

Presidential Address

**Working Committee Meeting,
New Delhi, September 24-26, 1986**

Comrades,

At the outset I must congratulate the Textile workers of Delhi, our CITU Union and all other organisations which headed the recent strike and successfully concluded it keeping the unity of the workers and the trade union movement in tact. The prolonged strike carried on in the midst of an intense crisis in the textile industry and against the adamant management which was bent on closure of some mills was a very very difficult operation and only a sustained unity of the workers and trade unions leading them could have led to an orderly conclusion of the strike. As a result, the confidence of the workers in their organisations and strength has increased their sense of solidarity and unity is strengthened and now vast members realise that unity of the trade union movement constitute an essential success for securing some of their urgent demands. The united conduct of the strike in these circumstances and over a period of more than hundred days, required conscious adherence on the part of all trade unions to a sense of class unity in spite of differences that are bound to arise when handling of strike of thousands of workers. No doubt there were differences and vacillations, and compromises between conflicting view points were essential to maintain unity. We must congratulate our CITU affiliated trade union for adhering to the principled

stand of firm support to the minimum demands of the workers while at the same time showing utmost concern for maintaining trade union unity. There is no doubt that after its successful fight for unity the strength of the CITU union will increase and it will further contribute to the maintenance of trade union unity and solidarity of the workers.

It cannot be said, however, that the Central Government and the Labour Department really discharged their job and did their best to secure justice for the workers. If the administration had exercised strong pressure against the recalcitrant and adamant attitude especially of a section of the management, the dispute could have been settled entirely in favour of workers.

Comrades, the last few months since our General Council meeting have witnessed a big spurt in the activities of the CITU and the joint activities of the trade union movement. The joint observation of 9th August as a day of fight against divisive forces, the observance of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day and the big peace demonstrations on September 1 show the rising awakening of our workers to the cause of fight against divisive forces. Besides, the CITU trade unions in many states have started taking up the question of unemployed workers, organised conventions and demonstrations. Equally important is the fact that in a number of states our CITU State Committees are taking up the question of organising the workers of unorganised industries. In some States, State Committees are also devoting their attention to the question of working women and their problems. But we have to note that so far as the question of working women is concerned our activities are marked by general neglect and indifference which is a sign of feudal attitude towards the problem of women. In many states where thousands of women are employed in unorganised industries, like beedi and other industries, the CITU union hardly intervene to organise them and champion their cause. This deviation which weakens the trade union movement has to be overcome in the shortest possible time and every union should have a working women's cell to ensure that the problems of working women are no longer neglected.

Comrades, at the meeting of the General Council in April last we have noted the Rajiv Government's policy of denigrating the public sector and observed that it was leading to harmful effects injuring the interests of the nation as a whole. We also observed that

the new economic policy will mean virtually not only the disbandment of the public sector but also disbandment of purposeful planning. This has been the plea of the World Bank for years and it seems that the new economic policy of Rajiv Government will succeed in fulfilling it.

However, Rajiv Gandhi has been assuring the people that the priority of the public sector in our economy will be maintained and there is no danger of disbandment of public sector. The actual policy pursued by the Government belies this promise. It is also seen that a Cabinet Minister is permitted to open a virtual war against the public sector denouncing it as any mercenary of private sector will do.

Mr. Vasant Sathe, Cabinet Colleague of Rajiv Gandhi in his recent article in Times of India says, "However, the whole concept of public sector was uneconomic and non-viable from its inception. In our enthusiasm to generate maximum employment at the earlier for our people we opted for setting up of public sector industry" Sathe with his enthusiasm for the private sector and international competition forgets that the role of the public sector was to establish strategic industries to curtail and reduce our dependence on western imperialists. He, therefore, ascribes every kind of evil with the public sector calling it labour intensive etc.

Sathe continues, "Thus in the name of Indian socialism all that we have achieved is a stagnant, high cost, inefficient, non-competitive, irresponsible and unaccountable system of production". The World Bank will fully endorse Mr Sathe. It had been using these denunciary words to secure its stranglehold on the Indian economy. In Sathe it has found the worthy storm-trouper. In the name of efficiency Sathe demands what all private capitalist want. He says that, "management must be given continued authority without any limitations of tenure or age, the only criteria being merit or capacity to deliver.... the management should be given full powers and facilities to employ modern managerial and technological methods for achieving minimum production and production efficiency. The output for man-shift should be comparable with the best available in the world. It is high time that we did away with the artificial definition between public sector and private must conform to certain basic national aims" Sathe calls not only for the dissolution of the public sector but also for complete freedom of employers to hire and fire workers, the right of management to

introduce technology irrespective of its effects on employment. People's livelihood and jobs are no consideration when introducing efficiency in the production machine. State's remedy is complete sway of private sector over the economy as a guarantee for efficient production when hundreds of private sector concerns in India are sick and revealing the bankruptcy of the private management. Sathe, besides, does not seem to be aware of the plight of the economies of United States and other Western countries where private sector rules supreme along with massive unemployment and chronic crisis.

It is obvious that Sathe's is not the individual voice of the Cabinet Minister, he is really expressing the real content of Rajiv Gandhi's economic policy and he is therefore permitted to come out with his outbursts against the public sector in open.

Now it seems that the representatives of the efficient private sector are asked to supervise the implementation of the Central Projects of the Government. In June this year the Minister for Plan Implementation announced a six member National Advisory Council under the Chairmanship of Ratan Tata and other private sector capitalists to monitor the implementation of Central Govt. Projects, removing bottle-necks and evolve methods and their completion on their schedule. All these years the idea was that the public sector should growingly control the private sector. Now the beginning is made to put the completion of the Central Projects under the expertise of the private sector.

The CITU protested against this move as a step towards privatisation and pointed out how in appointing this committee the Ministry was violating the norms of tripartism and the Government's resolution on workers' participation in management. The CITU further pointed out, "it would also render the work of the Committee of Union Minister of Labour irrelevant."

Further, the fact it is that the economic policy of the Rajiv Government leads to a growing discrimination against India's public sector and deliberate preference for foreign capital. It means, that public sector is being attacked from two edns, firstly an attempt to privatise it and handing over to Indian capitalists and secondly to emasculate it and to allow the foreign capital to penetrate into it and dominate it.

According to press reports the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) is reported to be planning massive import of 700

crores of rupees telecommunication equipment, which threaten to ruin Indian industry. The Indian Press now notes that Rajiv Gandhi Government's economic policy is putting public sector under the domination of foreign multinational capital. The Times of India issue dated May 5th observes, "The Government is planning to deal a bloody blow to the management of some of the most efficient state-owned undertakings stalling them with the so-called non-resident expertise. Though they will be collectively expected to invest substantial sum nearly 200 crores of rupees according to one's estimate in the proposed venture they will have no control over the new company's operation. It will rest in the NRI by virtue of 51 per cent of holding in its equity. But even this by no means is the most obnoxious feature of the scheme. What it will be expected to do and what cost to the orientation of managerial cohesion and morale on the state-owned undertaking is the main issue.

The NRI Company is sponsored by M.S. Pathak, who, to quote a writer in a responsible political weekly, "suddenly left in questionable circumstances the post of the Chairman of the public sector consultancy firm, Engineers India, to serve US multinationals in a relatively junior post. This is the person heading the NRI firm. Having set up the firm, Pathak proposes that the real consultant to the joint venture company would be a US firm, Booze Allen Hamilton, which is one of the three largest management companies in the world. The NRI proposal, therefore, envisages a technical collaboration agreement between the Indian Company and Booze Allen Hamilton. This is where the public sector policy of the Rajiv Government is leading.

It is obvious that the entire trade union movement and the working class should fight the anti-national policy, which will lead to mortgaging of our public sector to foreign capital. It is gratifying to note that our unions in the public sector along with many other union have already seized of the problems and held several conventions and conferences to denounce the policy and warned against this danger. An all-India Convention of public sector union is being called by the NCC to launch an emphatic protest of the working class against this anti-national new economic policy of the Rajiv Government. The entire trade unions must rally behind it to defeat this dangerous policy.

The realisation of the efficient drive in the public sector under the tutelage of US multinational expertise promises to meet direct

attack on the jobs, wages and living standards of the public sector workers. The entire tenor of Sathe's article is to hold labour as a villain of the piece. There are, too many people on job, there is too little work done, productivity is too low compared with international standards— This is the war cry. All this is to be remedied by introducing new technology and throwing thousands of workers out of job. This is virtually the new economic policy.

Demand for increased production by workers, linking productivity with wages, arbitrary fixation of productivity norms, schemes of voluntary retirement, submitted TUs, open propaganda against TUs as selfish and callous organisations not caring for society and the unorganised workers—this has become a stock-in-trade of the Government's and employer's offensive against labour. The demand for wage freeze is also getting louder and louder.

If as yet the general onslaught on the workers has not been launched it is because of the formidable strength of the trade unions which are displaying growing unity to face the common danger. The recommendations of the Pay Commission that the emoluments of the public sector workers should be brought to the level of the Central Government employees foreshadows an attack on the wage standards of the Public Sector workers.

But now it seems that the initiative to curb labour is being taken directly by the Prime Minister himself. Recently he directly intervened to veto an agreement between a recognised trade union and the management of public sector concern, Rare Earths. Neither the Finance Minister nor the Department of Public Sector Enterprises had objected to the terms of the agreement. The arbitrary and unprecedented intervention of the Prime Minister in a settled dispute speaks of mounting hostility of the Rajiv Gandhi towards labour.

Comrades, the drive against labour further expresses itself in the proposed amendments to the Industrial Disputes and the Trade Union Acts whose only purpose is to curb the freedom of the trade union and virtually illegalise all strikes. The ESMA, the power granted to the State Governments to declare any industry as an essential industry are not enough, it seems, to guarantee industrial peace. The Government is arming itself with further power to deny and prevent all direct actions, to ensure that the workers' protection again are stifled from the beginning. Over and above this a

new law for registration of unions and ensure the monopoly of the representation to certain favourites of the Government is coming and finally there is an attempt to curb the bargaining powers of the trade unions. The proposed amendments are based on the recommendations of the Sanat Mehta Committee Report, which the CITU had condemned long ago.

The amendment provides that any trade dispute can be referred to adjudication by the Industrial Relations Commission at the instance of either the State Govt. or the Central Govt. after failure of conciliation. The Industrial Relation Commission is a standing permanent adjudicating body at the disposal of the Govt. to forestall strikes and divert action and compel the trade unions to appear before the Commission. Experience shows that the power of the Govt. is always used to the disadvantage of the workers by depriving them of their only sanction by forces of action and strength of numbers. The Commission will always be guided by the prevailing policy of the Govt. towards labour. This is a device to impose compulsory adjudication or arbitration on the workers and it will always be used when the owners have no case and when the workers are likely to succeed. This is perhaps Rajiv Gandhi's first step towards industrial relation in the 21st century.

To give respectability to this strike breaking apparatus, a President of the status of the High Court Judge is to be appointed in consultation with the Chief Justice. He is to be paid away high salary with the permanent or long time job while hired strike breakers get only temporary assignment and lower remuneration. The other members of the Commissions are to be appointed in consultation with this high salaried strike breaker.

Gone are the days when workers can be duped by strike breakers, gowning the costumes of judiciary and posing an impartial authority.

The Labour Courts would have the following functions :

(i) Industrial disputes relating to discharges, dismissal, retrenchment or termination of a workman.

(ii) The application and interpretations of standing orders of establishments and propriety or legality of orders passed under the standing orders.

(iii) Certification of collective bargaining agent/council (including powers for derecognition for unfair labour practice)

(iv) Individual disputes of confirmation, seniority, promo-

tion, reversion, premature retirement, superannuation, leave, disciplinary matters, remuneration and retirement benefits.

In a word all the duties functions of the Labour Commissioners have now been given to Labour Courts thus lessening Govt's responsibility and making it appear as if the workers are likely to get justice from such an impartial body.

Then there are reactionary provisions for trade union recognition. Recongnitions will be based on membership as ascertained and the demand for recognition based on secret ballot of workers is rejected to pamper and favour INTUC unions. The disastrous effect of this anti-working class, anti-strike line of industrial relations has been noted by no less than Vasant Sathe, the fiery crusader against the public sector and Cabinet colleague of Rajiv Gandhi: "A major and catastrophic instance in the recent has been that of the textile industry of Bombay, which had been closed down for over two years, rendering about 200 thousands employees idle and causing the production loss running into billions of rupees during this period. The main reason for this show-down in the textile has been the insistence on the part of the management, unfortunately supported by the Government, that only a particular union (read Congress(I), INTUC affiliated union) will be treated as recognised union. The union is not willing to have its membership or its credibility and support among the workers judged on any democratic criteria, more particularly that of an election by secret ballot. It insists that it should be recognised by some sort of verification which it expects to be favoured by the Government because of its political allegiance.

"It is this which has been a bane of the entire employer and employee relations in this country. When this union had some credibility among the employees did not come to a crisis. But when the so-called recognised union lost its credibility and was not willing to establish itself by any democratic method the matter came to a serious break.

"As a result the whole industry was thrown in turmoil by a prolonged strike. It is therefore imperative to provide that in the present pattern of employer-employee relations, the only rational way of establishing a bargaining agent for the employees must be in the form of electing that bargaining agent periodically, for two years by secret ballot among the employees of the concern. The Industrial Disputes Act would have to be suitably amended to

achieve this object." (Sathe—Social Revolution, Page-182-183).

While Sathe's dialect against the public sector is secretly appreciated by his colleagues, his plea for secret ballot is rejected. The proposed amendment depends on check-off of membership which in the Indian condition means a guarantee of financial supply to a pliant union at the expense of the working class.

Besides, there is an atrocious provision which appeals to an unwilling worker to join the favoured union against his will. The amendment says, "The workmen who are members of an unregistered union may be given an option to join one of the registered unions within a period of three months. In case of workman who does not opt to join any registered trade union within this period of three months his trade union fee will be remitted to the principal bargaining agent, or the council as the case may be." The worker has not only the right to decide the representative character of the union by his vote but he has also the right to abstain from the union in which he has no faith. This is an instant provision. Only Hitler made it compulsory for all workers to join a fascist union. This is where the check-off system leads. You compel workers to join the union and to call it a bargaining agent. The check-off system demands that every worker should reveal his union affiliation to the management. The worker justly fear that they will be victimised if they do not join the favoured union. Now under the new amendment if they do not show their preference for the favoured union they will be deemed to be its members.

The provision for deciding the bargaining agent on the basis of check-off system is an instrument of promoting client unions in a conspiracy against the growth of militant unions of workers.

Besides, there is a provision that no union can be registered unless it has minimum 25 per cent membership in a concern. Under the present provision the scope for registration to growing militant unions is blocked thereby preventing them from participating in bargaining and negotiations. It is intended to keep monopoly of representation in the hands of certain unions which have no reputation for militancy. In fact the new amendment is a provision to prevent the future growth of militant unions of workers.

Then there is a further restriction on the workers' right to strike. Strike cannot take place even when a majority of workers so decides. Only when 75 per cent of the membership of all bargaining agents vote for a strike then alone it will be legal. Little more than

25 per cent minority can veto any strike. The authoritarian drive against working class is fully explained in the new amendment, which should be condemned and rejected by the entire trade union movement.

The recommendations of the Fourth Pay Commission have come as a source of disappointment to all Central Government employees. There is great disappointment over the summary rejection of the demand for 'parity in wages with the public sector'.

The disparity between the emoluments of the two sections have been growing in recent years to the disadvantage of the Central Government employees, and there was no reason why the principle of equal pay for equal work should not have been applied in their case. But it cannot be said that the fault lies entirely with the Pay Commission. The history of Indian Trade Union movement and working class struggle shows that important demands are never secured unless the employer is directly faced with concerted action on the part of the employees. This precisely was not the case in the present situation. The Pay Commission had taken the full measure of certain leaders controlling the employees' organisations, but will not lead to concerted actions.

Having said this one cannot but condemn the way in which the Fourth Pay Commission has handled the entire problem of emoluments, the salaries and Dearness Allowance of the workers.

In recent years the employees and workers are more and more thrown on the defensive to protect their real wage against the rising inflation and cost of living. The figures of total emoluments worked out by the Pay Commission and the authorities to make it appear as if the workers and employees are drawing a big slice of the national income, do not compensate the workers fully against the rise in prices and living index. Statistically it can be proved that there is hardly any radical increase in the standard of living of the mass of employees. On the other hand in spite of four figure wages employees are facing greater and greater difficulties to meet their family budgets, expenses on education and other needs of a minimum cultured life. The recommendations of the Pay Commissions have been made in disregard of all these considerations. Their main aim is to save as much money as possible for the Govt.

It seems, the government itself was preparing to ensure that the Pay Commission's recommendations did not add much to its expenditure on employees' salaries. Before the Pay Commission

was appointed the Government had adopted a policy of no further recruitment and not filling the vacancies.

In the course of three to four years, nearly 20-24 per cent of the posts have remained vacant and they are not likely to be filled in the near future also. It has been estimated that the saving effected through this reduction of the jobs is equal to the additional expenditure that the Government will have to spend for implementing the recommendations of the Pay Commission. Besides, the Pay Commission recommendations for half yearly review of DA is nothing short of cheating the workers of their legitimate compensation against the rising prices.

Extremely atrocious is the recommendation regarding refusal of maternity benefit to women who have two children. Only an uncivilised group of people can make such a recommendation thinking that they are discharging their responsibility towards family planning in India. If the Government accepts this it will condemn itself as much as it has done by passing the notorious Muslim Divorce Women's Act.

In the report which runs into hundreds of pages there is only one page dealing with working women. It has been correctly described by certain journals as display of male chauvinism. It appears to take into consideration some difficulties faced by working women but has not the courage to make positive recommendations to remove them. It also does not even mention that working women suffer from sexual harassment and every step has to be taken to stop this atrocious behaviour on the part of certain officials. Unfortunately the trade union of employees also have not reacted in a strong manner against this bias against women and the proposal to withdraw the maternity benefit from them.

A point of criticism, and one may say justified criticism, is that the higher echelons of employees and officials have been given very big increment in salaries and emoluments. This stands in contrast to what is being recommended for the ordinary employees. Partly this is due to the fact, perhaps, the higher circles were left out of the purview of the earlier commissions. But this also is not the entire truth. The technical and economic service personnel are being discriminated against and they are also complaining that the generalists of the services are being given special treatment and special concessions. Why? Because while the technical and economic personnel are trying to improve the functioning of capitalist

society the generalists constitute the main guardian army of the State apparatus. They are the defenders of the state against the lower classes and their movement. That is why after straining their loyalty for a few years the dividends are being paid to them and they should be firm in their dealings with the employees and people.

It will be extremely unfortunate if the trade union leaders and the employees after verbal protests again get themselves enmeshed after in dealing with anomalies and petty concessions. They must unite their forces to undo the injustice done to them. If they join their forces the entire trade union movement will stand behind them.

R.B.I. REPORT

The latest RBI report promises that the performance of the Indian economy in 1986-87 will be better than in the preceding two years. According to it with both agriculture and industry set to grow faster, the rate of growth of real national income is expected to be at least 5 per cent against four per cent in 1985-86 and 3.7 per cent in 1984-85. Now five per cent is considered by the World Bank and the Planning Commission to be the minimum necessary rate to avoid further deterioration of the economic situation. And this also if five per cent rate of growth is accompanied by six per cent annual growth rate in exports. It seems that the promised rate of growth will be unattainable as the latest reports suggest that large areas of the country are affected by insufficient monsoon and drought. Secondly, industry also seems unable to pick up as many concerns are closing due to foreign competition, the result of the new economic policy. The number of sick industry is growing and unemployment also is growing apace. Modernisation which means capital intensive industry is slowing down the rate of employment growth. Recent data shows that between 1973-74 and 1982-83 employment increased only by 3.7 per cent while fixed capital increased by nearly 29 per cent. The Seventh Plan visualises an annual growth of 3.99 per cent in employment. A five per cent increase in national income and 3.99 per cent in employment will only add to the miseries of the people.

This is the protest held by the current year. The RBI report exposes the false claims of the government about its successes in controlling inflation and holding the price line. The CITU has repeatedly exposed these claims. Now the RBI report also draws attention to the fact that Government's alleged success in control-

ling inflation does not give any relief to the people. The prices of essential commodities continue to rise despite this claim.

The RBI report points out that deceleration in the wholesale prices was accompanied by rise in consumer prices defrauding the people of their lawfully earned incomes. The rise in consumer prices was 8.9 per cent in 1985-86 against five per cent in 1984-85 on a point to point basis. On an average basis also the rise in the consumer prices was 6.4 per cent between 1985-86 and 1984-85. Thus while people were being regaled with stories of successes in price control they were more and more robbed through rising prices of consumer goods.

There is not going to be any relaxation in the price situation. Because with the heavy deficit financing programme of the Government, money supply must increase and prices must rise. During the last three years the money supply increased at an average annual rate of 17.8 per cent. The RBI advocates caution for the current year in regard to money supply but there cannot be caution with the government budget providing for huge deficit.

The RBI report promises a better performance in the industry for 1986-87. But industrial production is in doldrums and lot of capacity lies unutilised. The policy of liberalising imports has contributed to industrial stagnation, unutilised capacity and closure. The industry to be affected recently because of excessive imports is the fertiliser industry of the country. The Capital goods industry also is the victim of this charity towards foreigners. While shortage of electricity has played its role over imports of capital goods, iron ore, steel etc have caused serious dislocation in indigenous industry.

The deteriorating economic condition of the people, the continuous rise in consumer prices which affects the purchasing capacity of the people, the reduction of government expenditure on development projects, combined with import liberalisation deny all prospects of better performance and relief. The working class and the people must get ready to face new attacks transferring the burden of the crisis on their shoulders. All these once more underline the necessity and importance of concerted trade union action.

DIVISIVE FORCES

Comrades, at the last meeting of the General Council we discussed the gravity arising out of the challenge of the divisive

forces. Later on all important trade union centres decided to unitedly take steps to warn the people against this growing danger. But in the months that had passed since the General Council meeting, the attack of these forces is getting intensified in some respect while they are being contained to some extent. The situation in Punjab to some extent is much better than what it was six months back with the initiative in the hands of the security forces to protect the integrity and unity of the people. But the situation in the state continues to be dangerous as it was with the major part of the accord remaining unimplemented. The Government of India has delayed the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab and thereby lost an important weapon to mobilise the people of Punjab against the secessionist activities of the Khalistanis. This is leading to vacillation in the Barnala Ministry some of whose members are guilty of activities prejudicial to national unity and encouraging the extremist activities. The Punjab crisis can be solved only on the basis of honest implementation of the accord and simultaneous mobilisation of all democratic and patriotic elements to isolate and fight the murderous gangs acting in the name of Khalistan. The struggle for national unity in Punjab cannot be won by treating it as only a law and order problem. The primary instrument must be the political mobilisation of the people and isolation of the extremists. It is a matter of satisfaction that the working class of Punjab by and large has firmly stood by national and class unity rejecting the communal and secessionist appeals. This was in evidence when a joint trade union delegation consisting of representatives from all trade union centres was enthusiastically greeted by thousands of workers comprising of all communities and castes — majority coming from the Sikh community.

The working class must note that the murders of members of a minority community creates repercussions in other states. They are intended to rouse communal passion among the Hindus against Sikhs in other states so that the country is more and more divided on communal lines and the sikh minority is forced to migrate to Punjab while the Hindu minority is forced to leave Punjab. It must be admitted that the mass of people both in Punjab and in other states has displayed utmost sobriety and concern for communal unity by refusing to fall into the traps. The murderous actions in Punjab have been the handiwork of organised groups without the participation of the mass. Similarly the communal actions outside
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Punjab have been due to the provocation of certain Hindu communal elements out to create trouble. The mass of people though sometimes agitated has refused to join the campaign of riot and arson. It is a matter of great shame that the BJP leaders both in Delhi and Ahmedabad have by their activities and slogans contributed to the growing communal tension ending sometimes in riots.

The divisive agencies backed and financed from abroad have now opened a new theatre for their operation by launching Gorkhaland movement in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The leader of the agitation has left no doubt about his reliance on foreign governments to achieve his aims. He has asked the governments of several countries including Nepal, Pakistan and others for help in his ignoble cause. He is emboldened to call for Pakistani help because he knows that Sikh terrorists are financed and trained from Pakistan.

This is an out and out secessionary and reactionary movement which can be fought with the aid of the people. Already the leaders of this movement have unleashed arson and violence on a number of occasions leading to police firing on their violent procession. Recently they burned down the house of Com. Anand Pathak, member of our Working Committee and Parliament Member from the district. It is a matter of great satisfaction that all parties including the Congress(I) in West Bengal have declared their opposition to the movement as disruptive of national unity. However, some leaders of the All India Congress like Arjun Singh, the Vice President of the Organisation are taking a dubious position and pleading that the movement should not be considered as anti-national. This is nothing but betrayal of the cause of national unity. It is amazing that such persons should occupy leading position in the Cong(I) organisation which boasts of its fidelity and loyalty to the cause of national unity and whose government holds periodical national integration conferences to assure the people that it is deeply committed to Indian unity.

The Left Front government of West Bengal understood that the Nepali speaking population of the Darjeeling district suffers from backward conditions and from the same grievances regarding employment and economic conditions as the rest of the Indian masses. At the same time it was aware that there were certain special problems which had to be tackled to give Nepali speaking people a sense of unity and identity. While therefore launching

schemes to give economic relief and improve their living conditions the left front government declared Nepali as one of the official languages of the state. It also proposed to the Central Government that suitable legislation should be passed for providing autonomy to the area. If these proposals had been accepted by the Central Government the Nepali speaking people would have been considerably reduced.

Unlike in Punjab, the CPI(M) and the CITU are in a position to move their massive strength against the reactionaries and enter the battle for isolating them. The Tea Garden workers following the CITU unions and the workers and the people following the CPI(M) have now unleashed an explanatory and educational campaign among the Nepali speaking people to frustrate the secessionists. The Bandh call recently given by these organisations drew tens of thousands of tea garden workers speaking different languages to protest against the coercive attempts of the reactionary forces. Here there is not exclusive reliance on administrative measures and activities of security forces. A major political battle is being waged to win over those who have been trapped by the disruptive leadership. This is possible because the trade unions and the left forces have immense following, secured through political battles. Ultimately it is only this class strength among the people that can decisively defeat the forces of destabilisation.

All CITU unions and the entire trade union movement must convey our warm greetings to the Tea garden workers and Nepali speaking people rallied around the Left Front for their courageous fight to save Indian unity and promise full support to them in everything that they do.

Comrades, all this shows that the trade union movement must marshall all its forces to check the growth of divisive forces before it is too late. If the united trade union movement mobilises the entire working class to actively fight these disruptive forces, to fight them in factories, in offices to carry propaganda against them in meeting in procession and through bandhs they would be definitely put to fight and the country's unity will be saved.

Comrades, I must draw your attention to recent developments in the international situation which is growing tense. Thanks to the war drives of the US imperialists. The latest achievement of these war mongers seems to be explosion of a new device which assures them that Star War, carrying nuclear war into outer space

is a viable proposition. This is being done in the teeth of opposition from all peace loving forces, from all democratic forces and the socialist camp.

While the peace loving peoples in the world denounce these Star War moves they appreciate and applaud the peace proposals put forward by Com. Gorbachev on behalf of the USSR.

The various suggestions made by USSR to eliminate nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have given a new push to the world peace movement and strengthened the determination and confidence of peoples of all countries and from all walks of life to defend peace at all cost. The warm response of the USSR to the appeal of the Governments of the six non-aligned countries and the unilateral extension of moratorium of nuclear tests have forced the imperialists to change their tactics. The conference of Non-aligned nations in Harare has further exposed the racist outlook of the USA Government which refuses to organise effective sanctions against the apartheid regime. By championing the fighters for South-African freedom and the front line states the Non-Aligned conferences have expressed the genuine desire of the people of the Third World to fight apartheid and end all racial domination. This is a big set back to the USA which was conspiring to organise dissensions in the Non-Aligned camp with the aid of some of its friends. The support given by the conference to Nicaragua and Libya also constitutes a sharp condemnation of USA's aggressive activities. The Government of India played a very important and anti-imperialist role at the Non-Aligned conference. With its forthright criticism of some of the misdeeds of the USA it contributed to the unity of the anti-imperialist forces. This policy of the Union Government which supports peace and opposes US war designs, which supports the liberation and independence of third world countries threatened by the USA is of great help in strengthening the world forces opposing imperialism. The trade union movement and working class must use this favourable opportunity to mobilise the working class against the war designs of US imperialism and its support for the struggle for peace. The Union Government's policy provides ample opportunity to the working class to propagate for the achievement of an international task.

Comrades, all this must make us realise that our contribution to the struggle for peace is yet very little. We are no doubt devoting greater attention to this vital problem but we are too far behind

compared with what is required. We must try to overcome this lag as quickly as possible and should not be satisfied with our big mass mobilisation in one or two states.

We of course congratulate our West Bengal and Kerala comrades for their great success in organising huge peace rallies. We call upon all other states to strengthen the peace movement and follow in the foot steps of West Bengal and Kerala. Comrades, we congratulate West Bengal and Kerala, Tamil Nadu and other states for collecting funds to support the people of Nicaragua threatened by US imperialists. By collecting the necessary help our comrades from the two states have discharged an important international duty. Let their example inspire others so that CITU can say that it has really taken in hand the task of discharging international responsibility.

Comrades, before I conclude I must draw your attention to the attempts to surround India with a hostile atmosphere and hostile governments. The Western border is intensively active with concentration of large number of Pakistani forces near the country's frontiers. The continuous pouring in of arms into Pakistan, the encouragement given to its belicosity and the provocative actions of the dictatorial regime are all calculated to rouse tension to an uncontrollable point. The military dictatorship charged with training and sending armed terrorists in Punjab, continued its misdeeds. It does not even attempt to explain away the charge because it is confronted with facts giving the exact location of training camps and the number of terrorists that are being trained. Such open violation of international norms and such aggressive acts are pursued brazen facedly because of the encouragement and help from US imperialists.

Recently another heinous and dastardly act was enacted in Pakistan with the connivance of the regime. The murder of several Indian passengers travelling by a Pan Am plane was an act of deliberate provocation to create tension and enmity between the two countries. It is significant that the hijackers chose only Indian passengers as their target of murder when their progress aim was to retaliate against the misdeeds of the USA. The way in which the alleged hijackers got access to the plane also speaks of collusion between them and the authorities.

Though some of the Indians killed were US citizens, Reagan administration was not in the least worried and agitated. It compli-

mented the Pakistani authorities on the way they handled the situation. This was nothing but congratulating the hijackers for their shooting skill which hit the Indian targets without touching a white skin.

The Government of India and Rajiv Gandhi was justified in charging the Pakistani administration with indifference and negligence. They were equally justified in saying that Pakistan's encouragement to hijackers of Indian blame was responsible for recent terrorist act.

The murder of Indians is part of the warfare of tensions that the military dictator carries on against India with the backing of the USA. This is a dangerous development which may any day overwhelm the people of the countries. The working class of India must be fully seized of the situation and be prepared to meet any contingents.

The situation can be changed to the advantage of both if the two people remain firm in their friendship and this determination to frustrate the designs of common enemy. The CITU and the working class must warmly support the fight waged by Pakistan's democratic forces against the military regime. Their success and restoration of democracy in Pakistan will cement the ties of friendship between the two countries and defeat imperialist conspiracies against both.

Comrades, it is not fully known among the workers that the TNV gangs who carry on their sorties of murders in Tripura are trained in Bangladesh. the military regime, unable to subdue the fighting chakmas and other tribals, drives them into Indian territory and follows it with sending TNV terrorists into the country.

In Srilanka the campaign of mass murder continues in the mist of promises of peaceful settlement. The Jayewardene Government has been guilty of double talk and duplicity. While it carries on negotiations with the TULF it intensifies its military attacks against the Tamils. The people of India and the working class fully sympathise with the courageous Srilankan Tamils. The CITU appreciates the principled stand of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka and other left organisations. The Union Government has assured Sri Lanka that neither the people of the country nor the government supports dissection of Srilanka. All they want is a peaceful settlement and recognition of the just rights of the Tamil minorities.

The fight of the Tamils and India's support to them has

strained the relations between the Jayewardene Government and India. The imperialists are seizing the opportunity to create permanent barriers between two countries.

The CITU unions in Tamil Nadu and workers led by them have been opposing chauvinism of some elements in the state while defending the Srilankan Tamils. This chauvinism plays into the hands of US imperialism which seeks a direct conflict between the two countries to bring Srilanka under its domination.

In all states the working class and the CITU unions should be prepared to resist such chauvinistic solutions while fighting the divisive forces and the destabilising game of imperialism.

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11th Congress of The World Federation of Trade Unions— An Outstanding Event

THE Eleventh Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions which held its session in Berlin (GDR) from September 16 to 22, was one of the outstanding events of the year. It brought together millions of workers from all countries to discuss the problems facing the working class and the world. It brought together millions of workers from Socialist countries who are masters of their economy and millions from advanced and developing countries who are faced with the acute problem created by unemployment and economic crisis. It brought together workers from all continents to fight the growing danger of war and defend world peace. It was a mighty gathering of the advanced class of modern society taking counsel, to solve the acute problems facing the world.

The representative character of the gathering could be seen from the Report of the Credential Commission appointed by Congress. The Report says "The eleventh World Trade Unions Congress is by far the biggest trade union gathering to take place in the history of the international trade union movement, and the broadest and most representative forum for genuine and constructive dialogue about the concern and fundamental interest of the workers. The Commission informs the Congress that 1014 participants from all the continents of the world, representing 432 trade