



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Mortgaging India

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Even before the Railway Budget and the Annual Budget for the current fiscal year were presented, various statements laying down economic policy formulations were made by Narasimha Rao Government. The minority Government, displaying undue haste and utter contempt for democracy announced these measures outside the forum of Parliament. It did not wait for the vote of confidence or even the session to meet before pronouncing and implementing far reaching measures which are going to drastically alter the economic scenario in the country.

The two-time devaluation of the rupee by 22% within a span of just fortyeight hours, we are told has become inevitable to tide over the balance of payment crisis, whereas in reality it will but aggravate it. In rupee terms against the current foreign debt of Rs. 1,31,000 crores India will have to pay Rs. 1,62,000 crores on account of the devaluation. The Hon'ble Finance Minister would have us believe that the increase in exports and the decrease in imports which he claims will come into effect as a consequence of this devaluation will more than make for the difference and will lead to a drastic reduction in our international liabilities. Experience hitherto gained speak otherwise. While in 1987-88 the rupee was devalued by 1.3% the exports went up by 28.9%, in 1980-85 period the rupee devalued by 33% could increase our exports by a mere 9.7%. The growth of world trade in 1987-88 was 5.6% and in 1980-85 only 2.5%. Therefore trade boom has a bearing our export trade.

Leaving it to the bane of economists to ponder over the impact this measure may have on export/import and the balance of payments position, the common man himself is able to see through the lie. Manmohan Singh tells us that the devaluation will have no effect on the internal market in the country. The average wage-earner on the contrary found that with the rupee he possessed he could buy lesser amount of commodities, as consequent to the devaluation in the international market prices of all

essential commodities have witnessed a steep increase. A barrel of crude in the international market will no doubt cost more and so will atta, rice, dal and other essentials at home. This our Finance Minister tells us is progress and prosperity. The Finance Minister however was quick to add that inflation cannot be controlled by them and those who drafted the Congress (I)'s election manifesto had little knowledge of what economics is all about. And therefore we had the appeal of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, in his broadcast to the nation, to tighten our belts. Shri Rao is unaware of Indians. It is indeed a pity that he does not know that a belt is a luxury for us Indians. With each passing day the common man gets thinner and thinner due to lesser intake of food, thanks to the spiralling prices. The string with which he tightens his already loose tattered lower garment is now clinging to the bones. How much more should he tighten Mr. Rao. The Prime Minister contradicts himself when he states that the burdens of the crisis would not be thrust on to the shoulders of the common man.

Subsequently, the government has come out with clear cut pronouncements of its intentions. The MRTP limit will be raised to Rs. 1,000 crores from the present Rs. 100 crores; foreign equity participation will be allowed upto 51 percent; the remaining obstacles in the path of large-scale penetration of multinationals into the Indian economy will be lifted; FERA will be amended to facilitate yet larger drains from the country and last but not the least, will be the handing over of the public sector to private hands. These far reaching measures termed 'structural changes' will in fact change the very structure of the economy. A structure in which the multinational corporations will lay the rules of the game.

Even if the Finance Minister or for that matter the Prime Minister seek to deny the fact that these retrograde measures have been initiated at the behest of the IMF World Bank, the IMF Chief himself

Declaration

Of the 48th National Conference of the African National Congress Extracts-6 July 1991

We, participants at this 48th National Conference of the ANC representing a cross section of South African society : workers, students, the rural masses, intellectuals, religious communities, business-persons-men and women, young and old, black and white-hereby adopt this declaration as our collective message to our country and to the world.

This 48th National Conference of the ANC, comes at a time when our country and its people are poised to commence the last leg of our long struggle to bring an end to minority domination and usher in an era of democracy and peace. The people's hopes for freedom, social justice, democracy and peace stand higher than at any time during this century. As a result of the struggles and sacrifices of the people, the moment for the final eradication of the hated system of white domination has dawned.

We remain convinced that the only real hope for the future of our country and its people lies in the creation of a democratic society based on humane values. These values—government of the people, by the people and for the people have been kept alive and survived in our country, thanks to the sacrifices of millions of our people against the tyranny of white domination. We salute the people of South Africa, who have over many decades waged unrelenting struggle, undaunted by repression and other adversities. We pay tribute to all the patriots who have fallen in the cause of this noble struggle.

The possibility of eradicating apartheid by peaceful means has emerged through our struggles. The overwhelming majority of South Africans are convinced that the process of peaceful transition to a democratic future must proceed with all deliberate speed.

Our country has entered a period of decisive movement towards her redemption from years of cruel oppression and repression. We are conscious of the heavy responsibility on the African National Congress and the people in general to ensure that this takes place with the minimum of bloodshed and destruction. We pledge to march together in ever-swelling ranks to a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

We reaffirm the ANC's non-sexist policy and commit ourselves to urgently further deve-

lop mechanisms of addressing the serious challenge of women's emancipation in society at large, including our own ranks.

We reiterate our adherence to the principles of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa as enshrined in the Freedom Charter. These include the guarantee of the fundamental human rights of all South Africans, reinforced by an entrenched Bill of Rights a multi-party system of government, a representative and independent judiciary and regular elections. However, these rights will be meaningless without the fundamental restructuring of the economy to serve the interests of the people and far-reaching reforms in the areas of land distribution, housing, education, health, welfare and so on.

The main goal of the struggle is the liberation of our people from the system of national oppression. The ANC remains a national liberation movement committed to the transfer of power to the people as a whole. We do not act simply in the narrow interest of the ANC as a political organisation. Our mission, hand-in-hand with other democratic forces, is to rid South Africa of the scourge of apartheid in all its manifestations.

We reaffirm our commitment to the deepening of democracy within our ranks. The preparations for this Conference and the open and free exchange of ideas in its sessions have reinforced the unity and coherence of our movement. They have also planted the seed which will germinate in the development of a democratic political culture in our society.

We, the delegates assembled at this 48th National Conference of the ANC call upon all our people to join hands in the struggle for democracy and peace in our land. We reach out to workers, youth and students, the rural masses, traditional chiefs, artists, sports-persons religious communities, intellectuals, business-persons and others. We call on our white compatriots to take active part in the efforts to build a just and democratic future for all our people. We reach out in particular to the security forces and call on them to support and defend the process of peaceful transition to democracy, acting in support of the aspirations of the people.

Let Peace, Freedom and Justice Prevail !

contradicted this by stating that they were pleased with the measures undertaken by the Government of India. In plain words Shri Narasimha Rao, Mr. Manmohan Singh and the Congress (I) Government are being dictated by the IMF, a body dominated by the US. The dictates of US imperialism is being rushed through as remedies to cure the ills afflicting the country. These ills are but a consequence of the policies pursued by the bourgeois-landlord class rule in the country for over 44 years.

If the experience of the 1981 IMF loan is any indication, our countrymen are in for a further deterioration of the already miserable conditions in which they live. The lifting of curbs on imports, the liberalisation drive etc that were launched then saw our foreign debt burdens shooting up, and same was the case with other liabilities abroad. The situation worsened during the tenure of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The breath-taking speed with which he wanted to take us into the 21st century by a further lifting of curbs and an increased liberalisation landed us with an external debt of Rs. 69,681 crores by the end of 1989 whereas it stood at Rs. 25,800 crores in 1985 (Reserve Bank Currency & Finance Reports). The total liability, resultant to these measures at the end of 1990 stood at Rs. 1,31,000 crores, as pointed out earlier.

Now we are led to believe by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues and a host of economists and mediemen, stooges or otherwise of the IMF and the World Bank that to get out of the mess created by policies pursued by the dictates of the IMF/World Bank, we have to once again resort to the very same measure that created the crisis. Is it homeopathy or economics that they are teaching us? It is economics of course, but economics that is biased in favour of the imperialists.

Liberalisation we were told will allow foreign capital to flow into the country for investment, bringing along latest technology. Not only was this to usher in more employment avenues it was also intended to make the Indian industry stand up to compete with superior quality goods manufactured by these industries. Our cottage and village industries were to compete with multinational corporations—if this is not absurdity, then what can be? Faced with uneven competition and ruthlessness of the intruder many factories in the country had to bring down their shutters, leading to lakhs of workers joining the ranks of the unemplyed. As on today about 3 lakh industrial units both big and small are in the sick list. How many more will face the same fate is anybody's guess. The prescription is to close down all industries in the red.

In the eighties commenced a campaign of vilification and denigration of the Public Sector. It was intensified during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi Government when dismantling of the public sector and handing over the same to private hands gained

momentum. Now it has reached its crescendo with the government revealing its intentions to dismantle it in the near future. The core industries hitherto the bane of the public sector is bit by bit being opened to the private sector. Telecommunications, post and other such services have seen large investments by the private sector; compartmental functions in various other industries and sectors hitherto lying with the public sector have been handed over to private hands. Even conservancy and catering services in Railways, the Railway Minister revealed will be handed over to private contractors. Thus the Public Sector which has played a pivotal role in the development of the country is sought to be given a miniscule role if not totally dismantled. We are led to believe that the public sector is inefficient, loss-making and that mismanagement is the password. Even while not stating that the so-called Nehruvian model (Capitalism nothing else) has failed, we are informed that socialism has failed in India and the world and that socialism has no future. Whether socialism has any future or not let history decide. But to say that the socialist model has failed and that in India we had socialism betrays utter lack of knowledge. The socialist model pursued in different countries did face a crisis which were later to lead to severe setbacks in these countries. But the crisis were on account of the mistakes and departures from the path of socialist development resorted to by the parties in power in these countries and not due to any inherent weakness in the system itself. But that apart, pursuing capitalist development in India by collaborating with foreign capital and terming it as "socialist", the Indian ruling classes sought to mislead and befool the people. The people far from being fooled have time and again took up cudgels against these policies which have heaped immense miseries on them. Now this model of "socialism" being outdated our rulers now want to go in for "capitalism" the imperialist way. So the socialist obstacles impeding capitalist development have to be done away with. Naturally the axe will fall on the public sector. When the role of the public sector in Indian economy was enunciated during the course of the First Five year Plan, rather than it enjoying "commanding heights", it was but meant to help capitalist development, the capitalists in the country at that point of time lacking both the resources, will and the know-how to man the industries and services that were given to the public sector. Now that the Indian capitalist due to years of exploitation having accumulated enough capital and with the public sector industry already established, would like to put these industries into his cupboard. It is this intention that was being given expression to during the past few years. The international monopoly capital too wants its share of the cake, and the government willingly is becoming fiat accompli.

A government which lacks a clear cut mandate from the people; a government which holds democratic institutions with utter contempt is seeking to handover the gains of the freedom movement, the

CITU Denounces the IMF Dictated Economic Measures

Reacting immediately to the series of retrograde economic measures announced by the minority Congress (I) Government surrendering to the conditionalities of the IMF, the Secretariat of the CITU issued the following statements calling upon the unions to raise their voice of protest and launch actions :

On June 23 :

Prime Minister Advocates Appeasement to World Bank and the IMF

The Prime Minister, P V Narasimha Rao in his address to the nation after assumption of office has blatantly come out with a package dictated by the World Bank and the IMF conditionalities which will seriously affect the country's self reliance and the living standards of the common people of India. The CITU condemns this stand of the Government of India which totally ignores the views of the left and democratic opposition in the country in this critical juncture.

The Prime Minister's call for tightening up of the belt and necessary sacrifices is clearly indicating that a heavy dose of taxation on the common people is in the offing in the forthcoming budget.

In the name of removal of cobwebs coming in the way of rapid industrialisation, huge concessions are likely to be offered to the big business houses in the country. Moreover, he has given green signal for the foreign direct investments to exploit our economy. Multinational companies will be given a special favoured treatment by further relaxation of controls by Narasimha Rao Government.

The assurance given by the Cong (I) Election Manifesto to bring down the prices drastically within one hundred days of assumption of office is conveniently forgotten. In the light of Prime Minister's acceptance of humiliating conditionalities of the IMF that the subsidies should be stopped, his announcement that the public distribution system would be extended to the villages appears to be meaningless. Gone is the promise that one crore new jobs would be created every year if the Cong (I) party would come to power. All the lip sympathy expressed in the Prime Minister's speech for the poor and the rural population is only a cover up to hide the fantastic package of concessions offered to multinational companies. On the plea of introducing fiscal discipline in the economy toiling masses will have to face inroads in their standard of living.

The economic policies of Congress (I) party pursued during 80's which emphasised import liberalisation, increased consumption of luxurious goods and excessive thrust on export of Indian goods, have brought the national economy into this critical situation and pursuing the same policies would only mean further aggravation of the crisis in the Indian economy.

The CITU appeals to the working class to resist these policies and prepare for a countrywide struggle to force the government of India to change these policies. The CITU is firmly of the opinion that India would never achieve self-reliance by succumbing to the dictates of the World Bank and the IMF.

On June 26 :

CITU Denounces Finance Minister's Statement

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions denounces the statement made by the Finance Minister Man Mohan Singh in his first press conference on June 25. Coming in the wake of the Prime Minister's statement, it is brazenly subservient to monopoly and multinational corporations. His statement that "without the money and technology from the multinationals, the Indian economy would be marginalised", creates a dangerous postulation that the Indian economy will have to depend on the multinationals and can never become self-reliant. It is on record that the promonolist and pro-multinational economic policy pursued by the Congress for the last forty years of its rule is responsible for landing the country into the present economic mess. The same policy which now the minority Government is going to follow more aggressively, is being openly trumpeted as to bring panacea.

It is reprehensible that on the question of IMF loan, which even according to the Minister required countrywide debate, the Government has already sent the letter spelling out India's requirement only after consultations among the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and the top officials in the Finance Ministry even before initiating the debate. His statement that IMF conditions are the ones which even otherwise India would have implemented, shows that the IMF conditions are already accepted by the Government, and all talk of 'not accepting conditions against national interest' is just an eye-wash.

It is further reprehensible that the Finance Minister has openly gone back from the commitment given in the Cong(I) in its Manifesto to bring down the prices of the essential commodities within 100 days on the plea of changed situation.

The policy enunciation by the Finance Minister, coupled with the indication by the Railway Minister of a possible hike in the Railway fares and freight means a steep hike in the prices of all commodities. All this will render the life of the common man more miserable.

The CITU calls upon its unions and appeals to all trade unions to raise their voice of protest and prepare for united movement against the new offensive.

On July 3 :

Devaluation Surrender

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

The latest bout of devaluation which further dipped the Rupee to a low of 18% betrays the total surrender of Narasimha Rao Government to the dictates of IMF. The recent report of the World Bank had suggested that the real devaluation of the Rupee will have to be to the tune of 22%. This latest act on the part of the Cong. (I) Govt. at the centre shows that it is determined to carry out the dictates to the hilt, defying all opposition parties, mass organisations and the mass democratic opinion in the country. This latest act is only the signal for carrying out all the conditionalities of the IMF.

Apart from its dangerous consequences on the country's self-reliance, costlier imports and other devastating impacts on other aspects of our economy, it will send the prices of essential goods sky rocketing, which will spell ruin on the living conditions of the workers, peasants, rural poor and middle class. It amounts to a devastating attack on the real wages of the working class, and is perhaps one of the instruments to enforce freeze on wages, which is one of the conditions of the IMF.

Instead of carrying out its solemn commitments to the people to roll back on the prices, the Cong (I) Govt. is steamrolling on the lives of the millions of our people. Its concern is more to prove its bonafides to the foreign financial agencies than to its own people.

The CITU appeals to all the trade unions in the country to come forward to unitedly face this chal-

lenge, unleash mass united resistance and defeat this dangerous capitulation.

On July 5 :

CITU Secretariat Calls for Observance of All India Protest Day on July 17 against the IMF Loan and Other Economic Measures taken by the Government

The Secretariat of the CITU at its meeting held on July 4 under the Presidentship of Com. R. Umamath called upon its state committees and unions to observe July 17, 1991 as the All India Protest Day against IMF loan, Devaluation of the Rupee and other economic measures taken by the minority Congress(I) Govt. at the Centre.

The steps taken by the Government in quick succession within a few days have stunned the people and show the extent the Cong(I) Government can make abject surrender to the demands of the IMF to tune the economic policies of the country to its conditionalities. Moreover, the manner in which the Government over-ran the democratic process of a debate in the Parliament shortly to be convened and the manner it kept the matter concealed in the meeting with opposition parties, reveal its rabid authoritarian character to which it is going back immediately after being installed to power.

The CITU puts it on record again that it is the last forty years' rule of the Congress that has landed the country into this serious economic situation. Now it has created an idea that there is no option left for the country than to go in for the IMF. The CITU rejects this idea and asserts that several other options like tapping the black money, taxing Corporate Sector, realisation of the excise, customs duties, etc. were available to the Government before surrendering to the pressure of the IMF.

Expressing serious concern over the consequences of the IMF loan and the devaluations to the tune of 20% in two strokes, the Secretariat noted that these will adversely affect all sections of the toiling people and the working class in an unprecedented manner. Inflation and price rise of all commodities will record steep hike. Industrial sickness and closures will record new heights and the country will be dragged nearer to the vicious circle of debt trap.

The CITU calls upon all its affiliated unions to raise their voice of protest on July 17 by holding rallies, gate meetings, demonstrations, etc and explain to the workers the dangers involved in the Government measures. The Secretariat decided to build up further united movements in cooperation with other trade unions.

On July 17 :

CITU Condemns Freight, Fare Hike in Railways

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement:

The CITU strongly condemns the proposal for all round increase in both passenger freight charges of all descriptions of commodity traffic, goods, parcel and luggage. While the hike in passenger fare would directly affect the income of the common people, the increase in freight rate would impose additional burden on them via price rise. It has been proved in the past that so called exemption of a few commodities does not leave their prices untouched. The rise in monthly season ticket fares will put additional burden on the millions of daily commuters and salaried employees. Coming in the wake of several retrograde economic measures already taken by the Government like, IMF loan, Devaluation, etc, the railway budget will heap further miseries on the common people. The CITU demands withdrawal of the proposal for fare and freight hike.

Except for the sole aim of mopping up more funds, the budget is obviously an aimless one in that it has not addressed itself seriously to any one of the serious problems of the crisis ridden railway system of the country. The budget has nothing to offer to the travelling public by way of passenger amenities. It proposes no plan for expanding employment opportunities in the Railway which is the biggest employer in the country. On the contrary, open declaration of privatisation of the catering and conservancy services will add to the growing reduction of the staff complement in the railways. The Minister does not drop the slightest hint of changing the policy of over utilisation of existing assets instead of augmenting assets—a policy which has been the ultimate cause of disastrous accidents and the frequent dislocations in the system resulting in abnormal late runnings of trains, causing unbearable harassment to the travelling public. Instead of increasing the allotments on rolling stock, expansion of tracks, new track constructions, doubling works, electrifications, etc, allotments have been reduced in all these spheres.

The Minister has not even made the routine mention of the position of industrial relation in the railways not to speak of any declaration of reinstatement of the large number of employees during the last 10-12 years for participation in trade union activities, for reinstatement of whom the National Front Govt. had passed orders.

The CITU calls upon the workers and the people to oppose this anti-people budget and demand withdrawal of the proposals for increase in freight and fare.

Statement of the National Campaign Committee on Economic Policies of the Government

The N.C.C met on July 19 under the Chairmanship of Shri T.N. Siddhanta and adopted the following statement on the Economic Policies of the Government.

1. The Economic policies so far announced by the Government have caused serious concern.
2. No doubt the country today is facing a great economic crisis. But this is the result of uncontrolled liberalisation in import of luxury and non-essential goods, extravagant expenditure and reckless import indulged in by the Government over the past many years.
3. Whatever steps are to be taken in this miserable condition should not compromise with the basic goal of the Nation i.e. our Sovereignty, Self Reliance in Economy, Economic Independence and Social Justice.
4. It is also important the Government should take the people and other section likely to be affected i.e. Trade Unions, into confidence. It is regrettable that the Government has not done so, not even in the case of massive loan now being negotiated with IMF and World Bank and the Nation has not been told of the conditions there of. The Government has already devalued the rupee and sold gold without taking the political parties and the people into confidence.
5. We are particularly perturbed of the reported changes which are in the offing in the Industrial Policies such as :
 - (a) Delicensing of the Industries to the extent of an investment of Rs. two hundred crores, coupled with permission to foreign Capital to own 51 percent of Equity Capital.
 - (b) Import of Foreign Capital should be regulated and their holding should not be allowed to be raised above the present level and in no case should be upto 51 percent.
 - (c) Import of Modern Technology should take account our specific needs and our human resources and unemployment and our indigenous technological capabilities. Import substitution should be encouraged. These considerations are absent in Government's declared policies.
 - (d) The so-called Exit Policies and a freedom to

close factory at will, will adversely affect the workers. It is regrettable, that Trade Unions have not been consulted in the matter.

- (e) Further the policies should ensure increase in employment potential to solve the problem of unemployment, as was visualised in the draft 8th Five Year Plan.
- (f) Proposed large scale privatisation including that of Banks and profits making undertakings goes against the goal of self-reliant independent economy.
- (g) The small and tiny sector should be encouraged to flourish. Instead the Government has proposed to withdraw lower rate of interest to these sectors which opens possibilities of these sectors being forced to close down and adding to unemployment.
- (h) Uncontrolled growth of monopolies and big houses should be restricted.
- (i) People are adversely affected by rising prices. We fully share their agony. The policies announced by the Government to cut subsidies are likely to further increase the prices of essential commodities. This will adversely affect working people and particularly the poorer sections. The prices of food and essential commodities should not be allowed to rise but rapid steps should be taken to reduce the prices to reasonable level. The Public Distribution System should be strengthened under the supervision of the Citizens Committee. While resolving the crisis that has overtaken the economy, more burden should not be pledged on the working and the toiling people, instead the affluent section should bear the major share.

6. The workers will however cooperate with any steps that strengthen the independent and self-reliant economic development. The N.C.C. calls upon the trade unions to rouse the workers against these policies that weaken the country's self reliance and cause hardship to the workers and the common people.

Sd/-

1. Homi Daji, T.N. Siddhanta, K.L. Mahendra (A.I.T.U.C.)
2. M.K. Pandhe, P.K. Ganguly (C.I.T.U.)
3. Vireswar Tyagi, M. Sharma (H.M.S.)
4. R.K. Bhakt, Venugopal (B.M.S.)
5. Nani Bhattacharya, Aboni Roy (U.T.U.C.)
6. D.D. Shastri (T.U.C.C.)
7. Gyan Singh, R.K. Sharma (U.T.U.C. (L.S.))
8. J.S. Dara (I.T.U.C.)

State Government Employees to Launch Protest Actions

More than 60 lakhs of State Government employees all over the country will observe All India Protest Day by holding massive rallies and demonstrations on 13th August, 1991 against the dangerous economic policies of the present Government. The employees will also hold protest rallies on 26th July, 1991 if the Railway and General budgets impose additional burdens and taxation on the common people.

This decision was taken by the National Executive of the All-India State Government Employees' Federation which met at New Delhi on 13th and 14th July, 1991.

The meeting expressed extremely deep concern at the steps taken by the present Government in quick succession in applying for huge amount of loan from IMF, drastic devaluation of the Rupee and announcement of Government's policy of delicensing, decontrol, privatisation of public sector industries, closing down sick units, opening the floodgates for multinationals and the contemplation for withdrawal of food and fertilizer subsidies and heavy taxation in the ensuing budgets all in the name of tightening the belts.

The meeting considered the present economic crisis as the creation of years of wrong and pro-elite policies pursued by the successive Governments and now to tide over the critical situation the Government is completely surrendering to the IMF and the World Bank. The meeting felt that such an abject surrender to IMF will take away the economic sovereignty of the country.

The meeting cautioned the employees and workers of the country that the IMF dictated policy will surely result in further rise in prices, further unemployment and even in freezing of the wages, D.As and other benefits of the workers and employees. The toiling masses and the poorer sections of the people will be worst victims of this policy.

The resolution urged upon the Government to reverse this dangerous economic policy and adopt the following alternative measures for putting the economy in the right path :—

- (a) Stop all unnecessary imports of luxury goods which have no relevance to the living of common masses ;
- (b) unearth the huge amounts of black money

(Cont'd on page 21)

Convention in Defence of Economic Sovereignty

The four Left Parties, viz., the CPI(M), CPI, FB and RSP jointly organised a national convention on Defence of Economic Sovereignty at Constitution Club, New Delhi on July 19.

A presidium consisting of H K S Surjeet (CPI(M)), Indrajit Gupta (CPI), Chitta Basu (FB) and Tridib Chowdhury (RSP) conducted the proceedings of the convention. The convention was attended by the leaders of the four left parties and their mass organisations, Parliament Members, a number of economists and journalists of repute.

Prakash Karat, the Central Secretariat member of CPI(M) in his introductory speech briefed the retrograde nature of the economic measures taken by the minority Cong(I) govt. at the behest of the IMF and World Bank. Among those who spoke were H K S Surjeet (CPI-M), Indrajit Gupta (CPI), Chitta Basu (FB), Dr. Ashok Mitra, N. Ram, Arun Ghosh, Prabhat Patnaik, M K Pandhe (CITU), etc.

The statement adopted by the Convention categorically rejected the series of policy decisions announced by the government and called upon the trade unions, other mass organisations and the democratic forces to unitedly resist the policies and build up powerful movements for alternative economic policies.

Statement Adopted by the Convention

The Convention in Defence of Economic Sovereignty sponsored by the Left Parties categorically rejects the series of policy decisions announced by the Narasimha Rao Government to tackle the serious economic crisis facing the country. The two-step devaluation of the rupee by more than 20 per cent; the new trade policy measures; the proposed industrial policy resolution that is expected to dilute the MRTP Act and FERA, open the doors to multinational corporations and indiscriminately privatise the public sector; and the likely imposition on the working people of the burden of adjustment necessary to correct the balance of payments problem caused by the foreign exchange profligacy of the rich, are all being pursued without informing Parliament and the people. Despite repeated demands in Parliament and elsewhere, Government has not yet brought out a white Paper on the precise nature and causes of the foreign exchange crunch, and the compulsions facing the country.

This shroud of secrecy over its effort to fulfill the stringent conditionalities set out by the International Monetary Fund, from which the Indian Government is seeking a loan of \$ 5-7 billion, goes together with statements by Government spokesmen and measures, like the export of gold by the Reserve

Bank of India, which clearly create a sense of panic and bolster the view that borrowing from the IMF is "inevitable". There is no other reason why gold, which is presumably being pledged for short term assistance, should be airlifted and lodged in the vaults of the Bank of England, rather than retained within the country. Unfortunately, in the process, the Government is further eroding the confidence of international investors, particularly NRI investors/depositors, aggravating the liquidity crunch it faces, and undermining its negotiating stance in international capital markets.

The Convention rejects the argument that there is no way out for the country but to go in for an IMF loan and accept conditionalities that are not merely severe but also kept a secret till implemented. The failure of policies adopted in the wake of the Extended Fund Facility loan taken in 1981 to stabilise India's balance of payments belies statements by the Government that a second loan would provide the wherewithal to correct the structural imbalances characterising India's external accounts. The Convention reminds the people that it was in fact the path of liberalization pursued during the period of Rajiv Government and not controls and regulations, which is the root cause for the current serious crisis in imports that fed an elitist and import intensive production structure, as well as all kinds of non-commercial government imports. These imports were financed by indiscriminate international borrowing, which included large short terms loan that accounted for almost 50 per cent of additional borrowing in 1988 and 1989.

Given this background to the crisis, the Convention rejects the path of development recommended by the IMF and the World Bank for India. While promising little in terms of balance of payments adjustment, that path seeks to place the burden of whatever adjustment occurs on the poor: through cuts in food subsidies and other welfare measures; by dismantling the public distribution system; indiscriminately privatising public sector units; through engineered inflation which would erode the real wages and incomes of the working people; through policies of wage-freeze that prevent efforts to offset that erosion; and through growing unemployment resulting from the recessionary conditions generated by devaluation, import liberalization and cuts in public investment.

Government spokesmen purvey the illusion that the devaluation of the rupee and the subsequent changes in trade policy would soon lead to an increase in exports and a fall in imports and would thereby ease the trade balance. However, past experience suggests that while the volume of most

exports from India and other Third World countries is not too responsive to price changes, in some cases direct efforts to raise the volume of exports actually adversely affects foreign exchange earnings. In fact, by the new trade policy measures announced, the Government is discouraging a whole host of manufactured exports and encouraging precisely those traditional exports whose export potential is either limited or where volume increases are accompanied by a fall in exchange earnings. Indeed, tea prices have already declined substantially in London, while garment exporters have complained that importers abroad are now demanding that contracts be based on rupee prices, adversely affecting foreign exchange receipts. As compared with this, with a liberal import regime in place and import duty reductions likely, India's import bill would in all probability rise sharply in the coming year. In the net, a worsening of the trade balance in the short run is likely unless imports are curbed directly.

Despite these indications, recent evidence suggests that the Finance Minister's assurance that the value of the rupee would stabilise after the two-step devaluation has been belied, with the rupee sliding relative to major currencies. This only creates expectations of a further decline, aggravating the tendency towards capital flight seen in recent months. In short while the IMF loan may provide access to liquidity in the short run, the IMF package would only worsen the balance of payments difficulties, especially when repayments become due after three years. This is the logic of the debt trap.

Meanwhile, the devaluation of the rupee, together with the price increases engineered by cuts in subsidies and increases in indirect taxes and administered prices which (rather than direct taxes) are likely to be the Government's major efforts at reducing the fiscal deficit are bound to spur inflation and erode the living standards of the people. And, the recession generated by the factors mentioned above, together with the 'exit policies' likely to be incorporated in the new industrial policy, would imply the loss of jobs for thousands of workers in existing sick units and those which would opt for closure as part of IMF-type "structural adjustment.

If despite all this the new policy measures are being wholeheartedly welcomed by the organization of big business and the Chambers of Commerce, it is because IMF-type adjustment works in their interest and against that of the working people, though the latter in no way contributed to the foreign exchange crisis in the first place. Not surprisingly, a propaganda campaign has been launched through much of the official and private media, to disinform and convince the people that there is no alternative to going the IMF way.

The Convention stresses that the IMF path offers no solution to the present crisis.

The experience of countries which have been forced to accept the IMF's structural adjustment and stabilisation policies underlines this danger. Argentina, Brazil, Jamaica, and a lot of other countries have been convulsed politically by the adjustment policies which have cut back on welfare measures and left the people defenceless in the face of inflation and growing unemployment. There is not a single instance of a significant third world country that has undergone IMF dictated 'structural adjustment' and emerged at the end of it either with any degree of economic success, or, with its sovereignty and democratic institutions intact.

The Convention reiterates that an alternative path exists which can help overcome the present crisis and safeguard our economic sovereignty. The import restrictions in place over the last few months have already had a favourable effect on the trade deficit. The period of austerity requires stricter curbs on non-essential imports, the postponement of import-intensive and low priority investment projects, and the rescheduling (and, if necessary, pruning) of defence linked imports. This should be accompanied by a crash programme of exports, that relies on strategic placement and marketing rather than just price adjustment. Further, efforts should be launched to obtain fresh loans on a medium-term basis from Indian workers abroad (who should be provided with special concessions) and other NRI investors, and the conversion of some current short-term loans into medium term ones. The Government should also take steps to bring back to the country unrepatriated exports earnings (with punitive steps if necessary), which alone reportedly amount to \$ 1 billion. A combination of such measures should restrain foreign exchange outflow and ensure adequate inflow to meet the immediate shortfall of \$2-3 billion, and ease the foreign exchange shortage.

Reforms in the economy are essential. But these need not and should not be along IMF dictated lines. The main means to bring down the fiscal deficit should be direct taxation and the reduction in inessential and wasteful Government expenditure. There has to be an increase in direct taxation, a curtailment of overt and covert subsidies to big business and more effective tax enforcement measures to realise tax revenues. Loopholes in the tax laws should be plugged and black money generation curbed through punitive measures. Further, there is no reason whatsoever for not imposing wealth taxes and the large monopoly houses that have built up huge assets should be brought into this net. The adoption of measures of this kind will not only help reduce the revenue and the fiscal deficit but also reverse the trend of relying on indirect taxes and administered price hikes to garner additional revenues at the expense of the common people.

On the industrial front, the disciplining of capital, which has a range of freedoms shrouded by the

chorus against State intervention, is crucial. Those responsible for rendering industrial units sick through mismanagement, conscious or otherwise, should be penalised and their personal assets seized. The proposal that workers should be handed over the concern with adequate credit should be seriously considered.

Government must intervene actively to ensure that private industry makes appropriate technological choices, maintains capital equipment, invests in R & D, upgrades technology, and modernises and competes in the international market. The policy of indiscriminate imports of capital goods and technology for luxury goods production must end, while imports of technology in vital sectors in which modernisation is essential must be given priority.

The public sector must continue to be given prominence in the key strategic industries. Steps must be taken to eliminate inefficiency and bureaucratic management. Allocations to the public sector must be governed by an order of priorities which will enable it to play a key role in the economy, while avoiding non-essential sectors. The intensified privatisation drive which is expected to be announced in the new Industrial Policy Statement should be halted as it would only have the effect of demoralising the management of the public sector.

In the medium term, the focus should be on implementation of land reforms. Such reforms have been the basis on which even South Korea and Taiwan—the success stories held up by the World Bank and the IMF—have launched on successful industrialization. The conspiracy of silence regarding implementation of land reforms must therefore end. This together with rural employment guarantee schemes, that offer employment to the rural masses, while mobilising their labour to strengthen rural infrastructure and raise agricultural growth, are the basic steps needed to expand the home market.

While austerity is called for in the face of the serious economic situation, the burden of this austerity must be primarily borne by big business, the landlords and the affluent sections of society. The measures to provide relief to the poor in this period of economic difficulty must be emphasised. The public distribution system covering essential commodities of daily life must be expanded and targeted particularly for the rural poor. There has to be a sizeable expansion of schemes for employment generation and poverty alleviation. Programmes for expanding primary education, literacy and health for the people are a priority. These measures can be effectively put into action only by greater decentralisation of powers from the Centre to the States, and down below upto the Panchayat level so that the people become active participants in bettering their living standards.

The Narasimha Rao Government in the space of less than a month has rejected all alternative proposals. The latest instance being the summary rejection of the alternative policy framework put to it by the West Bengal Left Front Government which would have helped in laying the basis for avoiding the IMF dictated path.

The Convention demands of the Government of India that it place the terms and conditions being negotiated for the IMF loan before Parliament. There should be no repetition of the circumstances of the 1981 loan when the then Government tried to hide the conditionalities and refused to make them public. The people must be taken into confidence regarding the conditions attached to the IMF negotiations as this has a vital bearing on the country's economic and political future.

The headlong rush to meet the IMF prescriptions portend serious danger to India's economic sovereignty. Compromising economic sovereignty will have vital repercussions on political sovereignty.

The goals set in our freedom struggle to attain self-reliant growth and build up a strong and prosperous economy are imperilled by the bankrupt economic policies pursued by successive Governments who have lacked the political will and the determination to live up to the ideals of the independence movement. The economic regime sought to be introduced under the auspices of the IMF will endanger the democratic political system, erode our independent foreign policy and open the doors for the growing sway of multinational capital. Pressures will build up, such as the threat of Super 301 clause by the USA, to open new sectors to foreign capital—banking, insurance, service sector, and surrender on patents and intellectual property rights at the GATT negotiations.

This is a grave threat which must concern all patriotic Indians. Every citizen who cherishes India's independence and seeks to preserve our democratic values must come forward to oppose this disastrous path being imposed by a Government which does not command majority support in Parliament.

The Convention calls upon all sections—the trade unions, mass organisations of the working people, progressive intellectuals and democratic circles to oppose the IMF way. They must unite to mobilise all patriotic sections of the people, particularly the working people, to resist these policies and to build up a powerful movement for alternative economic policies. The task before us today is no less than the defence of the country's economic, and thereby its political, sovereignty.

CITU Delegation meets Labour Minister

A delegation of the CITU meet the Labour Minister, K. Ramamurthy on 9th July and submitted a memorandum to him.

The delegation was led by E. Balanandan, President of CITU and accompanied by other office bearers, namely R. Umanath, Vimal Ranadive, Md. Amin, P. K Ganguly and Ranjit Basu.

Memorandum to the Labour Minister Submitted by the CITU

Shri K. Ramamurthy
Minister of State for Labour
Government of India
New Delhi-1

9.7.91

Dear Shri Ramamurthy,

The CITU takes this opportunity to welcome you as a Union Minister of Labour and to place some urgent issues facing the working class for your immediate attention so that necessary steps are taken to resolve them in consultation with the trade unions.

1. Bill on Workers Participation in Management

A Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha providing for introduction of Workers Participation in Management on the basis of Secret Ballot of all workers. The trade unions have given some suggestions for improvement in the Bill. We would suggest that a meeting of Central T.Us should be convened to discuss these suggestions so that common outlook is evolved as soon as possible. It is necessary to get the Bill passed in the light of suggestions given by the trade unions so that genuine participation of workers is ensured in our undertakings both in public and private sectors.

2. Tripartite Committee on DA for public sector Units

The Tripartite Committee on DA for public sector undertakings was constituted by the Government of India in November 1988 with Union Labour Minister as the Chairman. However, the Committee could not complete its work and the time limit for submission of the Report has been extended to September 1991. The inordinate delay in finalising the work of the Committee was due to bureaucratic bungling by the BPE officials who failed to place before the Committee the Govt's proposals for a solution of the problem. There is deep resentment among the workers in public sector undertakings as a result of this delay and there is likelihood of disturbance of industrial peace if the issue is not settled expeditiously. We would request you to convene a meeting of the Committee at an early date so that the question can be resolved through negotiations without any further delay.

3. Removal of Ceilings in Payment of Bonus Act

The present ceilings of Bonus regarding entitlement and eligibility are much on the lower side and a large number of workers are deprived of their rightful bonus. All the Central T. Us have demanded removal of these ceilings so that all workers are covered by the Payment of Bonus Act. Despite repeated assurance in the past the ceilings have not been removed so far. We would request you to take up this question on a priority basis so that all workers are paid their rightful bonus. A bill to that effect should be brought in the next session of Parliament on a priority basis.

4. Law Relating to Unorganised Workers

The CITU has been demanding since long that a Central legislation to lay down working condition and suitable wage rates for the unorganised workers should be introduced in Parliament so that a large number of workforce in the country are given necessary protection from inhuman exploitation. Govt promised Central legislations for the agricultural workers and construction workers as per decisions of two National Seminars on the issues, but no tangible steps have been taken so far. We would therefore request you to take expeditious steps in the matter so that legal protection is given to the vast majority of our working force in the country.

5. New Industrial Relations Law

The previous Govt appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri G Ramanujam to suggest proposal for the New Industrial Relations Law in the country. The Report of the Committee however was not unanimous. The most important question in the Industrial Relations Machinery was the question of recognition of the trade unions. Majority of the trade unions in our country however feel that it should be decided by Secret Ballot of all the workers. We would therefore urge upon you to take note of the opinion of the overwhelming majority of workers and amend the Industrial Disputes Act to provide for Secret Ballot of all the workers to determine the representative organisation pending finalisation of other issues through mutual discussion.

6. Closures and Industrial Sickness

The growing industrial sickness is causing deep concern among the workers and a large number have been rendered jobless due to closures and sickness. The present official machinery to deal with the problem of sickness is totally inadequate and it is necessary to take firm measures to prevent growing sickness and closures. Efforts should also be made to reopen the closed units and an Apex level joint machinery should be created to deal with the problem effectively.

7. New Series of Consumer Price Index

The unilateral introduction by the Govt of India of the New Series of Price Index with 1982 as the base year has imposed a fraudulent series of price index on the working class. All the trade unions have demanded scrapping of the new series so that price index will reflect the actual rise in prices of essential commodities. The family budget studies were carried out without consulting the Central Trade Unions, the price collection machinery is faulty and all the recommendations of Rath Committee were not implemented by the Govt. We demand that meeting of the Central Trade Unions should be called to discuss the question in depth so that the views of the trade unions are taken into consideration by the Govt. If the workers lose faith in compilation machinery of the Government the whole purpose of price index would be defeated. We hope you would give serious considerations to the demand made by all the trade unions in the country.

8. Non-Functioning of the Tripartite Machinery

Various tripartite committees and Boards of the Government are not functioning and exist only on paper. Several issues of workers have been kept pending as a result of this. Even an important committee on ILO Conventions and Minimum Wage Advisory Board has been made defunct by the Union Labour Ministry.

The Indian Labour Conference and the Standing Labour Committee are not being convened regularly making the tripartite consultation a sheer farce. We would therefore request you to review the entire working of various tripartite committees so that they can discharge their responsibilities effectively in the interest of overall industrial relations in the country.

The list given above only highlights some major problems of industrial relations which require your immediate attention.

We earnestly hope that you would consider these issues dispassionately and take immediate steps to resolve the matters through discussions with central trade unions in the country.

Since the issues have been kept pending for a long time we would request you to treat them as urgent.

Yours sincerely,
E. Balanandan, MP
President, CITU

Comments of the Labour Minister

The Labour Minister discussed all the points with the delegation in presence of the Labour Secretary, V. P. Sawhney. On the issue of the new Industrial Relations Bill, he said, he is aware of the Report by the Ramanujam Committee as well as the note of dissent given by the five trade unions including the CITU. He assured he will look into the question positively as early as possible.

On the issue of DA, he assured that he will take up with the Finance Minister and convene meeting of the DA Committee in August.

On the issue of CPI Index, he informed the delegation that the Govt is thinking of initiating a process of survey etc to introduce a new series rectifying the earlier defects and taking into consideration the recommendations made by the Seal Committee and in this exercise he assured that he will consider associating the trade unions as demanded.

On the issue of convening Indian Labour Conference the Labour Minister informed the delegation that he has already fixed 10th October 1991 as the date for the ILC meeting. He also said that prior to this on 18th September 1991 he intends to hold the State Labour Minister's conference and in between he has agreed to convene the meeting of standing Labour Committee to prepare the agenda and other allied matters in preparation for the ILC as demanded by the delegation. (*ILC has been convened on October 10 and 11—Ed*).

On the issue of removal of ceiling on Bonus, he assured that he will discuss and see that the ceiling is raised as removal altogether will not be possible.

On the Bill on Workers' Participation, he assured that he will look into the amendments sought by the CITU and take early steps for discussions in the Parliament.

Similar assurances he gave on the question of legislations on Agricultural Labour and Construction Workers.

On closures and sickness he however failed to make any commitment. The matter will be dealt with in the new I. R. law, he said.

About the tripartite committees he assured that meetings will be called at an early date.

NCC Delegation

A delegation of the National Campaign Committee also met the Labour Minister on July 17 with an identical memorandum. The delegation consisted of M.K. Pandhe, Ranjit Basu (CITU); Homi Daji, T.N. Siddhanta (AITUC); G. Prabhakar, A D Singh (BMS), V. Tiyagi, M. Sharma (HMS), Nani Bhattacharya, Abani Roy (UTUC); D.D. Shastri (TUCC); R.K. Sharma (UTUC-LS) and J.S. Dara (ITUC).

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Struggle Continues Against Privatisation

P. K. Ganguly

Grim struggle continues against the privatisation of the UP State Cement Corporation Ltd since June 2, when about 40 workers were killed by police firing at Dalla while protesting against the physical hand over of the factory to the Dalmias.

Both the workers and the officers are unitedly carrying forward the struggle in all the three units at Dalla, Chunar and Churk. While majority of the workers and officers who left the places to avoid arrest, have still not returned, the rest have refused to join. Although they have not received the salaries since May, yet they are refusing to accept wages from the Dalmias.

Tense Situation

The situation is extremely tense in all the three units. As per reports, the entire area remains surrounded by a host of police CRP, PAC, BSF and CISF. The police is moving around the colonies broadcasting over the mike exhorting the workers to join, but in vain. While workers are refusing to join, the Dalmias are trying to recruit persons from outside. But so far they have failed in this attempt. There is a virtual strike in all the three units.

Simultaneously, the Dalmias are trying to take out the stocked cement to sell it out. On 29th June they first tried to take out cement with police help. But the workers who had remained vigilant launched a massive demonstration. The police provoked the situation near to firing. However, another ugly incident could be averted and the management withdrew from their effort to take out the stock.

They made their second attempt at Chunar on July 7 and met with the same resistance. About 170 workers including about 70 officers were arrested. But the management could not take out the cement. Again on July 10 there was another attempt at Chunar. Again over 130 workers and officers were arrested. A part of the stock however was taken out in the process.

Violation of High Court Order Continues

It is to be noted that the entire operation from the process of privatisation, the surreptitious manner in which the UP Govt. (former Mulayam Singh Govt) order to physically hand over the units was taken out, to the attempts to recruit from outside and to take out the stocked cement, have been and are being done in violation of the Status Quo order of the Allahabad High Court and when the case has been reopened after the reopening of the High Court on July 8 after summer vacation. But despite

repeated representations made by the workers' unions and the officers' association, the present BJP Government of UP has also not taken any steps either to revoke the privatisation order or to initiate any judicial enquiry into the firing incident. The High Court however has held the arrest of Dharamvir Khushwaha, General Manager of the Dalla unit as illegal and he has been released. The DM and SP have also been transferred.

All India Movement

In this situation, responding to the call of the CITU and the joint call by the CPSTU, the workers in the public sector undertakings and other industries and the national federations observed protest demonstrations all over the country on July 2 demanding revocation of the privatisation proceedings, judicial enquiry into the firing incident, suspension of the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, compensation to the families of the killed and to the injured workers etc.

At Delhi the CITU organised a dharna before the Prime Minister's place on July 2. About 300 workers from various public sector units, banks, LIC and other industries participated in the dharna. The dharna was addressed among others by Samar Mukherjee, P K Ganguly, Ashim Bala, MP, Kanai Banerjee, Jibon Roy, Mohanlal, Y D Sharma of AITUC and leaders of various unions.

A delegation led by Samar Mukherjee met the Prime Minister, P V Narasimha Rao later in the day and submitted a memorandum of demands. The Prime Minister expressed his inability to intervene on the demand for revocation of the privatisation order on the plea that the present Govt in UP was of BJP. But he assured that he will talk with the Home Minister so that he can ask the UP Government for instituting a judicial enquiry into the firing incident and also on the question of payment of compensations. But when asked as to how then the centre cannot intervene on the privatisation issue but can intervene on the other issues in spite of the BJP Govt. and when the privatisation and the killing of the workers were the result of the policy of the Congress(I) Government at the centre itself, he only assured to look into all the issues. On his request a detailed note of the entire issue was submitted to him later. Samar Mukherjee wrote a letter to the UP Chief Minister also.

The CITU Public Sector TU Coordination Committee of Andhra Pradesh observed the day in almost all the public sector units at Hyderabad. Ten thousand handbills were printed and distributed

to the workers. Gate meetings and demonstrations were held at ECIL, BEL, IDPL, HCL, HMT, HAL, BHEL, BDL, Praga Tools, Midhani, BDL, etc.

In Tamilnadu demonstrations were held by the CITU unions in Salem, Periyar, Tanjore, Chidambaranar, Tiruchy, etc. Leaflets were distributed to the workers. Madras and other District Committees of CITU organised processions and rallies. BHEL workers in Ranipet organised demonstration.

In West Bengal a convention was held at Calcutta, which called upon the workers to continue the struggle in a determined manner so that the Government is forced to revoke the privatisation proceeding. Demonstrations were held at Durgapur and various other public sector units also.

At Patna, the Co-ordination Committee of Unions and Associations took out a procession and held a rally. The coalfield Labour Union and other unions in the industrial belt at Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Dhanbad, etc organised demonstrations.

The All India Road Transport Workers' Federation observed the day on 9th July. The Bank Employees Federation of India observed it at its different units in the country. Similarly, the AIEA units participated in demonstrations at different places in the country.

The CEL in Ghaziabad, the IDPL in Rishikesh, the MSK Mills Workers' Union in Gulbarga held demonstrations.

The Air Corporation Employees Union held a demonstration in front of the Bombay Domestic Airport which was joined by the International Airport Authority Employees Union and the Sarva Mazdoor Sangh. Apart from holding rallies and demonstrations, all the unions sent telegrammes to the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of UP demanding revocation of the privatisation proceeding.

Further Action Programme

In this situation the UP State Committee of the CITU met at Lucknow on July 7 and 8 and took decision to step up the movement. A week will be observed throughout the state from July 25 to August 2. Demonstrations and rallies will be organised in all industrial units and districts. Memoranda with the following 5-point demands will be submitted to all the District Magistrates:

1. Revocation of the privatisation proceeding and restoring the units to the UP State Cement Corporation Ltd from the Dalmias.

2. Judicial Enquiry into the firing incident of June 2.

3. Suspension of the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police of the Sonebhadra District.

4. Compensation of Rupees Two lakhs to the families of the killed and Rupees Fifty thousand to the injured.

5. Release of all arrested workers and officers and withdrawal of all cases.

The week will culminate with a central state level rally at Lucknow before the Assembly on August 2 when the Assembly opens. Several thousands of workers will be mobilised in the rally. A memorandum will be submitted to the Chief Minister on the day. All other unions will be mobilised in the programme.

In view of the serious condition of the workers who are struggling without having any wages since May, the state committee has also called for liberal contribution to the Dalla Workers' Relief Fund.

The CITU Secretariat has called for observance of August 2 on an all India level to express solidarity in support of the Dalla workers' struggle and also for contribution in the Relief Fund.

The various unions in the Sonebhadra district in the mean time had decided for strike action in support of the Dalla workers and demanding revocation of the privatisation proceeding. The strike which was scheduled to commence from July 9 however have been postponed on the assurance given by the UP Chief Minister that the BJP Government will review the entire privatisation proceeding so as to revoke it. The unions, as per report, have given the ultimatum to the Chief Minister that they will go in for strike from any date in August, if the review is not taken in the positive direction.

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The question of Pension Scheme for workers was also raised by the delegation. The Minister assured that he will discuss the matter with the Finance Minister.

Delegation on behalf of Construction Labour

Earlier on July 5, a delegation on behalf of the National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation for Construction Labour led by Justice Krishna Iyer met the Labour Minister. The delegation was accompanied by P. K. Ganguly (CITU), Francis (AITUC) and representatives of HMS and BMS also. The delegation demanded introduction of the Central Bill for Construction Labour as per the conclusions of the National Seminar held in 1990 and stressed for constitution of a Construction Labour Board with powers for recruitment and regulation of employment. The Minister assured to take positive steps in this regard in consultation with the trade unions.

AIREC Plans Agitation

The All India Railway Employees Confederation has decided to launch a programme of agitation which will start with a mass dharna before the Parliament, to press their long pending demands, particularly the demand for reinstatement of the victimised workers. They have also undertaken elaborate programme for stream lining their organisation to prepare for the agitation plan. Decisions were taken in the meeting of the Central Working Committee, of the organisation, which was held in Delhi on June 30 and July 1, 1991.

During this two day session, held under the Presidentship of C M Singh, the President of the organisation, the working committee reviewed the developments that have taken place in the national sphere since the last meeting of the committee. The committee was deeply concerned to note that the country was in deep economic crisis and the policy adopted by the govt was agravating the crisis beyond measure, instead of ameliorating it. The committee decided to keep a keen watch on the situation and take appropriate steps as and when necessary. The meeting expressed serious concern for the large contingent of workers most of whom were removed/dismitted from service a full decade ago and have not yet been reinstated inspite of clear orders having been issued by the National Front Govt during its last days. The committee urged the new Govt to do justice to the victimised employees by taking them back to duty.

The meeting decided to send a deputation to the Minister for Rlys to urge him to reinstate the removed/dismitted workers and fulfil other vital demands of railwaymen put forward from time to time by the AIREC.

The meeting also decided that the leaders of the organisation would meet the leaders of the different parties and groups in the parliament to enlighten them about the situation in the sphere of industrial relations on the railways and to seek their support in getting the demands of railway workers fulfilled.

While the meeting with the Railway Minister is yet to come about, N S Bhangoo, Secretary General, AILRSA and member of AIREC Working Committee met the leaders of different parties, apprised them of the situation and handed over a brief memorandum to them.

Having taken stock of the state of the organisation in details the working committee adopted several measures to strengthen the organisation and prepare it for the programme of agitation. The working committee has decided to hold workers' meeting of the AIREC in all the zones within August 1991.

After completion of the zonal workers meeting a day long mass dharna will be staged before the Parliament on 10th September in Delhi.

Technical Staff Conference

The working committee has further decided that conference of technical staff would be organised under the banner of AIREC at Chittaranjan on Sept 23. The decision for holding a conference of technical staff to study their problems and properly formulate their demands was taken long back. A small committee was set up to prepare a document for placing before the conference for discussion. The committee has already finalised the draft and it would be discussed in the conference in which 5-6 delegates are expected to take part.

Engineering Workers' Conference

All India Conference of the Railway Engineering workers will be held under the banner of the AIREC sometime in the first week of September. Conferences in all zones will be completed before the All India Conferences. About 800 Engineering workers from different zones are expected to participate in All India Conference.

All India AIREC Conference

The Working Committee has decided that the All India Conference of AIREC will be held in the month of December this year on Eastern Railway. All units from branch to zone level have been asked to complete their conference before the All India Conferences. The units have also been asked to make serious preparation for agitational programme which would start with the day long mass dharna on 10th September.

SE Rly Engineer Staff

Conference of Engineering staff of SE Rly was held on 7th July at Aara with the participation of 165 delegates from different divisions of SE Rly. The conference was inaugurated by Uday Chatterjee Zonal Secretary of AIREC, SE Zone, while Basudev Acharya MP addressed it as Chief Guest. Besides, leaders of different constituents of AIREC of the zone also addressed the Conference.

A K Biswas, convener of the preparatory committee placed a report, 5 delegates took part in the discussion in the course of which they spoke on different problems of engineering staff. S K Dhar, Secretary General of AILRSA in the course of his concluding speech gave a call to the Engineering workers to organise themselves and join the proposed All India Conference of Engineering staff in large number.

The conference was conducted by a presidium.

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CITU Calls Upon Working Class To Resist New Attacks

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement to the press :

On New Industrial Policy

The New Industrial Policy statement submitted in Parliament yesterday is an abject surrender by the Government of India to the World Bank and the IMF sacrificing country's sovereignty and will lead to series of attacks on the living conditions of the workers and the common people in India.

By delicensing most of the industries the Government of India has opened the floodgates to big business both Indian and foreign, to strengthen their grip over the economy. The permission granted to foreign multinational companies to own majority shares in several sectors of economy will only increase their control over the Indian market mercilessly.

Automatic permission granted to foreign technology will subvert the indigenous technology and lead to closures and sickness in a massive way. It will further throw out of gear small scale and traditional industries in India adding to the already swelling army of the unemployed. Instead of fighting Super 301 imposed by US imperialists, Government of India is now surrendering to their demands.

The systematic dismantling of public sector by removing steel, power, petroleum, heavy engineering etc from the core sector, allowing private sector to take share of public sector to the tune of 25 percent and withdrawing financial support to public sector units, the Government of India has given up the path of self-reliant economic development and reverted the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956. Closure of public sector units or their being handed over to big business houses is on the agenda of the Govt after they have been built over four decades of hard work and sacrifices to strengthen a self-reliant national economy.

By removing the threshold limits of assets in respect of MRTP Companies the Government has reduced the MRTP Act into a hollow shell. The Government has given free reign to monopoly houses to spread their tentacles over the entire people of India. As a result of all these measures, economic growth in the country will further slow down resulting in increase in the number of people below the poverty line.

The General budget

The General Budget announced in Parliament yesterday imposed crushing burden on the common

people by increasing the prices of sugar, petrol, cooking gas, fertilizer and other items of daily consumption. Moreover, the increase in the price of fertilizer will lead to pushing up of prices of food-grains, pulses, edible oil and vegetables, while private transport will be costlier. The Cong (I) election pledge to reduce the prices in 100 days after assumption of office has been thrown into dustbin by the ruling party.

The Government has refused to increase the exemption limit of income tax and hit a large section of working class and salaried employees. However it has not imposed higher tax burden on higher income groups, nor imposed Wealth Tax, or Corporate Tax worth mentioning. Instead of collecting taxes from the rich individuals and companies it has offered concessions to black money holders to make their money white. Thus it is just appeasing them in practice.

Over Rs. 7000 crores of deficit financing will further increase the inflation in the economy whose burden will ultimately fall on the common people. Further, the relief of the reduction of excise duty on some consumer items will not be passed on the people but will be pocketed by industrialists.

The CITU therefore calls upon the working class and the people of India to raise their powerful voice of protest against the new industrial policy of the Govt. and the heavy imposts levied by the General Budget and organise united actions all over India so that the Government of India is forced to withdraw these anti-working class and anti-national industrial policies and measures.

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AIREC Workers meeting : S. Rly.

As per decision of the working Committee of AIREC the AIREC workers meeting for S Rly was held in Madras on 7th July. Workers from 3 constituent units attended. The meeting was presided over by K P Ramaswamy, President AIREC, S. Rly. The Zonal Secretary Venkatewaratoo placed brief on the organisational activities whereafter S K Dhar Secretary General AILRSA and AIREC working committee member explained the importance of the AIREC programme specially in the context of present situation arising out of the economic and industrial policy of the new Govt, which indicate acquiescence to IMF-World Bank dictates.

Rupee Against Pound Sterling (Middle Rate Rupees Per Pound Sterling)

1978	July 31	15.55
1978	December 20	16.50
1979	Jun 15	17.10
1979	December 4	17.80
1980	January 9	18.00
1980	July 8	18.45
1980	December 29	18.85
1981	January 31	19.30
1981	August 4	16.40
1981	December 22	17.20
1982	February 2	17.05
1982	June 28	16.50
1982	December 20	15.70
1983	March 2	15.00
1983	December 10	15.10
1984	February 7	15.25
1984	October 10	14.75
1985	February 26	13.95
1985	August 21	16.60
1985	November 4	17.40
1986	February 25	18.05
1986	July 13	19.00
1987	January 15	19.60
1987	March 3	20.35
1987	November 2	22.55
1987	December 1	23.60
1988	January 5	24.15
1988	December 4	27.95
1989	February 2	26.55
1989	December 27	27.55
1990	January 30	28.55
1990	June 26	30.20
1990	August 3	32.25
1990	December 28	34.33
1991	February 4	36.75
1991	July 1	37.37
1991	July 2	37.19
1991	July 3	41.59

Rupee Vs Dollar (Rupees per Dollar)

1679	End of March	8.1500
1980	End of March	8.1934
	End of October	7.6967
1985	Ehd of March	12.2696
1986	"	12.3916
1987	"	12.8700
1988	"	12.9584
1989	"	15.6140
1990	"	17.1482
1991	"	19.5812
	April 30	20.1800
	May 31	20.8500
	Jun 28	21.0504
	July 1	23.0388
	July 3	25.9500
	July 6	25.8799

(Statesman July 7, 1991)

Delegation of Anganwadi Meets Minister of State for Women and Child Welfare

Mrs. Vimal Ranadive has issued the following statement on behalf of the Samyukta Sangharsh Samithy.

A delegation of Samyukta Sangharsh Samithi consisting of five different all India federations of Anganwadi workers and helpers submitted a memorandum on the charter of demands describing their inhuman working conditions to Smt. Mamata Banerjee, the Minister of State for Women and Child Welfare today. The main question raised by the delegation was about their paltry honorarium of Rs 225/- to Rs 350/- for the workers and Rs 110/- for the helper. Smt. Rajkumari, the General Secretary of ABAK and other women workers accompanied in the delegation told the minister about the harassment by the CDPOS, the number of registers they have to fill up and long hours of work. They are not getting the TA while attending the meetings in the offices. The delegation told her that these women are appointed by the Centre Government, but are called as social workers and paid honorarium only exploiting their cheap labour. The delegation demanded regularisation of these women and be paid minimum wages.

After hearing patiently from the delegates Ms. Mamta Banerjee said the issue was under discussion of their ministry and when it came to Parliament all women MPs and others spoke in favour of their demands. She promised to consider the question of honorarium in a few days.

The delegation consisted of Shri. BK Prasad, Hukum Singh, Smt. Vimal Ranadive, Shri B D Joshi, Smt. Rajkumari, Smt. Shobha Rani and Smt. Usha Sharma and others representing all the federations.

Joint TU Action on 26th July Against the Economic Measures

The CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, TUCC, ITUC (Dara) and UTUC (LS) have jointly called for observance of July 26 as an All India Protest Day by the trade unions against the IMF Loan, Devaluation, Industrial Policy, Railway Budget, General Budget, etc which surrender the economic sovereignty of the country as per the dictates of the IMF and World Bank, and heap miseries on the Working Class and the common people. The Seven Central Trade Unions called for holding joint rallies, demonstrations etc on the day. At Delhi it has been decided to hold a rally of several thousand workers before the Parliament. Detailed report of the countrwide observance will be published in the next issue.

HISTORIC CONFERENCE OF ANC

Final Bid for Democratic, United, Non-Racial South Africa

M. K. Pandhe

The "Forty" Eighth Conference of the African National Congress held at Durban from 2nd to 7th July 1991 was a turning point in the freedom movement of the people of South Africa. It was the first conference being held in South African soil after a lapse of 30 years. Several delegates were meeting each other after decades due to the underground life or the stay in exile. Even as the conference commenced, delegates were coming from prison or from exile adding to the excitement of the delegates.

As Business Day, Johannesburg daily editorially commented on the eve of the conference, "The eyes of South Africa will be on the University of Durban Westville this week as the ANC sets about making decisions whose effects will be felt far beyond the bounds of that organisation" (1st July 1991).

The conference was being held at a momentous period of South African history after the release of Nelson Mandela and several leaders of ANC. The ban on the ANC and the South African Communist party was lifted and the ANC suspended armed struggle. Though F.W De Klerk Government claimed that all the political prisoners were released, a large number of ANC leaders and activists were still languishing in Jail, were working underground or were still forced to stay in exile.

The Nationalist party Government repealed several anti-apartheid laws, but in practice discriminatory practices were prevalent against black and Indian population. Separate constituencies for whites, blacks and Indians were existing and one man one vote principle was yet to be accepted by the Government.

The process of negotiations with ANC for future of the country was commenced but still was facing difficulties due to high and mighty attitude taken by the white minority Government. To obstruct the peaceful transfer of power to the people of South Africa the Government engineered INKATHA violence to create an impression outside that blacks were fighting blacks. Despite settlement signed by Nelson Mandela with President of Inkatha Freedom Party Mangosuthu Buthelezi which declared end to all violent activities, the violent attacks on ANC activists and supporters continued unabated. The minority Government's support to INKATHA was becoming clearer and clearer. The Government's financial support to Inkatha has also been exposed. The white racist extreme right wing forces led by ADWB have intensified their activities in the recent past creating difficulties in a peaceful settlement for

the establishment of democratic united, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa.

The reactionary press in South Africa was full of stories of so called inner party struggle in ANC and were hoping that the differences would emerge openly in the conference. However all their hopes were belied by the resounding success of the conference.

Altogether 2354 delegates representing 819 internal and external branches, Umkhonto we Sizwe (armed forces), the youth and women's leagues participated in the conference which was by far the largest and the most representative ANC gathering ever held. 17 percent of the delegates were women. The average age of delegates was 34 years while there were only 7 delegates over 70 years old and 185 below 25 years old. Overwhelming majority of the delegates were in their prime youth. The conference was attended by 450 representatives from 56 different countries. Anti-apartheid organisations from 15 countries sent their representatives. ANC chief representatives from 35 countries were also in attendance.

Due to INKATHA threats the conference began in strictest possible security. Access to the venue of the conference was controlled by 120 marshalls and ANC security staff.

The CITU was the only central trade union from India invited to the conference. I had the privilege to attend the conference on behalf of the CITU. The CPI(M) was represented in the conference by Sitaram Yechury. The other Indian delegates representing from India were A B Bardhan (CPI), Sheela Deedi (NFIW), B R Bhagat, Anand Sharma (Congress-I), S R Bommai, George Fernandes and Ajit Singh (Janata Dal), Susheel Dubey, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs represented the Government of India in the conference.

Before the conference commenced the delegates were dancing and singing revolutionary songs. Tremendous enthusiasm was generated among the delegates giving a festive colour to the conference. The venue of the conference was tastefully decorated the revolutionary spirit of the national liberation movement in South Africa.

Oliver Tambo, President ANC welcoming the delegates observed, "...you have come here propelled by the burning desire to make this conference the last one we ever shall have to hold under minority rule."

He continued, "we salute our allies in the South African Communist party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. We salute the ANC youth league—the future of our country. We salute the ANC women's league for steadfastly championing our cause and particularly the largely unresolved issue of women's emancipation. We salute commanders and combatants of our glorious army Umkhonto we Sizwe for the sterling contribution they have made to our struggle." Every sentence was received with thunderous applause by the delegates.

Comrade Tambo reviewed the activities of the ANC since he left the country in 1960 and paid glorious tributes to the valiant heroes who laid down their lives for the cause of freedom. He acknowledged the help rendered by various international organisations and frontline states for giving moral and material assistance to ANC in the years of trial.

He narrated how ANC was built from outside South Africa and how armed struggle was organised despite extremely difficult conditions prevailing in the country. Explaining how the white racist regime had to come down due to international and internal pressure Tambo said, "Operating within the logic of people's struggle—armed and political, and supported by the international community, we managed to push the enemy into crisis which could not be resolved within the confines of the old order. For the first time possibilities to end the apartheid and national oppression through negotiations were created. As a result of struggle the closed door that our late President, Chief A J Luthuli knocked on for many decades was finally opened. It is our responsibility and destiny to seize this historic opportunity."

Tambo concluded his speech thus: "we did not tear ourselves apart because of lack of progress at times. We were always ready to accept our mistakes and correct them. Above all we succeeded to foster and defend the unity of the ANC and the unity of our people in general. Even in bleak moments, we were never in doubt regarding the winning of freedom. We have never been in doubt that the people's cause shall triumph."

Nelson Mandela, Deputy President of the ANC in his forthright and clear cut opening address, explained how the conference was prepared in a democratic manner. He continued, "let us continue to demonstrate in our debates here this week that we stand by the principles of freedom of expression. All views are entitled to be aired. It is through vigorous and constructive debate that altogether we will chart the path ahead."

Pointing out the growth of ANC despite facing difficult situation he pointed out, "the ANC is the repository of the aspirations of the people. In terms of mass support and for reasons that are very easy to understand, we are the major political formation in this country."

The struggle of the ANC has changed the balance of forces to such an extent that "the apartheid system is now in retreat." He noted, "through the struggles of our people the ANC has been unbanned and we are able to meet in our country today. A regime where ideology is based on virulent anti-communism has been forced to unban our ally, the South African Communist party, and remove provisions from the law prohibiting the propagation of Communist ideas."

Nelson Mandela emphasised the need to remove all the obstacles to negotiations as spelt out in the Harare declaration. The question of ending the campaign of terror against the people is important. He further observed, "when these issues have been attended to, we should then move to convene the all party Congress, out of that Congress must emerge a number of important decisions. These will include agreed constitutional principles, the mechanism to draw the new constitution, the establishment of interim government and the role of the international community during transitional period."

He continued, "we must defend peace at the same time as we advance towards people's power. We must engage in successful defensive battles against the counter-revolution at the same time as we conduct successful battles to defeat the apartheid system. This is a struggle we must fight on all fronts simultaneously."

Formation of interim Government acceptable to various political formations within country was extremely important." It will take the character of a transitional government of national unity. Once the Government is formed we will have reached the situation whereby for the first time this country, South Africa will cease to be ruled by a white minority regime," Mandela said.

While categorically asserting about the role of the armed forces during the transitional period he said, "We have suspended armed action. But we have not terminated the armed struggle. Whether it is deployed inside the country or outside Umkhonto we Sizwe therefore has a responsibility to keep itself in a state of readiness in case the forces of counter-revolution once more block the path of peaceful transition to a democratic society."

Referring to the new Constitution of the ANC, Mandela stated, "we must ensure that we agree on a structure which enables the membership to participate in the formulation of policy and direction of the work of the movement while the leadership we will elect recognises that it is accountable without compromising its ability to lead."

Noting the question repeatedly raised in South Africa about the relations between ANC and South African Communist Party, Mandela said, "we consi-

der the South African Communist Party a firm and dependable ally in the common struggle to rid our country of the system of white minority rule. We will therefore rebuff all attempts to drive a wedge between our two organisations."

Emphasising the need for continuation of sanctions against South Africa Nelson Mandela said, "Undoubtedly we will also continue our discussions of the sanctions question which we began at our consultative conference last December. The challenge that faces us with regard to this question is that we should find ways and means by which we arrest the process of the erosion of sanctions and help to create the situation whereby we do not lose this weapon which we will need until democratic constitution has been adopted."

Throughout Mandela's speech there was repeated applause and ovation by the delegates attending the conference.

Leading foreign delegates then conveyed their solidarity to the struggle launched by the people of Africa under the leadership of ANC. On behalf of India B R Bhagat conveyed greetings of the people of India to the ANC conference. The proceedings were open to the foreign delegates. Later it commenced the close door delegates session which were daily continuing upto late night in view of the indepth discussion by the delegates.

Alfred Nzo, Secretary General, ANC submitted the 30 page organisational report to the conference. The report was divided into 3 parts, the first deals with the report on the organisational activities till the legalisation of the ANC in 1990. The second part deals with the activities after legalisation of the ANC while the third part deals with the Departmental Reports of the ANC and mentioned some recommendations to improve functioning of these departments. According to the report the membership of ANC in April 1991 stood at 7 lakhs, distributed in 14 regional committees. Since December 1990 the membership has more than doubled. The report also considers the organisational weaknesses and proposes ways and means to improve those weaknesses.

After discussion on the reports of the Secretary General and Treasurer General, the Conference split up to the following 5 Commissions on 3rd July:

(1) ANC Constitution (2) Violence (3) Negotiation (4) Building organisation and (5) Strategy and Tactics. In the plenary session on the same evening the conference discussed the new constitution provisions.

On 4th July the Conference had following 10 specialised commissions on policy related areas: (1) Land, (2) Economic Policy, (3) Health and Social Welfare (4) Local and Regional Government

(5) Education, (6) A New Constitution and Bill of Rights for South Africa, (7) International Relations, (8) Integrated Development Strategy, (9) Information Strategy and (10) Finance.

Reports of the commissions and resolutions of the specialised commissions were considered by the plenary session and were adopted after a threadbare discussion. These documents constitute a comprehensive policy framework of the ANC. In the forthcoming talks with the Government and in the Constitution Assembly they would form the basis of policy to be adopted by the ANC. The ANC organised a countrywide debate on the draft documents that were prepared by it beforehand and the previous discussion immensely helped the delegates to come to conclusion on these policy related issues.

Major Commission Reports

The Commission on violence in black residential complexes noted the death of several thousands of black people which was directed by agencies of the states and its surrogate forces in the form of councillors, warlords, vigilantes, death squads and certain white right wing elements. It was aimed to destabilise the ANC and other democratic forces, to ensure that the Government dictates the pace of transition in terms of creating its own agenda and to create a state of confusion and demoralisation in ANC ranks and the people in an attempt to alienate them from movement. The Commission therefore noted that violence was part of counter-revolutionary strategy to maintain white domination in new forms. Hence the ending or containing the violence should be at the top of the agenda and ANC's right to self-defence is not limited by any agreement entered into by the movement. The ANC further decided to establish structure on a branch, regional and national level with the partners within the tripartite alliance and other democratic formations to co-ordinate strategies in responding to the violence.

The Commission on the army of ANC Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) decided to maintain and develop it further until the adoption of a democratic constitution and the creation of a new defence into which cadres of MK will be integrated. The Commission further decided not to surrender equipment to the regime.

The Commission on Organisation lasting for about 8 hours and comprising some of the ANC's top organisers, emerged with a fresh approach to building the ANC. "It was decided that a conference of all regions must be held by the beginning of September to look into the question of regional democratisation and organising in the rural areas." The Organising Commission has further recommended that consistent and regular training of the ANC membership should be organised.

The Commission on Negotiations reiterated its firm commitment to a peaceful transfer of power to the people and it should be linked to the international pressure and mass struggle.

The Commission decided that once the obstacles to negotiations are removed there should be convening of the all party Congress, installation of an interim Government, election of a democratic constituent assembly and adoption of a democratic parliament.

According to the new constitution the ANC is a non-racial and democratic national liberation movement. It will consist of 6 office bearers and 50 other elected members of the National Executive Committee (NEC). The MK, women and youth wing and regional chairman and secretaries of ANC will be part of the NEC. The constitution provides for regional general councils including representatives of women's and youth wing.

In adopting the constitution which emphasises democratic practices and non-sexism the delegates at the historic conference expressed their deep commitment to these principles.

The conference elected Oliver Tambo as National Chairman, Nelson Mandela as President, Walter Sisulu as Deputy Chairman, Cyril Ramaphosa, former General Secretary of powerful National Union of Miners as the Secretary General of the ANC. It elected Jacob Zuma as Deputy Secretary General and Thomas Nkobi as Treasurer General. By voting through secret ballot it elected a 50 member NEC, one third of whom belong to the South African Communist Party while 8 of them are of Indian origin.

Mass Rally

A mass rally was held on 7th July at King's Park Stadium which was addressed by Nelson Mandela. In his speech he expressed confidence that in pursuance of the decisions of the historic ANC conference, the peace loving people of South Africa will unitedly fight for a democratic future by dismantling Apartheid once and for all from the soil of South Africa. He expressed the need for continued support from the international community which will force the Pretoria regime to end this outmoded racist system.

The foreign delegates were given opportunity to have detailed discussion with representatives of ANC on various aspects of prevailing apartheid in South Africa. There was a special session for trade union representatives in which Cyril Ramaphosa participated. Foreign delegates were also taken to some rural areas in Natal Province where they were shown the impact of Inkatha violence and they could visit the refugee camp and talk to the victims of violence.

On 4th July the Indian Community in Durban organised a meeting in Gandhi Memorial Hall to welcome the Indian delegation. About 200 persons of Indian origin participated in the meeting. The speakers told the audience to stand by the ANC in the transitional period so that a democratic South Africa can be formed. Indian delegation also visited Phoenix settlement started by Gandhi in the first decade of the present century which has been destroyed by Inkatha vandals. They also visited the hospital run by the Indian community for the invalid persons.

On our way back we stayed for some hours in Johannesburg and took the opportunity to visit 22 storied new ANC headquarters, central offices of COSATU and the National Union of Miners.

The people of Africa are determined to dismantle the Apartheid and are prepared to make whatever sacrifices are necessary to establish united and democratic South Africa under the leadership of ANC.

(From page 7)

that is operating as a parallel economy in the country ;

- (c) collect all arrear tax payments being evaded by the industrialists, businessmen and other richer sections of the people.
- (d) instead of increasing indirect taxes, increase the ratio of direct taxes asking the richer section of the people to bear the burden ;
- (e) increase corporate taxes and the extra profits for the monopoly concerns should be mopped up and deposited in the State Exchequer;
- (f) stop all wasteful expenditure of different Government departments, etc.
- (g) take urgent steps for self-reliance in respect of steel, coal, oil, etc. so that the scarce foreign exchange can be saved by stopping import of these items and strengthen the public sector ; and
- (h) introduce basic land reforms to boost up rural economy and thus expand the internal market.

The meeting called upon the employees and workers to build up united struggle to resist this economic onslaught and to defend their interests.

The meeting in another resolution severely condemned the State-sponsored vandalism and violence being committed on the Tripura employees, workers and their trade unions and the Central Government to take immediate remedial measures to put a stop to these atrocities.

Declaration

Of the 48th National Conference of the African National Congress Extracts-6 July 1991

We, participants at this 48th National Conference of the ANC representing a cross section of South African society : workers, students, the rural masses, intellectuals, religious communities, business-persons-men and women, young and old, black and white-hereby adopt this declaration as our collective message to our country and to the world.

This 48th National Conference of the ANC, comes at a time when our country and its people are poised to commence the last leg of our long struggle to bring an end to minority domination and usher in an era of democracy and peace. The people's hopes for freedom, social justice, democracy and peace stand higher than at any time during this century. As a result of the struggles and sacrifices of the people, the moment for the final eradication of the hated system of white domination has dawned.

We remain convinced that the only real hope for the future of our country and its people lies in the creation of a democratic society based on humane values. These values—government of the people, by the people and for the people have been kept alive and survived in our country, thanks to the sacrifices of millions of our people against the tyranny of white domination. We salute the people of South Africa, who have over many decades waged unrelenting struggle, undaunted by repression and other adversities. We pay tribute to all the patriots who have fallen in the cause of this noble struggle.

The possibility of eradicating apartheid by peaceful means has emerged through our struggles. The overwhelming majority of South Africans are convinced that the process of peaceful transition to a democratic future must proceed with all deliberate speed.

Our country has entered a period of decisive movement towards her redemption from years of cruel oppression and repression. We are conscious of the heavy responsibility on the African National Congress and the people in general to ensure that this takes place with the minimum of bloodshed and destruction. We pledge to march together in ever-swelling ranks to a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

We reaffirm the ANC's non-sexist policy and commit ourselves to urgently further deve-

lop mechanisms of addressing the serious challenge of women's emancipation in society at large, including our own ranks.

We reiterate our adherence to the principles of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa as enshrined in the Freedom Charter. These include the guarantee of the fundamental human rights of all South Africans, reinforced by an entrenched Bill of Rights a multi-party system of government, a representative and independent judiciary and regular elections. However, these rights will be meaningless without the fundamental restructuring of the economy to serve the interests of the people and far-reaching reforms in the areas of land distribution, housing, education, health, welfare and so on.

The main goal of the struggle is the liberation of our people from the system of national oppression. The ANC remains a national liberation movement committed to the transfer of power to the people as a whole. We do not act simply in the narrow interest of the ANC as a political organisation. Our mission, hand-in-hand with other democratic forces, is to rid South Africa of the scourge of apartheid in all its manifestations.

We reaffirm our commitment to the deepening of democracy within our ranks. The preparations for this Conference and the open and free exchange of ideas in its sessions have reinforced the unity and coherence of our movement. They have also planted the seed which will germinate in the development of a democratic political culture in our society.

We, the delegates assembled at this 48th National Conference of the ANC call upon all our people to join hands in the struggle for democracy and peace in our land. We reach out to workers, youth and students, the rural masses, traditional chiefs, artists, sports-persons religious communities, intellectuals, business-persons and others. We call on our white compatriots to take active part in the efforts to build a just and democratic future for all our people. We reach out in particular to the security forces and call on them to support and defend the process of peaceful transition to democracy, acting in support of the aspirations of the people.

Let Peace, Freedom and Justice Prevail !

Demand for withdrawal of US Nuclear Weapons from South Korea

[The General Federation of Trade Union of Korea (GFTUK) along with the Workers' Party of Korea and eighteen other mass organisations of DPRK issued a joint statement at Pyongyang on June 10 demanding unconditional withdrawal of all US forces and the nuclear weapons from South Korea. The GFTUK also demanded adoption of the Non-Aggression Declaration by South Korea immediately. We are publishing hereunder the two statements issued by the GFTUK in abridged form—Ed.]

Joint Statment by DPRK Political Parties and Mass Organisations

It is the unanimous desire and aspirations of mankind to live in a peaceful world free from the threat of nuclear war and nuclear weapons.

Our Republic has regarded the removal of the nuclear threat from the Korean peninsula as a vital problem that affects the destiny of the nation and as an essential requirement for safeguarding the Asian and world peace. It has made all sincere efforts to get U. S. nuclear weapons withdrawn from South Korea and convert Korean peninsula into a denuclearised zone.

When measures were taken between the Soviet Union and the United States to abolish some nuclear weapons, we supported them and hoped that such nuclear reduction measures would be also enacted in the Korean peninsula. However, the U.S. nuclear threat against us is daily growing.

Now it has become all the clearer that the presence of more than 1,000 nuclear weapons deployed by the United States in South Korea constitutes the main cause which creates dangers not only to the existence of the Korean people, but also to the peace and security of Asia.

When deploying more than 1,000 nuclear weapons in South Korea, the United States claimed that it is aimed at "detering the Soviet Union from downward thrust". Then, today, when the U.S.—Soviet relations have moved from confrontation to détente and the Soviet Union and the United States do not regard each other as the 'enemy', is there any need to keep these nuclear weapons?

Isn't it clear that more than 1,000 nuclear weapons deployed by the United States in South Korea are after all aimed at dominating the whole territory of Korea and Asia and at threatening and bringing under its control any Asian country in case something affecting its 'interests' or disagreeable to 'feeling' happens in this area?

In establishing and maintaining its supremacy in the Asia-Pacific region, it will not hesitate, if necessary

to blackmail the nations there with nuclear weapons or use those weapons under whatever pretext they can invent.

A clear proof of this is that the U.S. threatened the use of nuclear weapons during the Gulf war.

The top-level officials and military bosses of the United States declared more than once that they would use nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula, if necessary. They threaten us every year by mobilizing large military forces armed with means of nuclear attack in the 'Team Spirit' nuclear war exercises.

The United States and the South Korean authorities staged the 'Team Spirit' war manoeuvres this year again in disregard of our just demand for discontinuing the 'Team Spirit' at least during the talks for the sake of bringing the hard-won north-south high-level talks to a success. More recently, they are escalating the tensions, noisily crying over our 'nuclear capabilities'.

At the 22nd 'annual South Korea-US security council meeting' held last November, they worked out a 'combat training plan' to take 'aerial counter measures' against our non-existent 'nuclear facilities' and 'dislodge' them in time of emergency.

On this basis, in April the South Korean puppet defence minister made a bombastic statement which was virtually a declaration of war, declaring that they would carry out a 'preemptive strike' at our nuclear facilities'.

All this is aiming at diverting elsewhere the attention of the world public from its nuclear weapons deployed in South Korea and covering up its policy of nuclear blackmail in Asia with the Korean peninsula as the stronghold with outcries for an unilateral 'nuclear inspection' in our area.

No one can vouch that the ever-worsening acute situation of the Korean Peninsula may not spark off another war.

It is our Asian Countries that would suffer, if a nuclear war broke out in Korea, no matter where the nuclear weapons may fly from South Korea and, in particular, the neighbouring countries of the Korean peninsula would not be able to escape immeasurable calamities.

In order to remove the danger of nuclear war from the Korean peninsula and the rest of Asia, it is necessary, above all, to withdraw from South Korea the US nuclear weapons, the source of nuclear

war, and make the Korean peninsula a nuclear free zone.

The DPRK Govt has declared more than once that it has neither intention nor capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons, that it is ready to sign the Nuclear Safeguards Accord any time according to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and that it does not oppose nuclear inspection.

The question lies in the removal of U.S. nuclear threat to our Republic and Asia.

If the nuclear inspection should be made it must not be forced upon us alone with no nuclear weapons but the U.S. nuclear bases in South Korea must be opened to the public and an international inspection of them be made at the same time.

The US still tries to impose its will on other from the position of strength. This is an anachronistic way of thinking.

There are big and small countries in the world but there cannot be major and minor countries, nor can there be nations destined to dominate other nations or those destined to be dominated.

The US takes issue with those countries which do not possess nuclear weapons, wielding nuclear weapons. This is unilateral, big-power arbitrariness.

Japan sides with the U.S., calling for 'forced inspection' of our non-existent 'nuclear facilities'.

Sometime ago, broad sections of people in South Korea, including dissidents and people of the political, academic, art and cultural circles, published the '1,000 men declaration for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula'. They held that the United States must open to public the nuclear weapons which it has deployed in South Korea and agree to the simultaneous nuclear inspection in the South of Korea.

The United States claims that its nuclear weapons deployed overseas are more "deterrent power", a "nuclear umbrella", to protect its allies and friendly nations. Who on earth are they to "protect" and who to oppose today when the "confrontation" between world powers "has come to an end" and "reconciliation" has been achieved?

It is as clear as noonday that the aim of the United States in keeping its nuclear weapons in South Korea is to maintain its "policy of strategy" and thus obstruct the independent development of the Asian countries and gratify its dominant desire. The United States must unconditionally draw its forces and nuclear weapons from South Korea without delay.

Withdrawing the U.S. nuclear weapons from South Korea and making the Korean peninsula a nuclear-free zone are the fundamental requirements for removing the danger of a nuclear war from the Korean peninsula.

We expect that the Asian countries and peace loving states, political parties and organizations and people throughout the world will intensify their vigilance against the U.S. nuclear weapons in South Korea and join as one in the struggle to remove them and make the Korean peninsula a nuclear-free, peace zone.

Non Aggression Declaration

The adoption of the non-aggression declaration between the north and south of Korea is the starting point in removing the mistrust and confrontation between the north and the south and opening a new phase for peace and peaceful reunification.

At present massive armed forces stand in confrontation against one another along the Military Demarcation Line on the Korean peninsula. A

(Con'td on p. 2)