



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## Editorial

### CHIDAMBARAM'S BUDGET

*What it means to Working Class and the Country*

The Economic Survey Update brought out by the Finance Ministry on the eve of the Budget for the year 1996-97 gave clear indication to the working class and the people of India that the United Front Government was keen to carry forward the structural adjustment programme initiated by the Narasimha Rao Government. The Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram on several occasions after entering North block gave indications that his government would accelerate the liberalisation process in India.

A conservative financial commentator Swaminathan S Anklesaria Iyer while writing on the Budget has stated, "This is a Manmohan Singh budget, plus or minus two percent. No offence Mr Chidambaram - such continuity in philosophy is desirable, and will be cheered by investors, the world over." Repeated references by Chidambaram in his budget speech to the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front Government cannot hide the fact that he was by-passing the spirit of the CMP and in essence advocating the prescription given to India by the IMF and the World Bank.

The Budget claims to peg the fiscal deficit to 5 per cent of the GDP. However, this has been achieved by keeping stagnant the planned development expenditure in real terms. The Fiscal deficit provided in the Budget works on to Rs 62,260 crores which is marginally lower than that was reflected in revised estimates for 1995-96 at Rs 64,010 crores. Experts have however expressed the apprehension that the year may end with much higher deficit than visualised in the Budget.

The claim of the Finance Minister that the Budget gives more emphasis on agriculture and rural development is also to be taken with a pinch of salt.

The funds provided in the Budget will reach mainly the upper strata of the rural society. After all subsidies for drip irrigation, sprinklers, power tillers and tractors will in no way benefit the poor peasants. The increase in the share capital of NABARD from Rs 500 crores to Rs 1000 crores will no doubt benefit small farmers but major benefit will again be cornered by the rich farmers. The Rural Infrastructure Development Fund will be given additional Rs 2500 crores for development of minor irrigation, soil conservation, watershed management, etc but with the present corrupt administrative set up these funds are not likely to reach the rural poor.

The budget has provided Rs 5884 crores for food subsidy which is only Rs 384 crores more than the last years revised budget. With rise in prices of food articles the Budget provides only a small amount for strengthening of the public distribution system. With over 38 crores of Indian population below the poverty line the PDS will cover a very small portion of the Indian population.

The removal of the tariff barriers by the third world countries is an important aspect of the WTO package. While the advance countries are taking protective measures by formation of trade blocks and do not open up their economies for the products of the third world countries the reduction of tariff by others only helps the advance countries to dump their products in the third world countries. This would affect the Indian producers and some of them would be faced with closure. As Economic Times commented, "The Union Budget has dealt a virtual death blow to the domestic chemicals industry by reducing the average custom duty from 40 per cent to 30 per cent at a time when the international prices are in a tailspin." It also noted,

"The Union Budget has come as a set back for the Indian telecom manufacturing industry while MNCs and telecom operators have welcomed it." The public sector will specially be hit hard by the reduction in custom duty. The steel and coal industries which are mainly in public sector will also be adversely affected because MNCs will be able to dump their products in India since they are frantically in search of market due to lack of demand in their own countries. Several small scale units who produce the items which are producing items earmarked for these industries will be finding it difficult to continue their operation. This will lead to further retrenchment and reduction of jobs in these industries adding to the already high sickness in our industrial undertakings. Moreover, the country will be going further away from the goal of self-reliance.

The Budget proposal fail to make sufficient efforts to mop up resources for development. The big business houses who have accumulated huge resources during the last 5 years have not been asked to contribute for social development. The taxing of zero-tax unit is no doubt welcome and it would reduce tax evasion to some extent. Attempts made to streamline the tax structure will also help in recovering additional revenue. However the tax evasion will continue to galore due to corrupt tax collection machinery and political patronage received by big business firms.

All the trade unions raised the demand of enhancing the exemption limit of income to Rs 60,000. This just demand was not accepted by the Union Finance Minister and mere reduction of tax-rate will not satisfy salaried income groups whose tax is deducted at source. The Finance Minister could have imposed higher tax rate on the higher income groups and spared the lower sections. After all Rs 60,000 today is much less than Rs 4,000 in 1960 prices. The workers were expecting that the Finance Minister would announce enhancement of ceiling on gratuity to Rs 2.5 lakhs for general workers as in case of central government employees. He was also expected to enhance the ceiling on payment of bonus. Both the hopes have been belied.

Despite commitment to revive the sick industrial undertakings the Finance Minister has not announced any firm measure or provided funds for the revival of these units. There are many sick public sector units which require small amounts to make them viable but the previous government refused to provide these funds to overcome the sickness. The Finance Minister has not mentioned anything about writing off liabilities

of the sick NTC mills so that they could be made viable as per tripartite agreement on textile which was approved by the Cabinet during the previous regime.

The burden of enhancement of the excise duty to the tune of Rs 760 crores will ultimately fall on the consumers.

The Budget, through disinvestment of public sector, will raise Rs 5000 as resources. It is nothing but liquidating fixed assets for consumption needs. The process which was commenced by Dr Manmohan Singh is thus being continued by Chidambaram. The constitution of Disinvestment Commission and the Ministry of Industry's proposals to sell off equity to the tune of 75 per cent of several undertakings and even 100 per cent of certain other undertakings will set in motion a process of virtual liquidation of public sector undertakings. Despite opposition by all the trade unions and their offer of cooperation to improve the performance of public sector undertakings the Finance Minister is going ahead with further dismantling of public sector undertakings which will further take the country away from the path of self-reliance.

The Budget has no-doubt provided more assistance to the States for development. It has protected the interest of Bidi workers by providing higher duties on Mini-cigarettes. It has announced some schemes, though of symbolic nature to grant some relief to the people. However these are only benevolent exception to a policy of globalisation and liberalisation.

The Budget proposals are totally silent among the need for generation of additional employment and there is no provision for any scheme for additional employment generation in the background of growing unemployment in the country as a result of structural adjustment programme. The same trend is likely to continue after Chidambaram's budget.

The basic thrust of the Budget still continues to be pro-rich and anti-poor. It will enhance the inequality in the country and task of eradication of poverty still remains a distant dream. The United Front Government's Budgetary exercise cannot inspire the working class and the common people of the country.

### **Child Labour Workshops**

The CITU-ILO Kerala State and W.Bengal State Child Labour Workshops are going to be held at Trivandrum and Calcutta respectively on August 14-16 and August 21-23, 1996.

# Working Committee meeting of Steel Workers Federation

The Working Committee of Steel Workers' Federation met on 30th June 1996 at Calcutta.

The meeting was presided over by Com. M.K. Pandhe, President SWFI.

The meeting condoled the sudden death of Com. V.G. Bhaskaran Nair, Secretary CITU and also the demise of Shri N Sanjeeva Reddy former President of India. The meeting also condoled the death of other comrades of TU and democratic movement who passed away during the intervening period.

54 Comrades participated in the meeting.

The meeting congratulated Com. Mrinal Banerjee, General Secretary SWFI for his becoming the Cabinet Minister of Left Front Government in West Bengal.

The meeting also, in view of the new assignment of Com. Mrinal Banerjee decided to relieve him from the task of General Secretary of Federation and it was decided that Com. A Dakshi would take over as General Secretary of SWFI and Com. Mrinal Banerjee would remain Vice President of Federation.

Com. M K Pandhe and Com. J B Roy explained at length the Post Election situation prevailing in the country and urged upon units to strengthen organisation at unit level.

It has been decided to observe "Pension Day" on 16th July, 1996, in all the Steel Centres to protest against the 'Pension Bill' being placed in the coming session of Parliament.

Audited accounts of SWFI 1995 were placed by

the Treasurer.

Com. Bibhuti Das Mondal of United Contract Workers Union, Durgapur handed over a cheque of Rs 4620/- towards BTR Memorial Fund. (UCWU has so far donated Rs 2,20,000/- +4620/- towards BTR Memorial Fund).

It was reported by Com. Pandhe that BTR Memorial Trust had been allotted land by GOI at New Delhi. The construction work would be started very soon. All units were requested to deposit their contribution at the earliest.

It was also reported that the International Conference against atomic warfare at Hiroshima-Nagasaki at Japan to be held in August '96 will be attended by Com. Dilip Mazumdar.

Latest positions of Anamoly Committee and Production & Productivity Committee meeting were reported by Com. Pranab Chakraborty.

The Report of Production & Productivity Committee meeting was also placed at the meeting.

## Late News:

All functioning trade unions in Indian Iron & Steel Co., Burnpur, the trade unions of all affiliations from all the public sector steel plants and the central trade unions viz INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS and BMS met in a joint consultation on 24.7.96 at New Delhi and demanded immediate steps by Govt of India for modernisation of IISCO within SAIL framework.

## Meeting of State Govt Employees Federation

The National Executive of the All India State Govt Employees' Federation which met at Bangalore on 7th and 8th July, 1996 urged upon the new United Front Government to make a departure from the economic policies followed by the earlier government and to adopt a pro-worker and pro-poor economic policies so that the interests of the workers, employees and poor section of the people are protected.

The All India State Govt Employees Federation along with other trade union and mass organisations have relentlessly fought against the IMF-World Bank

dictated new economic policies which spelled disaster for the country, particularly for the working class, the employees and other sections of the poor people. The United front Government should therefore make a complete departure from these disastrous policies and follow an alternative path so that interests of the toiling masses and the country as such are protected.

The meeting strongly criticised the Union Finance Ministry's guideline for austerity measures which directly hurt the working class. The government should take steps to mobilise resources by alternative

methods like unearthing black money and moping up a part of the super profits garnered by monopolies instead of freezing the wages of the employees and reducing the staff strength.

The meeting strongly presented the recent price-hike of petrol and petroleum products including the cooking gas which will have cascading effect on the price spiral. Most unfortunately the United Front Government has chosen to follow the same old path of the earlier government in the matter of administrative price-hike. The meeting demanded complete withdrawal of the order for price hike instead of effecting some modification.

The meeting put the following demands before the United Front Government for immediate consideration:

1. To take effective steps to hold price-line and not to follow the method of the administrative price hike.

2. To take immediate steps to strengthen and widen the public distribution system ensuring supply of essential commodities through PDS.

3. To make adequate devolution of funds to the State Govts from the Centre with particular reference to the special category States of the North Eastern Region. To grant adequate financial autonomy to the States.

4. To stop privatisation of the Central and State undertakings, govt departments, to stop retrenchment, casualisation and freezing employment by keeping posts vacant and surrendering vacant posts.

5. To stop attempt to freeze wages, allowances and other benefits of the employees in the name of austerity measures.

6. To ensure constitutional guarantee of "Right to work."

7. To stop all sorts of victimisation of the trade union activists, to repeal all anti-worker and anti-employee Acts and Regulations and grant of full fledged trade union rights to the Govt employees. Necessary policy guidelines to be immediately issued by the Central Government to all State Govts.

8. To delete the arbitrary Articles 310 and 311(2) B and C or to suitably amend the same so that the Govt Employees are not dismissed without any scope of self-defence or issuing chargesheet. To repeal the infamous govt servants' conduct rules.

9. To safeguard the economic self-reliance of the country and no to bow down to the dictates of the IMF and World Bank. To stop indiscriminate entry of the MNCs and take over of Indian Industrial Units by MNCs. To safeguard the unity and integrity of the country by relentlessly fighting against all communal, casteist, divisive and separatist forces.

10. All India States Govt Employees federation to be recognised as a Central Trade Union Organisation for all consultative purposes on labour.

The National Executive called upon the State Employees and teachers of the country to popularise the above demand by holding seminars, conventions in July-Aug 1996 throughout the country. The National Executive called upon the employees to observe all India demands day on the basis of the above demands on 10th Sept 1996 by holding rallies and demonstrations at all levels of the country and also to constantly mobilise the employees against the communal, casteist and divisive forces.

The National Executive felicitated Com. Sukomal Sen, General Secretary of All India State Govt Employees Federation for being elected General Secretary of Trade Union International of Public and Allied Employees in a meeting of the Trade Union International at Damascus held on 25 and 26th June, 1996.

The National Executive felicitated Com. Ajoy Mukherjee Vice President of All India State Govt Employees Federation for being elected for the 3rd time to the Lok Sabha from West Bengal.

### **Editorial Board**

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### **CITU Publication**

## **WAGE AGREEMENTS IN PUBLIC SECTOR (1992-96)**

**Available at CITU Centre**

Price: Paper Back: Rs. 100/-  
Hard Bound: Rs. 150/-

# TRADE UNION INTERNATIONAL OF PUBLIC & ALLIED EMPLOYEES

## FINAL STATEMENT

A meeting of the Administrative Committee of the TUI of Public Services was held at Damascus, Syria on 25-26 June 1996 under the Chairmanship of Bro. Zouheir Ashour of Syria, Bro. Adib Miro, Secretary of WFTU and Bro D K Ganguli, Secretary, WFTU, Asia-Pacific region were present. The meeting was held in the process of reorganising the TUIs in accordance with the decisions of the 13th Congress of WFTU.

Having taking note of the situation that the TUI of Public Services has remained inactive for quite some time and the president of the TUI has also resigned and the General Secretary withdrawn himself from all activities and also taking into account that multi-form attacks on the public services in different countries like privatisation, wage and benefit cuts, retrenchment, contractualisation and downsizing have intensified against which a global resistance has become urgently necessary, the Administrative Committee meeting has, unanimously, decided the following:

1. The Head Quarter of the TUI is shifted and located at New Delhi, India.
2. Brother Sukomal Sen from India is elected as General Secretary.
3. Brother Christos Alekkou from Cyprus is elected as President.
4. Brother Zouheir Ashour from Syria is elected a Vice President in an existing vacancy. Besides that all the other Vice Presidents Bro. Tarakeshwar Chakraborti from India, occupy their posts and the Hd

Quarter will be run by the General Secretary and the Vice President Bro Chakraborti.

5. The above will be an interim arrangement till a final decision is taken in the next meeting of the Administrative Committee to be held by February 1997.

6. A preparatory team is formed with members from Syria, India, Cyprus and South Africa to assist the General Secretary for the preparation of the next meeting of the Administrative Committee and to restore living contact with the affiliated organisations in different countries. A meeting of this preparatory team will be held before two months of the next Administrative Committee meeting.

The next Administrative Committee meeting will also consider the question of the next Congress of TUI.

The meeting hopes that all affiliates and like minded organisations will extend their active cooperation and financial support and organise regional coordination for fulfilling the above tasks. The meeting also appealed to WFTU Head Quarter to render all possible help and assistance and guidance to the TUI.

The meeting profoundly thanked the Syrian General Confederation of Labour and its President Bro Naser and the Public Services Union of Syria and its President Bro Ashour and the WFTU and its Secretaries Bro Adip Miro and D K Ganguli for the assistance they rendered for the meeting.

## National Wage Settlement in Cement Industry signed

After 2-day conciliation proceedings the National Wage Agreement for Cement Industry has been signed at about 6 pm on 12th July 1996 at Delhi in presence of the Joint Chief Labour Commissioner (Central). From the workers' side it has been signed by representatives of five central trade unions/federations. As regards the terms of agreement, understanding was already reached during a bi-partite discussion between the Cement Manufacturers Association and the five central TUs/federations at Bombay on 18-19 June. Almost the same terms have been incorporated in the final agreement. The

memorandum of understanding was published in our last issue. Hence we are not reproducing the text of the agreement to avoid unnecessary repetitions. The minimum gain of the workers will be of the order of nearly Rs 900. Some of the cement companies including the ACC were trying to sabotage the system of National settlement in industry by entering into plant level agreement. Overwhelming majority of the workers were determined to salvage the system of national settlement. ACC and others attempt to sabotage it has ultimately been defeated.

# CENTRAL GOVT EMPLOYEES AND STATE EMPLOYEES HELD RALLY TO PAY HOMAGE TO MARTYRS OF CHICAGO ON 'MAY DAY'

Central workers held mass rally at the Presinet of Varanasi Cantt Head Post Office and CTO on 1st May 1996 at 4.30 PM. Earlier Central and State workers held meetings and seminars in their respective offices/units and later gathered at the Central May Day rally at the above cited campus. Red Banners of respective unions/association of the Central and State employees covered the walls of whole presinet to high light the significance of the 'May Day.'

Thousand of workers belonging to Income Tax, RMS Post Office, Telephone, Telegraph, Defence Civilian, Military, Eng Services, Defence Accounts, CPWD, Central Ground Water Board, Employees, Provident Fund, CCS, Office, N Rly, Loco Running, Station Masters' Association, N Rly & NE Rly, Survey of India, Akashvani & Doordarshan and Units of State Govt gathered in the rally.

Addressing the rally, Sri Santosh Kumar Srivastava, leader of State Govt Employees' Federation and A K Mukhopadhyay, General Secretary of Central Govt Employees, Coordinating Committee laid emphasis on forging solidarity and

unity among central and state govt employees.

The workers observed one minute' silence to pay homage to the martyrs of Chicago.

The workers expressed concern over sky rocketing price hike, ban on recruitment, new economic and New Telecom Policy of the Govt. Paving the way for privatisation, non-release of third interim report by Vth Pay Commission and in ordinate delay in submission of recommendations of Vth Pay Commission.

The govt workers demanded increase of minimum pay Rs 3340.00. The rally was presided by Sri Shiv Dhani Singh, president of Income Tax Employees Federation of Varanasi Range and conducted by Sri Girish Lal, Dist Secretary of All India Telecome employees Union.

Among those who addressed the rally were Sri R P Yadav, B N Singh, A K Niyogi, Ram Karan Ram, Ghanshyam Das, M D Ram, Radheshyam Mishra, Umesh Chandra Mishra, Anand Priyadarshi, S P Pandey, Jahuruddin, etc.

## Meeting of Central Govt Employees Coordination Committee

An urgent meeting of Central Govt Employees Coordinating Committee, Varanasi was held in the Recreation Club Hall of Central Telegraph Office, Varanasi Cantt. The meeting was presided by Sri Shiv Dhani Singh, president of Income Tax Employees' Association, Varanasi Range. Representatives belonging to Income Tax, Central Excise, Post Offices, RMS, Telegraph, Telephones, CPWD, Survey of India, Central Ground Water Board, CCS, Office, N Rly, Loco Running N Rly & NE Rly, Military Eng. Services, Defence Civilian, Defence Accounts, Akash Vani & Door Darshan, Employees Provident Fund etc participated in the meeting.

In a resolution, the Central Govt Employees representatives of Varanasi, expressed grave concern over undemocratic and anti-labour actions of the Regional Commissioner, Employees Provident Fund, Kanpur who had unleashed terror and revengeful actions against Sri Gulab Chand Srivastava, Secretary

of Karmachari Provident Fund Organisation Union, Varanasi to curb trade union activities by imposing unjustified and whimsical punishments contained in his memo No.1178 & 1179/EPF/Vigil/878 & 597 dated 5.6.1996. It is noteworthy that the punishing authority Sri SMH Jaisi, Regional Commissioner, EPF, Kanpur retired on 3.6.96 and put signature on the orders for punishment on 5.6.96 exposing his authoritarian, revengeful attitude. The Regional Commissioner had been exposed well for being allegedly involved in Rs 2 crore scam for which his extension of service was withdrawn.

The Central staff representatives of Varanasi vehemently condemned such undemocratic actions of the Regional Commissioner of EPF, Kanpur and demanded immediate withdrawal of punishment. Otherwise, the Central staff of Varanasi will take the matter seriously as an attack on democratic functioning of trade union of Central staff and will resort to industrial action if necessary.

# CITU EXPRESSES STRONG OPPOSITION TO HIKE IN PETROLEUM PRICES

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

The CITU expresses its strong opposition to the administrative order issued by the Govt. effecting hefty hike in the price of petrol, diesel, LPG and some other petroleum products. While the Govt. have increased the basic price of these items by 25-30%, after adding tax and duty the consumer shall be required to pay much more than what has been notified by the Govt.

Rise in the price of petrol and diesel is bound to push up the transport cost for both passenger and goods the net result of which would contribute in spiraling rise in the prices of all essential goods and services of common use and daily necessities.

It is a matter of deep regret and grave concern that the Govt. have ignored the loud protest voiced by the entire trade union movement against the so called

austerity measures announced by the Finance Minister on 17.6.76 which indicated the instant increase in the administered prices.

It is all the more deplorable that the UF Govt. have mounted this attack of administered price rise just one week prior to the commencement of the budget session of the Parliament. This is an old anti-people and anti-democratic practice of the previous Cong. (I) Govt. which was subjected to severe criticism by all democratic forces.

The way things are unfolding the giving rise to the doubt in the minds of the working class and toiling masses about the commitment of the UF Govt. to the CMP.

The CITU calls upon the working class and toiling masses to raise their powerful voice of protest against the administered price rise and mobilise the people to mount pressure on the Govt. to withdraw the order.

## CITU REITERATES STAND ON PENSION SCHEME; DEMANDS FOR OPTION.

CITU Secretariat issued the following statement to the press.

The bill on Pension Scheme drawn exactly on the same line with the Employees Provident Fund (Miscellaneous provisions) Amendment Ordinance promulgated three times by the Narasimha Rao Government, has been introduced in the Current Session of Parliament.

CITU reiterates its strong opposition to such move and also the Govt. Pension Scheme designed by the previous Govt since the said scheme is nothing but a mechanism of perpetrating permanent loot on the mass of the workers both in Organised and unorganised sector.

It totally dilutes the second retirement benefit of the workers of contributory provident fund and the pension offered by the scheme is much less than what the workers would be compelled to forego by way of diversion of almost half of the provident fund generation, to the so called pension fund.

CITU urges upon the govt to take note of the widespread opposition to the scheme among the

mass of the workers at the grassroot level cutting across affiliations which got reflected through massive strike action on 21st February '96 and numerous stay orders and writ petitions against the said scheme, and refrain from any attempt to impose the same scheme on the workers through legislation in Parliament.

CITU demands upon the govt to make the scheme optional so as to allow the common workers to decide themselves whether they would go in for Govt pension scheme or not. CITU already met the Prime Minister and Labour Minister and conveyed their request. CITU hopes that the Govt would consider the proposal and bring official amendment to make the scheme optional.

*Meeting on our work in*  
**CEMENT INDUSTRY**  
*On*  
**9th Sept 1996**  
*at Delhi*

# CITU denounces counter-guarantee to ENRON

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement:

The CITU expresses its strong opposition to the clearance of counter-guarantee extended to Enron for the Dabhol Power Project by the Deve Gowda Government.

The entire project deal concluded by the Congress(I) Govt and subsequently ratified by the BJP Govt has been opposed by the patriotic and democratic people of the country including several constituents of the present UF Government. The counter-guarantee issue had rocked the Parliament during the Cong(I) regime as also during the 13-day old BJP Govt at the Centre.

The extension of counter-guarantee is against the interest of the country and it is prone to put the State Govts into financial problem. This will ultimately have adverse impact on power tariff for which the people will suffer. This is an uncalled for out of way additional favour extended to the American Company.

It is a matter of national shame that our central public sector power companies such as NTPC, NHPC,

Powergrid etc are not provided with any support let alone Counter-Guarantee by the Central Government for realising the dues for the power supplied to various SEBs. Between 24 and 40 per cent of such dues amounting to crores of rupees are regularly outstanding against the SEBs for which these public sector power companies are facing serious liquidity crunch. While the Govt. put conditions on our PSUs to run commercially, they (the govt.) extend undue favour to private capital and refuse to support the PSUs!

Therefore when the Central Government is demonstrating sheer indifference in the matter towards their own power companies, extending counter-guarantee to the American company is all the more condemnable.

CITU urges upon the UF Govt to review its approval to the counter-guarantee and appeals to the working class and the people of the country to rise their voice of protest against the shady deal and mount pressure on the UF Govt not to succumb to pressure from imperialist forces.

## CITU extends support to Central Govt. Employees Agitation

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement in support of the ongoing agitation of Central govt. Employees for a further instalment of interim relief and early publication of Pay Commission Report.

The CITU strongly resents the inordinate delay in publishing the report of the Fifth Central Pay Commission set up in April 1996 in terms of an agreement between the Govt. and the employees' unions and associations, in the wake of a decision for indefinite strike by the latter. It is highly condemnable that though it was assured that the Report would be published within eighteen months no firm date for the same is being indicated even 26 months after it had been set up. The demand for another instalment of interim relief for Central Employees in this context is fully justified. It is unfair on the part of the Union Government to withhold the reference made by the earlier Govt to the Commission for recommending a further instalment of interim relief forcing the leaders of the organisations of Central Employees to resort to

indefinite hunger strike from 8th July, 1996.

While extending full support to the justified agitation of the Central Employees, CITU demands immediate clearance of the reference to the Commission for further instalment of interim relief as also appropriate measure to ensure early publication of the Pay Commission Report.

It calls upon the working class to extend all support to the just struggle of the Central Govt. employees and workers.

### General Council Meeting of CITU

The General Council Meeting of the CITU will be held at Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh from November 17 to 20, 1996.

# CITU EXPRESSES CONCERN AT DEVIATION FROM CMP WITH REGARD TO PSUs AND SMALL SCALE SECTOR

CITU notes with grave concern the recently reported announcement by the Industry Minister and the Prime Minister, at the meeting with the Industrial Chambers that the Govt is contemplating further expanding the list of industries for allowing more than 51% foreign equity participation in new areas which would render a large and sensitive part of the Indian economy in absolute control of foreign capital. It is also reported about the Governmental move on further opening up the areas hitherto exclusively reserved for public sector in the core and sensitive sector of the economy, to Private and Foreign capital.

CITU maintains that already enough damage is done by the previous Congress Govt in the above direction against which the entire trade union movement had raised their voice of opposition. Now further opening of whatever still remained reserved for public sector, being of extremely sensitive and strategic in nature, would further aggravate the same.

CITU is further concerned to note the statement of Industry Minister with regard to small scale and tiny sector of Industries as reported in the press saying that the Govt initiative for reform of small scale sector of Industry would relate to "revising definition of small scale industry....enhancing investment limit prescribed to them, enabling foreign investors to invest in equity capital....and changing the restrictive policies like reservation and export obligation in respect of articles reserved for exclusive production in small scale sector."

CITU feels that above measures would only lead to taking over the small scale sector by the big business and foreign capital and greater monopolisation of the Industrial economy and are in total contravention of the Common Minimum Programme of the UF Govt. which is committed to restore the (already distorted) "balance between the large, medium and small scale Industries" in view of job creating potential of the small scale/tiny sector.

Moreover the reported move to initiate fresh steps for disinvestment of PSU shares in the major profit making public sector units like SAIL, ONGC, IOC, MTNL, VSNL and Shipping Corporation of India by the Govt has also created alarm among the workers. CITU maintains that the UF Govt. in terms of its Common Minimum Programme is committed to strengthen major profit making PSUs to become global giant, while the decision to further divest more

shares of those PSUs to monopoly capital and foreign buyers are not at all consistent with the said commitment and should be stalled forthwith.

CITU urges upon the Govt. of India to refrain from aforesaid disastrous moves which constitute a threat to self-reliance of the Indian economy. □

## Railway Budget Spares Poor People from Further Imposts

The CITU Secretariat has issued the following statement as immediate reaction to the Railway Budget for 1996-97.

The CITU appreciates the Railway Minister's concern for common man as expressed in his sparing of the second class passenger of all categories from any fare hike except for 5% increase for sleeper class for travel beyond 200 kms, and exemption of 15 items of mass consumption from any rise in freight.

The CITU welcomes the emphasis laid on provision of rail transport to relatively undeveloped areas like the North-East region in a departure from the policy pursued by the previous government.

Perhaps a little more budgetary support would have enabled the Railways to bring about the required improvement in a larger measure. The CITU would like to request the Central Govt to review its policy in respect of budgetary support to the Railways and grant larger support to this important public utility service in marked departure from the policy of whole sale commercialisation pursued by the previous government at the behest of the IMF and the World Bank.

However, in the matter of priorities respecting gauge conversion, track renewal, doubling and expansion of the programme in the present budget has largely remained confined within the policy frame work of the previous gov't. On penetration of private sector as well the present budget indicates continuation of the previous gov't's policies.

The CITU would like the old policies to be thoroughly reviewed and reshaped with an eye to the interest of the whole people. □

# UREA SCAM: TIP OF ICEBERG —OFF-SHOOT OF POLICY SHIFT

□ SWADESH DEV ROYE

The Rs 133 crore urea-scam has rocked the country, stunned the countrymen and continued to occupy the front pages of major national dailies for several months. The urea-scam has surpassed all other scams on several counts. However the major distinction is that the involvement of Mr Narasimha Rao and his Cabinet colleague in charge of Fertilizer Ministry Mr Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav as crystallised from the arrest of their sons and close relatives. It has, thus been said that "it is uglier than hawala deal."

Startling revelations of conscious criminal violation of all accepted norms of international trade have almost exhaustively been reported in the press. Gross irregularities committed by officer of NFL and banks due to pressure from highest political levels have come to light. The details of sharing the booty have also become public.

The CBI investigation is going on. We hope that all the facts connected with the scam will be unearthed and all the culprits shall be given exemplary punishment. But the matter cannot end at that only. Because the urea-scam is only a branch of a big poisonous tree which must be completely uprooted.

Certain basic questions pertaining to the fertilizer policies adopted and pursued by the Narasimha Rao Govt are necessary to examine along with the urea-scam. The most prominent point is the shift in policy at the cost of self-reliance as a result of which urea imports went up abnormally resulting high rise in price in the international market, outgo of precious foreign exchange and increased subsidy burden. It is also necessary to know whether such huge quantity of urea import was at all necessary and why the country has been pushed to near glut situation causing serious crisis for the indigenous industry due to inventory pile-up. Moreover it is also necessary to find out what was the compulsion for the urea manufacturing companies to accept canalising agency and undertake import of urea.

## DANGEROUS SHIFT IN POLICY

The post liberalised fertilizer policy of the Cong(l) Govt has dispensed with the path of self-reliance and moved towards dependence on import. On 15th August, 1992 Narasimha Rao declared from the

roustrum of Red Fort the said resolve of his Govt. The country was totally self-sufficient in urea variety of nitrogenous fertilizer in 1990-91. However, with the dangerous shift in policy by the Rao Govt adequate step was not taken to add to the indigenous capacity to keep pace with the growing consumption. In such a situation the Rao Govt started importing urea for meeting the gap between requirement and indigenous production. A look at the figure of import will show that it has been increasing continuously but at galloping rate. But the consumption of urea really did not go up at that rate and thus when we shall proceed further with this discussion we shall see that import has far surpassed the actual requirement of our agriculture.

## INCREASE IN IMPORT OF UREA

<u>Year</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
1991-92	5.66
1992-93	18.57
1993-94	27.83
1994-95	28.70
1995-96	37.82

The huge import of urea by the Rao Govt was itself a scam of high magnitude. Narasimha Rao had told the nation that import of urea would be cheaper. During 1994-95 the country has imported about 29 lakh tonnes of Urea. As a result of such huge quantity of purchase by India the price in the international market shot up abnormally. But it must be mentioned that the experts had predicted such possibility well in advance which fell into the deaf ear of the Narasimha Rao Government.

The moment India decided to purchase huge quantity of urea from the international market, Narasimha Rao's theory of "cheaper" price evaporated and the price of urea shot up by more than \$100 per tonne!

It has been reported that the country has incurred a loss of \$300 million on account of urea import. The industry sources have been quoted, "The price of urea in the international market is ruling at \$135 per tonne. India has paid an extra amount of \$100 per tonne to import urea. In fact in 1995 the price of urea at the international market reached to around US \$245 per MT. The Government stand on taking a

sudden decision to import urea in bulk triggered high fluctuations in the international market as a result of which India imported urea at a higher cost.

Moreover, the budget provision for subsidy on imported urea for the year 1995-96 was Rs 1650 crore. But this figure shot up to Rs 1775 crore due to the dollar's appreciation against rupee. Compared to previous year's revised estimate it constituted an increase of Rs 609 crore. It is necessary to note that as against the weighted average cost of Rs 5500.00 per tonne of indigenously produced urea, with the current C&F landed cost, the farmgate cost of imported urea works out to about Rs 8800.00 per tonne. Thus subsidy on imported urea was higher by Rs 3300.00 per tonne compared to the domestically produced urea.

### **IMPORT FAR EXCEEDED ACTUAL REQUIREMENT**

During 1995-96 the government have imported urea worth over Rs 500 crore in excess of the actual need of the country. It is important to note that 60% of these imports took place during the second half of 1995-96 or in other words just on the eve of general election of Lok Sabha.

The mindless motivated imports have landed the country into a situation of glut. The financial year 1996-97 has started with an opening urea stock of about 2.8 million tonnes against the previous year's opening stock of 1.12 million tonnes, an increase of about 133%. Experts have noted that, "Even as there has been no unusual trend in the consumption of urea which was about 18 million tonnes during 1995-96, an increase of 5.9% over 1994-95, the problem of excess availability is primarily due to excessive imports despite increase in domestic production." It is evident that import decision was not taken on the basis of realistic projection.

### **INDIGENOUS INDUSTRY INTO CRISIS DUE TO EXCESSIVE IMPORT**

As a consequence of sudden increase in the stock of urea due to huge imports, the indigenous fertilizer industry is faced with a crisis situation. It is reported that "a price war has already started in the controlled urea segment which would further aggravate the financial prospect of the fertilizer producers." The indigenous industry is apprehending 50% reduction in profitability in 1995-96 compared to that of 1994-95. Moreover the glut situation may cause slow down of indigenous production. Thus the fallout of imports is that the public and cooperative sector fertilizer

plants are pushed to a situation to reduce capacity utilisation, abnormally high inventory and hence liquidity crunch. Should not the responsibility for such an uncalled for national loss be fixed and guilty punished ?

### **IT WAS A MUCH BIGGER CONSPIRACY**

As against the 37.82 lakhs tonnes of urea imported in 1995-96 the Ministry of Fertilizers actually planned to import 50 lakh tonnes but could not proceed due to the veto of Finance Ministry. The point is that why the Fertilizer Ministry was showing undue interest in importing much higher quantity of urea than the actual requirement totally ignoring the past record. However, it is not difficult to imagine what could have been the situation if the Fertilizer Ministry would have been allowed to import urea as per their plan (conspiracy?). In one sentence it can be said that the indigenous fertilizer industry would have been ruined and amount involved in scam/kick-back would have ran into several hundreds of crore of rupees. While enquiring the urea-scam these aspects of the case is also necessary to be addressed.

As reported in Financial Express on 1.7.96, "At least 75,000 tonnes of urea costing approximately Rs 52.5 crore is floating on Indian waters awaiting despatch orders from the Government to its assigned destinations." The report further went on to say, "the delay in offloading the ships is costing the exchequer a whopping \$25,000 per day by way of demurrage charges."

### **WHY IMPORT BY FERTILIZER MANUFACTURING COMPANIES**

MMTC and STC under the Ministry of Commerce were the sole canalising agency for importing urea in the country. In October, 1994 two fertilizer manufacturing companies namely National Fertilizers Ltd (NFL) and Pyrites, Phosphates and Chemicals Ltd (PPCL) under the Ministry of Fertilizers and Chemicals were also made canalised agencies and asked to import urea.

In reply to a question as to why NFL and PPCL were asked to import urea the Ministry of Fertilizers and Chemicals replied that "inability of MMTC to procure and supply adequate quantity of imported urea," is the reason.

On the other hand in May 1995 Mr Chidambaram as the Commerce Minister in the Narasimha Rao Government had rebutted the charge on the floor of Parliament. He had defended MMTC both for timely and adequate supply of imported urea at competitive

price.

Contradictory statements made by two ministers of Rao Govt on same issue, blaming MMTC, Fertilizer Ministry entered the international market for import of urea, refusal by some fertilizer companies to take up urea import but acceptance by NFL and PPCL, despite not called for interview Ramkrishnan was selected the Managing Director of NFL with special approval of Narasimha Rao at the repeated request of Ram Lakhan Yadav and subsequent NFL-urea-scram and involvement of Rao-Yadav-Ramkrishnan in the scam are serious issues related to the urea-scram and must be thoroughly enquired into.

But apart from those points, the basic question is that why the Rao Govt changed the time tested practice and involved fertilizer manufacturing companies in importing urea and other fertilizers. We believe that such change is bound to jeopardise the country's desired goal of attaining self-reliance in indigenous production of fertilizers. Because instead of employing their full available capital, skill and infrastructure in manufacturing work, they will have to divert a part of it for international trade. This implies neglect to our desired mission to enhance indigenous production and such step must be stopped.

#### **RESTORE POLICY OF SELF-RELIANCE**

It is an accepted fact that consumption and production of fertilizers in our country shall have to be increased to further augment the production of foodgrain to feed an estimated population of 100 million by 2000 AD.

The policy of the Govt in this regard was reflected in the Annual Report of the Fertilizer Ministry for the year 1990-91 wherein it was stated as under:

"The objective of establishment of additional fertilizer production capacity was sought to be achieved in the following manner:

Rehabilitation and revamping of those plants which are consistency operating at low levels of capacity utilisation ought to be made for improved performance and productivity. Such revamping, with incorporation of modern technology to the extent possible, would ensure significant enhancement of production levels from the group of plants, whose full potential was never realised due to various technological constraints.

Expansion of production capacity of existing fertilizer plants where significant investments made for creation of various offsite/outside and other infrastructural facilities may be fully utilised. These

locations can sustain new expansion projects keeping in view the available infrastructure and other facilities."

It is unfortunate and a matter of serious concern that the Narasimha Rao Govt completely reversed the policy of self-reliance. The result is open before the country. The gap between consumption and indigenous production has widened, imports have gone up resulting steep hike in the price in international market imposing heavy burden on the national exchanger including drain of precious foreign exchange and finally the horrifying scam. Therefore the present Govt must restore the policy of self-reliance without any delay.

#### **REVAMP THE OLD PLANTS**

The immediate task before the UF Govt should be to rescue the eight pioneer public sector urea producing plants declared sick and languishing under BIFR for last five years due to sheer neglect of the Narasimha-Rao Govt.

It is to be noted that as per recommendation of the Committee of Experts under the chairmanship of the Technical Adviser in the Ministry of Fertilizers, a revamping scheme for these sick units had been submitted to the previous Govt according to which these plants are to be revamped at a cost of Rs 2201.13 crore on implementation of which these plants would produce 23.2 lakh tonnes of urea on sustained basis. But the previous Govt did not take any positive step to implement the scheme.

Taking a lesson from the alarming surge in import of urea and the shocking urea-scram the UF Govt must act promptly and take necessary decision to revamp all the sick units of FCI and HFC by implementing the recommendation of the Expert Committee as referred above.

The CPI(M) Member of Rajya Sabha Dipankar Mukherjee has very rightly mentioned in his letter dated 3.7.96 to the Prime Minister that "even if the persons responsible for the urea-scram are punished and the money is recovered, the source of scam would still remain. As a matter of fact, keeping the urea producing units either closed or idle within the country while merrily importing urea would be a bigger scam."

#### **Full Secretariat Meeting**

A meeting of the full Secretariat of the CITU will be held at CITU Central Office, New Delhi on September 7 and 8, 1996. All Secretariat members to attend.

# CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

(BASE 1982 = 100)

Centre	Apr.96	May 96	Linking factor for Old Base	Centre	Apr.96	May 96	Linking factor for Old Base
All India	324	328	4.93	Rourkela	299	305	3.59
Gudur	326	332	4.33	Amritsar	289	289	5.19
Guntur	317	322	5.60	Ludhiana	295	297	—
Hyderabad	300	304	5.23	Ajmer	324	323	5.01
Visakhapatnam	312	317	—	Jaipur	312	327	5.17
Warrangal	315	314	—	Coimbatore	325	327	5.35
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	301	303	4.05	Coonoor	331	346	4.80
Guwahati	336	339	—	Madras	341	351	5.05
Labac-Silchar	290	296	3.96	Madurai	327	333	5.27
Mariani-Jorhat	315	317	3.95	Salem	329	333	—
Rangapara-Tezpur	316	318	4.29	Tiruchirapally	346	303	—
Jamshedpur	311	312	4.68	Agra	299	303	—
Jharia	277	279	4.63	Ghaziabad	308	310	—
Kodarma	276	283	5.43	Kanpur	314	319	4.69
Monghyr	298	302	5.29	Saharanpur	299	298	5.06
Noamundi	298	298	4.58	Varanasi	334	336	5.12
Ranchi-Hatia	311	315	—	Asansol	298	306	4.77
Ahmedabad	321	334	4.78	Calcutta	329	335	4.74
Baroda	324	332	—	Darjeeling	281	286	4.55
Bhavanagar	338	339	4.99	Durgapur	336	343	—
Rajkot	321	328	—	Haldia	348	351	—
Surat	346	352	—	Howrah	336	340	4.12
Faridabad	311	314	—	Jalpaiguri	289	297	4.16
Yamunanagar	310	310	5.53	Raniganj	291	294	4.40
Srinagar	314	315	5.47	Chandigarh	306	307	—
Bangalore	318	322	5.66	Delhi	336	337	4.97
Belgaum	347	348	—	Pondicherry	368	375	—
Hubli-Dharwar	325	329	—				
Mercara	324	328	—	<u>Additional series of Labour Bureau</u>			
Alwaye	341	347	5.19	Kothagudem	326	333	3.25
Mundakayam	348	353	—	Himachal Pradesh	306	306	3.75
Quilon	349	354	—	Bhilwara	321	323	3.20
Trivandrum	365	371	—	Chindwara	331	334	2.59
Bhalaghat	312	318	5.24	Tripura	315	319	4.37
Bhilai	292	298	3.49	Goa	358	365	3.40
Bhopal	339	341	5.46				
Indore	337	340	5.18				
Jabalpur	329	331	6.41				
Bombay	357	362	5.12				
Nagpur	331	336	4.99				
Nasik	344	353	—				
Pune	352	357	—				
Solapur	347	347	5.03				
Barbil	316	325	5.00				

Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number.

—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series,

# INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ENERGY AND MINING WORKERS

□ M K Pandhe

The International Congress of Energy and Mining Workers held at Montlucon (France) on 16-18 June strongly condemned the worldwide offensive of globalisation and called upon all the energy and mining workers to resist the offensive with all their might. Seventy seven delegates from 48 organisations who participated in the Congress unanimously adopted the policy document and the resolution which highlighted the danger of the operation of the transnational corporations in all the continents.

Arthur Scargill Co-President of the IEMO in his Presidential address frontally attacked the World Bank and the IMF for imposing conditionalities on the third world countries while granting loans. He stated that the total international debt of the third world had reached 1500 billion dollars which should be written off since the third world countries have paid more than that amount to the advanced countries.

Pointing out that one third of the world population has no access to electricity he advocated change in the energy policies so that energy is made available to all the people in the world.

Scargill stressed the need for strengthening of the untied movement of energy and mining workers against growing unemployment all over the world so that we can fight for the right to work as a fundamental right.

Criticising the growing attacks on trade union rights the IEMO co-President called for one international solidarity action for preservation and strengthening of trade union rights.

Alain Simon Secretary General of the IEMO presented the main document of the conference. He explained how persistent efforts resulted in achieving unity of energy and mining workers in various parts of the world which reflected in representative gathering in the IEMO congress.

Simon pointed out that 37,000 transnational companies control 170,000 subsidiaries world wide, provide 10 per cent of the world GDP, 70% of world exchanges, 75% of direct investment outside their home basis. 172 out of 200 of the largest transnational companies belong to the USA, Japan, Germany and Great Britain.

He further noted that 20 per cent of the most disadvantaged population represents only 1 per cent of world trade, 13 per cent of international investments.

According to UNDP, 80 per cent of the world's population represents only 4 per cent expenditure on research and development.

As a result of globalisation capital circulates practically without any obstacle in order to feed speculative profits. \$1200 billion move daily from one financial place to another i.e. 50 times the amount concerning goods and services, and as much as all exchange reserves of central banks, Simon noted.

He observed estimate two million are unemployed in European union countries, 35 million in OECD countries, 20 per cent of the working population without a job in Eastern Europe and one billion in the third world. These figures only reflect gross underestimation but they reveal how structural adjustment programmes are running the economies of various countries. The talk of full employment had become a mirage in the capitalist system.

Energy had been the worst victim of these policies. On the eve of the next century 2.2 billion people all over the world are without electricity while one billion people have no access to fossil energy fuel, Simon pointed out.

He underlined the need to come together irrespective of ideology to fight against the menacing situation. The offensive of privatisation must be opposed in every corner of the world.

India was represented in the congress by M.K. Pandhe, President, All India Coal Workers Federation and S. Pancharatnam, Secretary Electricity Employees Federation of India.

M.K. Pandhe while addressing the congress reviewed the struggles conducted by mining and energy workers against the structural adjustment programme and emphasised that international solidarity of the workers the world over will alone lead to successful resistance against the depredations by the World Bank and the IMF. He congratulated the French workers for their relentless struggle against the liberalisation policies and reduction in social security benefits.

Criticising the US imperialist policies for global domination he advocated full support to all the struggles against these aggressive policies.

Welcoming the initiative taken by the IEMO to bring together all energy and mining workers in the struggle against policies of globalisation, Pandhe fully

supported the IEMO efforts to launch world wide movement against the onslaughts of the monopoly capital.

S Pancharatnam explained how the transnational corporations are entering the energy sector in Indian economy and how it would lead to higher price for energy to the common man in the country. He noted how EEFI was participating in all the movements against the structural adjustment programme.

Delegates from South Africa, Algeria, Congo, Egypt, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Libya while supporting the proposal for a world wide struggle against transnational corporations, delegates from Russia, Ukrain, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria, Belarus, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, explained the deteriorating living conditions for the working class in these countries and how the working class is mobilising to resist the attacks on their standard of living.

The Speaker from Cuba expressed the firm determination of the people in his country to fight US economic blockade with the cooperation of the people all over the world. The delegate from Vietnam noted how his country was overcoming difficulties and making efforts to supply more energy to the people.

Speakers from Uruguay, Zimbabwe, Tunis, Congo, Senegal, Kuwait explained how the energy and mining workers are in action against the structural adjustment programme and supported the IEMO initiative.

The speakers from Great Britain, France, Norway explained how the workers in advanced capitalist countries are coming forward to resist the World Bank-IMF package.

The Congress adopted the draft constitution of the IEMO after indepth discussion. It agreed to give special concessions to countries which are unable to pay the affiliation fee prescribed in the constitution.

It also adopted the policy document after a debate. A resolution adopted by the Congress gave a clarion call for the workers in Energy and Mining industry all over the world to fight against the attacks on the standard of living by the transnational corporations. Pandhe moved some amendments to both the documents most of which were accepted by the Congress.

The Conference elected Arthur Scargill and Francois Duteil as Co-Presidents while Alain Simon was elected as the Secretary General of the IEMO. M K Pandhe was elected as one of the Vice Presidents and one seat in the Executive Committee was left vacant for the nominee of EEFI from India.

The IEMO Congress created a sense of confidence among the delegates that the World Bank-IMF machinations can be fought back effectively by the Energy and Mining workers all over the world if they unite and express firm solidarity with the struggles breaking all over the world. Those who have not joined the organisation should join it so that the international struggle of the Energy workers can be further strengthened in all constituents.

The Energy workers union in France made excellent arrangements for the conference which was appreciated by all the delegates:

## **MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION OF FRENCH WORKERS BEFORE G7 MEETING**

About 60,000 French workers staged a colourful demonstration on the eve of the G7 meeting at Lyons on 25th June condemning the World Bank-IMF dictated policies of globalisation. Four trade unions from France participated in the demonstration but the main gathering was organised by the CGT France. Over 600 buses came from all over France to bring demonstrators from all corners of the country. Thousands came by train. a large number of women workers participated in the demonstration.

A declaration read out at the commencement of the procession expressed concern at growing unemployment all over the world causing distress to million of families. It condemned the policies of privatisation which resulted in selling valuable assets at throw away prices to profit hungry capitalists. The Declaration opposed the curtailment of social security benefits and attack on trade union rights.

Thousands of workers and people in Lyons greeted the demonstrators on both sides of the roads who were also shouting slogans against the policies of G7 countries. Several workers carried huge flags of Cuba and condemned the blockade imposed by US imperialists.

M K Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU participated in the demonstration and expressed support of the CITU and Indian working class. There were representatives from Italy, Spain, Brazil, Senegal, Sweden who specially came to express the solidarity with the French working class.

French newspaper and electronic media gave good publicity to the demonstration.

□

# THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE CONSTRUCTION ORIENTED PUBLIC SECTOR UNITS

□ BINOY MUKHERJEE

**Introduction:** The necessity for formation of public sector undertaking in construction field was felt immediately after independence of the country to meet the following objectives:

To take up various developmental works of the country like construction of barrage, dam, thermal power station, hydel projects, roads, steel industry, improvement of rail industry, etc. The thought was obviously aimed to restructure our country in post-independent period through direct involvement of Govt organisations to ensure desired economic parameters where profit earning was not made sole objective but all round industrial growth was given paramount importance. In order to take up that task, the premier PSUs came into being which were M/s RPNN Ltd (formerly known as NPCC Ltd) under Ministry of Water Resources, M/s NBCC Ltd, under Ministry of Urban Development, M/s HSCL, under Ministry of Steel M/s BBJ Construction, under Ministry of Industry, M/s EPI, under Ministry of Industry, M/s IRCC, under Ministry of Surface Transport, M/s IRCON, under Ministry of Railways, M/s Bridge & Roof under ministry of Industry, M/s RECI under Ministry of Power and M/s RICI Ministry of Industry. Eventually this planning could generate enormous scopes of job opportunities and simultaneously best interest of the nation was served. Private sector was totally absent, competition existed amongst PSUs only. almost all the PSUs were engaged throughout the country and abroad during all the time to execute various projects proposed and approved by Planning Commission. Healthy working atmosphere, quality products - everything prevailed like as it existed in any other country during that period. The process of developmental works of the nation crossed many milestones in corruption free atmosphere and the same PSUs which, now more known as sick industries, were pride of our country which is a reality.

## **Gradual deterioration of PSUs - the reasons**

As soon as corruption could find its big space in the government as well as in nation, these PSUs were converted into tools by government functionaries to earn money illegally. PSUs were attached to various ministries and were run by some board of directors who were chosen very carefully by various

concerned ministries of respective departments to fulfil their motivated interest through them. Corruption started from here itself and after passing five decades in post independent period it has now spread at grassroot level like virus. So the fate of the construction PSUs became dark where it exactly stands today. Secondly, entry of private sectors as well as exercise of global tender process to invite outside companies has substantially reduced the scopes for PSUs to be assigned with adequate projects to maintain its require cash flow. Subsidies are withdrawn, privileges of preferential allotment to PSUs have been totally curtailed and naturally it cannot survive in the hard open competition today. The result is, these have become sick.

## **Industrial Disputes due to sickness of PSUs**

In the existing condition of the PSUs, the growth of industrial disputes is more than growth of productivity. This is absolutely due to faulty policy of government. They have not maintained any parity in regard of salary or any other facilities to ensure welfare of the employees. PSUs are attached various ministries and are regulated with different type of rules and regulations, where a section of employees are becoming gainer leaving the other part looser. No wage Board has been framed like some other sectors which exist in our country. In order to destroy this sector totally government is taking various detrimental steps which has caused inter-union rivalries and in turn has totally damaged motivation of the employees to work. Salaries are not paid even for months together. Things have taken a disastrous shape.

## **Improvement that can be done**

In order to restructure these PSUs and to improve the existing situation government will have to play a very effective and constructive role.

Few proposals are extended as here under:

1. All the PSUs doing construction job have to be brought under one ministry.
2. Different developmental projects approved by planning commission have either to be distributed amongst the PSUs in proportion of the strength or through competition and in that case competition has

*[Cont'd on page 18]*

## **Tripartite Delegations Endorse Full Employment, Battle Against Child Labour to Intensify**

### **Home work**

The 83rd International Labour Conference adopted a Convention and a Recommendation on home work. These instruments are the first comprehensive international standards in favour of homeworkers, a growing and often invisible workforce that is largely unrecognised in labour statistics and unprotected by legislation.

The Convention would oblige any ratifying member State to "adopt, implement and periodically review a national policy on home work aimed at improving the situation of home workers." The policy is to be developed in consultation with employers and worker organisations and other organisations concerned with home workers. The national policy on home work shall seek to "promote equality of treatment between home workers and other wage earners" in such areas as the right to organise, protection against discrimination, remuneration, occupational safety and health, social security and maternity protection, and training.

Delegates to the Conference agreed that home work can yield substantial benefits to employers, workers and national economies alike. For many workers, particularly women, home work provides an opportunity to earn an income while attending to domestic needs. For some professionals, working at home may be even the preferred option.

However, home work is an activity that largely escapes administrative control. The ranks of the low-paid and frequently clandestine force of homeworkers are growing in developing and industrialised countries alike. Women account for the vast majority of homeworkers (as much as 95%) and child labour is often associated with home work. The ILO Convention also calls on governments to include homeworkers in labour statistics and labour inspection systems. An ILO Convention, once ratified by a member State, creates a binding international obligation.

The Convention on Home work is supplemented by a Recommendation, which sets out specific internationally agreed provisions designed to serve as guidelines as to how the national policy on home work should be implemented. The provisions in the

proposed Recommendation call for equal treatment and registration of home workers. Collection of data on homeworkers and employers of homeworkers, are mainly intended to provide a basis for the national policy on home work. Finally, member States are called upon to promote and support programmes, which provide direct assistance to homeworkers. A whole range of such programmes are enumerated and they cover a wide range of means to improve the social and economic situation of homeworkers.

### **Full Employment Policy**

The Tripartite Committee on Employment Policy endorsed the concept of full employment, insisting that "the objective of full, productive and freely chosen employment through higher, sustained economic growth should remain a major goal of economic, social and employment policies as governments, employers and workers organisations adapt to a rapidly changing global market."

In spite of rising unemployment and deepening concerns about solutions to poverty and social exclusion, the Committee members agreed that "full employment remains an achievable goal despite anxieties over the possible job-destroying effects of rapid technological change and intensified international competition." It underlined the importance of creating "an economic environment which provides clear incentives to enterprises for investment and job creation." Among the elements of an enabling environment, the Committee cited "economic and financial stability and the absence of excessive price inflation and abrupt exchange rate movements."

The Committee report defines full employment as a "level of employment where all those available, able and actively seeking work, can obtain it." It acknowledges that any definition of full employment needs to take account of structural changes in employment patterns which include, "higher job turnover and a growing trend toward shorter and more flexible work hours." In response to these challenges, the ILO calls for measures to enhance "employability security" by providing "expanded opportunities for training and retraining, continuous

skill upgrading and the matching of skills with emerging labour markets."

The Committee insisted that the concept of full employment was valid for all countries while acknowledging that "the concept may have to be interpreted differently for developing countries." For developing and transition countries, the report said that promoting job creation in competitive new private sector and viable public sector activities is a "vital element of employment policies." It also called for "a comprehensive legal framework for the operation of small and medium enterprises and the reform of labour law in line with ILO standards."

A full employment strategy perforce involves "implementation of macroeconomic policies aimed at securing an adequate framework for faster growth, fiscal equity, job-creating investment and a more stable balance between supply and demand." This would involve, wherever possible, "a reduction in real interest rates, fiscal deficits, public debts and governments debt-servicing burden."

It also calls upon ILO to work with its constituents and with Bretton Woods institutions to examine the impact of trade and financial liberalisation on the level and quality of employment, appropriate forms of government support for infrastructural development and training, forms of support for the development of small and medium sized enterprises, the design of labour market institutions and regulations which can best satisfy the twin imperatives of higher employment growth and competitiveness.

The committee also stressed that the goal of full employment had been reaffirmed by the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. As a major support of employment generation, tripartite forms of social dialogue among governments, workers' and employers' organisations should become a "priority item on the national policy agenda."

### Resolution targets child labour

The Conference's Resolutions Committee welcomed the increased involvement of the ILO in the fight against child labour, including the launching of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), increased technical cooperation and efforts to increase ratification and implementation of relevant ILO Conventions.

The Committee called upon governments and, where appropriate, employers and workers organisations to develop formal policies and set priorities so as to immediately put an end to the most

intolerable aspects of child labour, namely bondage and child slavery, dangerous and hazardous work, the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the exploitation of very young children.

It also called for measures to "raise public awareness of the human and economic costs as well as the long-term non-viability of using child labour."

An informal meeting at ministerial level on 12 June at which more than 60 ministers spoke out against child labour highlighted the ILO's commitment to its eradication. Work on a possible new Convention prohibiting the most intolerable forms of child labour is slated to begin soon, with a first discussion of its set to take place at the 1998 Conference. □

## Central Trade Unions Oppose Disinvestment

Major National Trade Union Centres, viz, INTUC, HMS, BMS, CITU and AITUC have in a joint statement vehemently opposed the government move on disinvestment of the public sector and the proposed appointment of a Disinvestment commission. On the other hand they have demanded the government should implement the undertaking to strengthen the public sector, in which case the trade unions are prepared to cooperate with it on the basis of genuine dialogue. The need of the hour is to take steps to strengthen the public sector which must also include revival of sick industries.

Sd/- INTUC    Sd/- HMS    Sd/-BMS  
Sd/-CITU    Sd/- AITUC

### PUBLIC SECTOR UNIT-

[From Page 16]

to be restricted within PSUs only.

3. Board of Directors have to be chosen through Union Public Service Commission to avoid nepotism and favouritism and also to ensure that task is given to effective hand. Industrial responsibilities have to be monitored and penal actin should be ensure for deliberate short comings in true sense.

4. There should not be any bar for the working class to participate in the management if competency is proved and found effective for the betterment of the organisations.

5. Monthly review meeting has to be held and bulletine has to be published against performance.

6. Top management has to be made answerable for any slackness if detected.

# Helms-Burton Poses Dilemma for Sugar Companies

The Helms-Burton law tightening the US trade embargo against Cuba has been widely denounced in recent weeks by the EU, the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Community (Caricom), and the US' NAFTA partners. The EU plans to lodge a complaint against the law with the World Trade Organisation. At its recent meeting the OAS passed a resolution denouncing the measure as a violation of sovereignty, by a 23-1 minority, with 10 abstentions. In rejecting the Helms-Burton law, the 14-member Caribbean Community stated that democracy could not come to a country with outside pressure.

The US' two partners in NAFTA, Canada and Mexico, have never accepted the American trade embargo of Cuba and have extensive business interests there. At their meetings in Ottawa the week of June 10th, Prime Minister Jean Chretien and President Ernesto Zedillo said they were considering challenging the Helms-Burton law under provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The Helms-Burton bill, officially known as the Cuban Liberty and Solidarity Act, was signed into law by President Clinton on March 12th, in the wake of the Cuban airforce downing two Miami-based civilian aircraft near the Cuban coast on Feb 24. Its main provisions are:

1. To give Cuban-Americans and other US citizens the right to sue in US courts for damages from foreign users ("traffickers") of property worth more than \$50,000 confiscated by the Cuban government since Jan 1, 1959. This provision is aimed at halting joint ventures with Cuba. The President may suspend this right for periods of six months by certifying it to be in US national interests and will expedite the transition to democracy in Cuba.

2. To bar from entry into the US aliens using confiscated property claimed by a US national, officers or shareholders with a controlling interest in firms "trafficking" in expropriated properties, and their families.

## Indirect Effect

Although due to go into effect August 1, Helms-Burton has already been instrumental in Redpath Sugar refinery of Toronto's changing its buying pattern for a raw sugar.

Redpath, a wholly-owned subsidiary of UK-based Tate & Lyle, had for many years purchased up to half (100-150,000 mt annually) of its raw sugar supplies from Cuba. But late last year the company decided not to renew its Cuban supply contract for 1996. A key factor in the decision was the company's desire to continue selling sugar to Canadian food processors

that export to the US.

For several years, the company had complied with US restrictions against the entry of refined sugar or products containing sugar from Cuba, by segregating its refined product into Cuban and non-Cuban stockpiles. Customers wishing to export their products to the US would be supplied with non-Cuban sugar. However, with the growing number of companies doing business with the US, segregation had become a logistical nightmare, according to Redpath president Andrew Ferrier. Customers were becoming jittery about buying sugar from a plant which also handled Cuban sugar.

Another factor in Redpath's decision, according to Ferrier, was that Cuba had become an increasingly unreliable supplier, following the sharp decline in production after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Redpath's decision to stop buying Cuban sugar is an example of the indirect effect of the Helms-Burton law: In fact the original version of the law contained a provision which would have prevented any company importing Cuban sugar from exporting sugar from any origin to the US. However, this provision was removed last summer after intensive lobbying by Canadian parliamentarians in Washington. In this case Redpath is going beyond the letter of the law, in order to stay well clear of any trouble with the American authorities.

## Potential Conflict with Canadian Law

For several years Canada has had legislation designed to counter the influence of the US embargo of Cuba. The Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act (FEMA) obliges Canadian companies to carry on normal business with Cuba. On June 17th the Canadian Government announced that in September it would be introducing amendments to FEMA in Parliament to deal with the new situation caused by Helms-Burton. These measure are:

1. Penalties for violation of the law are increased from \$10,000 to \$1 million, to bring them in line with American penalties.

2. Blocking orders will be issued to prevent US nationals who have won judgments against Canadian companies in US courts from collecting the money in Canada.

3. Canadians who lose money through US court rulings will be enabled to recover their losses from any Canadian assets of the concerned US nationals.

4. A list of objectionable foreign legislation that purports to extend the jurisdiction of national trade law to Canada, will be compiled and it will be made illegal for Canadians to comply with those trade laws.

# Mad Cows, Floods, and Neo-Liberalism

An estimated 10,000 workers in the British beef industry are currently unemployed as a result of the crisis arising from the government's belated acknowledgement of a possible link between Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, or "mad cow disease") in cattle and the fatal brain disease Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) in humans. Half a million workers in the beef and related industries now confront the risk of losing their jobs at the same time as they are informed that these jobs may have placed their health—and their lives—in jeopardy.

Workers and consumers throughout the food chain are at risk of contracting CJD, which according to some predictions could reach epidemic proportions in the next century if left unchecked. These developments follow years of refusal on the part of government and industry to respond to union criticism of over-intensive production techniques and calls for stricter health and safety measures in the industry.

In 1988, with BSE spreading at an alarming rate, the Transport and General Workers' Union drew attention to the hazards to members from working with infected animals, and called for stiffer enforcement of food hygiene regulations. The union demanded action to address the multiple possibilities for BSE to enter into the food chain, including the use of cattle-derived proteins in fertilizer.

The government response was to close public health research institutes, to partially privatise the meat hygiene inspection service, to reduce the number of slaughterhouse and meat-processing inspection visits, and to oppose union demands for strict labeling requirements on animal feed. Since the disease was first diagnosed, the UK has recorded nearly 160,000 cases of BSE.

Industry employers have, for the most part, lined up behind the government in deflecting criticism of farming and industrial practices and attacking the European Union's ban on UK beef products, rather than joining with the unions and with consumers in pressing for positive measures to address the crisis. Accord to the Scottish TUC, "some unscrupulous employers are using the BSE crisis as an excuse to attack workers' terms and conditions of employment, including the denial of redundancy payments."

BSE is the toxic byproduct of a system of food production which places profit ahead of the universal

human need for healthy nutrition. The British case is hardly unique. Earlier this year, IUF members in Costa Rica experienced first-hand the fatal impact of hyper-intensive production allied with neo-liberal deregulation and lack of respect for trade union rights.

The banana workers' union SITRAP has repeatedly warned of the destructive environmental consequences of uncontrolled plantation production in Costa Rica, where unregulated pesticide use has expanded together with the enormous increase in banana acreage. The felling of primary forests to feed the industry's appetite for banana crates has led to widespread erosion and deforestation. To combat union organisation, the majority of workers are on short-term contracts. Employers and the government promote yellow unionism in the form of solidarismo.

Mad cow disease and Costa Rican floods, for all their apparent resemblance to biblical plagues, are social rather than natural disasters. They are the result of corporate greed and a lack of transparency and accountability on the part of government agencies which have abandoned their regulatory function.

Consumers are threatened by the residues of those same pesticides which sicken and kill Costa Rican banana workers, just as UK cattle and beef workers stand in the front line of exposure to BSE contamination. The women and men who produce our food, often for low pay and under dangerous conditions, need a strong union voice in the way that production is organised. Trade union rights are an essential guarantee of public health and sustainable production, and therefore a vital consumer issue.

(Acknowledgement from International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations News Bulletin, Vol 66, No.3-4/1996).

## Meeting of A.I. Coordination Committee of Working Women

A Meeting of the All India Coordination Committee of working Women will be held at Vishakhapatnam on 16th November, 1996.

## TOYING WITH TRADE-WARS

*(The theory of free-market and globalisation has been haunting the policy makers in 3rd world developing countries, of course through forced prescriptions by World Bank and IMF with the advanced industrialised nations in the background. But for those rich nations it is a 'Head I win tail you lose' case. While prescribing others to globalise they practice protectionism. It is interesting that the 'NEWSWEEK' (July 1, 1996) the leading journal of the Western Capital made stringent observation on such opportunism and backlash against globalisation. Although we do not agree with all formulations made in said observation, we reproduce the excerpts from said article which may help better comprehension of the contradiction between the richer nations on trade-matters: Editor)*

Bob Dylan will be entertaining the G-7 leaders in Lyons, France, this Saturday. The Europeans are increasingly irritated by US highhandedness in trade. Washington has stalked out of three straight negotiations at the World Trade Organisation on opening up the financial-services, telecom and maritime sectors. And now the US government is threatening a secondary boycott of foreign companies doing business in Iran and Libya. Even Canada, America's gentle northern cousin, is talking retaliation.

But there is something deeper going on: a backlash against globalisation and free trade. It is a popular reaction to the rush into everfreer markets, a queasiness over the pace of change that is spreading from Eastern Europe, to the American heartland, to developing countries—which both fear Western capital and are blamed by the West for its loss of jobs.

And it has all been exacerbated by the influence of multinational corporations at trade talks. Those talks have degenerated from the broad liberalisation efforts of GATT's early years into increasingly rancorous squabbles over market sectors. Ironically multinationals, which have the most to gain from free trade, may now be doing the most to give it a bad name. By casting doubt on the WTO's legitimacy—which creates a jittery investor environment—they have the most to lose.

It's strange. Though the world is generally at peace, the rhetoric of war lives on. Whether you talk to folks in the street, or supposedly sophisticated policymakers in the world's major capitals, there is a vague but quite settled notion that the cold war has

been replaced by a kind of economic death struggle among nations.

So what's going on—why so much discontent? A few reasons. First, multinationals do compete in rather warlike fashion—unlike economies, they can “die”, or go bankrupt—and they've increasingly gotten into the habit of dictating terms to negotiators. This was the real story behind the WTO telecom talks that were suspended in May, for example—a handful of US companies like Motorola and AT&T decided they weren't getting enough market access abroad in return for giving up their domestic monopolies. In his new book, “A Return to Politics,” German parliamentarian Hermann Scheer, a Social Democrat, argues that multinationals have convinced governments everywhere that their interests are one with the nation's. They're not.”

Second, free markets are increasingly associated with a lot of pain. Western Europe has 18 million unemployed, and there is a yawning income gap between the skilled and unskilled in America. Says Harvard economist Robert Z Lawrence, “there is a tendency for people to scapegoat globalisation.” Right now, free-trade misery happens to be the handiest issue.

Much of the blame for this change is directed at Washington. From the 1950s to the 1980s, the United States was the prime mover in liberalising markets. Now, however, the Americans seem to have joined the chorus shouting “enough”. The pro-free-trade coalition that got GATT and NAFTA through Congress in the early '90s has “lost all its momentum,” says Scott Latham, a DC-based international-business consultant. So perilous is it to talk of freer markets in Washington that even little Chile, the poster child of liberalisation in Latin America, finds itself blocked from joining NAFTA. Part of this, including the tough line at the WTO talks, is a bit of patriotic chin-jutting by Clinton in an election year (he faces popular discontent over corporate downsizing). But Clinton's temporary gamesmanship is, dangerously, translating into wounded relations with America's allies—and that may be more permanent.

Last week, prior to Lyons, there was a heated exchange over whether the summit communique should include language condemning a nation's right to unilateral trade sanctions. Six European nations wanted tough language, but Washington “has different

ideas," a European spokesman said. "Officially it'll all be glossed over," another OECD source told NEWSWEEK. "It will be embarrassing for the world's most prominent liberal economy to be seen promoting measures that contradict existing multilateral treaties." In fact, US multinationals, as well as Republicans worried about giving up US "sovereignty," badly want Clinton to insist on Washington's right to unilateral action.

Nonetheless, corporate nationalism in Washington is more prevalent today than ever. Call it the "George Fisher effect," Fisher, the chairman of Eastman Kodak, is by all accounts a brilliant executive who has mastered the art of using US trade law to his company's ends. He did it at Motorola, creating a powerful lobbying effort that had everyone from Bill Clinton to US Ambassador Walter Mondale working overtime for the company in Japan. In 1994 this resulted in a government-imposed deal that virtually guaranteed Motorola market share in cellular telephones in the Tokyo region—even though the company's claim of closed markets was not watertight. Then Fisher left for Kodak, and a company that had been fairly well behaved (and prosperous) in Japan for decades turned into a trade-relations terror. Last year Kodak dropped a 252-page report on the US trade representative detailing how rival Fuji has created a "profit sanctuary"—a protected market in Japan. Even many US experts considered the case weak and rendered outdated by the liberalisation in Japan. In any case, Fuji denied the charge, the Japanese government refused to negotiate and earlier this month the Kodak case was sent to the already beleaguered WTO.

In Europe and Japan, of course, there is nothing terribly new about governments backing domestic companies as national champions in overseas markets. But in an increasingly privatised world, this is a chivalric anachronism.

All this leads one to think that, in the end, the overheated trade-as-war rhetoric will cure itself. Given the mood at Lyons, one can only hope so. From the point of view of countries, all-out trade war is impractical. And companies, too, will act as a check on their own trade excesses, since as multinationals they must increasingly be diplomats. That is the real story behind the way America and China averted their own war over intellectual-property rights this month. Some US companies were pushing for sanctions against China for permitting the operation of pirate plants cranking out CDs and other goods. But a lot more were pushing against afraid of the loss of Chinese business if Beijing retaliated. Among those counselling caution was the single biggest US investor in China. Guess who: it is Motorola.

## The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions

- \* **Condemns Bhojpur killings**
- \* **Reviews situation to prepare for its future programmes**

The Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions consisting of AITUC, CITU, HMS, UTUC, UTUC(LS), AICCTU, IFTU, TUCC and various Industrial federations met on 19.7.96 at Delhi to review the situation and decide its course of action. Com.B D Joshi of AITUC presided over the meeting.

AT the outset, the Sponsoring Committee passed a resolution unanimously condemning the brutal massacre in Bhojpur district of Bihar organised by 'Ranabir Sena' the Gangster outfit of the landlords which killed 20 persons mostly women and children. The Sponsoring Committee viewed the killings as the offensive of the landlord class against the rural poor fighting for their rights. The Sponsoring Committee while conveying condolences to all the concerned families demanded upon the govt for taking strong action against the criminal outfit of the landlords.

Sponsoring Committee also expressed its strong resentment to the decision of the government on price hike of the petroleum products and demanded review of the decision. It also expressed opposition to any further disinvestment of PSU shares and against constitution of disinvestment commission and demanded concrete steps to strengthen the public sector units, end all discrimination against the same pursued by the previous regime and expeditious measures to revive sick PSUs at the earliest. It also recorded its strong disapproval against the policy of allowing private sector and foreign capital in Insurance Sector and in Telecom Sector. The sponsoring Committee also resented over the Govt clearance of counter guarantee to Enron Power project. It demanded immediate lifting of ban on recruitment in central govt deptt. Sponsoring Committee also demanded early steps by the Govt of India for removal of Bonus ceilings, increase of the gratuity ceilings for PSUs and other sectors to Rs.2.5 lakh and raising of the ceilings of exemption from Income tax.

The Sponsoring Committee reiterated the urgent need of united trade union mobilisation and movement for defence of the right and interest of the working class and common people and the country as a whole. It decided to meet again on 24th August '96 and chalk out its course of programmes.

Sd/- M K Pandhe CITU	Sd/- A B Bardhan AITUC	Sd/- V Tiagi HMS
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Sd/- Abani Roy UTUC	Sd/- R Shirma UTUC(LS)	Sd/- V K Patole IFTU
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Sd/- Dipankar Bhattacharjee  
AICCTU



After the last all India demonstration, in April 1996 some honorarium was increased. Even then Rs 300/- or Rs 500 is too low compared to the present sky rocketting prices of essential commodities.

After detail discussion on all those problems it was decided to meet the Prime Minister and Human resources Minister in a delegation to highlight the basic demnads.

As per the decision, all the trade unions met the Prime Minister on 19th July. The delegation was led by Com.E Balanandan M.P., and Com.Geeta Mukherjee MP.

The memorandum consisted 3 main demands (1) Recognition of ICDS workers as government employees (2) pending that they may be paid statutory minimum wages (3) the ICDS projects should not be privatised.

The delegation of about 12 women and men presented the memorandum. The Prime Minister inquired about the number of Anganwadi workers, and then noted the demands about the extra work given to them. Then he promised to look into these and give reply within a week.

On 20th of July the delegation of all trade unions met Shri SR Bomai, the Minister for Human Resources Development

to present another memorandum consisting the same demands. Com.Vimal Ranadive, Convenor of the Action Committee gave some instance of extra work, then showed the government orders regarding promotion of the Anganwadi workers to supervisory posts as well as the order of "10% of the ICDS projects to be given and sanctioned during 1992-93 to registered voluntary organisation..." Shri Bomai discussed many points with the delegation. But he did not rule out the possibility of giving the projects to NGOs. The question was raised that after taking over the project they generally dismiss the previous staff. This should not be done. The Anganwadi Workers themselves raised the problem of meager wages and other complaints to him. He also assured to look into the matter sympathetically.

In view of above developments, it is imperative that Samyukta Sangharsh Samity and the constituent units should prepare for all India agitation programmes.

- \* **CITU CONDEMNS NEGLIGENT MANAGEMENT FOR TRAGIC ACCIDENT IN NAPHTHA-JHAKRI PROJECT AT HIMACHAL PRADESH.**
- \* **DEMANDS JUDICIAL ENQUIRY AND ADEQUATE COMPENSATION FOR THOSE KILLED.**

CITU expressed shock at the tragic accident cause on 18th July 1996 at Kinaur District of Himachal Pradesh when a truck carrying explosive has caught fire at the entrance of the tunnel killing five workers including the driver and those working in the tunnel. Also 50 workers have been severely injured and admitted to hospital.

CITU expressed serious concern over the utter negligence of the management of both M/s Continental Foundation Joint-Venture and Naptha Jhakri Power Corporation in providing proper safety arrangements and implements which led to such serious accidents and loss of lives of the workers. Workers were not being supplied with safety masks, Helmet etc. and even Oxygen Cylinders were not made readily available in such a fireprone worksite.

CITU demands judicial enquiry into the cause of accident and stringent penalty of the negligent officials. CITU also demands adequate compensation for the deceased workers beside full-proof safety measures in the work-site to avoid repetition of such tragic accident.

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## BOOK POST