviet Union, which was free from all crisis and recorded great material uplift for the people and accelerated growth rate with a strong industrial base, which beat all previous records. It was the first state in the world which could enshrine the Right to Work in the Constitution and solved the problem of unemployment. It was the first state that gave land to the tillers, free education, free health care, housing, subsidised food, all social security measures including old age pension and stabilised the prices, which no capitalist country can ensure even at the present moment of their so called advance. The gains ensured in the Soviet Union boosted the struggles of the working class all over the world against capitalism.

The working class of the Soviet Union rebuilt the war ravaged economy in an astonishingly short span of time and became a world working class power posing a challenge to the US imperialists. Over 50 percent of the infrastructure of the industries were destroyed in the war. Agriculture was severely damaged. Rebuilding of such war ravaged industrial infrastructure in such a short time was a wonder in the history of social development in

Joint Countrywide Strike on Nov. 29

world. Its increased economic and material strength helped strengthening the economies of all other socialist countries and the newly liberated countries of the third world including India. It boosted the class struggles of the working class in the third world countries and the advanced capitalist countries against exploitation and class domination.

The foreign policy of the first working class state based on Lenin's Decree of Peace became a powerful factor to wage struggle for peace against imperialism and linked it with national liberation struggles and the progress of Soviet Union and all other socialist states. The spectacular development of the Soviet Union, its defence capabilities to safeguard socialism acted as a deterrent to the US imperialists' drive for the world domination and it saved humanity from another global war. The Soviet support to Non-Aligned movement was a great help to it to contain the depredations of imperialism in the third world countries.

However, some deviations from socialist principles crept in despite successful socialist constructions in Soviet Union. Krushchev underestimated the strength of imperialism. With deviations from the principles of scientific socialism, fissures started in the process of continuous socialist construction in commensurate with the march of time. Revisionist ideas retarded the development of the Soviet Union and permeated into the trade union movement too, and blunted the socialist consciousness of the workers. The process which was not rectified, helped the penetration of Western concept of democracy, slowly emasculating the working class of the revolutionary spirit of the October Revolution.

It culminated at the reforms being introduced by Gorbachov. In the name of reforming socialism by Perestroika and Glasnost, the Soviet Union is now being taken to the path of capitalism, dismantling the socialist gains step by step. The six years of Perestroika and Glasnost witnessed not only complete deviation from the principles of socialism, but witnessed mounting offensive against socialism, and the socialist past. It helped the counter revolutionaries, backed by imperialism to subvert the socialist states in the Eastern Europe and undermine socialism in the Soviet Union.

On the 7th Anniversary of the October Revolution the working class, the toiling millions and the progressive forces all over the world watch with great anguish the desecration of the monuments of Marx, Engels, Lenin and other beloved leaders of the October Revolution by the imperialist backed counter revolutionaries. The working class watches with great anguish the banning of the Communist Party and forfeiture of its properties by those who glibly talk of democracy. They pull down the red flag, the symbol of the revolutionary pledge of the working class and worker-peasant alliance and shamelessly wave the Czarist flag in the name of expansion of democracy, and are singing to the tune of US imperialism. The working class watches with

serious concern the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which was built with their blood and sweat and which was consolidated through years of struggle and sacrifice by millions.

But the working class knows from its own experience that capitalism cannot solve their problems. Despite an orchestrated campaign by world capitalism and their collaborators about the virtues of capitalism, world capitalism is under severe recession. Mounting unemployment, inflation, closures and sickness are plaguing each and every advanced capitalist country. Growing poverty is stalking the third world countries pursuing the capitalist path of development except in China and other socialist countries.

The severity of the unemployment in the advanced capitalist countries can be seen from the following figures, which represent the growth of unemployment in just one year :

	1990	1991
	(In percentage)	
Australia	7.3	9.8
Belgium	8.2	8.6
Canada	8.3	10.6
France	8.9	9.5
Germany	6.4	7.2
Italy	9.7	9.9
Japan	2.1	2.2
Spain	15.0	15.6
Sweden	1.6	3.1
Switzerland	0.5	1.3
U.K.	5.8	8.5
USA	5.6	6.8

Mounting attacks on the trade union and democratic rights of the workers and on their living conditions have led to rising struggles. In all capitalist countries rights of the working class and all social security measures are being taken away. Struggles against unemployment, price rise and for defence of trade union rights are sweeping in all the advanced capitalist and third world countries. The working class have now tasted the fruits of market economy and coming out in massive number in agitation in all the erstwhile socialist states, which have switched over to the path of capitalism. Prospect of further struggle is growing. Capitalism cannot be the answer to solve the problems faced by the working class. They have to fight for socialism for their solution.

Desperately trying to wriggle out from the deepening crisis, imperialism led by the US imperialists are trying to get the third world countries in their neo-colonial net of exploitation through their international financial agencies. India is one of the best examples. The US imperialists have forced the Narasimha Rao Government to tune its economic and industrial policies as per the demands of the IMF, posing a threat to its economic sovereignty
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AGAINST THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

Make the 29th November Strike a Total Success

E. Balanandan

The workers and employees of the country are seriously preparing for the success of one day all-India strike on November 29 protesting against the economic and industrial policy of the Government of India as per the call given by the all-India Convention of trade unions held at New Delhi on September 17, 1991. As decided in this convention state-wise, industry-wise and areawise joint conventions are being held throughout the country. The getting together of all sections of the workers and employees—the public sector workers including officers, private sector industrial workers, the bank and insurance men and officers, State Government and Central Government employees including railwaymen—irrespective of the political and organisational difference is creating a new confidence and enthusiasm among them in fighting back the retrograde policies of the Government. Though the BMS and the INTUC were officially not present in the All India convention, all embracing nature of the offensive brought many of their unions to move together with others. Thus an unprecedented unity in action is being forged on a national scale.

Soon after Narasimha Rao minority government came into power at the Centre they started saying that we cannot survive without an immediate external assistance and that too from the International Monetary Fund. In their anxiety to placate the IMF, World Bank, they began implementing the conditionalities proposed by them even without waiting for informing the Parliament. We are a sovereign nation and our Parliament is supreme. But under the new dispensation, 'DOs' 'DON'Ts' are being allowed to be dictated from abroad by the IMF. Mr. Manmohan Singh, The Union Minister of Finance, a "World Bank product", is assiduously arguing that the Bank-Fund prescriptions are the best remedies for all our ills, whose loyalty to the Bank is evidently more than that to our own country. The big monopolists of the country are competing with each other for complimenting Mr. Manmohan Singh for giving up the 'populist policies' and boldly going ahead with the Fund-Bank directives.

The secret airlifting of 46.9 tonnes of gold to England from our reserves for getting a loan, lowered our credit worthiness around the world. The devaluation of the rupee to the tune of 20 to 21 per cent under pressure alone brought up our foreign exchange liability to the extent of Rs. 300 crores, besides making our imports costlier while our goods fetch lesser amount for exports.

The Statesman daily dated October 18, editorially commented: "the devaluation of the first instruction

of their IMF structural reform strategy is the easiest to implement because it affects the domestic interest while benefitting the lender" The industrial and trade policy prescriptions ensure full freedom for transnational monopolists and to Indian monopoly capital and open the way for a fullfledged attack against the working class and other sections of the people. Industrial licensing is to be discontinued and big business can invest in industries of their choice. The MRTP Act has been dismantled; the investment restrictions on monopolies removed.

Foreign equity in companies raised to 51 per cent, and 100 per cent equity is also allowed for export oriented companies through which foreign monopolists are allowed to hold large assets in the country and to pump out huge profits. Foreign tie-ups in technology gets automatic clearance and the result would be that indigenous technology may go idle and R&D base will be narrowed. Private sector will be allowed in all the reserved sectors except a few. Private investment in the public sector is going to be allowed and closing down of the public sector units which are in the red. Foreign and Indian big companies are allowed for 24 per cent participation in small scale sector, which will enable the monopolists to squeeze this sector also.

New exit policy ensures freedom of closure for the employers together with a right to send out 5 to 10 per cent of the work force without any legal constraints.

In sum the whole range of these policies are designed to clear the way for unrestricted penetration of foreign companies in our economy and to ensure complete control of the economy by the big business tycoons and allow them to grab the public sector wealth and to do away with our planned development strategy as a whole. In this scheme the working class is the main target of attack. Whatever little rights and privileges they have acquired through bitter struggle are sought to be smuggled out at a stretch. Increasing insecurity of jobs, closures and retrenchment will become the order of the day. Lakhs and lakhs of workers are going to be thrown out to the ranks of the unemployed destitutes.

On the 17th of August 1991 when the trade union leaders of the country met the Finance Minister they told the Minister that these policy announcements he made on issues which are of vital concern for the working class, without consulting the trade unions were highly objectionable and expressed their dissatisfaction and made it explicitly clear that they are

going to oppose these policies with whatever strength they can muster. Except the BMS everyone was having the same view.

After hearing the leaders, the Finance Minister assured them that he will be meeting the trade union leaders as soon as the Parliament session is over.

In the meantime the Government of India came out with a Presidential Ordinance on September 27, amending the provisions of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1967. In the proposed ordinance the concept of Monopoly itself is removed. Those monopolies who were covered by the parent act are now free and they were given the unfettered right to expansion in any sector of the industry and economy. Even in USA there are anti-trust amalgamation regulations. But here in India all such restrictions are being removed. Another obnoxious provision is made that the public sector companies are brought under the purview of restrictive trade practices provision. The distinction between public sector and private sector is removed. It is obvious that all obstacles will be created in the development of public sector using this provision.

When the working class came out to the fore against these policies of sell out the Government was forced to say that they have no intention of bringing down the 'commanding heights' of the public sector and no intention of privatisation. They had to publicly announce in the Parliament that the public sector banks will not be privatised, when the bank employees and officers declared direct action.

But we find again that Mr. Manmohan Singh announced in Bangkok on October 16, after the IMF meeting that he is going to close down all the unviable public sector companies. He also said that the foreign banks will have no difficulty to operate in the country and they will be allowed to compete with the Indian banks and private sector banks will also be encouraged in India. These declarations after the discussions with the Fund officials need to be noted. The Times of India dated October 18, editorially commented that: "Going by the reports of the press conference of the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh in Bangkok on Wednesday, the Union Government appears to be *rushing headlong into an exit policy for industry without public debate or any effort at evolving a political consensus*". (Emphasis added) It continues: "It is significant that Dr. Singh chose to make his pronouncements in Bangkok towards the conclusion of the IMF-World Bank meeting—a somewhat unfortunate venue that is bound to provoke an adverse domestic reaction."

The new declaration made by the Minister outside the country and before the masters of Bank-Fund again goes to prove the fact that Mr. Manmohan Singh is a World Bank devotee.

The USA and the IMF demand that the entire service sector including the Bank and insurance i.e. all our financial institutions, should be privatised and the international banking and insurance companies should be allowed unrestricted freedom to operate inside the country. It is too much on our part to think that Mr. Manmohan Singh is opposing it, on the contrary he will be too willing to accommodate the IMF view.

The banking industry was nationalised after a big debate and the objectives of nationalisation were spelt out as under: "the banking system touches the lives of millions and has to be inspired by large social purpose and has to subserve national priorities and objectives, such as rapid growth of agriculture, small industries and exports, raising of employment levels, encouragement of new entrepreneurs and the development of backward areas." The banking industry has grown leaps and bounds and developed and started branches at every nook and corner of the country to serve the public. In the background of the private banks' failures, our people believed in the public sector banks whatever little transactions they have to make. But now 82 per cent of the bank deposits are from the households sector; organised private sector investments in banks, only 9 per cent and around 8 per cent by the public sector. Now the private sector monopolists wish to grab the banking sector too. Under the pressure of IMF, the Government of India is going to accept this though they are claiming on the contrary.

The Railway Minister has gone on record that he is going to allow private sector in wagon building and other areas. Though the railways are kept under reserved list, opening for the private sector is being assured.

The Electricity Supply Act was hurriedly got amended to accommodate the private sector in electricity generation and distribution. In the amended law itself it is assured handsome profits for the private capitalists while the public sector like State Electricity Boards are to cater to the needs of the people on the basis of government's policy perspective i.e., in the agriculture much less than the production cost and in some areas free of costs. The small scale industries and the weaker sections of society are being supplied power under the government direction at less than the production cost. That is the main reason for the losses in the State Electricity Boards. The pricing restrictions are also there for the Electricity Boards. Here again, we find government is going whole hog for privatisation.

Now-a-days it has become a fashion for every Minister to declare daily his intention of privatisation of some sector. Mr. Chidambaram went recently to USA for official discussion about Intellectual Property Rights and the Patent Laws. It is reported

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29th November Industrial Strike

Appeal to All Trade Unions by Sponsoring Committee

[We are publishing here under the appeal issued by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions to the Working Class to make the countrywide Industrial Strike on November 29 a big success—Ed.]

To voice its firm opposition to the Economic and Industrial Policies introduced by the minority Congress(I) Government at the Centre, the Sponsoring Committee organised two all India conventions at Delhi on 16th and 17th September 1991. The convention of 6th was exclusively of the public sector workers and officers and that of 17th was a general one participated by various Central Trade Unions, Industrial Federations of public and private sectors, confederations of Central and State Government employees including Banks, Insurance, Railways, Port & Dock, Post & Telecommunications etc.

The Conventions unanimously decided to observe an one-day countrywide industrial general strike on 29th November 1991 to be preceded by a massive 'Jail Bharo' movement throughout the country on 18th November, 1991.

The Sponsoring Committee of the conventions appeals to the entire trade union movement of the country irrespective of affiliation to extend active support to the decisions of the convention, and make all out preparations for making the strike and 'Jail Bharo' programmes a historic success.

The Committee further appeals to all sections of workers and employees in public and private sectors, in the unorganised sector and the employees of both central and state Governments to join this massive countrywide industrial bandh and swamp into the propaganda action through various means of campaign programmes like leafletting, postering, wall writing, squatting, gate meetings, street corner meetings, procession etc in preparation of the strike.

Conventions should be jointly organised at local, district state and regional levels to mobilise all sections of workers to join the strike on 29th November. Apart from these conventions, the all India convention has specifically decided that there should be joint conventions at all the important Industrial Centres of the country which shall be attended by the leaders of the Central Trade Unions and National Industrial Federations. The industrial centres selected for such convention are Cochin, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam, Madras, Bhilai, Indore, Baroda, Rourkela, Durgapur, Dhanbad and Kanpur, besides other centres that may be decided by the concerned trade unions. All these conventions should be completed by 15th November 1991.

Yours sincerely,
Sponsoring Committee

1. All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), 2. Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), 3. Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), 4. Trade Union Co-ordination Centre (TUCC), 5. United Trade Union Centre (Lenin Sarani) (UTUC-LS), 6. United Trade Union Centre (UTUC), 7. Indian Trade Union Congress (ITUC), 8. National Confederation of Officers' Association (NCOA), 9. All India State Government Employees Federation (AISGEF), 10. Joint Action Front, Bangalore, 11. Confederation of Central Government Employees and Unions, 12. Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Association of India (FMRAI), 13. Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI), 14. All India Insurance Employees Association (AIIEA), 15. Fertilizer Workers Federation of India (FWFI), 16. All India Railway Employees Confederation (AIREC), 17. All India Reserve Bank Employees Association (AIRBEA), 18. All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF), 19. All India Defence Employees Federation, 20. A.I.C.A.E.A, 21. All India Bank Officers Confederation (AIBOC), 22. STC Officers Association, 23. Air Corporation Employees Union (ACEU), 24. Income Tax Employees Federation (ITEF), 25. General Insurance Employees Association (GIEA) 26. All India Petroleum Workers Federation (AIPWF), 27. Labour Progressive Federation (LPF) 28. National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE), 29. All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA), 30. All India Reserve Bank Employees Association (AIRBEA).

Resolution of the 27th September Rally Left-NF Parties

The parties of the National Front and the Left who took the initiative to organise this rally congratulate the lakhs of people, workers, peasants, agricultural workers, youth, students, women drawn from various communities (Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and others) who have assembled here in the capital of India to participate in this massive demonstration to express their protest against those policies of the Congress(I) Government headed by Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao which hit the common men.

On September 29 the Narasimha Rao Government completes hundred days in office. The Congress(I) election manifesto had promised many things to be achieved within hundred days of its return to power. Particularly "to roll back prices to the levels obtaining in July 1990" of several consumer goods.

Not only prices have not been rolled back, prices are galloping ahead. While the wholesale price index stood at 191.4 on June 22, 1991 the day after P. V. Narasimha Rao took over as the prime minister, for the week ending September 3, 1991, the latest available, it has risen to 209. Inflation rate is now accelerating, the latest figure being 15.6.

It is to protest against the heaping of miseries on the toiling people through the Congress(I) Government's latest policies—the economic, industrial and foreign trade policies, the two-step devaluation by 20 per cent, the railway and general budgets—that lakhs of the people have marched to Delhi on this day, September 27.

This rally demands :

1. Roll back the price rise by implementing a public distribution scheme, covering both urban and rural areas, which will supply all essential commodities at fixed rates to the poorer sections of the society.
2. Put a stop to closures and retrenchment. Create employment guarantee schemes, food for work, facilities for self-employment, etc. Right to work be enshrined in the constitution.
3. Halt privatisation in vital spheres of the economy. Democratise and de-bureaucratise the public sector.
4. Ensure workers' participation in management.
5. Implement effective land reform measures; plug the loopholes in existing ceiling laws; distribute all land above ceiling and other surplus land to the landless; update all land records and pattas; enact central legislation for agricultural workers ensuring fair wages and better living conditions.

6. End atrocities on dalits, minorities and women. Render social justice.
7. Ensure remunerative price for peasants' produce.
8. Restructure taxes so that the burden falls on the affluent, and resources are effectively mopped up; curtail unproductive expenditure.
9. Initiate active steps against black money and blackmarketeers.
10. Implement one rank one pension for ex-servicemen.
11. No bowing to the conditionalities imposed by the I.M.F.

This rally gives a clarion call to the Indian people to carry forward the battle to reverse these policies of the Congress(I) Government and to secure relief for the common man.

Joint Committees of National Front and Left Parties should be formed at the state and district levels to organise a nationwide campaign to achieve this aim.

We appeal to all sections of our toiling people to join this battle and help it in every possible way.

On 29th November Industrial Strike

In another resolution the rally congratulated the trade unions for deciding to observe a countrywide industrial strike on Nov. 29 against the economic policies of the Government and extended full support to it.

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through price reductions etc and workers (including guaranteed employment)."

Again, the question of labour-management relations has been put by Dr. George P. Boulden of UK with the following words "Creating productivity workplaces and reaping the benefits offered by modern technology, computer systems, managing method etc. depend on good management focusing on enabling the people resource. In practice, this means managers actively encouraging such things as cross functional focussed teams, realistic planning, open communication, participative problem solving etc. To achieve this requires a style change: organisations must move to the middle ground of democracy with the focus on involvement and participation."

CITU Denounces Finance Minister's Assurance to IMF-World Bank to Close Down Non-Viable PSUs

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement on October 17 :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions denounces the statement made by the Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh in the IMF-World Bank meeting at Bangkok that non-viable public sector units will be closed down even without referring them to the BIFR. It was a total surrender to the IMF-World Bank, offering to sell out the country's economic sovereignty without making the least resistance.

The same supine attitude was seen of the Finance Minister and the Government of India before the US Trade Representative Miss Carla Hills a few days ago at Delhi, when she dictated the US terms of Super 301 and Special 301 to the Government.

It is to be noted that the public sector as a whole is still contributing to the tune of 80 percent to the economic growth of the country. The losses suffered in some units are solely because of the Government's policies and rampant corruption at the top. The Government refused to take cognizance of this fact, and on the contrary victimised the trade union functionaries whenever they identified such causes of losses.

It is further reprehensible for the Finance Minister to say that he was trying for a consensus through active involvement of the political parties and the trade unions. It is to be recalled that in his meeting with the trade unions on 17th August, all the trade unions except the BMS totally opposed and rejected these sweeping economic policies of the Government and warned him of united actions. Subsequently a joint trade union call has been given for a country wide industrial strike on November 29.

Simultaneously came the Railway Minister's statement that massive privatisation will be resorted to in the railways including manufacture of coaches and wagons and leasing out Railway lands to the private parties.

It is now clear, as was warned by the CITU earlier, that the IMF-World Bank having dictated the economic policies to the Government, are now supervising and commanding over the Government to practically implement these measures. Disinvestment of Government equity by 20 percent in public sectors, throwing the nationalised banks open to competition against the multinationals, lifting the temporary curb on imports, reduction of fiscal deficits, etc. all are the stiff conditionalities of the IMF and tantamount to dismantling of the public sector and a national self-reliant economy step by step and surrender of the country's economic sovereignty.

The situation breeds extreme right reaction in the

country and its subservience to imperialist pressure. All this portends a serious danger to our capacity to pursue independent policies.

The CITU calls upon all its State Committees and unions and appeals to all other trade unions to launch full scale preparations unitedly to make the countrywide industrial bandh on November 29 a big success to force the Government to retrace from its path.

Steel Minister Assures Early IISCO Modernisation

The leaders of all the five operating trade unions of Indian Iron & Steel Company, Burnpur, West Bengal jointly met the Minister-in-Charge of Steel Shri Santosh Mohan Dev at New Delhi on 7.10.91 and submitted a memorandum demanding immediate clearance of the modernisation programme of IISCO to save the oldest steel plant of the country from inevitable ruin.

The delegation was accompanied by M. K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU, Shri J. K. Kar Chowdhury (CITU), Shri H. Chattaraj (AITUC), Shri Bimanesh Mukherjee (BMS) Shri S. Swaroopa (HMS), were the other members of the delegation.

The memorandum submitted to the Minister and jointly signed by all the five functioning trade unions in IISCO viz ABK Metal & Engg, Workers Union (CITU) Asansol Iron & Steel Workers, Union (INTUC) United Iron & Steel Workers Union (AITUC), Burnpur Ispat Karmachari Sangh (BMS) Iron & Steel & Engg. Workers Union (HMS) highlighted the inordinate delay in commencement of modernisation process of IISCO owing to indiscipline of the successive governments in the Centre. The trade unions and the workers of IISCO always extended their full cooperation for the move for modernisation of IISCO from the beginning which was expressed in the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 12.7.89 by the unions with Steel Authority of India Ltd in the backdrop of proposed modernisation programme of IISCO. But many of such provisions of MOU dated 12.7.89 were violated by the management subsequently although number of departments of the plant have been phased out as a preparatory move towards modernisation of the plant.

The memorandum stressed and the delegation impressed upon the Minister that the modernisation of IISCO plant was warranted since long and since its take over by the Govt, the same has been sidelined by the authorities inspite of the consistent persuasion by the workers and the unions and bungling of the successive Govts with the modernisation of IISCO is pushing the plant towards inevi-

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CITU Denounces Government Ordinance to Amend MRTP Act

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following press statement on September 28 :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses its strong opposition of the Presidential Ordinance amending the MRTP Act 1969, solely designed to retard the growth, expansion and even normal functioning of public sector companies and give more liberal concession to monopoly houses.

The Ordinance, the CITU considers, is a natural fall out of the disastrous economic and industrial policies of the Government at IMF and World Bank dictate to weaken the very foundation of the Indian economy. The ordinance waved the ceiling of asset hitherto provided in the MRTP Act by freeing a large number of monopoly companies from the purview of the Act, thereby enabling them to operate freely in their monopolistic design liberated from Government control even in areas specifically reserved for the public sector. In fact such freedom would license the monopoly houses to garner more restrictive practices much to the detriment of the interest of the economy and the consumer.

On the other hand, the presidential ordinance while removing restriction on the operation of the monopoly houses, imposed veritable restrictions on the functioning of the public sector companies, in so far as PSU are brought under the purview of the MRTP Act. It would create in particular compulsion for the public sector companies to get clearance from the MRTP Commission for their modernisation, capacity expansion and other developmental programmes. And such restrictions, with the Government and the bureaucracy already heavily loaded against the public sector would severely retard the functioning and hence the very existence of the public sector.

The CITU, firmly maintains that the public sector companies having been installed mainly in the core sectors, to establish a strong foundation for the industrial economy of a developing country like India can in no way be brought at par with the private sector industries so far as the MRTP Act is concerned.

The Government's policy decisions designed to further dilute the core sector and allowing monopoly and multinationals in the most important field of power generation, steel etc and simultaneous inclusion of the existing public sector companies under the purview of MRTP Act, is aimed at giving dominance of the private sector including the multinationals over the public sector and further paving the way towards its denigration and subvert a self-reliant economy and national planning.

The CITU demands of the Government to reverse such disastrous policies and withdraw the provision of inclusion of public sector under purview

of MRTP Act. The CITU further calls upon the working class and all public sector workers irrespective of affiliations to unitedly join the massive countrywide strike action on November 29, which has already been called by the trade unions to resist such nefarious policies of the Government and appeals to all patriotic and democratic sections of the people to support the movement.

CITU Opposes the Move to Privatisise Air Lines and ITDC

The Secretariat of Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement to the press on October 5 :

The CITU strongly protests the move to privatise the Indian Airlines, Air India and the ITDC chain of hotels. The Union Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism has reportedly said that the Government proposes to invite the private sector including the foreign firms to participate with a greater role in the operation of Air Transport and the Department of Tourism Development. The proposal is being placed before the Central Cabinet for approval.

Thus it is clear that the Government is moving forward in a calculated manner for implementing the anti-national industrial policy formulated by it at the dictate of the Fund-Bank-Multinational Companies nexus.

The firm opposition demonstrated by lakhs of toiling people through the joint rally at Delhi on 27th September 1991 and the decision to go on a nationwide industrial strike on November 29 taken jointly by the trade unions in a massive convention held at Delhi on 17th September 1991 against the New Industrial and Economic Policies of the minority Congress (I) Government is being ignored by the Central Government. The CITU warns the Government that its failure to take lesson from the opposition of the trade unions and the Left-N.F. parties will not be tolerated by the people of the country and will lead to further massive movement.

The CITU appeals to the working class of the country to raise its powerful voice against the move to privatise the airlines and tourism and prepare to defeat the move at all costs for the sake of defending the public sector and self-reliant economy of our country.

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table ruin endangering the economic fabric of the entire area, besides the fate of 20000 workers of the plant.

The delegation demanded immediate clearance of the schemes for modernisation, expansion and ancillarisation of the IISCO without any further delay. The Minister of Steel while referring to various constraints and difficulties in the matter assured of his utmost effort for early clearance of the modernisation project for IISCO.

M RTP Ordinance : Vicious Attack on Public Sector

M. K. Pandhe

The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (Amendment) Ordinance issued by the President of India on September 27 removed all restrictions on monopoly houses relating to commencement of new undertakings, expansion of existing capacity of production, amalgamation or merger of units with a view to reducing competition and increasing control over the market, takeover of the units, appointment of directors of registration of undertakings. It attacked the public sector undertakings by bringing them under the purview of the act.

The MRTP Commission appointed under the act failed to check the growth of monopoly houses during the last 22 years of units operation. There is no wonder that the total assets of 20 big business houses reached a colossal figure of Rs. 30,000 crore during 1988-89. While cynically justifying the withdrawal of the so called restrictions, the Union Minister for Company Affairs, P Kumaramangalam, also stated that "in no way has it been operational to keep the concentration of wealth down." However, instead of giving some teeth to the act of check further growth of monopolies Government of India, by the ordinance, has made the MRTP Act totally meaningless for the monopoly houses against whom the act was supposed to take action.

Removal of Assets Limit : By statutorily removing the assets limit of Rs. 100 crore for a business house to be considered a monopoly, the government has removed all the monopoly houses from the purview of the act. After the ordinance the act will only be applicable to the so called restrictive trade practices and practically no industrial house will be treated as a monopoly house for the purpose of the act.

The Indian business houses were always demanding that public sector should be brought under the purview of the act. It was intended only to restrict the growth of public sector undertakings, and now the government has once again yielded to the demand of monopoly capital. As the Financial Express editorially commented on September 30: "It has taken several years for the government to yield to this entirely legitimate demand". It further expressed the glee of the big business houses by stating that the "announcement marks the successful end of one battle."

The public sector today is subjected to scrutiny by the Committee of Public Undertakings of Parliament. Every action of the management could be questioned in Parliament. Thus the public sector was brought under some sort of social control. However, the private sector was completely free from such control and no action of big business houses could be questioned on any suitable forum.

It was for this reason that the public sector was kept free from the purview of the MRTP Act.

It was necessary to check the malpractices prevalent in the private sector by taking strong action against tax-evaders, suppliers of sub-standard goods to the people, traders who indulge in adulteration, cartels which charge higher prices from the consumers by cornering the market, etc. But the government did not take any such step. The private sector was given full freedom to indulge in such malpractices and the show of enquiry or investigation by the MRTP Commission had been provided in the ordinance only to hoodwink the people. The new industrial policy is being praised by the private sector lobbyists simply because the government has given them full permission to indulge in similar irregularities with no threat of action.

Fictitious Penalties : Under these circumstances the increased penalty provided by the ordinance for violation of the act such as enhancement of fine from Rs. 10,000 to Rs ten lakh or provision of minimum imprisonment of six months will not deter any business house. For the past experience shows that the penal clauses in MRTP Act are only symbolic and very few industrial houses were penalised in the past for a violation of the act. Most of the cases were hushed up and the Monopolies Commission literally became Monopolies Promoting Commission.

The plea that public sector should be brought at par with private sector, is totally untenable because public sector had to make huge investments for the growth of the entire economy. The private sector was not prepared to invest in this field due to low profitability or longer gestation period.

The private sector coal mining industry, for instance, was not developed and the government of India had to nationalise coal mines to develop coal production and meet the country's growing energy requirements. Now to call the Coal India a monopoly and try to restrict its further growth by raising several legal barriers, is clearly an attempt to stifle this public sector concern and denigrate it by stating that it is likely to indulge in unfair trade practices.

Similarly, the banking industry, railways, ports and docks will also be covered by the MRTP regulations. While the private sector will manage to get scot free by resorting to bribery of the commission, the public sector is likely to fall victim to the new capricious policy of the Government of India.

Liquidating Public Sector : The MRTP Act had given authority to the Government of India to launch proceedings against the companies. But the

ordinance now permits the trade associations, consumers association or even an individual consumer to file a case against the companies, and the commission can utilise the position to resort to dilatory tactics and even blackmail the companies. In this regard public sector, again will be at a disadvantage. It is clearly, in tune with the intention of the Government to liquidate the public sector.

Since traders association or even an ordinary consumer can file an application against a company, there may be a plethora of litigations against the public sector undertakings creating innumerable problems for them, making their normal functioning more difficult.

There is undoubtedly the need that the public sector perform better and adopt pro-consumer policies. But that cannot be done through the Monopolies Commission which has miserably failed to check the anti-consumer practices adopted by big business houses, rather it has helped them continue such practices. If the government implements a genuine scheme of workers' participation in management through secret ballot, a corrective mechanism in public sector can be ensured. However, referring the issue to the Monopolies Commission will only mean creating hurdles in the future growth of public sector undertakings.

The World Bank and the IMF have always pressed for giving up of the special treatment given by Third World countries to the public sector undertakings. Since they play an important role in building a self-reliant economy, the World Bank had been pressurising these governments not to invest more funds in the public sector if they expect financial assistance from the international financial organisations.

As a matter of policy the Government of India has been giving preference to the public sector. A ten percent price preference was given in the matter of tenders from public sector units. This was necessary to protect the indigenous industries from unfair competition by multinational companies and monopoly houses. In the name of encouraging competition, however, this preference is being gradually withdrawn in awarding official contracts to public sector undertakings. The multinational companies and their Indian collaborators in private sector had always been lobbying for withdrawal of this price-preference to the public sector undertakings. Now they are to get what they wanted.

Preference to Multinationals : In the recent past the Government of India has awarded contracts to multinational companies for the supply of thermal power equipment though the public sector BHEL offered less price. It was because of the credit facilities offered by the foreign companies. The World Bank credit for power projects had a precondition that the Government of India float global tenders. Such practices are being resorted to by the international financial agencies to pressurise the

Government of India in several other industrial sectors too. Much of the equipment in coal mining industry which could be produced in India, was imported from outside which adversely affected indigenous public sector undertakings manufacturing these equipments.

The Monopolies Commission had been allowing these monopolistic practices and the new ordinance will only strengthen this trend causing impediments to the growth of public sector undertakings. The FICCI chairman, V. L. Dutt, was very happy at the ordinance since it would "discipline the public sector undertakings and bring them at par with the private sector" The role of public sector in checking the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few big business houses, is thus being scuttled in the name of competition with private sector units.

Cooperatives Under Scrutiny : A ridiculous aspect of the ordinances is that it has brought even the cooperative societies under the purview of the act. By this provision the government has made a mockery of the whole anti-monopoly legislation. While the real culprits are being allowed to carry their depredations with more vengeance, the public sector departmental undertakings and cooperative societies would be made targets on the plea of crushing the "unfair trade practices".

Even after watering down of the core sector of economy by removing from the list the steel, oil, energy, and heavy engineering industries, whatever core sector remained in the country would also be coming under the scrutiny of the MRTP Act. The Government's decision to maintain the supremacy of the public sector in the core sectors of economy, will be brought under direct attack of the private sector since trade associations can file a complaint against the core sector industries and stall their growth. Thus the ordinance allows unhindered growth of monopolies in the private sector but hits at the public sector's right to operate in the core sector of economy. It is a clear cut attempt to ultimately make the public sector subservient to the private sector.

The MRTP Ordinance thus nullifies whatever limited and feeble attempt was made in the country to check the concentration of economic power. The so called hindrance of the public sector to the growth of this phenomenon has been removed by the ordinance. The small and the tiny sector will have to struggle very hard in the forthcoming days to maintain their existence while the growth of the cooperative societies will be further affected adversely. The privatisation of the public sector will move up on the agenda of the Government of India with greater vigour.

The working class and the trade union movement in India cannot accept this retrograde path of development. The recent convention of public sector

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GLORIOUS VICTORY OF DALLA WORKERS

Privatisation Deal of UP Cement Corporation Revoked

P. K. Ganguly

The valliant struggle of the workers and officers of the Dalla, Chunar and Churk units of the UP Cement Corporation Ltd, a public sector under the UP State Government met with glorious success on October 12, when the BJP Government of Uttar Pradesh was compelled to issue an ordinance revoking the agreement arrived at by the erstwhile Mulayam Singh Government handing over the Corporation to the Dalmias. The ordinance further restored the Corporation to the State Government. 49 percent shares which were surreptitiously transferred to the Dalmias, were transferred back to the State Govt.

Deal Signed Surreptitiously

It is to be recalled that on the plea of losses, the Mulayam Singh Government gave an advertisement in May 1990 offering to sell the UP Cement Corporation with its three units at Dalla, Chunar and Churk in the Sonbhadra district to any private party at a throw away price. The notorious Dalmias who had closed down its own Cement factory at Dalmianagar, Dehri-on-Sone, Bihar a few years back on the same plea of losses, lost no time to accept the offer. The Rs. 770 crores worth units were given away to the Dalmias at a price of only Rs. 26 crores with an initial payment of Rupees one crore only. Sickness indeed became a profiteering business for the monopolists. They threw over 7,000 workers at Dalmianagar jobless and then made the future of over 5000 workers of Dalla bleak.

The CITU union at Dalla and the UP State Committees immediately launched agitation. The nine unions and the officers' associations operating at Dalla, Chunar and Churk filed petition at the Allahabad High Court. The High Court gave Status Quo Order directing the UP Government not to proceed with the privatisation. But violating the Status Quo Order, the Mulayam Singh Government and the Dalmias signed the deal surreptitiously. Knowing fully well that the already discredited Government of Mulayam Singh will not be returned in the forthcoming elections and being afraid of the victory of the Janata Dal, the Dalmias went ahead to complete the handing over ceremony and grab the cash even before the elections, on June 2, 1991.

Brutal Killing by Police

But the workers and officers at Dalla rose to the occasion and stood like a rock to prevent the physical handing over. It was a bloody coup on June 2. About 40 workers were killed by the brutal police firing. Their houses were ransacked and large scale arrests were made. Even the officers were arrested. The struggle took a serious turn. A delegation of

MPs of CPI (M) and CPI and CITU and AITUC leadership visited the place and extended full support to the workers' struggle.

The election results enabling the BJP to form the Government in UP and the Congress (I) at the Centre were a boon to the Dalmias, as these were the two biggest representative parties of the monopolists, advocating the path of privatisation. The formation of the BJP Government in UP was particularly advantageous for the Dalmias because of their nexus through the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Workers Remained Undeterred

But the workers and officers remained undeterred by the election results. They took the pledge in the name of the martyrs to fight to the finish. With a rocklike unity, they formed the Ekta Samity with all the unions and the officers' associations. Despite starvation, they refused to join work and refused to take wage from the Dalmias. With complete strike, work came to a grinding halt in all the three units.

The BJP Government continued to give fake promises and tried to tire them out. The Dalmias on the other hand tried to force them to join with the help of the police and hired gangsters. They also tried to run the factories by hiring outsiders. But the workers guarded the units with full determination. Lathi charge and arrests went on intermittently, but all in vain. The local BJP MLA, who had opposed the privatisation before the election, continued to oppose it even after being elected and after formation of the BJP Government. This made a division in the ranks of the BJP and the BMS.

Second Front at Lucknow

The workers opened a second front at Lucknow with a massive rally on August 2. The CITU extending support, observed an all India day on August 2. On August 26, the workers launched an indefinite dharna before the state Assembly with their families. Three days later the struggle took a new turn with the death of another worker due to starvation and exposure. P K Ganguly, Secretary CITU visited the place on the day. The police refused to hand over the dead body to the family and burnt it by pouring petrol over it. Subhasini Ali, the State CITU leader was arrested alongwith 150 workers. And yet the Chief Minister Kalyan Singh refused to meet and talk with the Ekta Samity leaders. Three CPI (M) MPs rushed to Lucknow. After initial refusal, the Chief Minister had to meet them. Subhasini Ali and the workers were released. On 2nd September the Chief Minister deputed the State Education Minister

to meet the leaders of the Ekta Samity. The Government wanted time upto 30th September. But it started offensive again. Subhasini and a number of workers were again arrested. The UP State CITU planned for a jail bhara programme, throughout the state and took initiative to mobilise various trade unions and federations.

On 7th September, a joint trade union meeting was held at the State CITU centre at Lucknow. The meeting decided to organise a broad based convention on September 21. In the meantime, the all India convention of public sector workers and the all India trade union convention held at Delhi on September 16 and 17 decided to extend full support to the Dalla workers' struggle and contribute for their relief.

The Convention of 21st September held at Lucknow gave the warning to the BJP Government that failing to fulfil its assurance to concede the demands by 30th September, the workers would launch dharna again. The central demand of course was revocation of the privatisation deal alongwith full compensation of the families of the dead.

Mass Arrest By BJP Government

The BJP Government's assurance turned out to be a fraud on the workers. The arrogant Chief Minister, so loyal to the Dalmias, refused to talk with the leaders of the Ekta Samity therefore with the support of other trade unions launched a "Lucknow Chalo" programme on 8th October. The first batch of about 400 workers including about 100 families converged at Lucknow on the day from Dalla, Chunar and Churk to stage the dharna before the Assembly. In a sweeping offensive the BJP Government police arrested all these workers, including the leaders of the Ekta Samity with their family members and children and put them into jails. The trade unions reacted sharply against such repressive act of the BJP Government. P K Ganguly and Sukomal Sen MP and General Secretary of All India State Government Employees Federation visited Lucknow on the day. The State CITU held emergent meeting. The UP State Government employees also staged a dharna in support of the Dalla workers. They observed a pen down strike on 9th October. They further decided to go on pen down strike again from October 16. The workers of Auto Tractors Ltd. which is also privatised, staged a dharna. The State Electricity Board employees in their emergent meeting called for a statewide strike on October 21 in support of the Dalla workers. The Central Trade Unions also met on the October 9 at Lucknow and decided to intensify the joint agitation. In the mean time another 800 workers came from Dalla and started the dharna near the Assembly. Various trade unions came forward in support of the workers and served meals in turn to the workers both at the dharna place and in the jail.

Sukomal Sen, MP tried to have an appointment with the Chief Minister. But he refused to meet. The

Government however had to give permission to visit the jail. A delegation consisting of Sukomal Sen, P K Ganguly, Subhasini Ali and Lallan Pandey, President of the UP State Government Employees visited the district jail. There was tremendous enthusiasm among the workers. They received the leaders with continuous slogan shouting. They addressed the workers in a maidan within the jail. The workers pledged in one voice to carry forward the struggle till the privatisation deal was annuled. One RSS worker in uniform promised that the moment he gets another dress, he would burn his RSS uniform inside the jail. The delegation then visited the women's jail also, where about 100 family members and children of the workers were kept. The same scene was observed there. The highly spirited women shouted slogans, "Down with the Dalmias, down with the Kalyan Singh Government."

The entire city of Lucknow came under brisk trade union activity—all in support of the Dalla workers. The papers flashed the news in big headlines. Pressure was mounted on the Kalyan Singh Government, which ultimately had to bow down before the might of the workers' unity and determination and issue the ordinance scrapping the privatisation deal.

The Struggle to Serve as Beacon Light

Thus came to a victorious end the glorious struggle of the Dalla workers, which continued for about one and half years. But in the process, a large number of them had to lay down their lives. A large number of families were ruined. But they saved the public sector. This was first time in India that workers had to martyr themselves to save a public sector from the vulturous claws of the private monopolists and their representative Government. The unparalleled significance was that, when the Congress (I) Government had openly enunciated the IMF dictated policies of privatisation of the public sector, and the BJP had declared its support to such policy decisions, and this public sector was actually given away to the Dalmias and the deal completed, the workers could get the black deal scrapped and restore the unit back to the state. All the combined might of the Government and this giant monopolist lay prostrate before the united might of the workers. It was also unprecedented that the entire family members of the workers stood like rock despite starvation and went to jails in high spirit pledging to continue to struggle till the privatisation deal was scrapped.

The workers have now started observing victory rallies all over UP. All the trade unions, the entire working class and the public sector workers in particular should observe victory rallies all over the country.

The Dalla Workers' struggle has added a new chapter in the history of the trade union movement of the country. It will serve as a beacon light in the continuing struggle of the workers against privatisation and against the economic and industrial policies of the Government and is bound to give momentum for the forthcoming countrywide industrial strike on November 29.

Women's Organisations Demand Implementation of National Commission for Women's Act

(Eight organisations of women, viz All India Coordination Committee of Working Women, All India Democratic Women's Associations All India Women's Conference, Centre for Women's Development Studies, Joint Women's Programme, Mahila Dakshata Samiti, National Federation of Indian Women, YWCA of India submitted a joint memorandum to the Prime Minister in October demanding implementation of the National Commission for Women's Act, 1990. We are publishing hereunder the memorandum. Ed.)

Dear Prime Minister :

We would like to express our concern and anxiety at the prevaricating and ambiguous stand of your government concerning the implementation of the National Commission for Women Act 1990. May we remind you that the Act was passed unanimously by both houses of Parliament with members belonging to your party, extending their full support? Subsequently the Act was notified in the Gazette. The Constitution of the Commission cannot therefore be considered a partisan issue but should be viewed as mandatory and incumbent on any government. It is hardly necessary for us to remind you that delay in the Act's implementation was a direct consequence of the successive fall of two governments since November 1990.

We had expected that your government would take the necessary measures to implement the Act, the urgency of which had been emphasised during the discussion in Parliament and our long standing demand following the recommendation of the Committee on the Status of Women in India made in 1975.

To our dismay, the reply of the concerned Minister on the floor of Parliament during the recent session has created an impression that your government wants to substitute the Commission by the Office of a commissioner for Women's Rights. We would like to state forcefully that this is not a question of semantics but of diametrically opposed concepts which can neither be amalgamated nor be a substitute for each other. To mention just a few salient points :

1. The Commission will be an autonomous statutory body, with powers of investigation as vested in a civil court, which will also monitor government's functioning vis-a-vis the constitutional guarantees for women's equality. The Commissioner on the other hands, will be an officer subservient to the government, who cannot have the authority of a civil court. The monitoring role will thus clearly be ineffectual.

2. The Commission's recommendations are mandatory. The government has to answer in Parliament within a time frame when it is implementing the recommendations and explain its non-compliance if any. The Commissioner can have no such legal force. His/her recommendations therefore can only be advisory not mandatory.

3. The Commission envisages a holistic approach to women's problems and the responsibilities of government through its mandatory right to be consulted on any policies that may affect women. No individual Commissioner, however competent, can play such a role.

4. The functions and powers of the Commission are at par with the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The Commissioner's office will become yet another powerless ineffective addition to the bureaucracy wasting public resources.

5. According to the Act, the Commission will function under the federal constitutional framework delineating distribution of powers between the Centre and the States. During the process of consultation between the Central and State Governments prior to the enactment, several states recognised the necessity for constitution of state level Commissions for which the Act itself provides the impetus, with a view to achieve balanced intervention at different levels. The Commissioner, on the other hand, is conceived as an omnipotent central authority, acting at the behest and under the control of the Central Government, with officers at different levels in the states, thus directly encroaching on the authority of the state governments. Apart from our anticipated ineffectiveness of such an office, we are compelled to view this proposal as a political instrument to be used against duly elected state governments. At a time when centre-state relations represent one of the most sensitive areas in India's political and constitutional development, this proposal appears to us an example of a blatant efforts at centralisation.

Without going into further details we would like to emphasise that the Act came through a long, hard struggle by the women's movement over a period of fifteen years. Under no circumstances are we prepared for any compromise on the question.

We would also like to remind you of your own public assurance of your commitment to 'consensus politics'. The National Commission on Women Act, 1990 represents an example of such a consensus, evolved through national debates at various levels. May we raise the question, Mr Prime Minister, how a minority government can by pass the present law

and try to push through a measure which has been rejected repeatedly by a national women's organisations in various forums ?

We are aware that certain sections at different levels of the Government are hostile to the concept of an autonomous body empowered to question the acts of Government. It is this resistance which has been responsible for the fifteen year delay in the enactment of this measure, from the time that it was recommended by the Committee on the status of women in 1975. We hope that your political sagacity will recognise the dangers of allowing such forces to sabotage one of the best examples of 'consensus politics'. You have repeatedly emphasised the need for citizens to act in the national interest in the present moment of the nation's crisis. We hope that the women's movement which has sought to maintain a constructive approach to all the dangers that now threaten the nation will not be made a victim of an act of sabotage. We further hope that by the next session of Parliament your government will announce its clear intention to implement this Act, and not seek to dilute it by a measure which is sometimes justified as a complementary, anticipatory measure, but which, in effect, will be diversionary and an undermining one, by creating a conflict of interests and authorities.

We request you to implement the Act and constitute the Commission without further delay and leave it to the Commission to suggest creation of any further offices that it may deem necessary after due deliberations.

Coal workers compelled the unwilling bureaucrats to receive memorandum

Two hundred coal workers from Relligraba colliery from Hazaribagh compelled the Ministry officials to receive memorandum through demonstration. On 26.9.91 the workers staged dharna in front of Energy Ministry to highlight their genuine demands. On being contacted, the workers were by the ministry officials told to come on next day for submission of memorandum. On 27.9.91 on being harassed by the ministry officials/bureaucrats on one plea or other the workers marched to the residence of P A Singma, Union Minister for Energy and demonstrated, jamming the entries. Ultimately the police intervened and ministry officials were compelled to come to spot and receive the memorandum from the agitating workers and apologised for such act of harassment to the workers. The dharna was led by Com. Ramanika Gupta, General Secretary, Coalfield Labour Union, Hazaribagh.

Railwaymen and Central Govt Employees should Unitedly Join 29 Nov. Strike—AIREC

The central working committee meeting of All India Railway Employees Confederation, held on 20-21st October 1991 at Mughalsaroi under the presidency of Com. CM Singh, has decided for various programmes for successful observance of All India industrial strike on 29.11.91. The resolution adopted in the meeting stressed the urgency for developing united efforts of all the organisations of Railwaymen and other Central Govt. employees for effective participation in the industrial strike on 29.11.91 for which the AIREC was striving hard since long. The central working committee also decided to join the proposed convention of central government employees to be held on 10.11.91 and to strive for a decision in favour of All India industrial strike of 29th November. The CWC adopted programmes of campaign to prepare the Railwaymen for joining the agitation.

NPCC Workers to go on Countrywide Strike on Nov. 28

The NPCC Staff Association (INTUC) and NPCC Workers' Union of India (CITU) have jointly decided to observe one day token strike in all the sites and offices of National Projects Construction Corporation Ltd. all over the country on 28th November 1991 to protest against management's deliberate inaction in sorting out long pending demands of the NPCC workers including wage-revision.

A large number of workers have been victimised on the plea of surplus manpower inspite of there being heavy orders. After prolonged persuasion, management agreed to re-employ only a part of those dismissed workmen inspite of concrete assurance from the Minister concerned for reinstatement of all concerned.

Although Minister of Water resources Shri Vidyacharan Shukla had committed in concrete terms before the union representatives on 12.8.91 to conclude wage revision shortly and reinstate all dismissed workmen, the management of NPCC has taken a deliberate stand only to kill time by projecting a show of bipartite talks which compelled the unions to resort to strike action.

Join 29th November Industrial Strike NPCC Workers Union of India

The Central executive committee of the NPCC Workers Union of India which met in Calcutta on 13th October 1991 has already appealed to the workers of the NPCC to take part in the industrial strike on 29th November with other public sector units to oppose the anti-labour and anti-people economic policies of the Govt. to press the long pending demands of the public sector employees.

States, Unions Prepare for Industrial Strike on November 29

The states, industrial federations and the unions have launched full scale preparation for the country-wide industrial strike on November 29 against the economic policies of the Government, responding to the call of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions from the 17th September Delhi Convention. The momentum for the strike is gaining ground with each passing day.

As per reports, state level and district level joint conventions are being held. Apart from this, joint conventions at the major industrial centres of the country are being organised. Various national industrial federations and unions, both the public sector and the private sector have already served strike notices. Joint rallies by CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMKP, UTUC, TUCC, alongwith various federations and unions have started in various states and industrial belts with postering and leaflet distribution.

The significant feature of the countrywide stir is that not only the public sector workers, private sector workers in the organised industries, but the workers in the vast unorganised sector of industries are also preparing to join this biggest industrial bandh in the country, as the IMF—dictated industrial policy formulated by the minority Congress (I) Government of Narasimha Rao has allowed the multinationals and the Indian big business to ravage the small and tiny sector also.

The State Government employees, bank employees, the Insurance employees and other middle class employees have also decided to join the strike.

The Central Government employees of different departments including Railway employees have decided to meet in an all India convention at Delhi on 10th November to take decision of action.

Following is a brief report of the preparations :

W. Bengal : After the massive twenty thousand strong joint convention at Netaji Indoor Stadium in Calcutta, the trade unions have launched district-wise joint conventions, rallies and gate meetings in each district industrial centres and factory. Another joint convention has been arranged at the industrial centre Durgapur on November 14. The strike has been given full support by the Left Front.

Kerala : A joint convention was held at Cochine, attended by several thousand delegates. District conventions and gate meetings are being held. Jathas and Evening Dharnas have also been planned. Another convention of public sector workers has been arranged. The LDF has also decided to launch campaign for the strike.

Andhra Pradesh : A joint trade union convention was held at Hyderabad on October 27. Zonal Conventions have been arranged at Vishakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Ramagundem, Kurnool, Kothagudem, Warangal, etc. A month long programme of meetings rallies, postering, leafeting and cultural shows have been planned.

The Hyderabad Co-ordination Committee of Public Sector Unions has launched full scale campaign to make the strike total in the Hyderabad based public sectors.

Karnataka : A convention has been arranged at Bangalore on November 9. The Joint Action Front in Bangalore has launched full campaign to make the strike total in the Bangalore based public sector undertaking also.

Tamilandu : Immediately after Delhi convention, CITU, AITUC, HMS, LPF and other federations held a meeting at Madras and fixed up dates for joint conventions in all the districts. Gate meetings and lunch hour meetings are being held in all industrial centres and factories. Strike notice will be served to the managements on November 13. Separate meetings of the Central and State Government employees and railway workers are being held.

Madhya Pradesh : Joint seminars and conventions were held at Gwalior. Another convention is being arranged at Bhilai. Gate meetings are being organised at different industrial establishments in the state.

Orissa : Local level conventions have been planned at Rourkela, Berhampur, Tensa, Samalpur and Bhubaneshwar. A State level convention has also been decided to be held at Cuttack in the second week of November, Gate meeting and leaflet distribution have also been planned.

Bihar : Bihar is preparing in a massive way for a bandh on 29th November at the joint call of the Left Parties and the Janata Dal. The Trade unions are preparing for a total strike. A joint state level convention is being held at Patna on November 3 and another in the industrial belt at Dhanbad on November 22. Rallies are being organised in all the colliery areas and other industrial centres. Two central rallies have been planned at Dhanbad and Bokaro. The final campaign will be launched throughout the state from November 22, culminating in the strike on November 29.

Uttar Pradesh : Joint campaign has been launched all over the state and in the industrial centres with postering and leafeting. Districtwise conventions are being organised. The victory of the Dalla

workers and their continuing struggle has given a boost to the strike preparations in the state, joint convention has already been held in the industrial city of Kanpur on October 20. A week will be observe from Nov. 23 culminating into the strike.

Delhi : The CITU is preparing for a three day strike from November 29 alongwith other trade unions. A convention has already been held at Delhi. Another joint convention has been planned at Delhi. Convention is being held at Ghaziabad also.

Haryana : A joint convention has been arranged at the industrial city of Faridabad on 16th November Districtwise campaign and conventions have been planned with gate meetings.

Punjab : CITU, AITUC and other trade unions have already held one joint convention at Chandigarh. Joint conventions and rallies are being held in each district and industrial centres braving all the depreations by the Khalistanis.

Himachal Pradesh : Preparations and campaign for the strike have been launched alongwith the preparations for the state CITU conference being held at Pounta Sahib on October 26 and 27. A convention has been planned at the industrial city of Parwanoo and another at Shimla.

Gujarat : A joint convention is going to be held at the industrial city of Baroda on November 13, followed by other places alongwith rallies and gate meetings.

Rajasthan : Districtwise conventions have been planned jointly with other trade unions. State level joint convention will be held at Jaipur on November 10 followed by in other industrial cities of Kota and other places.

Maharashtra : A joint state level convention has already been held at Bombay. District wise conventions are being held alongwith rallies and gate meetings in various industrial centres.

Assam : On November 10 a joint convention is going to be held at Guwahati. Districtwise conventions and rallies have been planned.

Unorganised Sector : Meetings of the CITU Co-ordination Committees of Unorganised Workers, Textile workers and Beedi workers were held at Delhi immediately after the Delhi Convention. According to the decisions, the workers in the unorganised sector of industries will hold conventions in each state to mobilise all sections of the unorganised workers in the strike. A week will be observed from November 23 and culminate in the strike on November 29. Various states have taken the initiative in this regard.

Jana Natya Manch will stage street plays on the 29th Nov. strike in several industrial Centres and States around Delhi.

CITU Congratulates Dalla Workers on their Victory

The Secretariat of the CITU issued the following statement on october 13 :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions warmly congratulates the workers and officers of Dalla, Chunar and Churk for their glorious victory in compelling the U.P. Govt. to revoke the privatisation of the U. P. Cement Corporation Ltd. which was handed over to the Dalmias by the erstwhile Mulayam Singh government.

A large number of workers had to lay down their lives on 2nd June under brutal police firing while resisting the hand over of this state sector to the Dalmias. The workers and their families had to carry forward the struggle without any wages all these months.

The BJP government also launched brutal offensive on the workers and their families and tried to tire them out, accepting the notorious Dalmias as their owners. But the workers and officers refused to bow down and formed the broadest possible unity bringing all the unions under the Ekta Samity and carried forward the struggle in a valiant manner which compelled the Kalyan Singh government to revoke the privatisation agreement. The victory of the Dalla workers is a step forward in the fight against the privatisation policy of the government and will certainly boost the preparation of the trade unions for the strike on 29th November '91 against the Industrial and Economic Policies of the government.

The CITU greets all the unions and the public sector workers all over the country for the support and the financial help given to the Dalla workers, and calls upon them to observe victory rallies in all the states and public sector undertakings.

MRTP Ordinance

(From Page 10)

unions has unitedly and resolutely opposed the drive towards privatisation. It has also opposed the new economic policies which give up the country's march towards self-reliance at the dictates of the IMF. The all India strike of November 29 will only be a beginning of the countrywide movement against the sell-out of the national interest by the Government of India.

Railwaymen's Struggle

Gomoh : Loco Running Staff Work, Win Demand

The Loco Running Staff of Gomoh have recently achieved a significant victory in their struggle against atrocities by some GRP personnel.

Gomoh is an important junction in the Dhanbad Division of Eastern Railway. For some time past the railway workers here were being subjected to harassment and atrocities perpetrated by some personnel of the Government Railway police. The Loco Running Staff Association registered a large number of cases and demanded appropriate action but to no effect. They were also for a long time carrying on agitation to stop running of trains with inadequate brake power as the section is a sharp 'gradient section' i.e. it is having a very steep slope and accidents frequently occur because of running of trains with less break power causing injury to staff and loss of national property.

In this situation a fresh instance of GRP atrocity sparked off angry protest by the running staff and ultimately led to stoppage of work as the authorities did not take action. It is only after hours of stoppage of the train services that the Railway and civil authorities came down for a settlement. The agreement signed by the DRM, Dhanbad Division, President LRSA Gomoh, and SDD Dhanbad included immediate remedial action in regard to GRP atrocities, and a 'no victimisation for stoppage of work' clause. The workers resumed work after stoppage of work for about 14 hours.

National Railway Mazdoor Union, Central Railway

The four day Annual session of the General Council of the National Railway Mazdoor Union (NRMU) Central Railway was concluded on 1st October at Jabalpur. It was attended by over 500 delegates and a large number of observers.

The conference was inaugurated by JP Chowbey, General Secretary, All India Railwaymen's Federation on 28th October at Sindhi Dharmasala premises in presence of a record gathering of railway workers and others. Earlier in the day a huge procession marched from the station to the place of the conference shouting slogans against the economic policies of the Government and in support of pending demands of railwaymen. The inaugural session was addressed among others by Samar Mukherjee, MP, Vice President CITU, K L Mahendra, Secretary AITUC Yamuna Prasad Shastri, President HMS, Madhya Pradesh. The welcome address by the chairman, Reception Committee S C Dall, Senior Advocate touched the hearts of all.

The General Secretary's Report was presented by C. Radhakrishnan, Asst. General Secretary, in the absence of the General Secretary P R Menon. After a day long discussion the report was adopted unanimously along with the annual accounts presented by G L Ghotankar, Treasurer.

Cultural programmes and seminars were organised along with the conference. The seminar on "The Current Economic Crisis and Industrial Policy" of the Central Government was addressed by trade union leaders. Main attraction was the speech of Santi Ghatak, the West Bengal Labour Minister.

The conference adopted the following resolutions:

1. Defend National Unity, Secularism, and Democracy
2. Light the lamp of knowledge 'Each one teach one'
3. Against the New Economic and Industrial Policies
4. In favour of Railway workers joining one day industrial strike on 29th November
5. On Railwaymen's demands.

The conference was concluded after election of the executive committee for the next term.

All India Railway Technical Staff Convention

The All India Railway Technical Staff Convention held under the auspices of the AIREC on September 23 at Mihir Dey Manch, Bijoy Pal Nagar. Chittaranjan was one of the memorable trade union events that took place in this once-walled township around the first railway locomotive works in India. The convention was hosted by CLW Labour Union. The Reception Committee responsible for all arrangements for the convention was chaired by Haradhan Roy MP. The whole township assumed a festive look on the occasion of the convention.

The All India Railway Employees Confederation decided to hold the convention for discussion on the problems of the railway technical staff of various categories and departments, to formulate a charter of demand and to adopt a programme of activity in its support. A committee was set up earlier which produced a note that formed the basis of discussion in the convention.

Proceedings of the convention which was attended by about 1100 delegates from all over India started with C M Singh, President AIREC hoisting the red flag of the organisation and garlanding the martyrs column. The presidium consisted of M L Banerjee, G S Sharma and Karnail Singh while the Steering Committee consisted of Nirmal Mukherjee, Nemais Goswami and S K Singh.

Over 20 delegates took part in the discussion on the draft note presented by Nirmal Mukherjee, which was later approved with some amendments suggested by the delegates. S K Dhar moved the resolution on the Economic Policies of the Government and the task of the Railwaymen. D B Roy moved the resolution on victimisation. A resolution was also adopted for contribution in aid of Dalla Cement Workers from the fund of the Reception Committee. A-13-man Committee for countrywide campaign on the technical staff demand with Nirmal Mukherjee as convener was formed.

N S Bhangoo, Secretary General AIREC, Basudev Acharya MP, Harikinkar Banerjee General Secretary All India Canteen Employees Federation, S R Das MLA were among those who addressed the session.

A largely attended open session held after the delegate session was addressed by Samar Mukherjee Chief Guest of the convention, who explained the necessity of the railway workers joining the industrial strike on 27th November alongwith the other workers. Among other speakers were N S Bhangoo, C M Singh, S K Dhar, Nirmal Mukherjee and Sunil Basu Roy MP.

LRSA Workers Convention

About 200 active workers of LRSA in Dhanbad Division, Eastern Railway attended the LRSA workers convention of the Division held at Dhanbad on September 22. The convention was addressed by N Sarkar, Zonal Secretary of LRSA Eastern Railway, S C Biswal Asst Zonal Secretary, S Haque Divisional Secretary AISMA besides S K Dhar Secretary General AILRSA.

Industrial Strike on November 29 : Railwaymen cannot remain onlookers : AIREC

In a letter addressed to J P Chowbey, General Secretary All India Railwaymen Federation and S K Vyas, Secretary General of National Confederation of Central Government Employees, N S Bhangoo, Secretary General of All India Railway Employees Confederation expressed the feeling that the railwaymen and other central government employees should not keep away from the struggle of the working class of the country against the anti-workers, anti-

people and anti-national economic policies of the government, they cannot remain as onlookers when entire working class will be on one day strike on November 29, they should identify themselves with the class and take part in the strike. In fact, he wrote "the Central Government employees are the most affected persons of anti-labour policy of the Government and are already suffering on account of them.

Bhangoo appealed to them for holding a discussion on how the participation of Railwaymen and other Central Government employees in the ensuing one day industrial strike on November 29 can be ensured by united effort.

Dharna Against Economic Policies

A day long dharna was organised by the NCCR Vijaywada unit on October 27 in front of the South Central Railway Divisional Manager's office in protest against the anti-worker, anti-people economic policies of the Government. Over 5 hundred railwaymen participated. It was inaugurated by M V Subbaiah, General Secretary SCREU and addressed by other railway leaders.

Dharna at Chakradharpur division, South Eastern Railway was participated in by about 2 hundred workers and was addressed by S K Dhar.

Com. Bishwanath Mukherjee

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the passing away of Com. Bishwanath Mukherjee, a veteran leader of the communist and working class movement in the country and a front line leader of the Communist Party of India. Com. Mukherjee died at Delhi on October 12 at the age of 77 after a prolonged illness.

Com. Bishwanath Mukherjee was a revolutionary, dedicated to the cause of anti-imperialist struggle and for socialism. He had to undergo imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle.

Com. Vimal Ranadive and Com. Kanai Banerjee, Secretaries of CITU visited the CPI Head Quarters on the day and placed wreath on his dead body on behalf of the CITU. The CITU conveys heartfelt condolences to his wife, Com. Geeta Mukherjee, MP and other members of his family.

Workers Preparing for Resistance to Privatisation Move of UPTRON Units

The workers of industrial area of Ghaziabad are on their toes preparing for a massive and determined resistance to the conspiratorial move for privatisation of UP Government owned Uptron Colour Picture Tube Ltd and its two ancillary units at Sahibabad.

The plea for privatisation as being sought to be popularised by UP Government is nothing new—the chronic loss and alleged inefficiency—the same old many times told rotten logic. The Uptron Colour Picture Tube Workers' Union, Sahibabad in their memorandum to the UP Chief Minister, a vociferous protagonist of privatisation has unveiled the real story behind the agony of this Government owned picture tube unit at Sahibabad. Only for non-supply of required raw materials the plant remained inoperative for days together and the managers responsible for procurement of raw material could never justify by any logic their failure for non-procurement of raw materials. There are revealing instances of rampant corruption in the matter of procurement of raw materials where purchases have been made at a much higher price than prevailing in the market. Uptron colour picture tube unit is having a good market in the country itself and nothing can justify the under utilisation of its full production capacity which is being deliberately engineered by the authorities for long inspite of vehement protest by the workers and the union.

The union in their memorandum to Chief Minister, UP has unveiled the conspiracy with the revealing fact that mismanagement and corruption in Uptron have been deliberately engineered to create a ground for privatisation of this profitable concern.

On 1st October 1991 the joint meeting of the leadership and the activists of the unions of Industrial Area, Sahibabad particularly from CEL, BEL, Upton and other electronic industries resolved to go in for strong resistance to the move of the infamous UP Government to handover the Uptron Colour Picture Tube Ltd and two of its ancillaries to M/s Videocon Ltd. The meeting decided to develop active co-ordination with 17 other units of Uptron scattered all over UP to develop a wider resistance to this privatisation move. M. K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU attended the meeting and it was declared that Dalla events would not be allowed to be repeated at Sahibabad and the Government would receive a befitting reply from the workers.

It was decided to hold a massive demonstration in front of Uptron at Sahibabad on 8th November 1991 by the working class of the entire industrial area of Ghaziabad and Sahibabad against the fresh privatisation move of the UP Government.

CITU Condemns Aquisition of Disputed Land at Ayodhya by BJP Government

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the BJP Government of Uttar Pradesh for issuing a notification acquiring four plots of land at the disputed spot at Ayodhya. The disputed spot thus taken, over rides all the normal processes of land acquisitions, negating the relevant provisions of the Land Acquisition Act.

The manner in which the BJP Government has rushed through the acquisition, clearly indicates its desperation in building the Ram Temple at the disputed spot. The reasons given as "urgency of the matter" and "for development of tourism" are absolutely ridiculous and cannot hide the communal motive behind the acquisition.

This action is fraught with the danger of communal flare up again not only in UP, but in the entire country. The CITU appeals to the working class and all trade unions to unitedly guard against any communal conflagration and offensive against the minority community. It calls upon the State Committee and unions in UP in particular to remain vigilant against any untoward happening.

The CITU demands of the BJP Government to retrace from its path and urges upon the Central Government to intervene to negate the step taken by the BJP Government.

CITU Condemns Niyogi's Murder

In a statement to the press, dated September 29th '91 Samar Mukherjee MP, Vice President of the CITU strongly condemned the dastardly murder of Shankar Guha Niyogi, prominent trade union leader of the Dalli-Rajahara workers, at Bhalai on September 27. This killing has been perpetrated by those forces who want to crush the workers' struggle in the Chattisgarh region. The BJP Government in Madhya Pradesh has been adopting anti-working class policies brazenly in support of the capitalists and contractors in the Chattisgarh region. Such a climate has emboldened the killers. Shankar Niyogi had been externed from the Chattisgarh region by the administration.

The statement demanded that the BJP Government take steps to immediately uncover those conspired to do away with this popular trade union leader and apprehended the culprits responsible.

Settlement of Coal Miners' Strike

We congratulate the seven lakh coal workers all over India for their remarkable unity and determination shown during the struggle for bonus for the year 1990-91. The one day call of strike on 14 October, 1991 valid all the coal miners as one man which forced the Management to agree to the just demand of the coal workers.

In a meeting held in the presence of Shri P. A. Sangma, Hon'ble Union Coal Minister on 10th October, 1991 at Calcutta it was agreed that all the coal miners drawing wages upto Rs 3500/- per month will get 8.33% bonus subject to a maximum of Rs. 2000/-. Workers will also receive Rs 250/- over and above this payment at par with last year.

It was agreed that Rs 1500/- will be paid to every worker before Puja and the balance amount including Rs 250/- will be paid on or before 15th December 1991.

In view of the settlement arrived at in the meeting we withdraw the strike call on 14th October, 1991 and appeal to all the workers to maintain solidarity achieved during the preparation of countrywide strike.

Sd/-
(S. Das Gupta)
General Secretary
Indian National Mine
Workers' Federation
(INTUC)

Sd/-
(Dr. M. K. Pandhe)
President
All India Coal
Workers' Federation
(CITU)

Sd/-
(Bhajan Dasgupta)
General Secretary
Hind Mazdoor Sabha
(West Bengal) for
Hind Khadan Mazdoor
Federation (HMS)

Sd/-
(Damodar Pandey)
Jt. General Secretary
Indian National Mine
Workers' Federation
(INTUC)

Sd/-
(Sunil Sen)
General Secretary
India Mine Workers'
Federation (AITUC)

Sd/-
(Dr. B. K. Roy)
President
Akhil Bhartiya Khadan
Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)

Com. Anandan Nambiar

The CITU deeply mourns the death of Comrade Anandan Nambiar, the illustrious leader of Railway Trade Union Movement and trade union movement in general. The Working Class and the railway workers in particular will ever remember his courageous role in leading their struggle and his fight for their cause on the floor of Parliament. The CITU sends heartfelt condolence to the members of DREU and to the bereaved members of his family.

Construction Workers Dharna and Deputation

Hundreds of construction workers under the banner of 'Construction Workers Federation of India' staged 'Dharna' before the Labour Ministry office from 2 pm. to 6 pm. on 27.9.91.

The workers from Punjab, J&K, Kerala, Assam, West Bengal, and other states assembled there, raised their long pending demands of (1) Comprehensive central legislation for construction workers to ensure employment through Construction Labour Board, implementation of welfare measures and social securities, safety etc and (2) National level Bipartite Wage Committee for construction workers. They also raised voice against multinationals infiltration in Indian Construction Industry and demanded for public sector protection.

At 5 pm. a delegation from the 'Dharna' met Mr. Paban Singh Ghatowar, Dy. Labour Minister and submitted a memorandum. The Dy. Labour Minister was accompanied by Mr. Kaul, Joint Secretary Ministry of Labour and Director General Welfare Board.

The delegation was headed by Com. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU, and other members were Com. Debanjan Chakrabarti, General Secretary CWFI, Com. Nanak Chand (J & K), Com. Natha Singh (Punjab), Com. Rabindranathan (Kerala), Com. Madhab Das (Assam) and Com. K. C. Ghose of West Bengal.

On behalf of the delegation Com. Pandhe explained about long pending demand of construction workers legislation and the present state of affairs of construction workers.

Mr. Ghatowar, Dy. Labour Minister gave patient hearing to the delegation and while expressing his views on the construction workers legislation told about stiff resistance from the employers side also from other sections not to include employment regulating construction Labour Board provision in the Bill. However, he will try his utmost to pass the legislation considering workers' representatives suggestions as much as possible. He also accepted Com. Pandhe's proposals to call a tripartite meeting to take a final decision after a final hearing from all corners. The Dy. Labour Minister assured the delegation that the construction workers legislation also will cover welfare, safety etc.

Com. Debanjan Chakrabarty reported the workers of 'Dharna' about this discussion.

ANC to Intensify Mass Actions

We are publishing hereunder a joint statement issued by African National Congress of South African Trade Unions and other mass organisations, which was received late.—*Ed.*)

An extended meeting of the ANC National Executive Committee, which included delegations from the leadership of the ANC Women's League, Youth League, SAGP and COSATU, met yesterday. The meeting discussed the deadlines of 30 April and 9 May as well as the idea of a peace conference and popular actions in support of various demands. The central concern dominating the meeting was the serious threat that the violence is posing to the negotiations process.

It was resolved that peace is absolutely necessary for a democratic transformation of our country. To this end, the meeting strongly supported a peace conference involving all parties and organisations. It needs to be a conference that reaches multi-lateral, binding agreements with obligations on all parties to act in accordance with these agreements. No single individual or party can resolve the conflict that exists in South Africa.

The meeting expressed its support for the present initiative of religious leaders to ensure that a broad based peace conference, the religious leaders could facilitate the convening of a preparatory committee that comprises all the key actors employers, labour unions the spectrum of political parties, the government and religious bodies. Such a preparatory committee would be responsible for organising the peace conference.

It was resolved that the ANC, SACP and COSATU would not attend the meeting called unilaterally by FW de Klerk, for 24 and 25 May.

A peace conference must be a serious affair and not merely a symbolic event. Agreements with enforcement mechanisms need to be reached on such areas as:

- * a code of conduct for all political parties;
- * a code of conduct for the security forces;
- * elaboration on the powers and functions of any Standing Commission on violence, which should offer speedy and effective relief to victims of violence;
- * a comprehensive approach to reconstruction.

Rather than hastily and unilaterally convening a symbolic conference in an attempt to score tactical points, the government use its powers to curb the violence and to ensure that its own security forces act impartially. We have still to see any real evidence of the government's bona fides in this regard.

The meeting expressed its solidarity with and saluted the political prisoners on hunger strike, and all others who remain incarcerated for their political prisoners. It is a deadline to which the government solemnly agreed in the Pretoria Minute.

We are outraged at the cruelty with which some of the hunger strikers have been treated. Some have been put in mortuaries and told they will be left to freeze to death. Others who have suspended their hunger strikes have been charged by the prison authorities with "attempted suicide" and sentenced to spare diet. We shall hold FW de Klerk entirely responsible for any deaths or debilitating injuries that may occur.

The ANC calls on all South Africans and the international community to observe Wednesday 22 May as a Day of Fasting in solidarity with our political prisoners. We demand their immediate release.

The ANC extended NEC reaffirmed its commitment to the demands in its open letter to FW de Klerk, until such time as progress is made in regard to these demands, the ANC will not involve itself in constitutional discussions with the government, or in any all party congress to discuss the mechanisms for drawing up a new democratic constitution.

Delegations of the ANC and the South African government have already met to discuss the Open Letter demands. These discussions will continue with a view to securing firm commitments from the government.

To back up these demands, which are all centred on bringing about a rapid end to the violence, a series of mass actions are being planned.

These include :

* nationwide consumer boycotts, whose timing and duration will be determined according to regional conditions;

Mass demonstrations on June 15;

* a national general stayaway on a date to be determined in the next few days.

The ANC extended NEC strongly condemns and dissociates itself from the series of bombings in central Johannesburg in the past 48 hours. The perpetrators are clearly those opposed to the negotiations process of a democratic South Africa.

Unless the government and other parties implicated in the violence address this threat seriously by moving beyond theoretic and posturing, unless they begin to take concrete and binding measures to end the violence, all South Africans will be the losers.

ANC press Release on the Issue of Hostels

The ANC's demand that the hostels and other labour compounds be phased out and converted into family accommodation and single occupancy flats for migrant workers, has been deliberately misconstrued by mischievous elements. The suggestion that the ANC wishes by this means to effect the mass eviction of the migrant workers from the only housing they presently have is a vicious lie calculated to sow misunderstanding and fan hostility. It has been a long standing demand of both the liberation movement and the Trade Unions that decent accommodation be provided for migrant workers in the cities where they are employed. In fact the demand to phase out hostels has most recently been pioneered by the workers in the mining industry, through their union. A number of employers and employers' organisations have accepted it in principle.

Our opposition to hostels and labour compounds is motivated by their sub-human character which degrades and humiliates African Workers by compelling them to live in unsanitary, barracklike conditions. Our concern is for the safety, security, comfort and human dignity of the migrant labourers whom rural poverty has forced to seek work in the cities.

The ANC appreciates that among the millions who travel to the cities to earn a living, there are single persons and married men who would prefer not to live with their families at their workplaces. Provision should therefore be made for single occupancy housing that affords them privacy and the basic decencies.

It is a national scandal that in this period of transition these relics of Verwoerdian grand apartheid still imprison millions of our national workforce. We call to have hostels and labour compounds done away with.

Press Release on Detention of Women's League Members

This morning the South African police arrested two groups of mainly women but also men and children who were keeping vigil and fasting in support of the hunger striking prisoners. Among those detained are comrades Albertina Sisulu, Makho Njobe, Mavivi Manzini, Baleka Kgositsile, Nosiviwe Maphisa, Winni Mandela.

All the members of the national Executive Committee of the ANC Womens League. In arresting Mrs Mandela the police also woman handled her so that she has several scratches.

The police plan to charge the group that was with Mrs Mandela but are considering releasing the group that was with Mrs Sisulu. Both groups are insisting on the release of the hunger strikers and will not agree to negotiate their own release.

If there is anyone going to court that will probably

be at 14H00. The actions of the police in this instance contrast starkly with the way they handle armed Inkatha supporters.

Call for Anti-Recession Programmes in USA

The AFL-CIO Executive Council adopted a statement outlining its "Anti Recession Programmes". The document stated:

The American economy is now in a painful recession. Millions of Americans and their families are being hurt. The official unemployment rate for January stood at 7.7 million workers. A more realistic count—one that includes discouraged and involuntary part-time workers—escalates the total to nearly 15 million Americans. The downturn is now seven months old and no decrease in unemployment is in sight."

Pointing out that "America will meet the enormous and mounting costs associated with the Gulf war, the bail-out of the savings and loan industry and the possible collapse of the banking system, the statement declared that "the crisis of unemployment and the need for long-term economic recovery is equally urgent and should be dealt with promptly."

According to the AFL-CIO, each one percent of unemployment costs American taxpayers \$28 billion—\$33 billion in lost tax revenues and \$5 billion in payments for unemployment compensation food stamps, Medicaid and similar costs. Workers, too pay a stiff personal toll in lost income, diminished self-esteem and family turmoil.

The AFL-CIO statement stressed that economic policies of the past decade have benefited a privileged few, but they have decreased the economic security and well being of average Americans. They should be replaced now with sound, effective programmes to counteract the recession". (According to a recent article in The Christian Science Monitor, "as the 1980s ended, the richest one percent of the population had a total after tax income equal to the total income of the bottom 40 percent. Or, translated into numbers, 2.5 million very rich Americans accrued as much income as 100 million very poor Americans.)

A five point Programme

The anti-recession programmes proposed include the following:

To urge Congress quickly to enact programmes

to stimulate job-creating growth and ease the suffering of unemployed Americans.

* To reform the unemployment compensation system to provide extended benefits, expanded eligibility and adequate funds for efficient administration of the programme.

* The nation's infrastructure—highways, bridges, transportation, sewer and water systems—is in urgent need of improvement and repair.

* The development and modernisation of mass transit and the railway system would provide the nation with valuable and essential services while it reduces US dependence on foreign oil.

* Equally important is the critical need for adequate housing for low and moderate-income families in cities, suburbs and rural areas.

It was stressed that the delay in meeting these needs is especially painful for minority workers in the cities where the deterioration has made it impossible for employers to locate facilities there and provide new jobs.

The federation urged the Federal Government to provide fund to maintain state and local government services that have been crippled by revenue shortfalls, particularly the Medicaid programme that is bearing the burden of mass unemployment. Many states and cities are facing cuts in police, fire and municipal services and their schools are suffering from a shortage of teachers and from deteriorating facilities. Families are unable to find affordable, adequate child care.

The disruptions caused by mass lay-offs, the AFL-CIO demanded must be countered by effective training and skills upgrading programmes to hold displaced workers qualify for new jobs and to build a more productive workforce.

Call for improved system of unemployment insurance.

The AFL-CIO called for improving the unemployment insurance the unemployment insurance system in the following manner:

To provide an effective safety net for the unemployed, the present programme needs to assure basic eligibility standards and extended benefits. Extended benefits should be provided for long term workers and for longer periods during the recession. The administration of the programme needs to be enhanced.

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(From Page 2)

and freedom. The result will be further fleecing of the common people and renewed offensive on the working class and the trade union movement.

On the 7-th Anniversary of the October Revolution; the CITU pledges to hold high the banner of the October Revolution and its gigantic achievements. It denounces those who are collaborating with imperialism for dismantling socialism. The working class must lay bare the crisis ridden path of capitalist development. All the unions must renew the pledge for workers' unity to intensify their fight for socialism on this 74th Anniversary of the October Revolution. All unions must observe a week from November 7 to 17 as decided by the Working Committee to propagate the gains of socialism and expose those who are denigrating it.

Exposing the designs of imperialism to undermine the economic sovereignty of the country, all unions must launch full preparation on the occasion to mobilise the entire working class and all other trade unions to make the joint call by the trade unions for the countrywide industrial strike on November 29 a great success as the first united trade union salvo to reverse the economic policies of the Government and take out the country from the imperialist net of neo-colonial exploitation and make strides towards self-reliance.

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in the American press that he has practically conceded the demand that our 1970 Patents Law will be amended to accommodate American demand. However, the modus operandi privately decided was to finalise the issue in the forthcoming GATT negotiations. This is going to further adversely affect our freedom to manufacture essential medicines and other goods.

The IMF has agreed to raise the quota as a premium for implementing all the conditionalities which they wanted. The Statesman dated October 18, editorially commented that: "The expected 40% IMF quota hike may well turn out to be the Trojan Horse which will increase India's propensity to borrow, but not enhance its ability to repay."

The prices of all essential commodities are going skyhigh in spite of the assurance given by the Government. The people are being squeezed and they are finding it very difficult to buy even essential commodities for maintaining themselves. This is the result of the implementation of the IMF dictated policies.

Therefore the policy of privatisation and liberalisation, etc. which are being implemented by the Government of India is not only anti-people but also endangering the economic and political freedom. The working class of the country irrespective of their political and organisational differences must come together and rally around to fight back these retrograde policies. The 29 November Strike call given by the Delhi Convention of trade unions must be effectively implemented in all sectors of our activity.

International Productivity Congress held at Bangkok

S. Dev Roye

To commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO), the International Productivity Congress was held at Bangkok from 3rd to 6th September '91 which was attended by 582 delegates from 25 countries. Out of 32 delegates from India there were two trade union representatives from CITU and INTUC.

Twelve invited speakers from different countries presented 12 papers on the main and sub themes. The papers were presented at the plenary sessions and the delegates and speakers had direct interface in the workshops on the basis of written questions at the end of day's plenary sessions. At the closing session the highlights of the workshops were presented by the respective rapporteurs and the 'Bangkok Declaration' was also adopted.

The papers mainly dealt with from different angles the questions of Productivity Improvement, Quality Control, Employment Generation, Human Resource Development, Labour-Management Relations etc.

The formulation of the CITU that without proper land reform the economy of our country cannot develop has been reflected in the paper presented in the Congress by the President of the Korea Rural Economic Institute. The paper said "in Korea land reform plan was successfully executed with 3 hectare ceiling limit to farm-cultivators with the slogan land-to-the-tiller." The author suggested that "in the beginning stage of economic development, the first thing that the government must do in countries where farmland is unevenly distributed is to implement a land reform plan which usually entails a redistribution of rights of ownership and/or the use of land away from large landowners and in favour of cultivators with limited or no land holdings."

In the background of the critical situation arising out of the IMF dictated Industrial & Economic policies of the Government of India, the discussion presented by Mr. Victor E. Tokman of ILO Switzerland is worthnoting. The paper has narrated the various measures prescribed in the developing countries and particularly in Latin America and consequent developments, as are apprehended by us in India, have landed the countries into serious crisis in the shape of closure of factories, fall in employment generation and standard of living of the people. It has been pointed out that the policies usually proposed refer to three areas: "liberalisation by tariff reductions or the elimination of administrative protection to particular sectors, privatisation of enterprises and public services and de-regulation, including the labour market and the social security system," and further

noted "as a consequence, there changes between sectors from manufacturing industry to services and within then, new industries' technology-intensive substitute those which in the past were the pillars of development like coal, steel, textile and shipyards." It has further pointed out that due to the said policy the employment structure deteriorated due to the slow down of employment creation in modern activities, increase in less stable and less protected labour, permanent jobs were replaced by part-time work and increase in subcontracted labour.

That in the process of improving productivity, service security of the workers must be guaranteed and also the necessity of real participative management and the gains of productivity should be distributed to all concerned, has been noted by Mr. Iwao Fujiwara of Japan in his paper Productivity Gains and Labour Management Relations:

1. "Through productivity gains, national employment must be increased and the aims of economic growth and industrial welfare must be pursued. Therefore, productivity gains must absolutely not lead to dismissal of workers.

2. Fair-labour-management relations are indispensable to promote effectively a practical productivity gain programme, and workers and employers should cooperate, study, and consult with each other on an equal footing.

3. The fruits of productivity gains should be fairly distributed among three parties: company stockholders, the whole society to improve national life
(Cont'd on page 6)

Book Post