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**ON TO ALL INDIA GENERAL STRIKE
ON 11TH DECEMBER 1998 !
MOBILISE THE MASSES IN ACTION !**

SUBHUMAN LIFE UNDER "INHUMAN DEVELOPMENT"

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services....everyone has the right....to education...to work...(and)...to social security"— golden are the words that read from "THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS". That was in 1948. It was 3 years after the end of World War-II, the world was waking up after six years of senseless bloodbath, devastation and degradation of human life all around.

It was the time when hundreds of millions of people were tasting freedom, released from the colonial yoke, after centuries of subjugation, ready to build their own lives, their own destiny.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS was signed by all the countries, it was their guiding star, their guiding hope. Several more RIGHTS were added to the list of rights later on by the international community. There are now RIGHT TO SECURITY, PARTICIPATION, FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION FROM DEVELOPMENT.

Mankind has given to human self on that day in 1948, the right instruments to live a human life, with hope and expectation..... But...

INHUMAN DEVELOPMENT!

What has happened after 50 years? Nothing is right, everything has gone wrong. The Human Development Report 1998, published by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) vividly charts that everything has gone wrong. Today 20% of the world's people in the highest-income countries (about 100 crores) account for 86% of total private consumption of the world whereas the poorest 20% consume only 1.3%

Out of 440 crores people in developing countries 270 crores have no basic sanitation, 150 crores have no drinking water, 90 crores do not know anything about modern medicines and about a fifth of the children do not reach up to 5th class in a school. 200 crores of

human beings suffer from anaemia, they do not have enough food and nutrition to grow up into a normal human being, better than a skeletal existence.

STARK INEQUALITY

And in contrast, what is the picture with the 20% people in richest countries? This 100 crores of the richest people consume 45% of all meat and fish (poor 5%), 58% of total energy (poor 4%), 74% of all telephone lines (poor 1.5%) 84.% of paper (poor 1.1%) and 87% of all motor vehicles (poor a little over 0.5%). Here poor means 20% of world's poorest population numbering about 100 crores.

So, exactly 50 years after the declaration of human rights this is the picture of the world! The top 20% are really human beings, the declaration is meant for them, the bottom 20% have to live, or are forced to live a sub-human life, born to work hard, produce things cheap, in exchange of next to nothing, to **SUBSIDISE** the life of the top 20%, and then, die like an animal. Human Development, really it is!

And this great divide is not exactly between the countries. The stark poverty is very much visible in the rich countries as well. About 10 crores of poor

people in rich countries are homeless, about 4 crores are jobless more than 5 crores do not get enough food and are

anaemic. USA has the highest average income among the developed states which is \$24000 annually, yet it has 17% of its population poor. United Kingdom has 15% with almost similar income levels and Sweden has 7% and Netherlands has 8% poor population respectively.

Should the poor remain poor always? Is there any dearth of resources to improve their conditions? Does the 'DECLARATION' not bind all the countries to direct the wealth to fulfil the objectives laid down in the DECLARATION? Yes it does, but what is happening is different.

They spend for:

*BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL OVER THE WORLD RS 25,000 CRORES (6 BILLION DOLLAR)

- Cosmetics for women in USA Rs 34,000 crore (8 billion Dollar)

Ardhendu Dakshi

* WATER & SANITATION ALL OVER THE WORLD Rs 38,000 CRORE (9 BILLION DOLLAR)

- Ice Cream in Europe Rs 46,000 crore (11 billion Dollar)

* BASIC HEALTH AND NUTRITION ALL OVER THE WORLD RS 57,000 CRORE (13 BILLION DOLLAR)

- Food for pets (Dogs, cats, birds, etc) in Europe & USA Rs 71,000 crore (17 billion Dollar)

- Cigaretts in Europe - Rs.210,000 crore (50 bn Dollar)

- Alcohol in Europe - Rs.420,000 crore (105 bn Dollar)

- Narcotic (Drug) like Cocaine, Marijuana, white and Brown sugar Heroin etc. - Rs.1680,000 crore (400 bn Dollar)

- Military spending all over the world(annually) - Rs.3200,000 crore(780 bn dollar)

The list will be unending. The 'development' of some, their fulfilment in life is the cause of despair, degradation and death for the majority of the people of the world. The story of the tragedy does not end here. The UNDP report says that in the developed countries conspicuous consumption is growing at the rate 2.5% on an average and developing countries are either stagnant or slipping down progressively. The story of Africa is appalling. 'The African household today consumes 20% less than it did 25 years ago'.

GROWING ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

If this part of the report is revolting, the other part is simply shocking. That brings out before us the real face of this development and its effect on human beings. It is the poor people who are almost always hit by the environmental damage caused by the rich. Every year about 1.5 crore acres of farmland is being desertified. The rich are polluting the earth and atmosphere. Global warming is causing unprecedented natural disasters. Unable to cope up with the loss of agricultural resource base, the poor go for deforesting green cover which, in turn, causes further damage to ecology and environment. So the reverse spiral goes on and on. It reports that 200 crores of people in the developing countries suffer annually from diarrhoeal diseases and 50 lakhs of people including 30 lakh children die every year. Lakhs of children in developing countries will suffer

from impairment of their brain because of constant inhaling of petrol emissions, which are mixed with organic lead. Poorer people living roadside have double the risk of brain impairment and pulmonary diseases.

WORST POLLUTERS - THE RICH

And how the environment is being spoilt by the rich? In 1995 carbon-dioxide (Co2) emissions in USA was 20.5 Metric tons per capita! Total global Co2 emissions were a staggering 23 billion tons (2300 crore tons)! But the total emission by all the Asian, Latin American, African, Arabian countries put together is just about 8 billion tons. In US, the per capita petrol consumption is 3 litres per day, in Canada and Australia it is 2 litres per day closely followed by Switzerland, Sweden and Germany. In comparison, in the developing countries per capita fuel consumption is nowhere near it, not even a litre per month, but they bear the brunt of it.

So, this is not human development, which is sustainable, it is destruction of our habitat, end of development. And the process is irreversibly going against the poor countries.

How does India fare in the international community? It has slipped down to **139th** position, measured by the Human Development indices. This is the result of almost 50 years of planning. And the pace of going down got aggravated after the Indian rulers embraced liberalisation of Washington design.

CAPITALISM - THE VILLAIN

If anybody had taken "The Declaration of Human Rights, 1948," seriously, it was Soviet Union. Soviet Union provided jobs to everyone, free medical and education to everyone to any level he or she had desired, not to mention about food and clothing. The so called champions of human rights have destroyed Soviet Union, plundered the land, pauperised the people and once the most advanced state has now slipped down to a "developing" status. Many girls in the neo-capitalist Russia now cross borders to work in hotels and take up prostitution.

The report of UNDP will find safe place in many a shelves. It is for the working class to carry the message, the real story of human development to the people in the capitalist system and not to stop until this inhuman development is ended.

END THIS US ARROGANCE !

By now it should be as clear as broad day light. US President Bill Clinton targetted US cruise missiles on Sudan and Afghanistan to make an escape cover for himself from the frightening noose of moral turpitude. He was under compelling circumstances to stutter his fusilades against these two countries. to drown the Lewinsky noises at home. But,

what if this pretext was not available to Clinton! He would have indulged in the same gunboat diplomacy, the attitude of

SAROJ CHOWDHURY

trampling down norms of international behaviour, of brandishing military might of the US and display the same attitude of contempt for the United

Nations. This is just in tune with the behaviour of a succession of US Presidents.

The world has not forgotten the fiasco of US invasion of Cuba, a small country, after it overthrew the corrupt and oppressive Batista regime; the bombing of the residential palace of Mummar Gaddafi of Libya and subsequent economic sanction; arrogant interventions in Guatemala,

GREETINGS TO PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

October 1, 1998 marks the 49th anniversary of the founding of People's Republic of China, which was, indeed, an event of great historic significance of our times.

The victory of Chinese revolution changed the fate of nearly one-fourth of humanity and dealt a decisive blow to the forces of feudalism, and imperialism. It radically changed the correlation of class forces and shifted the balance in favour of world peace, democracy and socialism. Forging a worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese people waged protracted struggles against the tyrannical rule of warlords, the comprador bourgeoisie and Japanese aggressors for almost 28 years and won final victory in their revolution.

During the past 49 years, New China has witnessed several ups and downs, twists and turns, in the course of building socialism in a large and economically backward country.

China has enjoyed an average annual growth rate of 9.8% which has led to tripling of its gross national product (GNP). This phenomenal growth of Chinese economy in the past 18 years has fascinated the whole world. Last year, a World Bank report entitled "China 2020: Development Challenges in the New Century" lauded China's economic success as being the greatest achievement of our times. The report estimated that in terms of national purchasing power, Chinese economy had surpassed German and would

exceed Japanese in the next 10 years. The report further said that even if China could maintain a 7% annual growth rate, it could overtake the United States, whose economy is presumed to be increasing by 3% annually, to become the world's number one economic power between the years 2020 and 2030. Although shrinking Asian markets and devalued currencies of turmoil hit South-East Asian countries have affected China's export growth adversely, the target of realising 8% annual GDP growth is expected to continue this year. This is primarily due to the political and economic stability China has maintained over the years and the effective measures it has taken to promote high growth with low inflation rate. Taking giant strides in diverse fields, China is presently heading for a place among the most advanced nations of the world.

China is a peace loving country, committed to an independent and peaceful foreign policy. China endeavours to develop friendly relations with all countries and advocates a new international political and economic order based on the principles of peaceful coexistence.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) and "The Working Class" of India hail the remarkable achievements of China in building a stable and prosperous socialist economy and extends warm greetings to the working class and people of China on the occasion of the 49th anniversary of the victory of Chinese revolution!

Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Chile and several other central and South American Countries. Military interventions in all these countries were unashamedly justified by US imperialism as being in defence of democracy, against what it calls "international terrorism" and for safeguarding vital US interests. The prolonged barbarous war on the poor country Vietnam by US is too recent to go into oblivion. Even in a serious situation like this, the present Indian Government prefers to underplay the danger and seeks to make a distinction of the missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan in North Africa. The BJP-led Government is treating people to nuclear jingoism on the one hand while doling out large concessions to US companies in gas pipeline, coal and oil exploration, power on the other. Alongside, secret talks are going on for three months to cause a thaw in the US attitude and to soften the economic sanction. This explains the distinction made by India at the NAM meeting and at the UN.

BIN LADEN: PAST & PRESENT

The chief suspect in the bombing of Nairobi and Dar-ess-Salem embassies, **Ossama Bin Laden**, a Saudi millionaire businessman used to be very close to the US. He was a conduit to maintain close links with CIA operators and the ISI of Pakistan in Afghanistan. In the dastardly murder of former Afghan President **Najibulla**, **Laden** played a very prominent part. Without the billions of dollar and modern weapons, the Taliban

offensive would have died long back. It is Taliban that has dragged Afghanistan back to the dark days of middle age. All these made him very close to US. But the moment **Laden** took an anti-US stand, he fell out of grace. The US thinks, this

very fact confers the right to use the missiles on Afghanistan.

About Sudan, the US took the plea of the pharmaceutical factory manufacturing poison gas. The belief of US in enough. It need not have any proof. The claim that US intelligence agencies collected soil samples of the factory prove the point, is ridiculous. The Chennai-based fortnightly, *Frontline*, recently published a report on the ongoing toll being taken by drought and famine in Sudan. Those of us who were grown-ups in 1943 when the trauma of Bengal famine killed 50 Lakhs of people, are very much acquainted with the situation. A father taking last look with tearful eyes before burying his dead son; a girl child dying being unable to suck mother's breast. The mother - a skeletal remains of an extremely emaciated woman - would meet her death soon. The whole country is stalked by a severe famine.

It is this country, which US

targetted for missile attack. Such is the concern for human life and welfare of the United States ruling circles.

U.N. HELPLESSNESS

Even the United Nations once again exhibited its helplessness. Such a flagrant violation of sovereignty of nations by the powerful did not cause the necessary flutter, protest and call for action. For the Gulf War, the US had a fig leaf of UN muted support. But nothing this time. In whatever way the saffron government may look at the situation, the danger for India being hostile to US policies or not toeing the US line on a substantive question, the B-52 bombers from Diego Garcia can fly to any Indian city and get away with impunity. The cruise missiles that hit Afghanistan and Sudan are warning volleys for all third world countries. Most regrettably, India lost an opportunity to reassert its leadership of third world countries and rebuff the arrogance of US power. The US is the number one enemy of all poor countries. At a time like this, only a united third world can prevent recurrence of such intrusions into sovereignty of nations, force the UN to adhere to its Charter and create powerful world public opinion.

Lack of access to safe water and basic sanitation-a regional profile,

1990-96 (percent)

Region	People without access to safe water	People without access to basic sanitation
Arab States	21	30
Sub-Saharan Africa	48	55
Latin America	23	29
East Asia	32	73
South Asia	18	64

(Source: Human Development Report '96)

"SELL OUT PSUS AT ANY COST!"

Every alternative day there is a statement in the Press either from the Finance Minister or from the Industry Minister or from the Finance Secretary regarding disinvestment of PSU shares. Those include boastful comments from the Finance Minister that his govt. is definite to overfulfil the budgeted target of disinvestment, while severely criticising the UF Govt. on their utter failure on disinvestment front. In the budget speech, clear direction has been set up by the BJP Govt by their announcement of virtual closure of Sick PSUs through a VRS package to the workers and disinvestment of 74% shares in other so called non strategic PSUs. The definition of 'non strategic' can be anybody's guess, and thus it is not being categorically defined to suit the advantage of those busy in selling off (or doling out!) huge national assets lying with the PSUs.

Now those who are advocating total sell-out of PSU shares have their own logic, however unscrupulous that may be. Hence under democracy they can always say that they are selling out

PSUs that have laid down the very foundation of a modern industrial India, in the interest of India only. But is that really so? Is there anything relating to country's interest, in their frantic exercise of selling out PSUs to foreign and private capital?

Nothing at all. Rather the statements being made by the Ministers are self contradictory, exposing the dubious intention.

In the Economic Editor Conference recently held in Delhi, the Finance Minister asserted in same breath that in no case the fiscal deficit would cross the budgeted level of 5.6 percent, despite considerate shortfall from the targetted revenue collection in the first quarter of the year, since he is confident to garner more than targeted amount from disinvestment of PSU shares! The message is quite clear as to how the proceeds of disinvestment would be made use of. But within a week the same Finance Minister stated in the 'Seminar on capital market' organised by Assocham said that "the proceeds of disinvestment of the blue chip shares will not be used just to bridge the fiscal deficit...About half of the proceeds will be ploughed back to nurse the Sick PSUs to health" (Economic Times 22.9.98). The

revealing contradiction between the statements from the same Finance Minister within a week on the same matter is reflecting the dubious attempt to confuse and misguide the people at large. In the same seminar the Finance Minister reiterated his determination to go ahead with the offloading of shares of blue-chip PSUs like IOC, GAIL, CONCOR, VSNL, MTNL & Airlines in the current year on a priority basis with the liberal announcement that retail purchasers would be allowed attractive discount.

Even the time chosen for disinvestment of PSU shares also demonstrates doggedness of the BJP govt to fritter away national wealth for the benefit of foreign and private capital. The govt has decided to offload shares of those blue-chip profitmaking PSUs both in the domestic and foreign market at a time when the stock prices all over the world including India are making a nose-dive. Selling assets in a depressed and declining market means distress-sale which facilitates transfer of wealth to private/foreign hands at a price much below their normal value.

During the one year period, the share prices in respect of almost all the PSUs targeted for disinvestment in 1998 have declined enormously and the minimum extent of decline is more than 20%. And such declining trend is still continuing unabated. In Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) the share price declared by 47.8% from Rs 183 per share to Rs 91/-, during last one year (Aug.'97-Aug '98). And the investment bankers appointed to deal with sale of GAIL's share are insisting for immediate offloading of shares in the depressed market.

Similarly MTNL share prices declined by 20.3% during last one year (Sept '97-Sept '98) and that in VSNL declined by 25.36% and in Indian Oil Corporation by a stooping 45.2% from Rs 822/- per share to Rs 450/- during September 97 to September 98. Same is the trend with Indian Airlines share. And this process of selling shares in a depressed market for the PSUs which are deemed to be non-strategic by the govt., those well run companies are being sought to be handed over to private and foreign companies at a nominal price.

Notable is that in all those PSUs slated for

Tapan Sen

COM CHADAYAN GOVINDAN

We record with profound grief, the death of Com.Chadayan Govindan, Member of the Central Committee and Secretary of the Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on 9.9.98. He was also the leader of handloom workers in Kerala, whom he organised and led in several struggles. In his death the working class and the democratic movement in the country and Kerala, particularly, has suffered an irreparable loss. Com.Chadayan Govindan, as a dedicated communist, has devoted his whole life to the struggle for emancipation of the working people and the poor. He made an invaluable contribution to the growth and strengthening of the left and the democratic forces in Kerala.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions and 'The Working Class' pay respectful homage to the memory of Com.Chadayan Govindan and convey heartfelt condolences to all the bereaved comrades and members of family.

disinvestment, govt is also adding more assets with them before a total sell out. In Indian Airlines targetted for immediate disinvestment infusion of additional capital worth Rs 125 crores has already been decided by the government. For Indian Oil Corporation, of which already 8.74% shares, have been offloaded and more is going to be sold from this month onwards, govt has decided to make further investment of Rs.25000 crore. Already project worth Rs.9500 crores have been undertaken to add to the capacity of Indian oil. In such a background, if, say, fifty percent of 400 million shares of Indian Oil Corporation are sold at the existing market price of Rs.450/- per share it can fetch only Rs.9000 crores to govt exchequer in lieu of which the assets worth at least 100 times more than the sales-proceeds of Rs.9000 crores including the recently injected investment of Rs.25000 crore would get transferred to some private/foreign companies. And for such liberal sale of country's wealth how much will go to the pockets of those operating the sale of PSU shares can be anybody's guess. Can these be called anything but shameless loot of public wealth by some individuals either in this country or more probably

from abroad?

Those who are shouting from the rooftop that disinvestment of PSU shares is in the greater interest of the country's economy, and those in governance of India who are operating such mechanism of plunder, are serving the main beneficiaries of such plunder abroad and also themselves and not the country in the least.

Those blacksheep deserve a lesson to be taught by the toiling people of India.

WITHOUT COMMENTS

CHEAP IMPORT VIRUS HIT DESI COMPANIES - BIFR:

A BIFR report cited cheaper imports due to reduction in import duties and growing competition from multinational companies as one of the reasons for industrial sickness.

According to BIFR's performance review report for 1997-98 in a random survey conducted among 50 companies, 22 companies said that they were unable to compete with cheaper imports from other countries. These companies complained that they had to pay hefty excise duties while imports were cheaper due to reduction in customs duties.

They added that complaints regarding unfair trade practices by foreign companies were not promptly attended to.

The report says that industrial sickness is on the increase with textile and metallurgical sectors continuing to be the areas where the impact of industrial sickness is most severely felt. There has been considerable increase in the number of references made to BIFR in 1997 and first quarter of 1998. BIFR received 338 references in 1997 and 118 references in the first quarter of 1998 itself.

Almost all the companies complained about lack of working capital facilities and said that banks and FIs took a very rigid attitude even with those firms which have a proven track record.

(Economic Times: 22.9.98)

DUMPING PUTS STEEL INDUSTRY IN CRISIS

Dumping of steel in the Indian market by foreign companies has created a serious crisis for the domestic steel producers, both in public and private sectors.

The policy of drastic reduction of customs duty on steel import from 85% to around 25%, and simultaneous increase in excise duty on Indian steel producers, has put the Indian steel industry in extreme disadvantage vis-a-vis foreign steel companies. Added to that is the indiscriminate dumping of certain items of steel in Indian market by the foreign countries, particularly Russia, Ukrain, Kazakstan and other CIS countries, which has led to further aggravation of crisis for the Indian steel industry.

Dumping means selling commodity in other countries at a price much below the normal cost price or less than the price charged in the respective domestic markets. What is happening in India is that the steel companies from the above named CIS countries have been marketing certain steel items viz., HR coil/plates/sheets etc., in India at a much lower price below their cost price since 1994-95. During 1996-97 and in 1998 it has assumed an alarming proportion.

As per the internationally renowned journal on Steel Industry, **World Steel Dynamics**, the normal value of HR coil/sheets/plates in Russia, Ukrain and Kazakstan ranged between US\$ 400 to US\$ 374.85 per tonne in 1996 which was arrived at by adding a reasonable margin of 5%

as normal profit.

But in 1995-96 itself those items from Russia, Ukrain and Kazakstan were sold in India at a price of US\$ 335 per tonne -which includes also insurance and freight charges over and above the offered price and which is much below the normal value. And subsequently during 1996-97, 97-98 and the first part of 1998-99, the import price of concerned items of steel from those countries have been continuously sliding down to US\$ 281 during April 1997 to January 1998 and to US\$ 175/US\$ 200 range in August/September 1998. At such a low cost even the most efficient steel producer in the world can never even dream of producing HR Coils/Plates etc., not to speak of the CIS countries! In fact the new private owners of the steel companies in those erstwhile socialist countries, who had taken over the govt owned companies in their countries almost free of cost have now been carrying on destructive trade practices in India.

BLEEDING INJURY

The Indian steel industry has suffered heavy injury in all fronts due to indiscriminate dumping, while the Govt. of India remains a mere onlooker. In respect of almost all the steel producers in India, it resulted in low capacity utilisation. In 1996-97, out of the total indigenous capacity of 7.8 million tonnes in both public and private sector for flat products like HR coils/sheets/plates etc., only 6.5 million tonnes have been produced!

The inventories for these steel items with the Indian steel industry have also gone up phenomenally from 3 lakh tonnes in 1994-95 to 6.6 lakh in 1996-97. Profitability of the steel industry also declined phenomenally due to decline in growth in sales. The indigenous sales of HR coils/plates etc. increased by 24% in 1994-95 against a production growth of 7.2% while in 1996-97 the growth of indigenous sales slid down to only 7.9% against a production growth of 26%. The much lower growth in sales compared to production resulted in sharp decline in profitability. In spite of increase in quantum of sales, net sales-realisation went down sharply in absolute terms. The profitability of the entire industry has come down from Rs.1375 crores in 95-96 to only Rs.474.05 crores in 1996-97. A loss of profit by Rs.901 crores in one financial year explains the extent of injury that dumping has caused to the industry.

In fact, in the background of sharply declining dumping price of steel imported, the domestic steel industry has been compelled to abnormally lower their prices beyond their means in order to stay in the market, which in reality affected their economic health.

The Govt. of India has taken an indifferent, rather negative, attitude in spite of repeated requests from the Indian steel producers for taking anti-dumping measures.

In September 1997, the major steel producer SAIL along with M/s

ESSAR submitted a petition to Govt of India urging anti-dumping measures against Russia and CIS countries in the matter of import of flat products of steel. They have submitted detailed justification for the same. Subsequently all other major steel companies viz. TISCO, Lloyds, Zindal etc also joined the same petition. In October '97, Gazette notification was made to that effect as per procedure.

In June 98, fortysix members of Parliament jointly wrote to Union Commerce Minister urging for imposition of anti-dumping duties on import of HR coils etc. from Russia/Ukraine/Kazakhstan.

BLATANT INDIFFERENCE

On 31st, August 1998, the Union Finance Minister communicated to Jibon Roy, MP & Secretary CITU, that the Designated Authority under Commerce Ministry investigating into the complaint of dumping have submitted their preliminary findings, which was gazetted on 17.6.98. The said Designated Authority admitted the incidence of dumping of HR coil/sheets/plates etc., the dumping margin ranging from 1% to 119%. The Authority also recognised that Indian steel industry had suffered heavy injury. But ridiculously enough, the said Authority could not find any causal link between the incidence of dumping and the injury suffered.

The countries in European Union, USA, Canada, and Venezuela have already imposed anti-dumping duties on import of the same steel items from the same countries, ranging from 64.28% to

80.5%. They could establish causal link between the dumping and injury to the local industry. But surprisingly the Indian Commerce Ministry could not wake up to such menace to Indian steel industry. It clearly reveals that those sitting in the seat of Governance in India are operating not in Indian interest but for some one else!

The Steel Workers Federation of India has submitted a

representation to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce for their urgent intervention. Jibon Roy has also urged the Union Commerce Minister to see reason and ensure that the Designated Authority under Commerce Ministry is made to see the injury suffered by Indian Steel industry and anti dumping measures are taken without further delay.

WITHOUT COMMENT

FAKE DIVESTMENT

At the centre of latest brainwave of privatisation process is the concept of a **SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLE (SPV)**. It is a marvel. One, it suggests adopting the much criticised way in which business houses have maintained controlling stakes in group companies.

Two, it suggests doing something that may be illegal as per the Companies Act.

Three, ...it intends to appropriate PSU money to sell other PSUs...It wrongly dangles the hope that the govt will be the biggest beneficiary. The SPV is planned to be a company with a capital of just Rs 10,000...for a Rs 5000 crore disinvestment programme.

Where will the SPV get the money from?...The govt and other cash rich public sector companies will give interest-free loans to this Rs 10,000 company, just as any Indian businessman takes out crores of interest free money for his Rs 300 investment company.

The SPV will sell shares in the market. But before that, PSUs will become equity holder in the SPV.

This means that say, Hindustan Petroleum will first give interest free loan to the SPV and the SPV will buy HPCL shares.....The whole thing is, of course, such a trickery because the govt is in fact appropriating cash from PSUs to privatise them.....

But what happens if the Special Purpose Vehicle is unable to sell the shares it has bought by using PSU money at least at the price it has paid? The SPV will lose money.

Typically, once investors know that the SPV has no option but to sell, they may wait to pick up shares in the secondary market cheaper.....

The SPV idea is claimed to lead to "better performance" and "higher" value of shares--the govt being a key beneficiary. But the HPCL's price had halved in just a few months. The market has its own logic, independent of our grand hopes.

(Debasis Basu, Economic Times, 23.9.98)

STEEL INDUSTRY: ANTI-WORKER MEASURES OPPOSED

The steel industry in India is facing a major crisis which is not likely to be over shortly despite tall claims made by the Union Finance Minister Yeshwant Sinha. When huge stocks of unsold steel are lying in the stockyard the Finance Minister could even see the beginning of the end of the recessionary period.

Since the new economic policy was introduced in India the steel was decontrolled and more private companies were permitted to enter into steel industry. These companies were paying to the workers much below the wages paid by the public sector steel workers. This enhanced their competitive capacity vis-a-vis the public sector. The private sector steel producers were not providing housing facilities, free education and medical facilities which further resulted in unjust competition in the industry.

The Government brought down drastically custom duty on

imported steel and imposed additional excise duty on indigenous steel which put domestic steel producers including those in private sector in severe disadvantages. The Western countries particularly CIS countries, were dumping their steel at cheaper prices. The failure of the Government to take anti-dumping measure has only aggravated the crisis.

IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION

Due to drastic reduction of public expenditure on construction activity, demand for steel in the country has gone down. The overall recession in the country has also resulted in not picking up the demand for steel when the additional production capacity has been built up in the country.

The Mini Steel plant were the worst victims. Majority of the mini steel plant had to close down due to cheaper steel coming in the country. Out of 23 million ton re-rolling capacity in the country the production was only 3 million tonnes.

The seminar held by Steel Workers Federation in Calcutta in July this year highlighted that the policy of globalisation has put the steel industry in serious problems and the solution lies in reversing the policies and striving for a self-reliant steel industry.

CITU'S INITIATIVE

At the initiative of Hindusthan Steel Employees

Union a joint meeting was organised in Durgapur in August along with of Chairman SAIL and General Secretary CITU to ensure full utilisation of capacity of DSP.

The HSEU pointed out that the high cost of modernisation which escalated due to corruption in implementing the programme, will not make the plant reaching a break even point even if it reaches full-capacity utilisation. Contracts were awarded to agencies like Birla Technical Services and other favourites at very high cost who have no experience in undertaking modernisation of integrated steel plant and operated as middle-man. The SAIL and the Ministry of Steel failed to take any action against the corrupt officials who minted hundreds of crores in the DSP modernisation. The story of Rourkela modernisation programme is in no way different.

The HSEU offered to give full cooperation despite these serious lapses

on the part of SAIL management.

But some of the steps now being taken by the SAIL management go contrary to the spirit of mutual cooperation and a policy of privatisation and anti-worker measures are being resorted to.

UNILATERAL EXERCISE BY SAIL

A so called "brain storming" workshop was held by the SAIL management in early September at Taj Bengal Hotel in Calcutta which dealt on the crisis faced by SAIL and formed six working groups on various aspects of working of SAIL. Surprisingly there was no involvement of trade unions in this workshop.

The workshop recommended reduction in manpower, joint venture with private sector, selling out IISCO, VISL and Maharashtra Electros melt and closing down of some operation. These decisions were reported to the press even before having a discussion with trade unions in steel industry. The workshop also visualised reduction of expenditure on welfare facilities to the workers such as hospitals, education etc.

The workshop clearly indicated that the SAIL management wants to shift entire burden of crisis on the workers. The workshop did not utter a word about stopping rampant corruption prevalent in the steel

M K PANDHE

industry, nor about the inaction of Govt. against dumping.

The management of SAIL has already announced disinvestment of its power plants at Rourkela, Durgapur and Bokaro, commenced action the closure of the blooming and slabbing mill of Rourkela steel plant and identified joint venture partner for service centres. Over and above, SAIL has decided to search for private partner to create additional finishing capacity for Durgapur and Salem Steel plants. Closure of the so-called uneconomic stockyards is also under consideration.

REDUCTION OF MANPOWER AND CURTAILMENT OF BENEFITS

In the name of right-sizing, a drastic reduction of manpower is being undertaken. Already more than 6000 employees have been reduced under the VRS while vacancies for the retired persons are not being filled.

The SAIL management has referred to IDBI the question of restructuring of its capital base. The IDBI promptly recommended sale of IISCO, VISL and Maharashtra Electromelt. The Chairman, SAIL, Arvind Pandey noted in the 26th Annual General meeting, "This will improve our debt-equity ratio and replace our borrowing besides contributing to improve the bottomline of the company."

SAIL is also contemplating for strategic alliance and partners who would invest funds in SAIL. All these mean more and more privatisation of SAIL operations.

In a joint meeting on production and productivity in SAIL CITU criticised the reckless market borrowing by the SAIL management in the modernisation programme which can be seen from the following:

EXCESSIVE BORROWING BY SAIL (in Rs. crores)

YEAR	Total loans	Interest liability
1993-94	11,272	1,114
1994-95	12,136	1,161
1995-96	14,476	1,376
1996-97	17,302	1,839
1997-98	19,872	2,146
1998-99	20,455(p)	2,289(p)

The interest burden which stood at 61 per cent of the gross margin in 1993-94 went upto 86 per cent in 1997-98 and in the first quarter of 1998-99 it stood at 152% of the gross margin.

The CAG Report on Durgapur modernisation strongly criticised the Ministry and SAIL management for the extravagant spending. Even the excess payments made to contractors have not been recovered. The heavy interest burden is mainly due to corruption for which workers cannot be blamed. The CITU pointed out that the SAIL management failed to take action against the culprits who have misappropriated crores of rupees and contributed to the present crisis. However, the management wanted to penalise the workers who cooperated with the modernisation programme despite mismanagement. CITU opposed disposing of IISCO, VISL and Maharashtra Electro Smelt and the joint ventures in captive power units. Without discussing with the workers it was wrong on the part of the management to take such arbitrary decisions.

CITU offered full cooperation if the management adopts policy to protect the public sector steel industry, revive the sick units and improve production to save the steel industry from the crisis. The CITU called upon all the central trade unions to jointly take up the movement and pressurise the Government to change its policies towards steel industry so that it can play an important role in development of national economy in India.

FOR CUBA: MEDICINES AGAINST BLOCKADE

Cuba has been subjected to a brutal economic blockade by the U.S.A.

The WHO, the UNDP and UNICEF have all held that the United States' blockade against Cuba had a negative impact on the health system and is threatening the outstanding achievements attained by the country in this field.

A meeting of the National Committee for Solidarity with Cuba held at New Delhi, attended by eminent personalities of our country, has decided to launch a campaign called "**Medicines Against the Blockade**" during the months of August to October, 1998.

The CITU has been a consistent fighter for lifting the inhuman blockade against Cuba and associating with all the efforts of the Solidarity Committee.

The CITU calls upon all State Committees, Industrial Federations and affiliated unions to wholeheartedly cooperate in this campaign by collecting medicines for our brethren in Cuba.

"PAYMENT OF WAGES MUST GET PRIORITY"

It is Dunlop India Ltd., again. This time the union representing 2100 employees of Dunlop at Chennai, approached the High Court of Madras for payment of wages overdue since November 1997.

The management obviously resisted the move.

First, it contended that the company having been declared sick by the BIFR, Section 22 of the Sick Industrial Companies Act would apply.

Second, it took the plea that the union, having preferred claims under Section 33-C(ii) of the Industrial Disputes Act, cannot approach the High Court seeking any remedy.

Third, it tried to take shelter under yet another case filed by the union seeking intervention of the Reserve Bank of India to provide funds to the management to carry on its operations and pleaded that the union is aware of the financial difficulties of the management.

'And the writ plea was not maintainable', was yet another argument.

The Madras High Court granted a small relief to the workers. Wages were due to the workers for the period from 1st November 1997 to 9th February 1998, i.e., for over 3 months. The court ordered payment for just one month wages.

But the court order is significant as it had dealt with certain important questions of law.

We extract the operative part of the High Court order (*see box*).

It is a significant judgement which

will have its impact much beyond the Dunlop employer-employee case. It has been made absolutely clear the BIFR or no BIFR, Govt. or private, the management, on the plea of funds crunch, cannot deny the worker of his wages already

earned.

Govt. of India, the biggest employer in the country, is at present in the forefront in violating the law of the land, by depriving thousands of PSU workers their statutory dues like wages, P.F.,

EXTRACT OF THE INTERIM ORDER

In the High Court of Judicature at Madras

Dated: 31.08.98

Dunlop Factory Employees Union

Chennai

Vs

The Management of M/s Dunlop India Ltd.

Chennai

"From the above discussion, it would be apparent that the

i) Writ petition is maintainable

ii) As between Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and Standing Orders having statutory force on the one hand and SICA on the other, the Industrial Disputes Act and the standing orders would rank as special statutes and they will exclude SICA.

iii) The workers are entitled to be paid their wages and this liability should be given top priority.

iv) The mere fact that the workers are aware of the financial difficulties of the management cannot by itself absolve the management of its obligations to the workers in respect of wages already earned.

v) The mere fact that the workers have sought for a certificate under Sec.33-C(1) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 will not be an embargo for claiming relief under Article-226 of the Constitution of India, and

vi) The filing of writ petition by the workers seeking the assistance of the Reserve Bank of India will not stop the workers from maintaining the present writ petition.

No doubt the situation is very precarious for the management, but it is no excuse to say that they have no funds. From the decided cases it also does not appear that such a defence is open to the management at all, as has been observed by the Supreme Court, the wages and emoluments of the workers rank above everything else. In these circumstances, the contentions raised by the petitioner have to be accepted and a direction will issue to the first respondent management to pay a month's wages and salaries due to the members of the petitioner/union within a period of two months from today. Call after two months".

gratuity on the plea of "funds crunch". Will the Govt. of India pay heed to the interim order of Madras High Court, follow the order in letter and spirit and also

ensure that the order is implemented by all other employers? How long the "lawmaker" can continue to act as "law-breaker"? Madras High

Court has fully exposed the anti working class character of the unscrupulous employers and the guilty Govt.

PENSION CASE IN SUPREME COURT

The hearing of the case against retrograde govt pension scheme pending in Supreme Court will be held on 3rd November 1998.

On 25.8.1998, the Supreme Court, inter-alia instructed the contending parties including unions to submit written affidavit on or before 15.10.1998 on the judgment of the Madras High Court which upheld the govt pension scheme.

The Govt pension scheme by ordinance in 1995 and subsequently enacted in 1996 was opposed by the entire working class. Innumerable court cases were filed against the scheme in various High Courts of the country. The Calcutta High Court stayed the operation and reiterated the stay on the operation of the govt pension scheme first on the ordinance and subsequently on the Act. In one such case of Steel Workers Federation of India and IEL Employees Union Vs Union of India, the govt side filled special leave petition in Supreme Court urging for vacation of the stay order granted by the Calcutta High Court. But Madras High court and some other High Courts in the country did not grant such stay order, or vacated the stay order granted initially. Madras

High Court had also upheld the govt scheme.

The Supreme Court, while rejecting the govt's plea for vacating the stay order of the pension scheme granted by Calcutta High Court, stated on 19.8.97 that "Whatever benefit available to workmen under the scheme of 1995, shall remain available to them". During the hearing on 17.7.97, the Supreme Court also noted *inter alia* that "Mr Altaf Ahmed, A.S.G., stated that because of the pendency of writ petition in different High Courts and conflicts of decisions by way of either final or interim orders rendered therein, he is advising the concerned authorities to move an appropriate application under article 139A of the constitution for withdrawing the writ petitions from different High Courts to this court".

On 16.7.98, the Supreme Court issued a clarificatory order related to the interim order dt. 19.8.97, which states *inter alia*: "It is therefore clarified that those workmen who want to take the benefit of the scheme of 1995 will have to adopt the procedure under the scheme and will have to contribute appropriately for availing the benefit of the scheme of 1995. This is strictly without

prejudice to the rights and contentions of the parties in the present proceedings. It is also obvious that those workmen who do not want to avail the benefit of the scheme of 1995 will certainly not have to contribute as per the said scheme and they would remain under the scheme existing prior to introduction of the scheme in 1995. In their cases, no occasion would remain for the employers to remit those workmen's contribution to the authority".

It should be noted that this clarificatory order applies to those workers who are covered by stay orders of Calcutta High Court (or any other High Court) and does not amount to rendering the Government scheme, *per se*, optional, for all.

After this the case again came up for hearing in Supreme Court on 25.8.98 and the Supreme Court passed the order narrated in the beginning.

Now the hearing on the case will commence on 3.11.'98. Meantime in respect of certain cases, the writ cases pending in different High Courts have not yet been transferred to Supreme Court. Concerned Unions are requested to take initiative to get their cases transferred to Supreme Court well before 3.11.'98, which will definitely strengthen the case.

SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT ON

1. WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

The Supreme Court Judgement of 13 August 1997 contains Guidelines prohibiting sexual harassment.

As defined in the Guidelines:

“Sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour such as:

- * physical contact
- * a demand or request for sexual favours
- * sexually colored remarks
- * showing pornography
- * Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.”



**STOP
SEXUAL
HARASSMENT**

2. WHO DO THESE GUIDELINES APPLY TO?

It is the duty of the employer or other responsible persons in work places or other institutions to prevent sexual harassment and to provide procedures for resolution of complaints. Women who either draw a regular salary, receive an honorarium, or work in a voluntary capacity in the government; private sector or unorganised sector come under the purview of these guidelines.

3. PREVENTIVE STEPS

Must be undertaken by employers or other responsible authorities in public or private sectors as follows:

- * Express prohibition of sexual harassment should be notified and circulated.
- * Prohibition of sexual harassment should be included in the rules and regulations of government and public sector bodies.
- * Private employers should include prohibition of sexual harassment in the standing orders under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.
- * Appropriate work conditions should be provided for work, leisure, health, and hygiene to further ensure that there is no hostile environment towards women at workplaces and no woman employee should have reasonable grounds to believe that she is disadvantaged in connection with her employment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AUGUST, 1997

4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- * Employers must provide a Complaints Committee headed by a woman and not less than half of its members should be women.
- * Complaints Committee should include an NGO or other organisation that is familiar with the issue of sexual harassment.
- * Complaint procedure must be time bound.
- * Confidentiality of the complaint procedure has to be maintained.
- * Complaints or witnesses should not be victimised or discriminated against while dealing with complaints.
- * The committee should make an annual report to the government department concerned of the complaints and the action taken by them.

5. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- * When the offence amounts to misconduct under service rules, appropriate disciplinary action should be initiated.
- * When such conduct amounts to an offence under the Indian Penal Code, the employer shall initiate action by making a complaint with the appropriate authority.
- * The victims of sexual harassment should have the option to seek transfer of the perpetrator or their own transfer.

6. OTHER PROVISIONS OF GUIDELINES

- * Sexual harassment should be affirmatively discussed at worker's meetings, employer-employees meetings and other appropriate forums.
- * Guidelines should be prominently notified to create awareness of the rights of female employees.
- * The employer should assist persons affected in cases of sexual harassment by outsiders or third parties.
- * Central and state governments are required to adopt measures including legislation to ensure that private employers also observe guidelines.

THESE SUPREME COURT GUIDELINES ARE LEGALLY BINDING AND MUST BE ENFORCED.

(Source : India Centre for Human Rights & Law, Mumbai)

ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS ON UNITED STRUGGLE

The All India coordination committee of Road Transport Workers comprising AITUC, CITU, HMS affiliated unions met at Hyderabad on 2.9.1998. It was presided over by Shyamal Chakraborty. The meeting called upon the Road Transport Workers of the country to unite and unleash struggle against the anti people and anti working class policies of the Central Government and some of the state governments, as a part of the so called liberalisation policy.

Reduction of the role of the State Transport Undertakings (STU) and gradual privatisation is the main target of the offensive. As a result the strength of the STUs is gradually decreasing and private buses are coming in a big way. The workers of the STUs are face retrenchment. On the other side, working conditions of the workers of private buses are also in deplorable condition. There is no service security, no appointment letters, no retirement benefits and no accident compensation. 50 lakh truck workers are facing the worst working conditions. It is the same state of affairs with auto, taxi and other modes of transport.

The roads are inadequate and the condition of the roads is substandard, due to lack of maintenance which causes fatal accidents apart from wear and tear of the vehicles.

The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961 is outdated and the

clauses related to workers' service conditions require amendments. Motor Vehicles Act of 1988 created anarchy in road transport sector.

Under these circumstances road transport workers in different sectors decided to unite and fight together to change the anti-people and anti-working class policy of Central Government towards road transport.

DEMANDS ON GOVT. OF INDIA

a) Transport including Road Transport should be included in the core sector. Transport should be given top priority in the planning process.

b) Stop privatisation of Road Transport Undertakings and go for 100% nationalisation of passenger road transport.

c) A National Transport Development Finance Corporation should be set up to offer soft loans to the STUs.

d) The Motor Transport Workers Act 1961 and Motor Vehicles Act 1988 should be amended as suggested by the Coordination Committee.

e) Central Government and State Governments should continue capital contribution to the STUs.

f) For workers in private sector appointment letters should be issued, minimum wages and 8 hours a day (or 48 hours a week), P.F. and insurance schemes and other social welfare schemes should be implemented.

g) Roads should be developed and improved with adequate maintenance. Increasing load on roads of ever increasing freight carriages is to be restricted and shifted to Railways and other modes of Transport. For this we demand a comprehensive transport policy.

DEMANDS ON STATE GOVT.

a) To take effective measures to improve forthwith the working conditions of workers under private sector road transport like passenger buses and goods-trucks, taxies, autos, etc., relating to the implementation of minimum wages, regulation of working hours, issuance of appointment letters, benefits of provident fund, gratuity and other social security measures.

b) No passenger stage carriage permit shall be given to jeeps and maxicabs.

c) To reimburse fully the cost of social obligations met by the STUs for the different sections of the society

d) Reduce Motor Vehicle Tax and abolish passenger tax.

e) Withdraw taxes on services under public transport system.

f) Initiate workers participation in management of STUs without delay.

In pursuance of the above demands the meeting called upon all the Road Transport Workers to:

i) Organise Gate Meetings, Conventions at District Level and

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State Level with wider participation of all sections of road transport workers before 30th

November 1998.

ii) To organise one day strike along with all other sections of

workers throughout India on 11th December 1998.

REIGN OF TERROR IN DHAURABHATA

The dolomite mines owners in Dhaurabhata in Madhya Pradesh have let loose a reign of terror against the workers.

The Lal Zanda Mazdoor Union (CITU) signed a settlement with the managements of these mines on 28.11.1997 but this has not been implemented so far.

A large number of workers who have served for several years are not getting the benefit of PF or ESI. The local administration and Labour enforcement machinery of the Central Government is not taking any action against the managements, despite blatant violation of the labour laws and non-implementation of the tripartite agreement.

These managements engaged anti-social elements to terrorise the workers and attacked the CITU workers on 12.6.98. This was

falsely termed as a clash between two unions. What is surprising is that false cases were launched against 365 CITU workers!

The workers protested against these attacks. On 13.6.1998, these anti-social elements once again attacked the CITU activists, seriously injuring two leading activists, Jagdish Sahu and Guharam Pal. When workers assembled to protest, the agent provocateurs of the management threw some stones from behind and the police immediately resorted to firing, killing one worker, Dhannu Lal, on the spot. Once again, instead of arresting those who indulged in stone throwing, the police arrested 209 workers including 89 women. 4 of the arrested women were pregnant. Even now 27 workers are in jail on false charges.

Warrant of arrest has been issued against the President of the union O.P. Gangotri, who is an advocate at Bilaspur.

The local administration is fully protecting the employers who are not implementing the labour laws, violate agreement signed with CITU union and do not pay minimum wages.

The management is not attending conciliation proceedings alleging that the union is resorting to gangster methods which is totally incorrect. As a matter of fact all this is engineered by the management itself to continue their violation of laws.

M.K. Pandhe who visited the area on 24.8.98, had urged the Union Labour Secretary to intervene and take suitable steps to implement minimum wages, labour laws and the tripartite agreement.

KARNATAKA CONVENTION OF NPMO

The State level convention of the Platform of Mass Organisation held on 1.9.98 at Town Hall, Bangalore, was a tremendous success. Over 1,200 delegates from every nook and corner of Karnataka participated. Over 30 organisations of workers, of public sector employees, of State and Central Government employees, of workers of medium, big and multinational

organisations, of employees of LIC, GIC, banks, of Hotel workers, Agarbathi, Beedi, Anganwadi, doctors, scientists, journalists, teachers participated in a day long discussions over the impact of globalisation, liberalisations and privatisation resulting in loss of jobs for several thousand workers. The convention took note of the struggles of peasants and agricultural workers.

Eight study papers on public sector, private sector, financial sector, agricultural sector, on central and state govt employees, problems of students, youth and women were presented. The convention decided on the following action programme:

(a) To hold district and Taluk level conventions by 15.10.98 (b) To organise 9 Jathas, covering following districts: i) Bangalore,

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Kolar, Tumkur ii) Mysore, Mandya, Chamaraja Nagar iii) Coorg, Hassan, Chikkamagalur iv) Dakshina Kannada v) Udupi, Shimoga, vi) Uttara Kannada, Dharwad, Haveri Gadag vii) Bellary, Chitradurga, Davanagere viii) Bidar, Gulbarga, Raichur ix) Bijapur, Bagalkot, Koppala. These Jathas will take the campaign to the masses and will

be completed between 21.10.98 and 7.11.98.

(c) Organise a mass rally on 15.11.98 in Bangalore with a estimated mobilisation of over 75,000 persons. (d) One day strike on 11.12.98 alongwith Rastha Rokho, Rail Rokho programmes. The convention strongly criticised the state govt bid to privatise KEB, Mysore Lamps, and

Karnataka State Public Sector industries and urged the workers in these establishment to join the struggle against privatisation. The convention took a pledge to fight globalisation, liberalisation, privatisation and the forces of communalism. S Suryanarayanan Rao administrated the pledge.

(Report from V. J. K. Nair)

JUTE WORKERS' STRIKE ON BONUS

A meeting of the representatives of all operating unions in Jute Industry held on 10.9.98 at Calcutta congratulated the jute workers for

their movement in support of demand of 20 per cent bonus for the year 1998, by observing 1 hour token strike per shift.

The movement will continue after

12.9.98 in the present form till settlement. The workers will also boycott the bonus, if management offered the same on existing basis.

(Report from Niren Ghosh)

IOC CONTRACT WORKERS

Indian Oil Tikka Shramik Union, Ranchi, secured wage increase and other benefits for the workers employed by Hazra Service, a contractor for Indian Oil

Corporation. The workers will get a daily wage of Rs 75 and a uniform allowance of Rs 120 pm. They will also get 7 days of CL, medical leave of 10 days and paid

festival holidays on par with regular employees of IOC. A settlement in this regard was signed on 27.7.98, which will be in force for a year from 1.8.98.

(Report from P. B. Goswami)

STRIKE BY SEAMEN OF HOME TRADE

The Seamen of Home Trade all over India observed one day token strike on 10th September 1998 at the call of Forward Seamen's Union of India (CITU) demanding settlement of Charter of Demands as the last wage agreement expired on 31.3.98.

There were four vessels berthed at Mumbai and all the Seamen joined the strike. Sailing, shifting and maintenance work of these vessels were stalled. The serving seamen gathered themselves in the dinning halls of respective vessels and shouted slogans whole day.

There were five ships at the Kochi Port. The seamen of these vessels observed the strike.

Bepur (Kerala): Seamen of the passenger vessel M.V. Laccadweep participated in the one day token strike at the call of FSUI.

Goa: M.V. Samudra Manthan (Research ship of Geological Survey of India) which was undergoing heavy repairs at Margao, Goa, passed her lonely day as the Seamen did not turn up for work for one day token strike.

Port Blair: The ship M.V.

Ramanujam, there were only 9 seamen who participated in the token strike and did not turn up on maintenance work upto 24.00 hrs of 10.9.98.

At Calcutta a passenger vessel to Port Blair was scheduled to sail on 9th Sept 1998. But the management of Shipping Corporation of India Ltd changed the date of sailing. The Indian National Shipowners Association and Shipping Corporation of India, were urged to initiate talks on the demands immediately, failing which the seamen will go on strike again on 16.10.98.

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MAHARASHTRA: WORKSHOP ON CHILD LABOUR

The Maharashtra CITU organised an ILO sponsored workshop in Aurangabad in the Marathwada region on 29.6.98. This was the first ever workshop in this backward region on the growing problems of child labour in the Shiv Sena-BJP ruled state. The workshop was inaugurated by K.L. Bajaj, General Secretary of Maharashtra CITU.

Bajaj stated that he was happy to note that the ILO has realised the seriousness of this growing problem in India and in other underdeveloped countries and has come forward to share the responsibility for its elimination. He welcomed the ILO initiative and offered CITU's cooperation in this regard.

The organisers of the programme

had taken care to make this workshop fully representative. They had invited Moosa, Secretary to the Industries, Labour and Energy Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, who attended the conference. Moosa explained in detail the different aspects of the child labour problem and the government policies and programmes for elimination of this practice. Phufate, the Asst. Commissioner of Labour, Aurangabad region, was the chief guest and gave valuable guidance and information to the participants.

Anna Sawant, Secretary of Aurangabad-Jalna district committee of CITU presented a paper which contained a detailed study of the child labour problems

in Marathwada region. This paper was the main document for discussion in the workshop.

The workshop was attended by 72 functionaries and delegates from different parts of Aurangabad-Jalna region. The participants made specific suggestions towards elimination of child labour.

Udhav Bhavalkar, Secretary, CITU, Maharashtra, chaired the workshop. Earlier, Pandit Munde, President of Aurangabad-Jalna District CITU, initiated the proceedings and introduced the speakers. CITU functionaries Sakharkar, K.N. Jha, Sable, Mankape and Ujad and others worked hard for the success of this programme

(Report from P.R. Krishnan)

CITU WRESTS FERTILISER UNION FROM BJP

Coramandel Fertilisers Ltd., Visakhapatnam is a prestigious industry in Andhra Pradesh. It is producing 2.5 lakh tonnes DAP fertilisers per annum. On 21.8.'98 elections were held for the Coramandel Fertilisers Employees Union, the only union in the industry. CH. Narasinga Rao, Secretary, A.P. CITU, won against P.V. Chalapathy Rao, Vice-President, State BJP and sitting President of the union for the last two tenures. All the office bearers in the CITU pannel won the elections, with handsome margins.

The Management of CFL has resorted various measures like curtailment of medical benefits, compulsory VRS and medical unfit, contracting out the canteen and jobs like unloading and workload in bagging section etc. It also resorted to victimisation measures like suspensions and chargesheets etc., on those who oppose these measures. CITU resisted these anti-worker actions for the last two years and educated the workers from time to time. This resulted in CITU's thumping victory in Coramandel Fertilisers Ltd.

(Report from A. Ajay Sharma)

COM.PRITISH CHANDA

The CITU deeply mourns the death of Com.Pritish Chanda, the former General Secretary and President of UTUC(LS). Com.Pritish Chanda was associated for a long time in the erstwhile United Council of Trade Unions, National Campaign Committee and then the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions and the National Platform of Mass Organisations. The CITU sends its heartfelt condolence to UTUC(LS) and the bereaved members of his family.

TAMIL NADU

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WELFARE SCHEME

Government of Tamil Nadu has enacted the Tamil Nadu Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Work) Act, 1982. As per this Act, welfare schemes can be initiated for the welfare of 12 categories of workers in Loading/Unloading, Salt pans, Fishing Industry, Boat working, Timber Industries, Toddy Tapping, Coir Industry, Tanneries, Stone breaking or stone crushing and in Construction.

Tamil Nadu Manual Workers (Construction Workers) Welfare Scheme was started in 1994. It came into force on 1.11.94 first in Chennai, Madurai and Coimbatore and later on was extended throughout Tamil Nadu from 15.6.97.

The object of the scheme is to provide for the following welfare measures for the manual workers engaged in construction or maintenance of dams, bridges, roads or in any building operations, namely:-

- 1) Creches
- 2) Group Personal Accident Insurance Scheme
- 3) Provident Fund and E.S.I. Scheme and
- 4) Pension Scheme.

So far 80000 construction workers have joined this scheme by paying initial registration fee of Rs.25. Membership will be renewed by payment of Rs.10

once in every two years. The workers can join the scheme on the basis of a certificate given by the trade union, to which they belong.

Construction Workers Welfare Board was formed, consisting of representatives from the Government (4), the employers (7) and Trade Unions (7). The Labour Commissioner is the Chairman of the Board. Joint Commissioner of Labour is the Secretary of the Board.

The Board pays insurance premium of Rs.25 for all the welfare scheme members to United India Insurance Company. If any worker meets with death due to accident at the workspot, his/her nominee will get Rs.1 lakh as compensation. For injuries and disablement due to accident, the worker gets proportional compensation depending upon the degree of disablement.

The welfare scheme was amended recently to add new measures. These are:

- 1) funeral expenses of Rs.500/- to the family of a worker in case of death (due to accident or natural)
- 2) Maternity assistance of Rs.1000 each up to 2 children
- 3) Marriage assistance Rs.1000 to son/daughter of twice.
- 4) Education Assistance of Rs.750 on passing 10th standard and Rs.1000 p.a. on passing plus 2

upto 2 children.

A welfare cess of 0.1% of the estimated cost of construction is collected from public/private owners of construction. The cess was raised to 0.3% from 1.7.1997. Upto 11.6.98, Rs.5.5 crores has been collected as cess.

CWFI, Tamil Nadu state committee, has been launching many movements for betterment of the scheme and implementation of welfare measures like P.F., Pension, ESI, Creche, etc.

Now, Govt. of Tamilnadu is making hectic preparations for bringing in 'Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Social Security and Welfare Scheme, 1998'. The scheme will be made applicable to workers of 54 unorganised industries like catering establishments, driving auto rickshaws and taxis, engineering works, gunny industry, handloom, powerloom, plastic industries, street vending, tailoring, shops and establishments, hair dressing and beauty parlour, etc.,

Kerala Govt. is also implementing welfare schemes for various sections of workers.

CITU units can take initiative to press for introduction of such welfare schemes in states, wherever they are not there at present.

(Report from R. Singaravelu)

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J & K CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE OF TUs

A two-days meeting on 29th & 30th July 1998 held in Srinagar, various trade union leaders, representing workers and employees of different sectors of economy and establishments, decided to form a broader platform of resistance against the disastrous economic and anti-working class policies of Central and State Governments.

The name of this Platform is "CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE OF TRADE UNIONS". The meeting unanimously elected 31 member working committee with all the Presidents/General Secretaries of 15 organisations forming part of the platform as its members. Mohamad Maqbool will be its convenor and Nisar Ahammad Banday, Organising Secretary, All member executive committee was also constituted.

The Co-ordination Committee of Trade Unions will try to unite all the trade unions on common agreed demands facing the workers and employees while respecting and preserving their identities and ensure their democratic functioning.

The Platform will also fight for the industrialisation of the state and launch a campaign to inculcate work culture among the workers. This platform while fighting against the privatisation and liberalisation policies of the Central and state governments, will take up immediate issues of the working class on the basis of

demands charter.

The demands, *inter-alia*, include: Provide adequate budgetary support to revive and expansion of Public Sector and stop its privatisation.

Enhancements of basic minimum wages to Rs.78/-per day.

Regularisation of all casual/daily wagers, timescale & workcharged

employees.

Immediate measures to revive sick Industrial Units.

Pension as third retirement benefit.

Shifting of Government offices back to the valley, which were dislocated during turmoil.

(Report from Md.Maqbool)

WHO WILL HELP JAMUNA DEVI?

Jamuna Devi is a woman.

Jamuna Devi is a worker.

Jamuna Devi has been working at the Bhurkunda colliery in Hazaribagh for 16 years.

She has worked satisfactorily all these years.

Ten years ago, she was made a Miscellaneous Mazdoor Cat.II, along with many others.

Today, all the others in her batch, all men, are in higher categories.

All the men have been promoted.

Jamuna Devi has not.

She appealed to the officers for her promotion.

The officers said : YOU ARE A WOMAN.

YOU ARE A HARIJAN.

YOU CANNOT BE PROMOTED.

Two years away from the 21st Century, Jamuna Devi, working in a Public Sector colliery, is a victim of **CASTE AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION**.

Who will help Jamuna Devi? Who will ensure justice for her?

The CITU has taken up her case.

With the Central Coalfields management.

With the Labour Ministry.

With the National Commission for Women.

The CITU will fight for her.

JAMUNA DEVI WILL BE PROMOTED.

REPORTS & EVENTS

ESI: STANDARD BENEFITS ENHANCED

The Government of India, in the Ministry of Labour have issued a notification (No.S-38012/2/94-SS.I dated the 1st September 1998) amending the Employees' State Insurance (Central) Rules, 1950, enhancing the standard benefit under rule 54. The revised table of benefit is appended in the *Table* below:

The notification has also reduced the present qualifying period for sickness benefit to 78 days from the present 91/92 days (by amending sub rule (i) of rule 55).

The notification has further reduced the qualifying period for maternity benefit from the present 80 days to 70 days by amending sub rule (i) of rule 56).

It may be noted here that the ESI corporation constituted a sub-committee on 11th December 1990, to review the scale of cash benefits under the ESI Act. The sub-committee comprised, *inter-alia*, *Kali Ghose*, Secretary, CITU and the employees' representative on the ESI Corporation. The sub-committee presented its report far back in 1993. The present changes are part of the sub-committee's recommendations. The Government has now, belatedly come out with the present notification, after relentless pursuit by *Kali Ghose*.

TABLE

Sl. No.	Average daily wages	Standard Benefit Rate in Rs
1.	Below Rs 28	14 or full average daily wage whichever is less
2.	Rs 28 and above but below Rs 32	16
3.	Rs 32 and above but below Rs 36	18
4.	Rs 36 and above but below Rs 40	20
5.	Rs 40 and above but below Rs 48	24
6.	Rs 48 and above but below Rs 56	28
7.	Rs 56 and above but below Rs 60	30
8.	Rs 60 and above but below Rs 64	32
9.	Rs 64 and above but below Rs 72	36
10.	Rs 72 and above but below Rs 76	38
11.	Rs 76 and above but below Rs 80	40
12.	Rs 80 and above but below Rs 88	44
13.	Rs 88 and above but below Rs 96	48
14.	Rs 96 and above but below Rs 106	53
15.	Rs 106 and above but below Rs 116	58
16.	Rs 116 and above but below Rs 126	63
17.	Rs 126 and above but below Rs 136	68
18.	Rs 136 and above but below Rs 146	73
19.	Rs 146 and above but below Rs 156	78
20.	Rs 156 and above but below Rs 166	83
21.	Rs 166 and above but below Rs 176	88
22.	Rs 176 and above but below Rs 186	93
23.	Rs 186 and above but below Rs 196	98
24.	Rs 196 and above but below Rs 206	103
25.	Rs 206 and above but below Rs 216	108
26.	Rs 216 and above but below Rs 226	113
27.	Rs 226 and above but below Rs 236	118
27.	Rs 236 and above	125

OUSTED BANK STAFF WIN BACK JOBS

The multinational ANZ Grindlyas Bank, in India, started rationalisation of its operations far back in 1973. This was with the main intent of shrinking the workforce was evident from the fact that by 1979, 400 jobs disappeared.

The Grindlyas Bank Employees Union, Mumbai, conducted agitations, including a 100 days strike in 1979-80, in protest.

The dispute was referred to the National Industrial Tribunal (NIT), which in its award directed the management to maintain the workmen staff strength, without erosion, when the operations were fully computerised. For four years the Award was honoured just to facilitate the computers to be fully operative. In the process the deposits of the Bank grew five times and profits multiplied tenfold.

But the multi-national greed for profit is insatiable. So they threw the Award Committee to the winds and resorted to temporary and contractual appointment of sub-staff paying paltry adhoc wages.

The union challenged the violation of the NIT Award. After dilly-dallying before the conciliation authorities, the Bank gave regular wages to the workmen who worked upto four months. There were 46 workmen with over a year of service and 180 with just 2 to 4 months of service. The Government chose to refer the cases of only 46 workers, who had worked more than 240 days continuously, for adjudication. All the 46 workers were promptly terminated by the management! But later, it took back 14 of them and made them permanent. This was in 1993.

After a prolonged legal battle, the Tribunal in July, 1997 ordered the bank to reinstate the other 32 workers and regularise their services. The Bank took the matter to Bombay High Court, first before a single judge and later before a division bench, where the Bank's petitions were dismissed by April 1998.

'Graciously' the Grindlyas Bank management did not venture to take the issue to the Supreme Court and implemented the Tribunal Award in June 1998! Thus the struggle of these victimised sub-staff culminated in success after protracted legal process.

Twentyeight of these workers who got confirmed in job had contributed Rs.2000 each, and a total sum of Rs.56000 has been remitted to Com. BTR Memorial Trust Fund.

(Report from P.N. Subramanian)

AICCTU CONFERENCE

The Fourth Conference of the AICCTU was held in New Delhi on 22-24 September 1998. Dipankar Bhattacharya, General Secretary, AICCTU, presented the report reviewing the activities of AICCTU since the 3rd conference.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU conveying greetings to the conference emphasised the need to strengthen T.U. unity to fight the offensive of globalisation. He

also noted the dangerous consequence of BJP led Government coming to power which hit the secular fabric of the country.

He appealed to the delegates to effectively implement the decisions of NPMO convention held on 12th August '98 so that the strike on 11th December becomes a grand success. The growing deterioration in the living standards of the common people

will prevail upon them to join this nationwide action, which alone can defeat the policies of the BJP Government, he pointed out.

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REPORTS & EVENTS

SUCCESSFUL STRIKE OF COLLEGE TEACHERS

Nearly four lakh college and university teachers, comprising lecturers, readers and professors, went on an indefinite strike from August 11. The strike concluded on September 5 with an successful agreement with the government and the All India Federation of College and University Teachers Organisations (AIFUCTO), which gave the strike call.

The strike forced the Human

Resource Development Minister Murli Manohar Joshi, to come down for a settlement, who earlier insisted that he will not negotiate with the striking teachers unless the federation called off their strike.

There were state level actions in all the states on September 4 in the form of one-day cease-work, dharnas and rallies to give a warning to the government. The strike saw the unparallel unity of

action by all the sections of the teaching community. During the strike period the teachers organised rallies, hunger strikes, dharnas and huge processions in the university centres and state capitals.

The major gains of the strike are that the teaching profession has been made more attractive for the new entrants and substantial gains have been made for the existing teachers.

PHILIPPINES: WORKERS LOSING JOBS

The ongoing "Asian crisis" has directly displaced 69908 workers in Philippines from January to June this year. This amounts to **421 workers retrenched every day**. (By July retrenchment had gone up to 82839 workers)

330 establishments have been closed this year - an average of **two firms shutting down every day**. Another 1287 firms have resorted to retrenchment or job rotations. In the next four months an additional 123 establishment are expected to close adding 8104 more workers to the displaced list. Official government figures of unemployed has gone up to 4.2 million (13.3%) in April 1998, from 3.2 million (10.4%) in April 1997. This means an average of 2781 workers join the ranks of the unemployed each day. On top of this another 5.8 million Filipinos are underemployed.

With the administration plan to trim government jobs by 5% every six months, 120000 government employees will lose jobs within one year of President Estrada's regime.

As a result of the neo-liberal

policies of liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation, more lay-offs and job cuts are expected in the coming months.

(Source: KMU correspondence)

COM. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO

We record with profound regret the sudden death of Comrade P. Ramachandra Rao, Member of the Central Committee and Secretary of the Karnataka State Committee of the CPI (M) in Delhi on September 18, 1998.

Comrade Ramachandra Rao began his career as a school teacher in the Dakshin Kannada district of Karnataka. After being active in the teachers' movement, he started working among the unorganised workers such as beedi and tile workers and became an established trade union leader in the 1960s. He was a member of the general council of the AITUC. After the CITU was formed in 1970, he became district secretary of the CITU, a member of the CITU General Council and later the general secretary of the CITU state committee. In the 1970s, he also played a key role to build the Kisan Sabha in Karnataka. The CITU and "The Working Class" pay homage to Com. Ramachandra Rao and convey condolences to the bereaved family.

WFTU PLEA TO NAM SUMMIT

In a Memorandum presented to 12th conference of the Non-aligned Movement, the World Federation of Trade Unions had drawn attention to the global economic and social issues which directly affect the working people in all countries, including the non-aligned countries. The memorandum, *inter-alia*, stated:- "Whole countries and regions in various parts of the world have been pushed into economic decline and depression in recent months. Million of jobs have been lost and more job losses are expected as the regional financial crises are threatening to assume global dimensions. What was once "financial turmoil" has become full-blown depression with loss of more than a trillion dollars in purchasing power and the addition of 30 million people to the ranks of the unemployed. At the same time, the currency devaluation forced by the speculators has resulted in the bankruptcy of thousands of businesses in several countries. The "bubble economy" nurtured by the big banks and big business is now blowing up. The crisis is aggravated by the policies which are being pursued by the International Monetary Fund favouring the moneylenders and speculators, responsible for the recent financial turmoil.

The time has come to look at the basic issues. The outflow of resources from the developing countries as well as the weaker

economies has now become accelerated, as a consequence of the unequal trade and declining terms of trade for the developing countries as well as the huge burdens of servicing a colossal foreign debt. The globalisation which has been going on has only worsened these imbalances.

The global market is dominated by the transnational cartels. The global turnover of the TNCs exceeds global exports. It is also well known that close to one-third or more of world trade is accounted for by the internal transactions within the transnational corporations and subject to transfer pricing which governments can neither regulate nor control.

Structural adjustment and other economic policies should conform to the objectives of social development. The worsening economic and social situation in the developing countries is directly linked to such "adjustment policies" and the resulting rapid increase in the number of unemployed and underemployed and those denied their basic human needs. Globalisation should not lead to further widening of the gap between the developed and developing countries, through the unrestrained exploitation of the resources of the latter by the TNCs, mainly based in the G7 countries. Steps should be taken to formulate and enforce a Code

of Conduct to regulate the activities of the TNCs.

Moreover, the poor developing countries are still paying back huge sums as debt service, which eats up a large part of their development funds. It is, therefore, essential that all outstanding external debt of developing countries be written off as development assistance, so that the huge sums now spent on debt service are spent, instead, on urgent social needs.

The WFTU believes that the current emphasis on deregulation, privatisation and devaluing the role of the state sector while dismantling the social security structures as advocated by neo-liberalism is totally misplaced and can only invite a repetition of the crisis of the 1930s. And we are particularly concerned at liberalisation measures which force developing and least-developed countries into unequal competition with TNCs.

There has to be an international inquiry into the reasons for the ongoing financial turmoil and effective mechanisms should be set up to the unfettered speculation and profiteering on the world financial and commodity markets. A tax on speculative capital movements should be imposed immediately. Such a tax can not only deter speculation but could also provide the resources needed for new job-creating investments."

BTR MEMORIAL FUND

(Details of receipts subsequent to the list published in December 1997 issue of 'The Working Class')

1. Delhi State	3,200.00	42. Kottayam Dist Com. of CITU	77,500.00
2. Delhi State	5,100.00	43. Com. Inderjit Singh, Haryana	250.00
3. Grindlay's Bank Empl. Union	8,833.00	44. CLW Labour Union	5,000.00
4. Delhi State CITU	2,500.00	45. CIRB(Dist. Agricultural Workes Union) Haryana	5,100.00
5. RBI Emp. Assn., Trivandrum	5,000.00	46. Delhi Municipal Workers Lal Jhanda Union	2,000.00
6. RBI Emp. Assn., Cochin	1,175.00	47. Satvir Singh, Haryana	500.00
7. Indian Bank Emp. Assn. Kozhikode	1,247.00	48. Canara Bank Staff Union, Mumbai	50,000.00
8. Delhi State Committee of CITU	2,500.00	49. Indian Bank Emp. Union, Calcutta	10,000.00
9. Charma Udyog kamgar Union, ghaziabad.	5,100.00	50. Canara Bank Staff Union, Ernakulam	6,265.00
10. Delhi State Committe of CITU, Ghaziabad	9,500.00	51. Sukkarmani Mejham, Dughda Colliery, Bihar	5,000.00
11. Coalfield Labour union	1,400.00	52. WB State Committee of CITU	1,50,000.00
12. Delhi State Committee of CITU	1,200.00	53. All India State Govt. Emp. Fed./Punjab	8,300.00
13. NCOEA (Gathara Washery)	200.00	54. Ravindra Nath Bhattarcharya, Patna	5,000.00
14. NCOEA (Gobindpur Br.)	600.00	55. E.Rly Workers Dhanbad Div.	2,000.00
15. V. Krishna Murthy, Karur Vysya Bank	1,000.00	56. Comrades of Canada Bank, Pune	5,519.00
16. Prasanta Kumar basu, Calcutta	250.00	57. Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union	3,000.00
17. G. Janardhana Reddy	200.00	58. Canara Bank Staff Union, Ernakulam	4,330.00
18. J. Ballabh, CITU Centre	1,000.00	59. Umesh Gupta, RBI/New Delhi	500.00
19. All India Insurance Empl. Assn.	1,00,000.00	60. Tripura State Committee of CITU	10,000.00
20. Syndicate Bank Staff Union	65,560.00	61. T.N. State Govt. Emp. Association	25,000.00
21. Bank Emp. Federation of India/Calcutta	1,00,000.00	62. Bihar Rajya Vidhut Parishad Field Kamgar Union	5,000.00
22. Basudev Chatterjee, CBI, Calcutta	100.00	63. Grindlays Bank Emp. Union, Mumbai	56,000.00
23. Kalyan Biswas, CB/Calcutta	50.00	64. Indian Overseas Bank Staff Union	500.00
24. Singareni Colliereis Emp. Union	1,00,000.00	65. Canara Bank Staff Union	2,560.00
25. G.P. Sengupta, Calcutta	1,000.00	66. Reserve Bank Emp. Union	9,650.00
26. BEFI, Kerala	40,490.00	67. Kerala State Committee of CITU	6,00,000.00
27. NCOEA, Ranchi	7,000.00	68. Coalfield Labour Union	1,200.00
28. Tripura State Committee of CITU	15,000.00	69. G. Janardhan Rao	200.00
29. NCOEA	5,000.00	70. NCOEA Ranchi	5,000.00
30. U.P. State Committee of CITU	6,000.00	71. Canara Bank Staff Union	2,670.00
31. Wings Wear Workers Union	1,000.00	72. Sukhdev Singh, BHEL, Jhansi	300.00
32. State Co-ord. Comm. of WB Govt. Emp. Assn. & Union.	5,00,000.00	73. TISCO Karmachari Union, Bihar	1,500.00
33. Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts Emp. Union.	1,930.00	74. Industrial Mazdoor Union, Jamshedpur	5,000.00
34. Chemical Workers Union, Sonapat, Haryana	1,500.00	75. U.P. Menon, CITU Centre	3,000.00
35. Assam State Committee of CITU	10,000.00	76. K. Vaithinathan, Tamilnadu	2,000.00
36. Bihar State Biri Mazdoor Union, Jamir	1,000.00	77. Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union	3,000.00
37. United breweries Sramik Sangh, Hithidah(Bihar)	480.00		
38. HSCL Em. of Patria Office	120.00	Total	26,39,949.00
39. WB State Committee of CITU	3,00,000.00	Previous receipts as reported in December issue	80,51,904.00
40. Fed. of State Emp. & Teachers Orga. Kerala	98,370.00	Total Receipt upto 23.9.98	1,06,91,853.00
41. Ernakulam Dist. Comm. of CITU	2,12,500.00		

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FIDEL CASTRO ON GLOBALISATION AND THIRD WORLD UNITY

In diverse speeches during his recent visits to Grenada, Barbados and Jamaica, the Cuban President, **Fidel Castro**, talked at length on globalisation and third world unity.

On the question of globalisation he remarked: "Globalisation is one of the most important and most decisive issues at the present stage of human history. That is why we need to know what place we are going to occupy in this globalised world, because we perceive the difficulties, we perceive the omissions and we have to fight for our people, the peoples of the Caribbean and the peoples of the entire Third World".

"Our united strength cannot be ignored", he affirmed. "And those of us who were enslaved and exploited for centuries in the past have the right to aspire to and fight for a world of justice, of freedom and of peace in the 21st century."

The world is rapidly becoming globalised, which means that finances, transfer of capital, investments and trade are rapidly extending through the world and that is "an inexorable law of human society's development, the advance of the productive forces and the development of technologies, communications and transportation.

"We ask ourselves: What kind of a world is that globalised world going to be for us? What will be left for us? And we say to ourselves: What's going to become of the Third World? An immense area of duty free zones where the industries and capital of the developed countries will seek out cheap labour force, earn a lot of money and not even pay taxes". To confront these challenges what is needed first and foremost is a total regional unity of the people and continents "to demand their rights, to demand a decorous place in the world, within the world economy, before total globalisation takes place, a globalisation which must be based on solidarity and justice".

Referring to the need for third world unity, Fidel emphasised that the third world peoples, "who were so atrociously colonised and exploited" now constitute the overwhelming majority among UN member countries and the day "the UN is

democratised and its irritating privileges and usurpation of Security Council functions comes to an end and all of us enjoy equal rights at the UN, the sooner we will see the end of injustice, of abuses and of plundering, to which our people fall victim". The Cuban President then turned to what he called the moves to attempt to eradicate the preferences and privileges enjoyed by the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) via the expiry of the Lome Convention and other regional agreements depriving the Caribbean countries of their markets.

The Cuban President made it clear that his country is categorically opposed to the suppression of preferential treatment for Caribbean products and asked whether the WTO's role is to secure the interests of transnational companies or whether the organisation "should exist in order to promote a new and more equitable trade order that protects the interests of the countries which desperately need development?"

"If some are very rich and other are very poor, the world order should, in the first place, help the poorest and economically least developed countries, which constitute today the overwhelming majority of humanity."

He emphasised that the third world countries, which are a majority in the WTO, should learn how to defend their rights. "One of the great challenges that lies ahead for us is to prevent them from dividing us by employing deceit and illusory promises".

"The truth always wins out sooner or later, from those who crucified christ for bringing a message of love and solidarity to the poor and oppressed of Rome 2000 years ago, to those who locked Nelson Mandela in a prison cell for 27 years for fighting against the apartheid system in the middle of the 20th century". Talking of the rich heritage of the third world countries. Fidel remarked: "We are also rich, but not in terms of economic indices, not in terms of enjoying consumer societies. We are rich in our feelings, in our hearts, in our ideas, in our aspirations for justice, in our noble human feelings, and that definitely constitutes the peoples' greatest riches."

(Report by J. Ballabh with inputs from Gramma International Aug.16,1998)



The CITU and ILO organised a workshop for women trade unionists from the Hindi speaking states in New Delhi, on 26-28.8.1998, attended by 18 participants from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, UP and Delhi.

Vimal Randive presided over the workshop. L.P. Massun, ILO representative for India and Bhutan inaugurated. Dr. L. Mishra, Labour Secretary, Government of India, was the Chief Guest.

The subjects covered in this workshop were: working women and trade unions, Trade Union Organization, Labour Legislation for working women in India, ILO Conventions and Recommendations concerning working women, Unequal status of women in society - a historical outline, Role of working women in society today.