



Vol. 29

No. 1

September 1998

Price: Rupees Four

# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU





Top: AWWC Japan Delegation in India. Bottom: Anganwadi Convention, Delhi 20.8.98

# FORWARD TO A COUNTRYWIDE STRUGGLE AGAINST BJP GOVT'S ECONOMIC POLICIES AND COMMUNALISM

M K Pandhe

The two significant nationwide conventions held in New Delhi on 11th and 12th August have given a clarion call to the working class and the toiling masses of India to resolutely mobilise millions in the struggle against economic policies and communalism of the BJP-led government at the Centre. Both the conventions mark the growing militancy of the mass organisations arising out of acute discontent prevailing among the people as a result of deteriorating economic situation and steep rise in prices of essential commodities.

The four months' existence of Vajpayee Government has exposed all the fallacious claim the RSS and the BJP were making on the eve of the last general elections. Its tall claim of good governance has proved to be a big hoax and the internal squabbles within the ruling coalition has made the government vulnerable to greedy blackmailing tactics of coalition partners. Jayalalita's sword of withdrawal of support to the government is continuously hanging precariously over the head of the Prime Minister. There is no wonder the government has no time to take any measure that would give some relief to the people.

## FIELD DAY FOR BUREAUCRACY

The World Bank lobby in the Indian bureaucracy naturally got a field day and concessions after concessions were granted to multi-national companies and Indian big business houses without even carefully going into their implications for the national economy. The recent budget was a clearcut bonanza to the bourgeois-landlord classes and multinationals while people could receive only additional tax burden and burden of price rise.

The public sector was singled out by the government for a special attack. Sick industry were threatened with closure notice while the well run ones were slated for disinvestment to the tune of 74 per cent of their equity. The withdrawal of budgetary subsidy and other discriminatory deals in the matter of orders, taxation etc would further cripple several public sector units which would ultimately make them

unviable.

In such a situation the Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) organised a national convention of PSU workers on 11th August 1998 which was attended by over 700 delegates from more than 150 public sector undertakings. The shocking conditions were prevalent in the public sector undertakings due to utter neglect by the Government of India. Delegates narrated how even the revival packages prepared jointly are not being carried out. Workers have to launch long drawn struggles even to get their monthly wages earned through hard toil. The CPSTU convention called for two day nationwide strike on 10th and 11th December 1998. A series of programmes had been chalked out viz holding of regional and local conventions, organisation of human chain, etc which would popularise among the public sector workers the decision to go on strike. On 25th November all unions will serve strike notices through massive demonstrations all over India. This united powerful action by over 19 lakh public sector workers will be an indictment of the anti-national policies pursued by the BJP government.

## CLEAR MESSAGE OF 2 DAY STRIKE

A successful strike of the public sector workers will give a clear message to the Central Government that its draconian policies will not be taken lying down by the working class and there would be effective resistance at every step.

A determined working class can force the government to change its policies and it could be clearly seen from the experience of Fertiliser industry where the united trade union movement could force the government to sanction necessary funds for revival of at least two sick public sector units. If the pressure is further mounted through struggle it may be possible to force the Government of India to take measures to revive the rest of the sick public sector Fertilizer units.

The Government of India is adopting a steam roller policy since it is under the impression that the public

sector employees movement is divided and is unable to oppose the policies of the Government of India. The reply to this misconception can be given only through a determined struggle and whatever weaknesses are there in the movement should be overcome in time. vacillation should be removed, those who did not attend the convention should be pursued to join the programme of actions so that the two day strike will be a complete success. This is the need of the hour and all CITU unions should take initiative in the matter so that maximum possible unity is built in the country in defence of public sector and its workers.

The remarkable enthusiasm created among all the delegates as a result of the deliberations of the convention must be fully utilised to strengthen the united movement of the public sector workers. Unity of the sick industry workers as well as workers in well run industry in public sector must be brought down in a common struggle against the government's policies. Sustained work by the CITU unions is necessary to achieve such a cherished unity which alone can defeat the govt's policies.

### **NATION WIDE STRIKE BY ALL MASS ORGANISATIONS**

The convention of the National Platform of Mass Organisations on 12th August was really massive and reflected complete identity of views of all trade unions and mass organisations of Kisans, agriculture workers, women, students and youths in our country. The 24 points demands adopted by the convention reflected an alternate approach to the erroneous policies pursued by the Vajpayee Government and covered major demands of all sections of people and organisations participating in the conventions. The clarion call given by the convention to organise strike on 11th December 1998 was enthusiastically welcomed by the delegates. The mass organisations other than trade unions will also chalk out various forms of action which will engulf the entire country and even the remote villages. A success of this action will pose a major challenge to the BJP led Government and its IMF/World Bank dictated policies. Over 5000 delegates who participated in the convention went with determination to seriously prepare for this massive strike action. It is the duty of the CITU unions in all sectors of the

economy to make concerted efforts to ensure success of this strike so that this historic action becomes the biggest and broadest ever nationwide action. The participation of other mass organisation will ensure a genuine toiling people's protest action against the policies of the Government. The programmes of state or local level conventions, massive demonstrations in State Capital as well as before Parliament, have been adopted from the convention.

It should be the task of the CITU unions to get in touch with other mass organisations so that the action programme on 11th December will really be a massive actions in which millions of people will actively participate. Unity of all the mass organisation should be given paramount importance so that all will strike together against Govt policies.

### **FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNALISM**

During this nationwide campaign proper emphasis

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### **TAKE PAINS TO EXPLAIN TO THE PEOPLE RALLY THE MASSES FOR THE STRUGGLE**

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should be given to the struggle against communal and divisive forces. Since BJP Government has assumed power communal forces are trying to get an upper hand and openly preach hatred against minority communities. The active preparation of construction of Ram Temple are openly going on while opposition to accept even the judicial verdict is being indulged in and glorified. The refusal of Shiv Sena Government to take action on the Srikrishna Commission is an affront to the secularism of India. So long this government remains in power, even the future of democracy is in stake. Already the law and order situation is at its lowest ebb today.

The CITU union have a great responsibility to shoulder in the country. It is only the working class and the toiling masses which can pose a forceful challenge to the present alarming situation in the country.

The effective implementation of the decisions of these two convention will galvanise the national situation in the country and through massive struggle the reactionary policies of the BJP Government can be squarely defeated and the self-reliance of the country can be defended.

# INSURANCE SECTOR: IMPLICATIONS OF OPENING UP

The BJP led coalition Govt. while presenting its budget made a crucial proposal to allow the entry of 'swadeshi' companies into insurance sector. The proposal, if approved by the Parliament will have far reaching implications for the nation, the worst sufferers being the policy holders.

In any globalised economy, no Government can give a selective clearance for indigenous companies. For globalisation means complete and unrestricted opening up of the industry and trade. The Finance Minister had asserted that Swadeshi is not against Foreign Companies and that it is not protectionism; it neither opposes globalisation nor deregulation. All these illustrate that the BJP Govt. is hell bent on privatising the insurance sector, the "Swadeshi" slogan is only a transparent mask to dupe the people.

The LIC came into existence in 1956 by amalgamating 246 private insurance companies which resorted to large scale malpractices.

Bombay life, the insurance company owned by Birlas, New India Company of Tatas and National Company of Singhanias, all Swadeshi companies, evaded claims to the tune of 49.5%, 59.41% and 74.7% respectively. It is our every day experience now, how people are being cheated by the private finance companies. It

is doubtful that the performance of the private companies will be different, in insurance industry. Can the Government guarantee that the notorious past of the Swadeshi Insurance Companies will not recur?

The entry of private companies, which do not seem to have any commitment and are driven by pure profit motive, into insurance sector, will spell disaster for the national economy. The notorious record of private companies before nationalisation and the recent history of MNCs elsewhere in the world stands testimony to this.

## A Raghunatha Reddy

"Prudential Insurance Company" of America had to pay a penalty of 500 million dollars for its fraudulent transactions. "First Executive," one of the celebrated "Fortune-500" companies, became insolvent because of its speculative investments. "First Capital", "Equitable Life", "United Bakdwin", "Alliance Life", etc. are a few of the companies that are blacklisted by the Govt. of U.S.A. for their fraudulent activities. Now such of these MNCs are looking towards the developing countries like India.

LIC is performing exceedingly well after nationalisation. It has built up a Life Fund of Rs. 1,05,000 crores and paid a dividend of 199.87 crores for the

year ending 31.3.98 on the Government's initial investment of a meagre Rs.5 crores. LIC invested Rs. 56,000 crores for the 8th Five year Plan. LIC and GIC are collectively in a position to provide Rs. 1,00,000 crores for the 9th Five Year Plan.

LIC's investments reached an all time high of Rs.68,067 crores as on 31.3.97 with a spread of 37,330 crores in Central Govt. securities, 8,906 crores in State Govt. Securities, 8,214 crores in Electricity Boards, 10,967 crores for housing, 2,028 crores for drinking water, 540 crores in State Owned Road Transport Corporations, 45 crores in various industries and 37 crores in Sugar Co-operatives. Thus the funds of LIC are utilised for the planned development of the nation. Will the Swadeshi or MNCs invest the funds collected from Indians for the development of India?

LIC settled 97% of claims, whereas the International experience is only 40%. LIC could not settle the remaining 3% claims owing to technical reasons and legal complications. LIC provided Group Cover for 1.20 crores of Landless Agricultural Labourers and 1.80 crores of I.R.D.P. beneficiaries. Can one expect such a performance from profit thirsty private companies?

*(A. Raghunatha Reddy is a leading functionary of AIIEA and President of Cuddapah District CITU in Andhra Pradesh)*

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**LACKEYS OF FUND-BANK, NEVER LEARN  
TEACH THEM THE LESSONS OF ASIAN DEBACLE**

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*(New Delhi, 12th August 1998. The All India Convention of National Platform of Mass Organisations (NPMO) was held at Talkatora Stadium, with the massive participation of seven thousand delegates representing various mass organisations of workers, peasants, agricultural laborers, students, youth, women, and professionals to decide the future course of struggle against the phenomenal price rise, unemployment, and the disastrous economic policy of liberalisation being pursued by the BJP led Govt at the Centre. The convention was presided over by a presidium representing the leadership of various central TUs, viz., CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, TUCC, UTUC(LS) and AICCTU and from the student, youth, women and peasants organisations. E Balanandan, President CITU, represented CITU in the presidium. MK Pandhe, General Secretary CITU addressed the convention. Among other speakers in the convention were K L Mahendra (AITUC), V Tiagi (HMS), Dipankar Bhattacharya (AICCTU), N M Sundaram (AIIEA), Brinda Karat (AIDWA) N K Shukla (AIKS). The text of the Declaration adopted in the convention of NPMO is reproduced here. - Editor)*

## NATIONAL PLATFORM OF MASS ORGANISATIONS: CALL FOR ALL INDIA GENERAL STRIKE ON 11.12.98

1. The National Platform of Mass Organisations in its Convention held on 12th August 1998 expresses serious concern at the fast deteriorating economic situation in the country since the BJP Govt has come to power at the Centre. Inflation rate which was 4.7% in April has gone beyond 8 % within 100 days of BJP coming to power. The prices of essential commodities like vegetables, dal, edible oil etc., have shot up during this period. Public Distribution System is being systematically dismantled.

2. With growing industrial sickness and slowing down of economy in all the sectors, the tall claims of liberalisation have been belied. While multinational companies are allowed to capture Indian market, the loot of Indian people has gone up. There is no wonder that the number of people below the poverty line has been swelling.

3. The BJP-led Government is in a hurry to privatise the profit making Public Sector Undertakings, close down the so

called sick units, gift away the national assets to the Indian and foreign monopoly capital through direct sell out, bringing down Government share to 26% while disinvesting 74% to private sector. Lakhs of public sector workers are thrown out of employment

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through Voluntary Retirement Scheme and other means. In short, the PSU net work built over the years, which served as the backbone of the country's self-reliance, is under liquidation. The workers have been worst affected by the anti-PSU policy. The workers of sick units are not getting salaries for months together, languishing at the wage fixed twelve years ago, violating agreements revised DA is not paid and overdue wage negotiations are not commenced.

4. The Central Government as well as several State governments have resorted to various measures leading to retrenchment of large number of employees. Vacant

posts remain unfilled. The retirement age has been hiked shutting the doors of employment to the unemployed.

5. The new economic policies of liberalisation and globalisation pursued since 1991, the main postulate of which was that the State should withdraw from industrial ventures and business, have become more aggravated with the BJP coming to power.

6. The hoax of *swadeshi* of the BJP Government stands unmasked. While in opposition, the BJP had made a scathing attack on the then government for signing the GATT agreement. But having come to power, it upholds commitment to international agreements including the amendments to the Indian Patent Act. Meeting the WTO conditionalities and amendment of the Patent Act will add to the loot of the Indian people, cause disastrous effects on the agricultural and pharmaceutical sectors and lead to rampant closures, accentuating the

unemployment situation in the country.

7. While there is an allround deterioration in the living conditions of all sections of the people, the BJP Government is trying to divert the attention of the people towards dangerous pursuits like nuclear weaponisation. It has, thereby, disturbed the normal peaceful relations with the neighbouring countries and also has helped internationalising the Kashmir issue. The Govt has opened up even the Defence Reserach and Development Organisation to the private sector, collaborating with the CII, endangering the security of the country. It is also preparing to capitulate to the USA on CTBT and like issues.

8. By pursuing the construction of Ram temple, the BJP and its Sangh Parivar have rekindled the communal tension in the country, developing Hindutva based jingoism.

9. The BJP seeks to subvert the Parliamentary democracy by proposing Presidential form of Government and review of the Constitution. It distorts history and is preparing to rewrite history with the Hindutva approach.

10. The media is used on the one hand for cultural invasion by the multinationals and on the other hand for spreading the Hindutva outlook.

11. The policies pursued by the BJP government have further disturbed the Centre-State relations, instead of strengthening the same.

12. The peasantry is suffering due to non-implementation of genuine

land reforms and non-distribution of ceiling surplus and *benami* lands to the landless. The BJP has declared its intention to do away with agricultural land ceiling. Whatever money has been pumped into the rural areas, have been pocketed by the rural rich, while poor peasants are groaning under the crushing burden of indebtedness.

13. Declining public investment and encouragement of corporate sector in agriculture leaves them at the mercy of rural capitalists and MNCs. Unprecedented price fluctuations of cash crops, lack of credit, lack of marketing facilities and poor quality of pesticides had led to the failure of cotton and

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### INDUSTRY SLOWS DOWN - RUPEE SLIDES EXPORTS DWINDLE - IMPORTS SWELL PRICES TEAR OFF ROOF - CRISIS PEAKS WHY THEN MADNESS WITH 'REFORMS' ?

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other crops leading to suicides of peasants in several parts of the country. Due to all these anti-peasant policies our food security system has been endangered.

14. The agricultural workers are denied minimum wage above the poverty level. The BJP Government has turned down the demand to introduce the long pending comprehensive Agricultural Workers' Bill giving in to the landlord lobby.

15. The Urban Land Ceiling Act is being scrapped enabling the builders lobby to grab urban lands.

16. The Bill providing for 33% reservation to women has been scuttled. The Govt intentionally backtracked from introducing the Bill taking advantage of sabotage by some others.

17. The large majority of women workers have no protective legislation. Discrimination against women in different spheres continues unabated. Women are denied equal right in property. Crimes against women are on the increase but culprits invariably go scot free.

18. The students are denied the right to education and the slogan "Education for all" has become a mirage. Students from lower income group are being deprived of higher education due to exorbitant hike in fees and commercialisation of education. Instead of strengthening the scientific, democratic and secular education, the BJP Govt is trying

to communalise the education system.

19. The teachers are denied proper scales. Vacant posts are not filled up, a sinister adhoc and contract appointment system is introduced creating job insecurity among the teachers' community.

20. The condition of youth is very bad due to loss of job opportunities during the last several years and right to work as a fundamental right has become a far cry.

21. In cultural sphere, driven by profit motive, the official electronic media competes with western and private satellite channels in broadcasting offensive programmes which degrade women and glorify violence and crime, throwing overboard all the rich cultural heritage of India.

This Convention, therefore, calls upon all the mass organisations in India to organise a countrywide campaign on the following demands

## Demands

1. Withdraw the new economic and industrial policy; scrap IMF-World Bank package of neo-liberalisation and patents regime.
2. Halt reckless entry of multinationals in Indian Economy.
3. Stop privatisation, disinvestment and corporatisation of central and state public sector units and Government departmental work. Give up opening of insurance, telecom, financial sectors, electricity, etc. and open sky policy.
4. Reopen closed industrial units, revive all sick units, provide adequate and immediate financial packages therefor.
5. Protect small scale and traditional Indian industries.
6. Check price rise and inflation.
7. Strengthen public distribution system, supply in adequate quantity and quality essential commodities at subsidised prices to economically weaker sections.
8. Reintroduce Essential Commodities Act and take action against hoarders and blackmarketeers.
9. Take speedy measures for implementing genuine land reforms, plug loopholes in land ceiling legislations, distribute ceiling surplus and *benami* lands to the landless. Provide free house sites to agricultural workers. Update the land records and protect the sharecroppers.
10. Step up public investment for agri-infrastructure development, research and irrigation; ensure availability of credit for agriculture, write off all debts of poor peasants, ensure marketing facilities, remunerative prices and comprehensive crop insurance.
11. Introduce comprehensive Central Agricultural Workers' Bill.
12. Introduce right to work as a fundamental right under the Constitution. Ensure payment of unemployment allowance.
13. Withdraw ban on recruitment and fill up all vacant posts.
14. Ensure education for all; ensure free and compulsory primary education; stop commercialisation of education; withdraw fee hikes and step up budgetary allocation for education to 10 per cent.
15. Adopt 33 per cent Women's Reservation Bill;

## STRUGGLE AGAINST ECONOMIC POLICIES IS FOR PROTECTION OF COUNTRY'S SOVEREIGNTY

16. Take speedy measures for abolition of child labour.
17. Guarantee the rights of dalits and tribals; take stringent action against perpetrators of atrocities against them. Fill up the backlog of SC/ST quotas in recruitment.
18. Immediately enact the law on recognition of trade unions through secret ballot.
19. Guarantee above-poverty level minimum wages, with automatic linkage to price index; ensure periodical revision; place the Minimum Wages Act under 9th Schedule of Constitution; strengthen implementation machinery; extend labour

### Action Programme

This convention calls upon all mass organisations irrespective of affiliations to join the following programme of action in pursuance of the above demands:

1. Holding of State/District level Conventions, to be completed by October 1998.
2. Massive rallies at State Capitals including at Delhi in November, 1998.
3. Nationwide General Strike on 11th December, 1998.

legislations and social security measures to the unorganised sector and home based workers.

20. Hike direct taxes; tax the corporate sector and rural rich; reduce indirect taxes and grant relief to the poor.

21. Curb all media and cultural programmes which violate secular values, dignity of women and glorify crime and violence.

22. Halt nuclear weaponisation; stop arms race; Refrain from signing the CTBT and NPT.

23. Take stringent action against all involved in corruption deals, particularly those holding public office.

24. Arrest all those indicted in the Sri Krishna Commission report.

## ABOLISH BONUS ACT CEILINGS: CITU

The CITU has demanded immediate promulgation of an ordinance, abolishing the eligibility limit (ceiling on bonusable earnings) in the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965. This has become imperative as the Parliament is not in session now and the festival season is in the offing.

The CITU pointed out that the Government of India has kept this issue lingering on for years together except for an annual ritual of seeking comments/suggestions from employees' and employers' organisations.

During 1996, the Government then considered two proposals: (i) Abolition of eligibility limit in the Bonus Act and (ii) Revision of limit to Rs 5000. Then again, the routine exercise of seeking comments was there. But no decision was taken.

Now, the Government has chosen to seek comments from the central trade unions and employers' organisations on a fresh proposal. The proposal had been mooted by the Central Organisation of Employers. The employers had emphasised that *'the issue of bonus should be seen in the perspective of the need for achieving high rate of GDP growth.'* Hence they desired that *'the Government should examine the question of linking bonus with productivity.'*

The employers, as a class, responsible for turning thousands of well-run industrial units sick and for ever increasing number of closures, lock out and wilful cutting down of production targets, have suddenly become concerned with GDP growth, when the issue of bonus is raised!

This is the usual tactics of delaying and pushing the government to put the matter in cold storage.

In the 33rd Indian Labour Conference also when the central trade unions pressed for abolition of eligibility

limits by amending the Bonus Act, the employers raised the bogey of a total review of the Act. This was only intended to parry the issue of immediate decision on eligibility limit.

The CITU has deplored the present attempt by employers to link bonus with productivity. CITU also opposed any move to link the minimum and maximum bonus or the eligibility limit and calculation ceiling with productivity.

Recalling that after the last revision of eligibility limit in the Bonus Act during 1995, the eligibility limit in the case of Group 'C' and 'D' employees of the Central Government had been removed and the income limit in the ESI Act has been raised to Rs 6500, the CITU urged the Government to take a decisive step in this regard now.

In this backdrop the CITU has, in a letter dated 20.8.98, urged the Government of India to abolish the ceilings in Bonus Act through an ordinance.

### EXTENDED MEETING OF CITU SECRETARIAT

An extended meeting of the CITU Secretariat participated by the Presidents and General Secretaries of State Committees and Industrial Federations was held at New Delhi on 13.8.98. E.Balanandan chaired the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the outcome of the CPSTU and NPMO conventions held on 11th and 12th August, 1998, and called upon the CITU Unions to make extensive countrywide preparations for the All India General Strike on 11.12.98 and CPSTU strike on 11th & 12th. All action programmes adopted by the NPMO convention must be meticulously planned and carried out with utmost emphasis on carrying out the campaign down to the mass of the people.

(New Delhi, 11th August, 1998. The National Convention of Public Sector Workers was held at Mavalankar Hall here, to decide the countrywide action programme by PSU workers against the move of the BJP Govt to liquidate the public sector through closure and disinvestment. The convention was called by the Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) comprising PSU Unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC, HMS along with Joint Action Front of PSU Workers, Bangalore and PSU Trade Unions Co-ordination Committee, Hyderabad. 756 delegates, from almost all the PSUs from all corners of the country, took part in the convention. 42 speakers took part in the deliberations. The Declaration detailing out the future course of action programme was placed by MK Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU and seconded by RA Mittal, Secretary, HMS. Among others who spoke in the convention were Jibon Roy (CITU), Michael Fernandes, (JAF, Bangalore), K Balakishan (Hyderabad PSU Co-ordination Committee), K L Mahendra (AITUC), H Mahadevan (AITUC), Tapan Sen (CITU), N M Sundaram (AIIEA), H S Rajput (BEL Workers Union), Sukdeb Singh and B K Singh from BHEL, Debbarjan Chakraborty (CWFU) A K Roy (Progressive Front Labour Union), C Kuppasamy MP (Labour Progressive Federation, Tamil Nadu). The declaration, adopted unanimously, is reproduced here—Editor)

## CALL OF NATIONAL CONVENTION OF PSU WORKERS: ALL INDIA STRIKE IN PSUs ON 10 & 11.12.1998

This National Convention is held in pursuance of the programmes of propaganda and agitation adopted at the extended meeting of the CPSTU held on 12-13 May, 1998 at New Delhi to defeat the anti-public sector policies of the central Government and for realising the long pending urgent issues of the PSU workers. The convention was presided over by a presidium comprising S Dev Roye (CITU), J Chittaranjan (AITUC), R.A. Mital (HMS), Michael B. Fernandes (JAF, Bangalore) and K Balkishan (PSU Co-ordination Committee, Hyderabad) and attended by over 700 delegates. The participants came from all over the country, far and near, representing all the key sectors and major industries. The background paper presented in the convention exposed the design to wipe out the public sector net work in the country. The vilification campaign that public sector and losses are synonymous and private sector is the symbol

of 'super efficiency' has been thoroughly scotched with facts and figures.

The BJP-led Government's National Agenda for Governance (NAG) declared, "Government will expedite comprehensive reforms of PSUs including Restructuring, Rehabilitation and Disinvestment, ". But going by the experience of 100 days of governance, the budget and other policy measures adopted by the Government, it is crystal clear that they are out to totally dismantle

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the public sector through multipronged attack like bringing down Government share to mere 26% and disinvesting 74% shares to Indian and foreign private capital; closing down the so called sick units; splitting PSUs in the name of restructuring; and throwing, lakhs of workers out of employment in the name of VRS. In short the public sector net work, built over the years since

independence which served as the backbone of the country's self-reliance, is under liquidation.

Based on the experience and understanding of the delegates, the convention held that the attack on the public sector has been further accelerated, warranting countrywide united vigorous movement of the public sector workers. The convention felt that the fight to defend public sector against the onslaught of Fund-Bank dictated policy of liberalisation and globalisation is, in effect, a fight for saving the country from deindustrialisation, guarding the path of self-reliant economic development and protecting the economic sovereignty. Therefore, entire people of the country - the working class, the toiling masses, all patriotic forces, the progressive sections of the intelligentsia - all concerned from all walks of the society must be mobilised in this fight for the cause of the nation.

The national convention resolves to observe **two days' strike by the public sector workers all over the country on 10th and 11th December, 1998** in support of the undernoted 10 points charter:

1. No privatisation of public sector
2. Stop disinvestment of PSU shares and scrap the Disinvestment Commission
3. Expeditious revival of all sick PSUs; Govt. must act as promoter and give all necessary financial assistance
4. Scrapping of SICA Amendment Bill introduced in the Parliament.
5. Embargo on wage revision for the employees of the PSUs referred to BIFR and also on payment of slab system VDA at revised rate should be withdrawn immediately. The 67 PSUs under Central Govt VDA should be granted wage revision..
6. Already delayed wage negotiations in all CPSUs where the tenure of previous agreement has expired must be started forthwith in right earnest without attaching any conditions. Pending such wage negotiations and settlement, interim relief on a monthly recurring basis should be paid
- 7 No deployment of contract workers in permanent and perennial nature of jobs; regularisation of existing contract workers.
- 8 Removal of all ceilings in the Payment of Bonus Act by bringing an ordinance; upward revision of exemption limit of Income Tax.
9. Enhancement of ceiling on payment of Gratuity to Rs 3.5 lakhs with effect from 1.4.1995 in line with the Central Government employees.
10. PSUs should be allowed to devise separate Pension Scheme without diverting compulsorily any fund from contributory PF scheme. Grant immediate examtion to PSUs who have applied for the same.

As steps towards preparation for the strike, the following programmes of propaganda and agitation are adopted by the convention :-

1. **The background paper and declaration of this convention are to be translated in local languages and distributed among the workers by holding gate meetings on 27th August, 1998.**
2. **Convention in all the state capitals and also at prominent PSU centres in the country, jointly with other trade unions and mass organisations, to be completed by 31st October, 1998.**
3. **Organise human chains on 10th November, 1998.**
4. **Serving notice of strike jointly by the trade unions on 25th November, 1998.**
5. **Countrywide Canteen Boycott by PSU workers on 3rd December, 1998.**
6. **Other means of campaign till the days of strike, according to local situation.**

The CPSTU appeals to all public sector workers all over the country, irrespective of affiliations, to join the above programmes including the strike and make them grand success.

## TUI WORLD CONGRESS

A preparatory meeting for holding of the World Congress of Trade Unions International of Public and Allied Employees (TUI) was held at Delhi on 14.7.98.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of AIBEA, BEFI, AIBOC, AIIEA, AISGEF and AI Telecom Emp.Fedn. K L Mahendra (AITUC), M K Pandhe (CITU), and D K Ganguli (WFTU-Asia-Pacific) were also present.

It was decided to hold the TUI World Congress and an International Seminar on "Impact of Economic Globalisation on Public and Financial Services" at Calcutta from 2nd to 6th November 1998. The programme:

2.11.98 Directive Committee meeting of TUI

3.11.98: International Seminar

4-6.11.98: TUI World Congress

Sukomal Sen, General Secretary of TUI, announced that the TUI affiliates will again meet on 12.8.98 at Delhi for forming a Preparatory Committee.

# 1998 WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST A&H BOMBS

The 1998 World Conference against A&H Bombs International Meeting opened on August 2 at the International Centre in Hiroshima City.

About 300 people, including 63 delegates from 38 organisations of 21 countries and 3 international organisations, took part in the meeting.

On behalf of the organiser, Ayako Sekiya, member of the Committee of Chairpersons of the Organising Committee, made a keynote speech. She said:

"The emergence of new nuclear weapons possessing states clearly shows that the conventional system of allowing a limited number of states to monopolise nuclear arms has never been effective for "controlling nuclear weapons" or overcoming the danger of a nuclear war. It is for this reason that more people than ever have a feeling that "this must not be left as it is," raising their voice calling for nuclear weapons to be eliminated without delay.

"To end nuclear proliferation and prevent nuclear war, there is no other way than to exert truly conscientious efforts for the elimination of nuclear weapons."

"But, the US government's dominant opinion is that since the elimination of nuclear weapons is a complicated time-consuming task, it is not practical to make efforts with such a fixed time frame.

## PEACE MARCH

The anti-nuclear world conference was preceded by a Great Peace March, which covered the length and breadth of Japan, through 11 courses. The earliest of these, the Tokyo-Hiroshima march commenced on 6th May 1998.

Natha Singh (Punjab) and M Rajangam (Tamil Nadu) joined the peace march on 29.7.98. These two were the only marchers from outside Japan. In the background of BJP led government move towards nuclear weaponisation, the CITU representatives from India, received a grand welcome. In fact they were asked to lead the march holding the front-banner till it reached Hiroshima.

Swapan Kumar Ray, Debasish Dey, Tapan Kumar Pathak and Kalebu Komala Pudinarah, were also part of the 8-member CITU delegation that participated in the World Conference at Hiroshima.

The question now is: Are we going to remain exposed to the threat posed by nuclear weapons even after the turn of century, or avoid such perspective and decisively turn to eliminate nuclear weapons?"

M M Lawrence and V B Cherian, Secretaries, led 8-member CITU delegation to the conference. M M Lawrence addressed the conference (see box) and pledged CITU's cooperation and solidarity with the world wide movement for elimination of nuclear weapons.

## DECLARATION

The meeting adopted a declaration calling on world peoples for realising a nuclear weapon-free 21st century. The declaration titled "**For a Nuclear Weapon-Free 21st Century to be Accomplished by the Movement of the World's Peoples**" called on the people of the whole world to stand up together for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

*Excerpts from the Declaration:*

The nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, whatever reasons these two governments may find, clearly run counter to solving conflicts by peaceful means, and aggravate the nuclear arms race and increase a danger of nuclear war. At the same time, contradiction and bankruptcy of the policy of the nuclear weapons states to condemn the nuclear arms development of other states while trying to maintain their privilege of development and possession of nuclear weapons, have now become clearer than ever. Unless we change the situation to abolish nuclear weapons immediately, we cannot fundamentally remove the present danger we face today. Voices of the people calling for that effort are now rapidly growing and expanding throughout the world. Still today, the world is loaded with over 30,000 nuclear weapons, which continue to threaten the survival of humankind and the future of our planet. We must not allow this situation to go on in the 21st century.

Now that it has become a reality that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime, which assures the nuclear monopoly of the 5 states - USA, Russia, UK, France and China, cannot prevent nuclear proliferation or remove the danger of nuclear weapons. Given the principle of equality of nations

and democratic international relations, the world must now free itself from the bankrupt nuclear monopoly system and make a new step forward.

In achieving this historic task, the responsibility of the nuclear weapon states is heavy, especially that of the US, whose deterrence policy has been the biggest obstacle.

The US has repeated subcritical nuclear tests and promoted the development and deployment of new nuclear weapons. Last autumn, it also decided on the new nuclear policy, which included the possible use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. And it has taken dangerous military actions against Iraq, with the use of nuclear arms as one of its options. The policy to allow the use of nuclear arms for countering nuclear proliferation is totally unacceptable. We believe that such dangerous policy of nuclear monopoly is the decisive factor of the inherent contradiction of the NPT regime that has worked to perpetuate the inequality and unfairness between the nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear states, and is providing an incentive for acquisition of nuclear arms.

The World Conference against A&H Bombs, since its very beginning, has upheld the tasks of preventing nuclear war, abolishing nuclear weapons and extending relief to the Hibakusha in solidarity with them. With these goals, the Conference has helped enhance world people's opinion, set out the basic direction for building a broad-based movement and cooperation, and promoted the activities all over the world. Being confident in the growing voices to support this direction, **we call on the world to take the following actions to develop a bright perspective for the 21st century:**

**We urge the governments of nuclear weapons states to decide without delay to eliminate nuclear weapons and to start international consultation to eliminate them within a fixed time-frame. We will demand that the nuclear weapons states immediately stop all kind of nuclear tests and nuclear weapon development, and declare non-use of nuclear arms against non-nuclear states. We must remove foreign military bases and troops and ban bringing-in of nuclear weapons. Let us create, expand and strengthen nuclear weapon-free zones and increase nuclear weapon**

**free declared municipalities. We demand the dissolution of military alliances that stand in the way for a nuclear-free world. Let us strengthen solidarity with the movements for - peaceful solution of conflicts; national sovereignty and self-determination; military expenditure reduction; environmental protection carried out in the world.**

The 300 attendants, including 63 delegates of three international organisations and 38 organisations from 21 countries, all stood up and applauded to express their support to the declaration and their determination to develop public opinion and the movement all over the world for the elimination of nuclear weapons, now that the logic of the nuclear monopoly system of the nuclear-weapon states has become bankrupt.

### **WE LONG FOR PEACE!**

We are gathered here from various parts of the world—from places far and near—of many races and of diverse cultures, with just one single purpose: to make this planet free of nuclear weapons.

I come from India where the Government led by a Hindu chauvinistic party has the grandiose ambition to acquire the status of a nuclear weapon state. But what the people in India long for is peace and improvement in their living conditions.

There is growing mass poverty and inequality that exists in distribution of income and wealth in India. There is a pressing need to address these problems. But the Government is squandering away resources for weaponisation. The people and the workers in India, including the CITU which I represent, are working towards acceptance and pursuit of policies to bring peace and betterment in the standard of living of the people.

History has taught us many lessons. One of them is that wars can no longer be won by the quality and quantity of weapons. In a nuclear war there never will be a winner.

The real guarantee for peace is non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament, applicable equally and uniformly to all countries of the world. Let us resolve together to work to achieve this goal.

( M M Lawrence, speaking at the conference )

# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO WORKERS: W.B. SCHEME

*[The Left Front Government of West Bengal under the Chief Ministership of Jyoti Basu, Vice President of CITU, has formulated a scheme to render financial assistance to the workers who suffer on account of lockout or suspension of operation or closure. We are publishing hereunder the full text of the Scheme For Financial Assistance To The Workers In-Locked Out Industrial Units (FAWLOI).-Editor]*

In the sphere of closed industries, the main policy thrust is on re-opening of the closed units. A provision of Rs.50 crores has been earmarked in this year's State Budget to facilitate such re-opening of Closed Units. Along with this thrust, a separate provision of Rs.50 crores has been earmarked with the objective of providing some financial relief to the workers who are out of employment due to alleged closure of industrial units in West Bengal. The financial assistance to the workers is intended not to compensate for the loss of income but to extend some relief to the workers affected by prolonged lockout/suspension of work/alleged closure of industrial units in West Bengal. The eligible workers would be entitled to a cash assistance of Rs.500/- per month with effect from 01.04.98. The salient features of the scheme are as follows:-

## **1. Industrial Units to be Covered under the Scheme:**

- (i) The industrial units should be factories and plantations registered under the Factories Act, 1948 and the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 in West Bengal;
  - (ii) The industrial units have been under lockout/suspension of work/alleged closure for more than one year on 31.03.98;
  - (iii) Such units have been in operation for more than five years prior to the incident of such closure;
  - (iv) Though closure order/winding up order/liquidation order has been passed in respect of a unit by BIFR/Court/Tribunal, the same has been challenged in the appropriate legal forum;
  - (v) State Government is the appropriate Government for the units under the Industrial Disputes Act;
  - (vi) The unit is one which has had regular production activities and not a seasonal one.
- (Note: If a unit has branches in different states, workers in West Bengal only will get the benefit).

## **2. Screening Committee for Selection of Units and Procedure thereof:**

The State Government will constitute a committee

for selection of the industrial establishments that are to be covered under the scheme. The committee will also advise the Government from time to time in the implementation of the scheme. The Committee will consist of the following members:

- (i) Labour Secretary - Chairman
- (ii) Secretary, I.R. & P.U. Department - Member
- (iii) Special Secretary, Finance Department - Member
- (iv)-(ix) Six representatives of Central Trade Unions - Members
- (x) Labour Commissioner - Member
- (xi) Chief Inspector of Factories - Member
- (xii) Director, ESI (MB) Scheme - Member
- (xiii) Joint Secretary, Labour - Member-Secretary.

While the Committee will examine the records of the Labour Directorate and the Factories Directorate to identify the units, registered Trade Unions may bring to the notice of the Committee the names of such units which they feel should be included and these will be considered in the light of the conditions of eligibility on the basis of available records and necessary enquiries.

## **3. Eligibility of Workers:**

On approval of the industrial unit(s) by the Committee, the Labour Directorate will issue notice(s) to this effect. On issue of the notice(s) by the directorate, the workers of the approved unit(s) become eligible to be covered under the scheme.

3.1. In order to get the benefit under the scheme a worker in the unit has to satisfy the following conditions:-

- (i) The worker should be a regular workman on the rolls of the factory, plantation, other administrative offices of the company who has lost wages due to the lock-out/suspension of work/alleged closure;
- (ii) The worker should have worked in the unit continuously at least for a period of one year prior to the alleged closure;
- (iii) The worker should be a workman under the

Industrial Disputes Act;

(iv) He has not retired/resigned/voluntarily retired/accepted a scheme of separation and has not accepted terminal dues pursuant thereof;

(v) The worker has not crossed 58 years of age on the date of application

3.2 The benefit will not be provided to workers in following cases:-

(i) If the worker is in employment in the same factory even if the unit is closed; (e.g. Security staff, maintenance staff);

(ii) If the worker has retired/resigned/voluntarily retired and has accepted terminal dues or has been dismissed/terminated as per law;

(iii) If the worker is gainfully employed;

(iv) If the worker has taken pension from the Provident Fund Organisation on attaining eligibility or is in receipt of commuted pension.

3.3. Benefit under the scheme would be discontinued in the occurrence of any of the following events:-

(i) On the Unit re-commencing its operations;

(ii) On the death of the worker;

(iii) On the worker attaining the age of 58;

(iv) On the worker accepting the terminal benefits under any offer of separation, retirement or VRS;

(v) On the worker accepting pension or commuted pension from the PF authorities;

(vi) On any of the conditions of ineligibility becoming applicable.

#### **4. Applications for Benefits and Preparation of Lists of Beneficiaries:**

1. Application: On approval of coverage of a unit under the scheme by the Screening Committee, the Labour Directorate will issue notice(s) inviting applications from eligible workmen of the unit. The notice will mention the place, and the period during which such applications will be received. The eligible workmen would be required to submit individual applications in the prescribed proforma to the designated officers. (who normally would be the ALCs/DLCs of the districts/regions), along with an undertaking on the fulfillment of eligibility criteria.

2. Lists: On receipt of the applications, the Labour Directorate will make necessary inquiries to verify eligibility of the workers. In doing so, the officer has the right to verify the claim with the records of the PF authorities, ESI Corporation etc. and also

conduct local inquiries. He could also take evidence of the concerned trade union leaders in the factory or others to determine the genuineness of the claim.

After verifications, a consolidated list in respect of all workers in a particular factory will be prepared by the Labour Directorate. The list of beneficiaries shall include the names and addresses of the applicant, identification number and the name of the bank and branch where the account is to be opened. A copy of the list will be sent to the branch of the bank where the accounts are to be opened.

#### **5. Method of Payment:**

(i) The eligible workers would be entitled to the cash benefit of Rs.500/- per month. The benefit will be provided unless it is terminated by the application on any of the events of disqualifications outlined in the scheme or any modification by Government Order.

(ii) The workers will be paid quarterly and the payment will be made through banks, where the workers would be asked to open accounts.

(iii) This would imply that all the workers whose names appear in the lists approved by the Labour Commissioner would be required to open bank accounts in specified branches of nationalised banks.

(iv) For the sake of convenience, all workers of a factory would be asked to open accounts in the same branch.

(v) The Government would sanction an amount of Rs.100/- initially as additional amount to the workers to enable them to open the accounts in view of their indigent condition that would be directly sent to the banks along with the lists.

(vi) The amounts will be remitted to the concerned bank branches by means of a cheque for the consolidated amount, along with an authenticated list (in duplicate) and amounts to be credited. The bank, on crediting the amounts to individual accounts will return one copy that would serve as the acquittance roll.

#### **6. Management of the Scheme:**

A cell will operate in the Labour directorate with suitable officers, supporting staff and other facilities to administer the scheme. The State Government will, from time to time, review the working of this scheme and take such steps as considered necessary.

## WB: ALL TUs DEMAND REPEAL OF BONUS CEILING

In a joint statement issued on 19.8.98, the CITU, AITUC, UTUC, AICCTU, HMS, INTUC, UTUC(LS), TUCC, Mercantile Federation and AIREC-SE Railway in West Bengal called for observance of 2.9.98 as Bonus Demand Day. The central Trade Unions and federations have urged the Government of India to amend the Payment of Bonus Act, by promulgating an ordinance, repealing all the ceilings. The statement noted that:

"The Payment of Bonus Act as amended upto date covers employees getting wages/salary upto Rs 3,500/- per month. During

this period, due to rise in prices, the rate of DA has increased and a large section of workers and employees have crossed the limit of Rs 3,500/-. They will be deprived of Bonus.

Moreover, this Bonus Act imposes two more restrictions to the advantage of employers, viz. (i) ceiling on income in calculating bonus and (ii) maximum rate of Bonus payable. Though there has been some increase in DA, the real wages of the workers have gone down and we do not find any justification of imposing various ceilings under the payment of Bonus Act.

Very recently the Govt of India raised the coverage ceilings under the ESI, PF and Gratuity Act. The wage ceiling for payment of Bonus to Govt, Railway, Port, Post and Telecom employees have already been raised."

Pointing to the urgent need for raising coverage and other limits provided in the Bonus Act, in view of the bonus being paid before the Puja festival in West Bengal, the TUs have decided to build a united campaign in this regard. On 2.9.98 badge wearing, holding of united meetings and demonstrations and sending of telegrams to the Union Labour Minister have been planned.

## MUMBAI TU CONVENTION PLANS STATE WIDE ACTION

A joint trade union convention held in Mumbai on 26th July 1998 has given a stirring call for working class action throughout Maharashtra in the coming weeks, against the anti-people, anti-working class and anti-peasantry policies of the Vajpayee government at the Centre and the Shiv Sena-BJP State government. Apart from area-wise and locality-wise meetings and demonstrations, the action plan includes districtwise conventions to be organised in the next two months. The anti-privatisation, anti-price rise and anti-unemployment convention was held at Podar College hall at Matunga in Central Mumbai, a

thickly populated middle class area.

The State of Maharashtra which has been in the forefront of national movement for freedom is, today, unfortunately in the grip of communal forces. In the midst of such forces, the working class is today facing and fighting the biggest challenges to its unity. The Hindutva forces, blessed and headed by the Shiv Sena-BJP coalition government, are trying to eliminate the working class existence by dismantling the industry itself.

It must not be forgotten here that the Sena-BJP coalition came to power in Maharashtra by dislodging the rebellion stricken

Congress party, with their Hindutva slogan, backed by tall and sugar coated promises to the people. Their electoral pledges included amongst others: jobs to the sons of the soil; 40 lakh free houses to the slum dwellers; re-orientation of Swadeshi movement; reopening of closed mills and factories; rehabilitation of sick industries and strengthening of industrial base; reduction of prices of essential commodities; and the like.

In contrast to the electoral pledges of more industries and jobs to the people, what the State is witnessing today is indiscriminate closure of more and more mills and factories. Amongst the 4.5

lakh closed and sick industries in the country, more than 30,000 units are from the State of Maharashtra. The owners of these industries have already swindled more than Rs 45,000 crores from nationalised banks with no hope of recovery. Astonishingly, 34% of this huge amount, i.e., more than Rs 15,000 crore, are in the pockets of the industrial employers of Maharashtra. In addition, numerous industrial establishments are allowed to be clandestinely shifted from Mumbai-Thane industrial belts, with institutional support, by throwing out the employees. The land belonging to the closed mills and factories are being allowed to be sold to the builder lobby to bring out residential sky-scrapers with three star, five star and super star facilities. These are coming up with anti-social and under-world money, adding to the parallel economy. The anti-social

activities in cities and towns in Maharashtra— looting of properties, extortion, robberies and dacoities—are on the rise. Killings and murders of well known personalities from music and film world, business and traders community and professionals, and attacks on and threats to media have all become a regular practice. The killers of well known trade union leader Datta Samant are yet to be nabbed. Widespread scarcity has hit rural areas of Maharashtra. The prices have become so prohibitive that it has become practically impossible for the common men to buy anything from the market. The public distribution system has come to a standstill, particularly in rural Maharashtra.

The Sena-BJP government is now set to handover the Public Health System in the State, in parts, to the private capital. Move is already afoot to hand over the city's

famous KEM Hospital, GT Hospital, JJ Hospital, Cooper Hospital and Tilak Hospital to private agencies with largescale contract system. This will deprive on an average 18 lakh poor people of their subsidised and concessional medical facilities in these public hospitals. Ever increasing contracting out of jobs in industries like Airports, Port and Dock, Railways, Road Transport, hospitals, educational institutions, with no legal protection to the workers employed is another feature, very rampant in Maharashtra.

It was in this backdrop, the 26th July Mumbai convention was attended by more than 1000 representatives of different organisations.

The constituents of the action committee also took a massive morcha on 18th August from the August Kranti Maidan to the Governor's house in Mumbai.

*(Report from P R Krishnan)*

## JABALPUR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS: INSURANCE EMPLOYEES ORGANISE RELIEF

The nightmare of the devastating earthquake which caused havoc to the inhabitants of Jabalpur and its adjacent areas in the early morning of 22nd May, 1997, is still fresh in the memories of the people of the area. When the people went to sleep in the dreadful night, nobody knew the next dawn would bring unprecedented and unspeakable miseries and hardships for them.

They did not know that many amongst them would not be able to see the light of the next morning, thousands would be seriously wounded and scores of people would be rendered homeless within few seconds.

Keeping in line with its tradition, the All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) rose to the occasion and called upon its units for generous relief for the victims of the earthquake.

The AIIEA raised a total amount of Rs 3,60,992 and constituted a relief committee with K N Tiwari as convener. After a survey of the vast and unapproachable areas affected by the earthquake, the committee located a small village 'Budhari Dhangawa' off from Jabalpur, mostly inhabited by tribals and scheduled caste population, living below the poverty line. It also identified the victims to be given financial

assistance.

At a function organised at 'Budhari Dhangawa' on 25.4.1998, the concerned villagers were given the first instalment of the relief amount in cash. The amount was handed over, by B Sanyal, General Secretary, Central Zone, AIIEA. In addition to this, all the students of the lone Primary School in the village numbering

179 were given school bags, books, complete compass boxes, water bags and toffee packets.

After about one month from the disbursement of the first instalment, the progress of the reconstruction work was assessed by the committee and the 2nd instalment was released on 22.5.98. Assessment of the

progress of the work was again undertaken and the 3rd instalment was released on 21.6.98. The fourth and final instalment would be released very soon subject to the satisfactory utilisation of the 3rd instalment. A total sum of Rs 2,25,000/- has been utilised so far for the purpose of relief of the earthquake victims.

### BIHAR STATE CITU MEETS

A meeting of the Bihar State Committee of CITU was held at Bokaro Steel City on 29-30 June 1998. Twenty five members participated in the meeting which was presided over by Chandi Prasad, President, Bihar CITU.

J.S. Majumdar, General Secretary, submitted a report on the activities of the State Committee after the last meeting.

On behalf of CITU Centre, Samar

Mukherjee, Vice-President and M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary participated in the meeting and guided its deliberations.

The meeting prepared a Charter of Demands of the workers in the State and decided to organise a massive campaign.

The meeting also planned activities among the unorganised sector and decided to constitute 9 District Committees.

A special meeting of the comrades

working in Coal industry was held to work unitedly all over Bihar so that the struggles of workers are better co-ordinated.

A joint meeting of the Bokaro Steel Mazdoor Union and Progress Front Union was held to work jointly in the Steel industry. A rally was held at the gate of Bokaro Steel Plant which was addressed among others by M.K. Pandhe, Samar Mukherjee and A.K. Roy.

### TAMIL NADU: CAMPAIGNS AND STRUGGLES

Tamil Nadu State Committee of CITU, at its two-day meeting at Chennai on 22nd and 23rd July, has called for extensive struggles against economic policies, industrial sickness and closures. It has also planned for state wide struggles in the unorganised sectors.

J. Hemachandran chaired the meeting.

Industrial sickness, lay off and closures are increasing in the state. In Chennai and surrounding areas, major industrial units like Ashok

Leyland, Ennore foundaries, KCP Ltd and in Coimbatore Lakshmi Machine Works are working only 2 or 3 days per week. More than 500 ancillary and spare parts manufacturing units of small and medium size are closed in Ambattur industrial estate and in the Madras Export Processing Zone. Almost the same situation is prevailing in Coimbatore, Hosur and other engineering centres. Thousands of contract, casual and trainee workers have been thrown out of jobs.

In the textile sector, more than 300 big, medium and small mills are closed. In many mills, wages are not paid regularly. Thousands of workers have been laid off. Other sectors in textile, like handlooms, powerlooms and hosiery, are also facing critical situation with only a small portion of the capacity being utilised.

The State Committee has decided to conduct state wide campaign on these issues immediately. It also decided to intensify the campaign among the workers in unorganised

sector. The state Government had declared that a Welfare Board for unorganised workers will be formed in the State. This decision was taken after two tripartite committees went into the problems faced by the unorganised workers and submitted a detailed report to the Government.

State Committee decided to conduct explanatory campaigns in all districts and then organise district level rallies on 9.9.98 as a prelude to a state level strike in the unorganised sector.

State electricity workers have concluded a wage settlement, following sustained campaign and struggles conducted by the Central

Organisation of Tamilnadu Electricity Employees (CITU). Workers in the State Transport Undertakings are also in the midst of struggle, on their charter of demands.

State level conferences of construction workers and head load workers were held recently in Nagercoil and Erode.

*(Report from A.K. Padmanabhan)*

### KARNATAKA CITU STEERS NPMO ACTIVITIES

**K**arnataka State Committee of CITU has taken the initiative to form a state-level coordination committee of the National Platform of Mass Organisations to carry on joint campaigns and struggles. Three meetings have been held by July end. Four regional 'Jathas' are planned to cover the entire State of Karnataka, culminating in a mass

rally at the capital city of Bangalore. A state-level convention under the aegis of NPMO-Karnataka is slated to be held on 1.9.1998.

The Karnataka State Committee of CITU met in Bangalore on 26.7.1998. W.R. Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU attended the meeting which was chaired by S. Suryanarayana Rao, President,

State CITU. The meeting chalked out plans to implement the action programmes to be launched by the CPSTU and NPMO.

Sector-wise and mass-front wise joint committees have been constituted to attend to preparation of campaign materials and work out detailed campaign programmes.

*(Report from V.J.K. Nair)*

### WEST BENGAL: PSU WORKERS' CONVENTION

**S**tate Convention of CPSU Unions was held at Calcutta on 4.8.1998. More than 500 workmen from different districts and industries like Construction, Steel, Textile, Engineering, Jute, Chemical and Pharmaceutical etc. participated.

The convention was presided over by Kali Ghosh. The main resolution was moved by Debanjan Chakrabarti.

Chittabrata Mazumdar, General Secretary, CITU W.B. State Committee, inaugurating the convention pointed out how our national economy is slowly

loosing its self-reliance. The MNCs are taking grip of our economy by inroading in different industrial sectors. The open door economy since 1991 has dragged our economy as a whole into a deep crisis.

Niren Ghosh, President, W.B. CITU, deplored the central government's step-motherly attitude towards West Bengal and called for intensified fight to defeat these anti-people policies of the central government.

The Convention decided to implement the action calls planned to be issued by the

CPSTU and NPMO conventions, throughout the State, preceded by a massive joint campaign.

*(Report from Debanjan Chakravarty)*

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## POSTAL WORKERS' STRIKE GAINS

The 8 days of strike by postal workers under the banner of Joint Council of Action commenced on 9.7.98 and concluded successfully on 16.7.1998, with the Union Minister for Communications, Sushma Swaraj, assuring earliest settlement of the demands of striking employees. The highlights of the assurance and the follow up measures taken subsequent to the strike are as under:

1. No victimisation. No disciplinary action will be taken against the striking postal workers.
2. Strike period wage will be given to Departmental and Extra Departmental employees.
3. Fresh Cabinet memo will be prepared and forwarded to the

Cabinet on the particular demands of pay scales, Status, Statutory Gratuity, Pension and leave and other demands of Extra Departmental Employees.

4. Bonus formula is yet to be changed. The grant of additional number of days for the year 1995-96 ad 1996-97 has been forwarded to the Cabinet for approval.

5. On upgradation of pay scales of Postmen/Mail Guards, the Directorate has issued order on 3rd July, 1998 upgrading pay scale to Rs.3050-4590 at par with CPO Constables and the date of effect is from 10.10.97. It has been demanded that the upgraded pay scale be notionally fixed up from 1.1.96 instead of 10.10.97. The Directorate has taken note of it and assured modification.

6. Mutually it has been agreed that

the Group 'D' pay scale should be upgraded to Rs.2750/- to 4400 considering the nature of job performed by Group 'D' officials and who should not be bracketed with other Group 'D' of Central Services.

7. A Committee has been formed with 3 representatives from two Federations, two from NFPE and one from FNPO. Other members of the Committee are from the official side headed by Member(P) as Chairman of the Committee. The terms of reference of the Committee is to consider upgradation of pay as envisaged in the Charter of Demands. This Committee will submit its report to the Government by 31.8.98.

*(Courtesy Postal Life)*

## UNIONS URGE REVIVAL OF CIWTC

The Trade Unions affiliated to CITU, HMS, INTUC, AITUC and Officers' Associations functioning in the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation Ltd.(CIWTC), a Govt. of India Undertaking, jointly formed a 'Confederation' with Hemlal Chatterjee (CITU) as Chairman and Hiranmoy Chakraborty and Nanda Sen (CITU) as Joint Convenors.

The representatives of the Trade Unions and Officers' Associations met the Surface Transport Minister at New Delhi on 22.7.98, accompanied by the Members of

Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha which included Lakshman Seth, Anil Basu, Dipankar Mukherjee, Md. Salim, Tarit Tofdar and Samik Lahiri.

The Delegation raised the issues relating to (i) need for appointment of a full time Chairman and Managing Director (ii) ensuring proper administration (iii) modernisation of Rajabagan Dockyard and replacement of old vessels and infrastucture (iv) Payment of working capital (v) Financial support by the Government of India for payment of salaries and wages and

implementation of wage settlements and payment of statutory dues (vi) Cargo support and (vii) various other suggestions for improvement of the Company. The Surface Transport Minister, Thambi Durai, appreciated the views expressed by the Members and assured that steps will be taken to initiate meaningful discussions with the trade unions very soon.

*(Report from Hiranmoy Chakraborty)*

Consumer Price Index figures for June'98 have not been received from Labour Bureau, Shimla, till the time of going to the press, and hence not published in this issue - Editor

## REPORTS & EVENTS

### BANK STRIKE: 18.9.1998

The United Forum of Bank Unions has called for a countrywide strike by bank employees and officers on 18.9.1998, to demand comprehensive industry level wage settlement.

The talks between the unions of officers (on 11.8.1998) and of workmen (on 12.8.98) with the Indian Bank's Association (IBA)

were deadlocked. The IBA maintained that industry level settlement would be restricted to Basic Pay and Dearness Allowance only. Other components of wage packet and service conditions would be left for bank wise negotiations and settlement. This is in line with the Narasimham Committee recommendation to ultimately do

away with the industry-level wage settlement and usher in bank wise settlements, thus giving a go by to decades old practice in Indian banking.

The UFBU comprising nine all India unions of Bank officers and workmen, will meet after the 18th September strike to decide further action programmes.

### CENTRAL TUs OPPOSE TATA AIRLINES PROPOSAL

The AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS and INTUC, in a joint communication addressed to the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, voiced opposition to the TATA-Singapore Airlines proposal. The joint letter dated 17th August, 1998, reads:

"We are extremely concerned to note that the Government of India has referred the proposal of Tata-Singapore airlines to the Foreign Investment Promotion Board for consideration.

The proposal clearly envisages 40 per cent equity participation of Singapore Airlines which is trying

to capture the Indian Civil Aviation market through the Tatas. If this proposal is accepted by the Government of India, it will spell disaster on the public sector civil aviation industry.

Despite Tata Airlines having failed to implement the guidelines issued by the government, the Civil Aviation Ministry is showing a sympathetic consideration to the proposal which clearly hints behind-the-scene talks between the Tatas and Civil Aviation Ministry. There are rumours about some clandestine deal with Tatas which is against

the interests of the country and public sector airlines.

We, therefore, strongly urge you to intervene and outright reject the proposal of Tata-Singapore airlines so that Indian Industry's interests are properly protected.

We hope you will give serious consideration to the united opinion expressed by the Indian Trade Union movement on this question."

The letter was signed by K.L. Mahendra (AITUC), R. Venugopal (BMS), M.K. Pandhe (CITU), R.A. Mital (HMS) and C.D. Sinha (INTUC).

### GOVT. NOTIFICATIONS

The Government of India, by a notification dated 17.7.98, has added persons employed as cooks in hotels and restaurants using power, liquefied petroleum gas or any other mechanical device in the process of cooking to the Schedule II of the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923. This notification will enable these

workmen to get the benefits of Workmen's Compensation Act, in case of accidents etc.

By yet another notification dated 21.7.98, the Government of India has brought into force the amended ceiling of Rs.3.5 lakhs under payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, with effect from 24.9.97.

In another notification dated

22.7.98, the Government of India have announced that the amendments to the Employees Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, revising the rate of contribution to PF from 10% to 12% and from 8.33% to 10%, have since come into force from 22.9.97.

### COORDINATED STRUGGLE AT CALCUTTA AIRPORT

The Calcutta Airport Coordination Committee, comprising all workers employed in and around Calcutta Airport, is spearheading a joint campaign and agitation against the anti-people

economic policies of the Government of India. A Joint rally to protest against nuclear weaponisation was held on 6.8.1998. The committee has opposed disinvestment in Indian

Airlines, privatisation moves and disparity in wages and service conditions of private airlines workers.

*(Report from S. Sen)*

### HIMACHAL: CONVENTION AT PARWANOO

A convention of Parwanoo industrial area workers was held on 9.8.98 by CITU jointly with several other unions. Kashmir Singh Thakur, General

Secretary, HP CITU inaugurated. Over 200 workers participated. Condemning the anti-worker/repressive policies of HP Govt and connivance of Labour Deptt with

the employers, the convention demanded unfettered trade union rights, implementation of labour laws etc. A massive rally of workers is planned on 1.9.98.

### MP: CITU OPPOSES BALCO PRIVATISATION

The Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO), a 'Mini rathna' PSU, is to be handed over to private hands. BALCO has achieved 95% capacity utilisation with a production of over 2 lakh

tonnes of aluminium and turn over of Rs 8000 crores every year. BALCO obtained Rs 150 crores soft loan (in US \$) for a new rolling mills which has commenced operation. In a

statement, S Kumar, and Badal Saroj, President and General Secretary, CITU Mahdy Pradesh, have denounced the move to privatise BALCO.

*(Report from Vinay Dwivedi)*

### WORKERS FIGHT SALE OF C C I UNITS

At the call of the "Save CCI Committee," hundreds of workers of the Cement Corporation of India from Charki Dadri (Haryana), Akaltara, Mandhar (MP), Delhi Head Office and Graining Unit, Kurukunda (Karnataka), Bokajan (Assam) and Nayagoa demonstrated before Parliament on 10-8-98 demanding:

(i) Revival of CCI (ii) Not to sell its units to private sector (iii) make the CCI viable taking necessary steps for modernisation. They were addressed by H Mahadevan (AITUC), Keshav Bhai Thacker (BMS) Kanai

Banerjee (CITU) Vireswar Tiagi (HMS) and Nanjappan Robin Datta (INTUC) and others.

Later, a delegation met Sikandar Bakht, Minister of Industries and explained as under:

The workers are opposed to the hiving of Charki Dadri Akaltara and Mandhar units as these can be viably run. The old Draft Rehabilitation Scheme needed many modifications and alternations. It is imperative to effect changes in the top management and in the marketing policy, etc, besides weeding out corrupt practices at all levels. Conversion of wet process

to dry process in Mandhar and Akaltara factories will make them fully viable.

The Minister assured the delegation that he will get the matter examined.

A team of leaders from AITUC, BMS and CITU visited the Charki Dadri plant of the CCI on 14.8.98 which has been kept idle for two years.

The team found numerous evidences of huge wastage and inefficiency of the management responsible for the loss.

The team also addressed a largely attended meeting of the workers.

## ALL INDIA CONVENTION OF ANGANWADI WORKERS

The All India Convention of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers held on 20.8.98 at Delhi has decided to join the general strike on 11th December 1998 as per decision of NPMO.

The convention was attended by about 250 workers and helpers from six constituents organisations of Samyukta Sangharsh Samity, i.e., CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMKP, NFTU and Lal Nishan.

The convention expressed their anguish over the policies of the

govt and the move to privatise the projects. Recently the Govt of Punjab decided to close 51 projects throwing 10,000 women into the streets.

The convention was greeted by P K Ganguly, (CITU), K L Mahendra, (AITUC), R A Mittal (HMS), B K Prasad (NFTU) B V Krishna Rao (HMKP)

The convention formulated programme of agitation on the basis of the long pending demands of Regularisation as govt employees, statutory

minimum wages, and against privatisation or handing over the project to state Govt.

The programmes of action:

1. To join general strike on Dec 11 enmasse
2. To observe Oct 2 as Demands and Action day at district and state level.
3. All workers and helpers to send demand post cards to central govt
4. March to Parliament during the budget session
5. All State units of every union to send telegrams on Aug 27th to the Chief Minister of Punjab against closure of projects.

## CITU CONDEMNS DENIAL OF I.R TO SICK PSUs

The Deptt of Public Enterprise (Government of India) has issued circular on 19.8.98 on interim relief to the employees of Central Public Sector Units @ 10% of basic pay subject to a minimum of Rs 280/-.

But the said office memorandum

also imposed ban on interim relief to the employees of sick PSUs in BIFR and other loss making enterprises.

In a statement released on 22.8.98, CITU denounced the said order of the Govt of India. The concerned PSUs have been

rendered sick due to faulty policy of the Govt and the employees should not be penalised for no fault of theirs. CITU urged upon Govt of India to withdraw such embargo for payment of IR to the employees of sick PSUs and also to take expeditious steps for revival of sick PSUs.

## MASSIVE STRIKE BY INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AT DELHI

At the call of CITU (Delhi State) over 20 lakh industrial workers of Delhi, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar (Noida) and Faridabad observed a complete strike on 21st August 98, to protest against the anti-worker policies of the Government and to press for the 8 point charter of demands against the price-rise and for raising minimum wage to Rs. 3500 and DA to Rs. 2 perpoint, end to closure of factories and stoppage of demolition of jhuggi

clusters etc.

In Delhi, complete strike was observed in Najafgarh, Nangloi, mangolpuri, Naraina, Wazirpur, GTK road Nirankari, Samaipur Badli, Jhilmil, Friends Colony, Patparganj, Okhla etc. In Ghaziabad, Sector 4, Meerut Road, Buland Shaher Road etc. observed total strike. In Noida industrial area, the strike was complete in Phase I and near total in Phase II and III. In Faridabad too the strike had extensive impact

including DLF area and all industrial sectors.

Braving the attacks by hired gangsters of the employers and terror created by local police and administration in many areas like Samaipur Badli, Gaziabad Sector-IV, Faridabad etc, workers responded magnificiently to the strike call.

The CITU congratulated the workers of Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida and Faridabad for their massive participation in the strike.

## SOUTH KOREA: WORKERS' RESISTANCE

South Korean Workers Rise to Challenge IMF Restructuring. The words "flexibility" and structural adjustment have become the magic words of cure for Korean financial crisis. For the Korean government and employers—educated by the IMF regime—these words mean one thing: "mass dismissal." These words have meant devastation for the workers of South Korea.

The closure of five banks, as stipulated by the IMF conditions, which sent 10,000 employees packing, the government issuing warrant for the arrest of the President of the Korean Metal Workers Federation, **Dan Byung-ho**, massive downsizing and wage reduction undertaken in a mutual understanding between the employers and the government

have led to cries of pain and agony by the workers ringing throughout South Korea.

On July 15th around 2 PM, over 2,000 terminated workers were joined by more than 5,000 fellow workers and their supporters from metal industries to public, social service, and bank sectors.

The mass rally at the Jongmyo Park, downtown Seoul, warmed up with solidarity. The rally, a part of the strike programme, was one of the highlights of the second day of the general strike. The first day of the strike was led by 65,000 metal workers, including over 30,000 members of the Hyundai Motors Workers' Union. They were joined by more than 100,000 public sector and bank employees, including the Korea Telecom Trade Union and the

workers of the three closed banks. The would be unemployed—college students from different universities—rounded off the tail of the march.

From Indonesia to Korea, Asian workers and the general citizens are actively resisting the IMF regime and their government's anti-labour policies. They demand an effective instrument to control the sinister—even conspiratorial—activities of the inhuman capital, which caused the local currencies to tumble, precipitating the crisis, intent on deepening it even further.

This is a report from the (South) Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

Will our "reformers" addicted to IMF recipe will learn any lesson?

## "REVERSE" MIGRATION IN ASIA

Bangkok - When the police pounded on her door, **Tooch** leapt out of bed, terrified. She grabbed her purse and pulled on whatever clothes she could before being bundled on to a bus headed first for Bangkok's immigration detention centre, and then for the Cambodian border.

"I didn't want to come to Thailand," said the 35-year old factory worker, "but I couldn't find work at home."

**Tooch** and her sister **Sinai** were both swept up in a raid against illegal workers by Thai immigration officials.

Like millions of illegal migrants

in Southeast Asia, they are feeling the crush of tight times as economies shudder under the weight of financial turmoil. Once the darlings of labour-hungry tiger economies, illegal workers are increasingly unwelcome. Immigration policies are getting tougher as national unemployment rises, and undocumented men and women are being sent home by the thousands in reaction to battered budgets.

### Thailand and Indonesia

Thailand and Indonesia have been shaken hardest. In Thailand growth plunged from 6 per cent in 1996 to almost zero in 1997,

with prospects for 1998 even grimmer. Indonesia looks even worse. From 8 per cent growth well into the latter part of last year, experts foresee an absolute decline of 5 percent for late 1998, a prediction made before Jakarta's economic crisis turned violent.

### Illegal immigrants

Earlier this year, the Thai labour minister announced 300,000 illegal foreign workers would have to leave by the end of June 1998 to make way for some of the nearly two million unemployed Thai nationals, a dramatic turnaround in a country boasting virtually full employment in pre-

crisis days.

Malaysia, the other Southeast Asian country which has cracked down severely on illegal workers, plans to deport 10,000 illegal foreigners each month in 1998. Of its 2.2 million foreigners, about a million are undocumented Indonesians.

## Women hard hit

Particularly hard hit by the clampdown are women. In the 1970s they accounted for about 15 per cent of the Asian migrant workforce. Today, half of those seeking work abroad are women. They are concentrated in the most precarious forms of wage

employment and are thus more vulnerable to lay-offs. Women are also more widely dispersed, making it harder for organised labour to reach them.

Activist groups worry clandestine and illegal migration will grow as border controls get tighter, worsening conditions for remaining workers and leading to greater abuse. In Thailand, there are fears that prostitution and bonded labour could rise as more families sink below the poverty line and try to make ends meet by sending their daughters away to work.

## "3-D" Jobs and "SALEPs"

However politically charged the issue of illegal migration, Southeast Asia still suffers from labour shortages, especially in sectors known either as "3D" jobs—dirty, dangerous, demanding, or as **SALEPs jobs that are Shunned by All Except the very Poor.**

Despite high unemployment at home, many nationals continue to turn down these undesirable jobs. Employers may prefer illegal workers, who they see as "obedient" and willing to do more work for less money.

*(Courtesy: World of Work, The Magazine of ILO)*

## CITU GREETES GFTUK

On the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of the Korean People's victory in the liberation war, the CITU pledged its total solidarity with the Korean People in their continued struggle to achieve peace in the Korean Peninsula and the Korean reunification.

In a message dated 23.7.98 to the

General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea (GFTUK), M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU noted: "It is, indeed, high time that the notorious concrete wall dividing the North and South Korea is dismantled. South Korean authorities should put an end to the repressive laws against the popular demonstrations for the

reunification of the country and to prevent people to people contacts. Moreover, in order to reduce tensions and pave the way to the independent and peaceful reunification of the country, the United States should withdraw its troops from South Korea. It is in the interest of world peace and just a world order."

## USA; 54 DAYS - STRIKE IN GENERAL MOTORS

The General Motors (GM) one of the international automobile giants in USA, faced a 54 days long strike in its two plants at FLINT from 5.6.98. The strike by 9200 workers led by United Auto Workers (UAW), idled 25 assembly plants and affected more than 100 part plants across North America. The GM's losses are estimated to be over \$ 2

billion! The strike in turn rendered 186,000 other GM workers idle!

The striking workers forced the GM management to shelve the proposed sale of its Delphi Plants in Flint or Dayton until January, 2000. The GM also agreed to invest \$ 180 million at the Flint stamping plant, as per its original commitment.

The GM and UAW will meet regularly and try to avoid future disputes.

The strike by United Auto Workers against the General Motors is the Second largest action by U.S. Workers, in the recent times. Earlier the United Parcel Services Workers in U.S.A. staged a successful strike making major gains.

## TELL TALE FIGURES ON LABOUR COST

The AIOE Labour News, a bulletin published by the All India Organisation of Employers has published a statistics in its April 1998 issue. It is revealing. We extract it below:

### Comparison of Labour Cost per Hour in US\$ in Textile Industry

|                 |      |                 |       |
|-----------------|------|-----------------|-------|
| 1. Bangladesh   | 0.23 | 15. Portugal    | 3.70  |
| 2. China        | 0.34 | 16. Turkey      | 4.44  |
| 3. Indonesia    | 0.43 | 17. Greece      | 7.13  |
| 4. Pakistan     | 0.44 | 18. Spain       | 7.91  |
| 5. India        | 0.56 | 19. UK          | 10.27 |
| 6. Thailand     | 1.04 | 20. Australia   | 10.84 |
| 7. Syria        | 1.12 | 21. USA         | 11.61 |
| 8. Malaysia     | 1.18 | 22. Italy       | 16.20 |
| 9. Czech Repub. | 1.43 | 23. France      | 16.49 |
| 10. Brazil      | 1.46 | 24. Austria     | 18.81 |
| 11. Morocco     | 1.47 | 25. W. Germany  | 20.50 |
| 12. Colombia    | 1.85 | 26. Switzerland | 22.32 |
| 13. Argentina   | 2.47 | 27. Japan       | 23.65 |
| 14. Mexico      | 2.93 |                 |       |

- Note: 1. The lowest per hour labour cost is 0.23 US \$ in Bangladesh and the highest is 23.65 US \$ in Japan  
 2. The differential in labour cost between India and Japan is 0.56 to 23.65, almost 50 times!  
 3. Figures for China are lower than in India, because of (a) exchange rate differentials and (b) perks and subsidies available in kind to the Chinese workers.

- Editor

## JAPAN WOMEN WORKERS' STUDY TOUR

The Asian Women Workers' Centre (AWWC) sought assistance from CITU to an all women delegation undertaking a study tour of India. On behalf of CITU, M Raji, Convener, WWCC, Tamil Nadu, coordinated the visit. The 19 member women delegation headed by **Michiko Hiroki** visited Chennai and Bangalore from 24th to 31st July, 1998.

Arriving in Chennai on 24.7.98, the delegation visited two garment factories, including the one in the Export Processing Zone, a unit run with Japanese investment. Study materials on unorganised sector, child labour and EPZ were

prepared and presented to them. by the WWCC, TN. The team visited home based workers in Beedi, Pappad making and handloom.

An all women meet with the delegation was participated by activists from various organisations. The interaction was chaired by Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, AICCWW and CITU. Mythily Sivaraman of AIDWA also participated. The event received wide coverage in the Press and electronic media.

On 25.7.98, the delegation met the State CITU leaders T K Rangarajan and A K Padmanabhan and had a detailed

discussion on the CITU activities and organisation.

The team visited Bangalore for two days. There, visits to BPL-TV factory, AG's office and a creche and an interaction meeting were arranged. Varalakshmi and Meenakshi Sundaram coordinated the team's programme at Bangalore.

The Japanese team was delighted to participate in a convention held at Chennai on 26.8.98 against Nuclear Arms.

Before their departure on 31.7.98, W. R. Varada Rajan, Secretary CITU, had a dinner-meeting and presented a memento.

(Report from M Raji)



*Mumbai*  
*Anti Nuclear Rallies: Japan*  
*Calcutta*





*Two Days PSU Strike: 10-11, Dec. 98*