



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Secretariat Calls for

Massive Participation in Convention against Communalism on September 19

The Secretariat of the CITU met on August 4 and 6 and reviewed the General Council meeting held at Kanpur from July 21 to 23. The meeting was presided over by Com. Samar Mukherjee and attended by Com. Balanandan, Com. M. K. Pandhe, Com. Md. Amin, Com. Vimal Ranadive, Com. Ranjit Basu and Com. P. K. Ganguly. Com. Jibon Roy attended the meeting on 6th August.

The meeting deliberated on the following decisions of the General Council for which all State Committees and Unions should make maximum mobilisation for successful implementation.

Convention against Communalism: The convention being jointly organised by the CITU, AITUC, NTUC, HMS, UTUC, TUCC and UTUC (LS), will be held at V. P. House Lawns, Raji Marg, New Delhi on September 19 from 10 A. M. It is estimated that several thousand workers will attend the convention. All State Committees of CITU and the unions should make maximum mobilisation of workers to participate in the convention.

A procession will be held after the convention. It has been estimated that about 10,000 workers should participate in the procession. Northern Indian States should make special efforts for mobilisation of workers in the procession which will start in the afternoon. The unions should bring their banners for the procession.

Anti-Price Rise Day: As decided, the anti-price rise day is to be observed on 23rd August by holding rallies, processions, demonstrations, etc.

Tripura Day: The Tripura Day is to be observed on 10 September condemning the semi-fascist terror unleashed by the Congress (I) TUJS regime in the state and demanding its resignation. The demonstrations and rallies should express solidarity with our

camrades for their valiant struggle.

Contribution of Re 1/- per Member : As decided in the General Council, the drive for collection of Re 1/- per member from each union for the Central CITU fund should be started immediately. The process is to be completed by 30th May, 1991, the Foundation Day of the CITU. The National Projects Construction Workers Union of India was the first union to contribute Rs. 1035/- to the Central fund as per its membership strength.

Convention against Closures & Sickness: The date will be fixed by the Secretariat after consultations with other trade unions.

On Unorganised Workers : The resolution was referred to the Secretariat. The Secretariat finalised the resolution with the minimum wage as well as with the action programme. The action programmes include observance of Demands Week from September 3 to 8, 1990; State and region level conventions to be completed by October to popularise the demands with other trade unions wherever possible and preparation for a countrywide strike in November, 1990.

(The resolution has been printed in this issue—Ed.)

Textiles : The Secretariat endorsed the proposals taken in the meeting on Textile industry held at Kanpur on July 24. The action programmes include observance of Demands Week from August 25 to 31; state conventions to be completed by October and an all India rally before Parliament tentatively during the Winter Session.

Beedi Industry: The Secretariat endorsed the proposals taken in the meeting on Beedi industry held at Kanpur on 23rd July, 1990. Accordingly, an all India meeting will be held at Delhi on 20th September. All States should send reports by that time regarding the working and service conditions of the

Observe Tripura Day on September 10

Bank, Insurance Employees Demand Pension as Third Retirement Benefit

At the invitation of the All India Reserve Bank Employees Association, a meeting of various organisations of workmen and officers in banking and insurance industries was held on 11th July at Calcutta to exchange views regarding measures for realisation of the demand for pension as a third retirement benefit. This was a preliminary attempt to coordinate the activities of the organisations in pursuance of this demand, which they have been conducting on behalf of their respective organisations. The following joint statement was issued by the participating organisations on July 11.

This meeting of the representatives of National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE), All India Bank Officers Confederation (AIBOC), Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) All India Insurance Employees Association (AIIEA), All India Reserve Bank Employees Association (AIRBEA) and Federation of LIC Class I Officers' Association held in Calcutta on 11th July 1990 is of the unanimous opinion that a meaningful pension scheme, beneficial for all sections of employees—workmen as well as officers, is an imperative necessity and the managements of banks including Reserve Bank, Insurance and other financial institutions should not delay in conceding the same. Because of unabated price escalation and inflation, the existing super-annuation benefits of those establishments viz. gratuity and contributory provident fund erode considerably with the passage of time and provide woefully inadequate coverage to employees and their families after retirement from service. Also social responsibilities and various exigencies invariably make deep inroads into the benefits available on retirement, thus depleting these further. In this situation a monthly sustenance in the form of pension provides social security to the retirees and as such pension in addition to existing superannuation benefits has now become the common demand of the working people including those in the public sector, and justifiably so.

2. This meeting having analysed in depth certain proposal of pension scheme in total substitution of employers' contribution to provident fund—more or less in line with the Central Government, conclude that the said scheme would be beneficial only for a meagre section of workmen and officers on the verge of retirement or retiring within a few years hence, but for the vast majority of employees and officers this will confer no benefit at all and hence would be by and large unacceptable, while for the new entrants this would be detrimental, the scheme being obligatory for them. This meeting, therefore opines that the proposed scheme is not at all in conformity with reasonable expectation of employees in general.

3. This meeting is of the considered opinion that in order to compensate erosion due to non-indexation

of provident fund and severe limitation imposed on entitlement and quantum of gratuity available, the managements should contribute more towards employees' superannuation schemes, and this additional contribution should go towards pension. Accordingly, this meeting urges on the management to discuss and decide with the Associations/Unions of employees/officers a suitable pension scheme as third retiral benefit for financial institutions including banks/insurance etc.

4. This meeting also urges on the Government of India to consider positively introduction of a scheme of pension as third benefit for banks insurance etc, on the suggestion stated above.

5. This meeting appeals to all organisations in banks/insurance etc. and all sections of employees and officers to associate with this joint endeavour for introduction of a meaningful pension scheme to safeguard the interests of the retirees and those retiring hereafter. This meeting sincerely desires that a united movement encompassing all on this common demand of pension be built up.

6. This meeting decides to intensify the struggle for pension as third retirement benefits by a programme of sustained campaign during July-August 1990 by all organisations, observe an All India Day on this demand by badge wearing and deputation of employees to respective managements sometimes in the 3rd week of August 1990 (date to be announced later), and resolves to chalk out jointly further programme of agitation including strike action for realisation of this justified demand. The participating unions will also appropriately take up the matter with the managements in Banks/Insurance etc. and the Government of India for early finalisation of the pension scheme,

7. This meeting also resolves to form a co-ordinate body of the participating organisations as also those who would be associating with this endeavour with Com. Samir Ghosh, General Secretary, All India Reserve Bank Employees Association, as Con-venor, for periodic review of developments and decide further course.

Editorial Board

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P.K. Ganguly (*Working Editor*)

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TUs Demand Reinstatement of Bangladesh Biman Workmen by Air India

The CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS, UTUC, TUCC and UTUC (LS) have submitted the following joint memorandum to the Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Arif Mohd. Khan demanding reinstatement of the Bangladesh Biman workmen retrenched by the Air India :

1. Since 1972, the Biman Bangladesh Airlines has been operating flights from Calcutta. Its work at Calcutta Airport was all along being performed by its own employees (unlike in Bombay, where it had entrusted its flight handling to Air India from the beginning).

2. In June 1989, the Air-India management started handling Bangladesh Biman flights. Biman management issued retrenchment orders on their 28 Indian employees effective from 1st June 1989 and offered compensation. But compensation was not accepted by the Biman employees. Later on, an adjustable amount was accepted under court orders, without prejudice.

3. Much earlier, in 1988, Air India management had constituted a "Joint Committee on Station Performance Improvement" consisting of representatives from Air India Employees' Guild (AIEG), the union representing ground staff in Air India, and the management of Air India. This joint management-union committee agreed unanimously and recommended that the Bangladesh Biman workmen should be absorbed in Air India in the same manner as the Thai Airways (TG) workmen were absorbed in 1976. But the management has gone back on its own words. It has accepted the work of Biman but has not made provisions for absorbing the workmen.

4. Air India's backing out of commitment made in a joint forum of workers and employer is a most unjustified and pernicious action. If such an action is allowed, where a joint recommendation is ignored by a public sector undertaking even on such a vital matter as job security of the workers, then the whole concept of workers' participation in management will be reduced to a farce. The National Front Government's avowed aim of giving right to work to its citizens will also be seen as an empty promise when the workers find that even the existing work is being snatched away.

5. In keeping with the principles upheld by the Government, it is only right and proper that the Bangladesh Biman workmen should be absorbed without any pre-conditions in Air-India. We appeal to you to act without any delay and instruct Air India management accordingly,

CITU Condemns Lathi Charge on AIIMS Employees and Doctors

P. K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU has issued the following statement on August 13.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses serious concern over the situation created in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences due to the highhandedness of the police. The CITU condemns the authorities for deploying police in the Institute and the brutal lathi charge made by them, which injured a large number of employees including women and children who were on peaceful dharna. They did not spare even the doctors and scientists which sparked off the lightning strike in the Institute. The seriousness of the situation can be gauged from the fact that out of 1816 beds, less than 100 patients now remain in the main hospital, the rest having been discharged or shifted to other hospitals. This situation has been created in the premier and prestigious Medical Institute in the country due to the adamant and anti labour attitude of the management and the Health Ministry, who have resorted to the path of direct confrontation with the striking employees, instead of resolving their demand for reviewing their promotional cases after eight years of service. Thousands of patients have been put to great hardship in the process.

The CITU demands of the Government immediate withdrawal of the police forces from the hospital and negotiated settlement of the dispute.

Retrenched Employees of Food Corporation to be Reinstated

Nearly 300 retrenched Daily Wages workers will be reinstated by the FCI Management in A.P. This was informed by the Hon'ble Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Shri Nathuram Mirdha to Com. Basudev Acharya, M. P. when the latter represented this matter along with the office-bearers of the FCI Employees' Association (CITU). Against the illegal retrenchment of the workers, petitions were moved before the Industrial Tribunal, which passed an Award in favour of the employees. Against this an appeal was preferred by the FCI Management in the A. P. High Court, which was also dismissed in favour of the employees. Though more than a period of three years has gone by, the FCI Management was not prepared to honour the Court judgement. Hence, the FCI Employees Association (CITU) had conducted mass hunger strike by the retrenched workers and their family members at A.P. since 9th July, 90. Now, in the wake of the assurance of the Minister, the hunger strike has been suspended.

CITU Denounces US Military Build up in the Gulf Region

The Secretariat of the CITU met under the presidency of Com. Samar Mukherjee on August 22. The meeting was attended by Com. E. Balanandan, Com. M. K. Pandhe, Com. Vimal Ranadive, Com. Md. Amin, Com. Kanai Banerjee, Com. Jibon Roy, Com. Ranjit Basu and Com. P. K. Ganguly. The meeting issued the following communique :

The Secretariat of the CITU denounces the military intervention by the US imperialists in the Gulf region on the plea of championing the cause of sovereignty of the West Asian countries against the attack by Iraq.

While the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq was rightly condemned by the United Nations, the unilateral action taken by the USA has only exposed its war mongering character once again and its pursuit for world domination. The US imperialists were only waiting for any opportunity to intervene in the Gulf region in its imperialist interest to disrupt the Arab unity and establish their hegemony in the region, and the Iraqi invasion on Kuwait has given this opportunity to the USA.

It is all the more reprehensible that while the UN has refused to recognise the merger of Kuwait with Iraq, and decided to impose sanctions against it, the US imperialists acting as the gendarme of world reaction violated the UN Charter and unilaterally went ahead to impose blockade on all shipments to Iraq including even food and medicines.

With over 50,000 troops already landed on Saudi Arabia and a huge fleet of battleships, aircraft carriers, bombers and fighters, the USA getting support from Britain and other imperialist countries and some reactionary regimes has created a war like situation in the gulf region. The shameless game of USA for hegemony in the gulf region is further exposed from the fact that while it poses for the so-called safeguard of the sovereignty of Kuwait and protection of Saudi Arabia from the attack by Iraq, it at the same time defends the occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank by Israel.

With all its crocodile tears for peace, the USA, true to its imperialist character, has jumped into the fray to escalate the cold war. The gulf crisis on one hand helped the multinational oil corporations to garner huge profits by increased prices of crude oil and on the other hand put the third world countries including India in a serious position due to the hold up of the supply of petroleum.

The US military intervention has rightly sparked off protest actions in the Arab world. The CITU demands immediate withdrawal of the US and other troops from the gulf region. It calls for resolution of the problem within the framework of the United

Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab countries themselves.

On Reservations for Backward Classes

The Secretariat of the CITU expresses serious concern over the agitation launched in several states on the issue of reservations for backward classes in the Government and public sector employments as announced by the Government. The agitations led to loss of lives, damage to public property and disruption of normal activities in several places, threatening to assume more serious proportions.

On the question of reservation of jobs the CITU has always made its stand clear that in a situation of growing unemployment as a result of the capitalist path of development, being pursued by the successive Governments, the backward castes, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been the worst hit. They have been the victims of perpetuating caste atrocities and discriminations since decades. Under the circumstances, the CITU therefore supports reservation of jobs for them to the tune of 22.5 percent and is opposed to any such movement which is against reservations.

However, so far as the Other Backward Classes (OBC) are concerned, which come under the purview of the present 27 percent of job reservations, the CITU categorically states that there are economically affluent sections among them, who cannot be compared at par with the Scheduled Castes/Tribes. Therefore while supporting the reservation, the CITU urges upon the National Front Government that the economic status of the people has to be considered while giving the benefits of the reservation.

At the same time, the CITU reiterates its stand that reservations alone can never solve the gigantic problem of unemployment, as has become evident from the fact that despite the policy of reservations being pursued since independence, the number of unemployed, particularly among the backward castes has gone on increasing. Agitations culminating to caste riots sparked off in several parts of country in the past whenever this delicate issue had come to the fore. The only solution lies in the reversal of the pro-landlord and pro-monopolist economic policy of the Government and planning, starting with genuine land reforms, which can generate more employment.

The CITU calls upon the working class and appeals to all trade unions to remain vigilant so that the agitation does not enter the working class ranks and the industrial establishments. All sections of workers must maintain their class unity and prevent any attempt to divide their rank on the issue.

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At the same time, the CITU reiterates its stand that reservations alone can never solve the gigantic problem of unemployment, as has become evident from the fact that despite the policy of reservations being pursued since independence, the number of unemployed, particularly among the backward castes has gone on increasing. Agitations culminating to caste riots sparked off in several parts of country in the past whenever this delicate issue had come to the fore. The only solution lies in the reversal of the pro-landlord and pro-monopolist economic policy of the Government and planning, starting with genuine land reforms, which can generate more employment.

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A Powerful United Struggle in the Offing

On the basis of the Approach Paper adopted in the Durgapur All India Convention held on April 2 and 3, the Steering Committee on 'Right to Work' is moving ahead for nationwide campaign and mobilisation.

Accordingly a national seminar is being convened on 2nd September 1990 in New Delhi. The role of mass organisations in achieving Right to Work is the issue for discussion.

As decided by the Durgapur convention all the national Trade Union Centres, mass organisations functioning amongst kisans, students, youth and women, confederation of officers' associations and a number of forums of various social bodies are invited to participate in the seminar. A number of organisations including INTUC, AITUC, BMS, etc. already communicated their consent to participate in the seminar. It is expected that most of the invitees will join it and draw a nationwide programme of united action. In that case, this is going to be a most broad based platform to fight the single biggest malady in the country—unemployment.

As a preparation to this national seminar conventions are already underway in different states and in some cases, industrywise. These conventions, workshops, have generated enthusiasm among all sections of people, be it industrial worker or intellectuals, youths or students, women or kisans. They are looking forward for the successes of the national seminar.

Joint Convention at Nagpur

Following the call of the Durgapur Convention on Right to Work, the first such Joint Convention in Maharashtra was organised at Nagpur on July 28. The Dhanavate Rang Mandir was packed by over 1000 delegates that represented a very broad spectrum which included the central trade unions, railway, defence, electricity, mine, transport, and textile workers; bank, insurance, post and telegraph, Central and State Government employees, representatives from organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, youth, students, women, teachers, professors and journalists.

The Convention began with revolutionary songs presented by the Nagpur DYFI Cultural Group. A presidium comprising A.N. Vadnerkar, M.S. Bharane and Ghagarkar was elected, while BEFI leaders V.V. Asai conducted the proceedings. The convention first paid homage to CITU Founder-President Com. B.T. Ranadive. Chairman of the Reception Committee and Maharashtra CITU Secretary B.P. Kashyap, in his Welcome Address, declared that the

working people of Nagpur will march in step with the rest in the countrywide movement for attaining the Right to Work and all that it implies.

Messages for the success of the Nagpur Convention were received from Union Labour Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, Union Information Minister P. Upendra, CITU General Secretary Samar Mukherjee, MP and Labour Minister of the Left Front Government of West Bengal Shanti Ghatak, and these were read out amidst applause.

The Convention was inaugurated by CITU Secretary, M.K. Pandhe, who congratulated the organisers for the successful holding of the convention and then placed before the delegates the highlights of the Approach Paper that was adopted by the Durgapur Convention on Right to Work. While welcoming the assurance given by the National Front Govt. of including the Right to Work as a Fundamental Right in the Constitution, he cautioned the delegates to remember that the implementation of this assurance was no easy matter, since it would entail fundamental changes in economic policy. These changes, he said were not forthcoming, as witnessed by the Union Budget and the thrust of the Central Government's economic and industrial policies, which would further aggravate the problems of unemployment, price rise, closures and industrial sickness. If the Right to Work was to become a reality, the working class of the country must unite all other toiling sections behind it and must lead a massive struggle so that sustained pressure is brought to bear on the Government, he concluded. CPI(M) MP from West Bengal, Sarala Maheshwari, explained how capitalism could not survive without a huge reserve army of the unemployed. She narrated the achievements of the Left Front Government of West Bengal in the sphere of rural and urban employment, despite the constraints of working within the present set-up. Finally, she stressed that if the Right to Work was to become a reality, a radical change in the present social system was the essence, and she called upon the working people to join this vital struggle with renewed grit and determination.

Among the other main speakers at the Convention were the General Secretary of the All India Confederation of Central Government Employees, S.K. Vyas, President of the All India State Government Employees Confederation R.G. Karnik, Secretary of the AITUC, A.B. Bardhan and others.

The Resolution of the Convention was moved by the Chairman of the Posts and Telegraphs Employees Co-ordination Committee, B.N. Mukherjee and it was seconded by Central Government Employees leader Shrivastava. The Convention concluded with a resolve to implement all the forthcoming central

calls for action in the nationwide movement to achieve the Right to Work for all.

Convention by Construction Workers

Construction Workers' Federation of India (CWFI) with the help of Punjab State Committee of CITU held an all India Convention on Right to Work at Shapur Candi, Pathankot, Punjab, on 12th August. The Convention was attended by over 300 delegates who came from all over India. At the outset, the Convention adopted condolence resolution on Com. BTR, Com. Saroj Mukherjee, Com. Kishorilal and on the martyrs of Punjab.

The convention was presided over by M.K. Pandhe, Mulk Raj, Natha Singh, Biswamitra, and Ram Kisen.

The convention was inaugurated by M K Pandhe, Secretary, CITU. In his inaugural speech he told that the National Front Govt. has decided to fulfil one of their election pledges by incorporating "Right to Work as Fundamental Right in the Constitution." He also told that by mere inclusion in the Constitution will not serve the purpose for actual fulfilment of Right to Work. It can be achieved by creation of more jobs, reopening of closed and sick units, by land reforms and distribution of surplus lands, by stopping retrenchment and closures, by withdrawal of ban on recruitment in Government Sector. He told about the adoption of massive programme of labour intensive technology. If the Central Govt. prepared a comprehensive plan of big schemes of housing in urban and rural areas, net work of road construction, minor and major irrigation projects, construction of over-bridges, schools, etc., huge manpower could be deployed in gainful employment.

Debanjan Chakraborty, General Secretary, CWFI placed the approach paper of the convention and urged upon the Government to take necessary steps to introduce the Right to Work as a Fundamental Right in the Constitution. Mangat Ram Pasla, Secretary, CPI(M) Punjab State Committee told the delegates about the paramount importance of this Right to Work struggle. He stressed upon united and broader trade union movement to establish the Right to Work as a real fundamental right in practice.

Chandra Sekhar, General Secretary, Punjab State Committee of CITU while addressing the delegates told that it is in the unorganised sector where the workers have to take more pain in comparison to the organised sector for implementation of Right to Work as a Fundamental Right.

T.H.K. Warrior, Secretary, CWFI, told about the positive steps taken by Left Front Government of West Bengal and LDF Government of Kerala by

implementing land reforms and adequate distribution of surplus land, incentive to small scale and self-employment schemes through which more employment took place.

Mulk Raj, Working President, CWFI told that once Right to Work becomes a fundamental right as per Constitution, we can take the help of the Law to get the job or unemployment allowance.

The convention was attended and addressed by leaders of DYFI, SFI, AIDWA, LIC, Bank, All India Kisan Sabha, Teachers and Engineers' Organisation.

The convention also adopted resolutions on Workers' Participation in Management, against price rise, against communal and divisive forces and against the new industrial policy.

Massive Rally by CITU at Patna

The Bihar State Committee of CITU organised a massive rally of several thousand workers at Patna on August 10. The rally was organised in pursuance of several demands like check in price rise and strengthening of public distribution system; change of the new Industrial Policy; against closures and industrial sickness; for right to work and unemployment allowance; Rs. 30/- as daily wage for unorganised workers; Rs. 20/- as daily wage for agricultural workers; for Dearness Allowance; abolition of contract system and regularisation of contract workers, etc.

The rally was attended by a large number of workers and employees from various federations and unions apart from CITU. Women and agricultural workers participated in large numbers. From the morning itself thousands of workers and agricultural workers started coming in from different parts of the state and assembled at Gandhi Maidan. The procession from Gandhi Maidan passed through the main thoroughfares of the city and culminated in the rally before the Chief Minister's office. However, despite previous notice, the Chief Minister was not present. A delegation led by Chandi Prasad, the State General Secretary of CITU met the Deputy Secretary of the Chief Minister and submitted the memorandum of demands.

The rally was addressed among others by M. K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU; Chandi Prasad, Yogender Prasad Singh, Sachidananda Singh, Sudhabindu Mitra of JMS, Lallu Chowdhury of DYFI, Arun Kumar of SFI, Sarangdhar Paswan, Ramanika Gupta, S. K. Bakshi, Yamuna Sahay, etc.

Powerful United Protest Against Super - 301

Saroj Chaudhuri

Sponsored by the National Federations of workers and employees in coal, steel, fertilizer, insurance, banking, chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals, scientific workers, etc and attended by more than 500 representatives from all parts of the country, a broad-based convention was held at the Mavalankar Auditorium, New Delhi on August 23, 1990 against the US threat of invoking Super-301 of US Trade Act against India after having branded her as an unfair trade partner.

Dr. Ashok Mitra, the distinguished economist, delivered the inaugural address and set the tone of deliberations. In an hour-long speech, Dr. Mitra elucidated the various manipulative measures being resorted to by the US, the brazen misuse of UN agencies, the distortions brought about in the world trade, the role of international financing bodies, the real role of multinationals, the implications of recently announced changes in industrial policy and the nature of threat against India. He called for massive protest and opposition to defeat the conspiracy against India and called for an alternative strategy to development that would promote self-reliance. Others who addressed the Convention were Dr. I. S. Gulati, Yashwant Sinha MP, Hannan Mollah MP, Dr. Biplab Das Gupta MP, Sukomal Sen MP, Dr. M. K. Pandhe, Mrs Usha Menon, Balraj Mehta, A. K. Kealaya, Dr. N. Mehrotra, Nilotpal Basu, Prof. Nirmal Chanda, George Vergese, D. N. Mayekar, Dr. S. S. Siddiqui, R. L. Gupta and N. M. Sundaram. At the end of the day-long illuminating discussion during which the speakers who included economists, scientists, Members of Parliament and trade union leaders, focussed searching lights on the various facets of neo-colonialist offensive against India. A resolution was unanimously adopted amidst loud cheers. The resolution is reproduced herein below.

After the convention, the participants went to the US Embassy, held a demonstration there demanding withdrawal of the threat of Super 301 and handed over a copy of the resolution adopted to an official of the Embassy.

Resolution

A new danger today looms large over India—the danger to freedom to be free to formulate and carry out its priorities, policies and programmes for national development and advance. Never before has there been such a brazen attempt to browbeat India into reversing her nationally accepted policies and decisions, altering and amending her industrial, trade, fiscal, tariff and several allied policies, so as to fit in a scheme dictated by the Government of USA. The danger emanates from the threatened invocation of Super 301 of US Trade Act against India after

having branded her as an unfair trade partner. As of now, India remains under strict watch until the end of the current year. The threat has just been postponed, not removed, for the six months when India remains under probation. What the US is demanding is nothing short of writing the legal code which free India should agree to obey without demur.

The US Government has been energising the levers of power and pressure to allow the multinational corporations (MNCs) free access and operation in India and opening up India to these new vehicles of neo colonialism. It has been insisting on the removal of regulatory controls on foreign companies and whatever restrictions remain of restraining the monopoly houses, and recasting patent laws in its favour to the detriment of self-reliant economic development. It has been demanding the removal of protective restrictions on imports and a share in the services sector, specially insurance and banking. And all these in the name of restructuring "international trade on a healthy footing for the common good of all nations". In the process, the US is building a new type of multilateral framework which will permit the powerful industrialised countries to unilaterally determine unfair trade practices of any country. This is in fact the key aim of industrialised countries in on-going GATT talks known as the Uruguay round. This new trade framework will permit them to deal with the underdeveloped countries one by one and smash their opposition and beat them down into accepting its dictates. The US attempts to intensify the pillaging and plundering of the third world countries, India included, open a new and dangerous chapter in neo-colonial domination and exploitation.

The fall-out of restructuring being demanded by US goes far beyond trade. It touches the contours of political sovereignty. The prescribed restructuring will lead to complete monopoly control of numerous products especially of drugs, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, pesticides and various chemical compositions and thwart development of indigenous science and technology, research and development. The unhindered and uncontrolled operation of multinationals will destroy the industrial potential already created, the product diversity already achieved, severally endanger the public sector created out of enormous sacrifices of the people, dwarf out indigenous technological development and take the country into a deeper layer of debt and technology traps. The services sector such as banks and insurance, which have developed into a dependable source of finance capital and a major channel of mobilising public savings will come under unequal competition and will be swamped by the much vaster resources that the multinationals can muster.

The irony is that the US which practices nume-
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General Council Resolutions

(Kanpur July 21-23, 1990)

On Struggle of the Workers of Unorganised Sector

The General Council of the CITU congratulates the workers of unorganised sector for series of struggles unitedly conducted by them in several states for improvement in their wages and service conditions. During these struggles the movement had to face repressive measures by the police but the workers could not be cowed down by them. The struggles have resulted in improving the minimum wages in most of the states in the country, though they are far below the demand raised by the unions.

The minimum wages fixed in different states vary from state to state and there is no uniformity in wage levels. In certain states it varies from district to district. In several states the wages are not linked with price index with the result that the standard of living of the workers decline with the rise in prices of essential commodities. The fringe benefits are almost absent for these workers while job security is non-existent.

The benefits of various labour laws are not being provided to this sector. These workers do not get any benefit of Provident Fund, Gratuity, ESI, Leave facility, retrenchment benefits or compensations and they enjoy no proper limitation of hours of work.

The General Council therefore calls upon all the unions in unorganised sector to take initiative in building a powerful united movement of unorganised workers in pursuance of the following demands :

1. (a) Minimum basic wage for
 - (i) Unskilled workers —Rs. 1050/- at 800 points of Consumer Price Index (1960=100).
 - (ii) Semi-skilled workers Rs. 1250/-
 - (iii) Skilled Workers Rs. 1500/-
- (b) Service Weightage —For unskilled workers Rs. 15/-
—Semi-skilled workers Rs. 20/-
—Skilled workers Rs. 25/-
- (c) Dearness Allowance —Cent per cent neutralisation at all levels of wages.
2. Appointment letters to be issued to all workers.
3. (a) Proper housing facilities to be provided to such workers.
(b) HRA to be introduced compulsorily.
4. Application of P F Scheme, Gratuity, retrench-

- ment benefits, maternity benefits and other statutory benefits for the workers of this sector.
5. Medical and Educational facilities.
6. Abolition of contract labour in permanent and perennial nature of jobs and regularisation of contract labour.
7. Genuine welfare measures.
8. Stringent punishment to employers for violating statutory provisions.
9. Special protection to women workers and child labour in the matter of job and working condition.
10. Equal remuneration to women workers at par with male workers and creche facilities at their working places.
11. All labour disputes to be settled within the three months and full wages in case of delay.

The General Council notes that the minimum wages prevailing in different states vary drastically from one another. The workers in the States will have to plan their approach accordingly in a flexible way so that the above demands are achieved through united movement in a co-ordinated manner all over the country.

The General Council of CITU appeals to all the trade unions to organise a Demand Week to press the demands of unorganised workers in the 1st week of September. State and region level conventions should be held to popularise the demands during the period.

The General Council of CITU further urges upon all the trade unions to prepare for a country-wide strike of unorganised workers in the month of November as a follow up action of the decisions of the All India T.U. Convention of unorganised workers held in Delhi in September, 1989.

The CITU calls upon all the state committees of CITU and all the affiliated unions to mobilise the workers of unorganised sector for successful implementation of the programmes on all India level.

The CITU appeals to all the organised workers to extend all support to the fighting workers of unorganised sector, so that they achieve their just demands.

On World Capitalist Crisis

The meeting of the General Council of the CITU held at Kanpur from 21st to 23rd July, 1990, takes serious note of the propaganda offensive laun-

ched by the capitalist press against the socialist system in the wake of the set backs in East European countries and developments in the Soviet Union, arising out of several lapses and violations of socialist principles. Taking advantage of these developments this offensive is purposely carried on with a view to confuse the working class and the people about the achievements of the socialist system and to side-track their attention from the deepening world capitalist crisis. The fact that is sought to be ignored is that the advanced capitalist countries mainly sustain on exploiting the 3rd world countries and by adverse balance of trade against the developing countries.

The so-called economic recovery in the advanced capitalist countries as a result of technological advanced and automation is a temporary phenomena and cutting down of production in steel, ship building, engineering and other industries are clearly visible. Excess capacity in several other industries is being reported. Japan, USA, West Germany and UK have reported lay-off of steel workers in large numbers. The figures of unemployment in these capitalist countries have already reached all time high figure of 10-12 per cent which is more than 40 millions mark and it is increasing every year. Curtailment of social security benefit is being opposed by the trade union movement in these countries while growing danger of health and safety of workers due to high technology has become a matter of serious concern in these countries. Excessive pollution of atmosphere (i. e. air, water, space) is posing serious hazards to large scale population. Threat to ecological balance of nature is crossing the boundaries of countries and becoming an international phenomenon. Social crimes in capitalist countries have reached unprecedented levels.

The contradiction among the leading capitalist countries are on the increase. The stiff competition for capturing market in the third world countries between EEC countries and USA has been further increased, and dumping of products in the third world countries has assumed serious proportions. The Japanese products are trying their best to capture markets which were earlier controlled by the US monopolists. The appreciation of Yen in relation to Dollar has created balance of payments difficulties for US. The Japanese trade surplus today is over 50 billion dollars and the US current account liability is 138.7 billion. For the purpose of meeting this negative balance of trade and other liabilities the US administration is increasing budgetary deficit in a huge way which may touch the figure of 170 billion in 1991, and raising the interest rates which is creating liquidity crisis in other advanced capitalist countries. On the other hand the production per man hour is becoming lower in the US than that of Japan, France and other developed capitalist countries. Besides the formation of greater Germany or unified Germany becomes a challenge to US and other EEC countries about which many are vocal.

The multinationals in imperialist and other advanced capitalist countries in order to capture markets

in Third World countries have resorted to several malpractices and offering of kick-backs to official representatives have become a common phenomenon. Through several dubious methods these companies have toppled Governments in Third World countries to ensure sale of their products in these countries.

Capitalism has been able to register advances by evolving ever newer forms of neo-colonial exploitation, operating through the multinationals and by inflicting adverse terms of trade against the third world countries.

The World Bank and IMF have imposed several conditionalities on the Third World countries to facilitate the penetration of multinationals in these countries. The indebtedness of third world countries have already entered the debt trap. A large portion of the borrowing is meant for repayment of the earlier loan with the result that the net aid is getting reduced. The adverse balance of payments position in most of the countries is making them more and more dependent on advanced capitalist countries. As a result of these developments the economies of the Third World countries have become stagnant and even the Governments had to come out against the exploitative policies of the advanced capitalist countries.

The intensification of the contradictions between the imperialist countries and the Third World countries is further aggravating as a result of cut-throat competition among the imperialist countries for capturing market. The black-mailing tactics adopted by the imperialist powers such as use of Super 301 by US Government against India is evoking strong resentment among the people of our country and government had to come out against such pressure tactics. The recent meet of the developing countries including India (G-15) expressed the need for co-operation among the developing countries to take measures to resist the policies of the advanced capitalist countries. The North-South dialogue between the advanced and developing countries has clearly highlighted the widening gulf between them. The growing thrust of the multinationals in our economy is indicating that the gulf is likely to widen further in the days to come. The situation has gone to such an extent that Comrade Fidel Castro's call for moratorium on foreign debt repayment has received substantial support among Latin American countries. Similarly several African countries have advocated similar steps to overcome the balance of payment crisis. The growing unfavourable terms of trade for developing countries will further intensify the contradiction between the developing and imperialist countries.

The deepening of the world capitalist crisis is reflected in the social degeneration in the advanced capitalist countries. The violence and sex in films and literature is morally corrupting the younger generation in these countries. The crime rate in all the capitalist countries is rising higher every year making social life extremely unsafe for decent living. The menace of drug traffic and AIDS is so widesp-

read that scientists have expressed serious concern at the future of the human civilization as a whole. All those who talk of virtues of stability of the capitalist system have no answer to the low level of social morale in the society.

It is pertinent to note that after the toppling of the socialist governments in Eastern Europe speedy steps are being taken to privatise the economy to build capitalism. The West German monopolists are taking over the main industries of East Germany. Wage cuts, redundancies, closures and large scale unemployment together with price rise and all other evils of capitalism have started haunting them.

Despite these set backs and retrograde development in some socialist countries the CITU firmly believes that socialism alone can liberate the working class and the toiling people in the society. The historical destiny of human civilisation lies in fighting for socialism and upholding the banner of proletarian internationalism. In spite of temporary setbacks suffered by the working class movement in some parts of the world, the toiling masses have no other alternatives but to resist exploitation by the capitalist class and for building socialism which only can free the working class from exploitation.

The General Council of the CITU therefore reiterates its conviction that capitalist system is doomed to fail and the working class must continue the struggle against capitalism with more vigour. Those who talk of working within the framework of capitalist society are bound to end up in becoming a tail of capitalism and betraying the interests of the working class.

The CITU therefore calls upon all the affiliated unions to make best efforts to raise the socialist consciousness of the working class in the country so that the countrywide struggle for socialism can be further invigorated.

On Functioning of The ESI Corporation

The meeting of the General Council of the CITU takes note of the deteriorating conditions of the ESI Corporation, resulting in non-availability of adequate facilities to a large number of workers all over India covered by the ESI scheme.

The Government has taken steps to withdraw the medical benefits to the insured persons during strikes and lockouts which is defeating the very concept of social insurance. The workers are also deprived of benefits on the days of holidays if they fall sick during the leave period. The ceiling on medical benefits has led to further restrictions on medical facilities available to the workers.

The callous attitude of the Central Government in running the scheme relying on bureaucracy has been the root cause of malfunctioning of the ESI Corporation. Over and above this the prevalent corruption in the corporation has made the matters worse for the workers. Despite repeated assurances

the Central Government has failed to take positive measures to improve the functioning of the ESI Corporation.

Under these circumstances the proposal of the ESI Corporation to enhance the eligibility of coverage under the scheme from Rs. 1600 to Rs. 3000 has evoked strong resentment among the workers. There is an universal opposition to increase the coverage of the scheme due to non-availability of any medical benefit to the workers. Moreover, the workers drawing more than Rs. 1600/- salary, who won the right of reimbursement of medical expenses, will lose the benefits in some undertakings. Therefore all the central trade union organisations during the recent Indian Labour Conference opposed any enhancement of eligible salary limit for the purpose of coverage of the scheme.

The General Council of the CITU therefore urges upon the Govt. of India to drop the proposal to enhance the limit of coverage and take suitable measure to improve the functioning of the scheme so that workers get the real benefit from the scheme. It is only after improving the functioning of the scheme the workers may accept any proposal to enhance the coverage of the scheme.

The CITU calls on the workers to campaign for the radical improvement in working of the ESI scheme so that necessary medical facilities are made available to the insured workers without any restrictions.

On Greetings to the Working Class of Kanpur

The General Council meeting of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions conveys its warm greetings to the workers of Kanpur engaged in Textile, Jute, Engineering, Leather and other organised and unorganised sectors and centre and state Governments and Mahapalika employees as well as junior doctors for their relentless struggles against exploitation and for T.U. rights.

From the very inception of the CITU, the working class of Kanpur have been fighting for their various problems and security of their rights making their united strength and struggle as the basis of their movements.

The workers of Kanpur under the leadership of CITU have conducted remarkable movements in the recent past. The strike of the NTC workers of Kanpur during the three days all India strike of public sector workers in March, 1989, demanding parity of wages, DA and other facilities with public sector workers was successful in spite of the opposition of certain central trade union organisations. In February 1989 the CITU took the leading part in the historic rail roko movement of Kanpur textile workers demanding withdrawal of K. K. Pandey award which recommended irrational and impractical increase of workload on textile workers. The leading

role played by the CITU during the rail roko movement left an important impact on not only the textile workers but also on the general public of Kanpur. This was reflected in the Lok Sabha election result, as manifested in the victory of Com. Subhashini Ali, the candidate of CPI(M) and leader of the CITU.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions has been organising movements against closures, lock-outs, retrenchments, lay-offs, ban on recruitment and similar anti-labour policies of the employers and the government. The struggle launched by CITU against illegal closures of JK Cotton Mills from 15th May 1989 and two civil disobedience marches (avagya march) organised on 2.10.89 against the ban imposed by the then Congress Government and again on 12.7.90 against reinforcement of the same ban by the present Janata Dal Government, have been important events in the history of trade union movement in Kanpur.

The CITU has been constantly demanding lifting of illegal closure and payment of full back wages to the workmen and reinstatement of workmen thrown out of their employment by LML (Scooter). The Chief Minister is purposefully dragging on the matter and gone back on his promise in this issue.

The CITU has also been fighting against communal and divisive forces and it is to the credit of the CITU that it could effectively fight the communal forces during the recent disturbances and stop it from spreading to the whole city.

The General Council meeting takes serious note of the anti-labour attitude of the Janata Dal Govt of UP, and demands of the Government to take effective steps so that JK Cotton management lifts the lock-out which has already been declared by the Government as illegal, and for reinstatement of LML Scooter workers and withdrawal of undemocratic orders banning the workers' constitutional trade union rights. The CITU assures the working class of Kanpur its full support in their legitimate struggles till they achieve success in winning their just demands.

The CITU General Council expresses its gratitude to the working class of Kanpur for the excellent arrangements made by them to make the General Council meeting a grand success.

NPCC Management Compelled to Negotiate with CITU Union

The management of National Projects Construction Corporation Ltd., a central public sector undertaking was compelled to call the CITU union in wage negotiations. The negotiation started at the company's Head Quarters at New Delhi on 6th August, in which the CITU affiliated NPCC Workers' Union of India and the INTUC affiliated NPCC Staff Association participated. The AITUC affiliated All India NPCC Employees Federation did not attend the meeting.

It is to be recalled that due to opposition by the AITUC Federation, the management had been refusing to include the CITU union in the negotiations. The previous agreement had expired in December 1986. The CITU union had submitted its Charter of Demands in June, 1986. After long drawn struggle, the management was compelled to constitute the Joint Management Council, the first meeting of which was held in July, 1989. But the meeting could not bear any fruits due to the negative attitude of the management. The CITU union carried forward its struggle.

Delegations of the union met the concerned Ministers of the new National Front Government with MPs. Ultimately the management called the joint meeting on 6th August. The CITU union pressed for the new agreement to be effective from 1.1.1987 and for maintaining the two patterns of wages, and industrial pay and DA for the workers. The INTUC union supported the CITU. But taking advantage of the absence of AITUC, the management did not come to any conclusion. It however agreed to convene the next meeting on 3rd September. Efforts will be made in the mean time to ask the AITUC Federation to attend the meeting. On behalf of the CITU union, Nirmal Roy, President; Benoy Mukherjee, Vice President and Visheshwar Paswan, General Secretary attended the meeting.

Agreement in NBCC

A bipartite agreement was signed in NBCC on May 23, by the management and NBCC (Cal) Workers' Union (CITU), through which more than 300 workers have been regularised in permanent category and more than 400 NMR/Casual workers got work charge category i.e., semi-permanent status. In addition to this agreement, through another agreement 16 retrenched workers of Assam got back their services. The workmen scattered all over India also got enhanced medical allowance and favourable modification of some service conditions.

North Zonal Convention of AIPWF

The North Zonal Convention of All India Plantation Workers' Federation was held at Silchar on 9th and 10th June. 124 delegates representing about two lakh plantation workers of West Bengal, Tripura and Assam attended the Conference, which started with the hoisting of Red Flag by Com. Achintya Bhattacharjee, the C.C. member of CPI(M) and one of the pioneers of plantation workers' movement in the region. Led by Com. Gopen Roy, one of the founder leaders of plantation workers' organisation in Cachar, floral wreaths were placed on the martyrs' column.

Com. Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU inaugurated the delegates' session. He pointed to the new responsibilities that fell on the shoulders of all those who cherished the ideals of CITU in the changed situation in the country. While welcoming the steps taken by the N.F. Govt. in defence of the interests of the working class, he called upon the delegates to mobilise the working class in struggles on the issues of unemployment, closure of industries, price rise and fighting the divisive forces to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country.

A presidium consisting of Com. Bimal Sinha, H.B. Rai and Dhaniram Khosla conducted the proceedings of the Convention.

Com. Ananda Pathak, the leader of the plantation workers in Darjeeling District and President, AIPWF and Com. B. Sinha the leader of plantation workers of Tripura addressed the Convention. Both of them narrated the attacks unleashed on plantation workers by the secessionist forces and Cong(I)-TUJS coalition Govt. A number of plantation workers in Darjeeling and Tripura were martyred in the struggle against these forces, several families were evicted from the gardens and unspeakable atrocities were meted out to a number of women.

In a resolution the plantation workers were called upon to carry forward relentless struggle and firmly resist the machinations of the communal and secessionist forces, which were backed by imperialism.

The Report placed by the Convenor in particular discussed the situation prevailing in tea-industry in factual details. The production and cultivation of tea, its per capita production, sale proceeds, export and internal demand steadily increased as a result of which the profits and income of the owners went up. On the other hand the employment of workers and their real income had been declining year after year. The report called for building up a broad based movement of the plantation workers of the North Eastern region in a co-ordinated manner.

The convention in a resolution raised the following demands :

1. Setting up an Enquiry Committee by the Central Govt. for a comprehensive enquiry into all aspects

of tea industry including amount of invested capital, the lives and livings of workers, etc.

2. Nationalisation of tea gardens owned by foreign and Indian monopoly capital.
3. Fixation of wages of plantation workers on the basis of need based minimum wage. Pending that fixation of daily wage at the rate of Rs. 30/- with the provision of one weekly holiday with pay.
4. Employment of 3.5 workers per hectare in tea garden in view of the mounting unemployment problem.
5. Stricter implementation of Plantation Labour Act, Gratuity Act, P.F. Act and other labour welfare Acts and measures. Exemplary punishment to those employers who violate these Acts.
6. Enhancement of wages for plucking tea leaves in view of non-revision of such wages for a long time.
7. Take-over of ceiling-surplus land of gardens unfit for tea-cultivation.

The resolution called upon all unions affiliated to the Federation to launch full campaign on the above demands for the next three months.

Fourteen delegates participated in the discussion on the report. The convention adopted resolutions demanding the inclusion of CITU in the Govt. committee on labour-related matters, on price rise, against communalism and secessionism, on T.U. rights etc.

Com. Vimal Ranadive, General Secretary, AIPWF in her concluding speech laid emphasis on increasing the strength of the organisation rapidly and building up united movement in defence of the interests of plantation workers and also called upon the delegates to ensure inner trade union democracy to strengthen the organisation.

The convention formed a 17 member Committee with Com. A.G. Dastidar as Convenor.

A mass rally of workers was held at Silchar in the evening of 9th June. The rally was presided over by Com. N. Huda, Secretary, Cachar District Committee of CPI(M). Despite incessant rains and flood conditions in different parts of the district, more than 2500 plantation workers, male and female, joined the rally and paraded the main thoroughfares of the town in a colourful procession. Com. Samar Mukherjee, Com. A. Pathak, Com. B. Sinha and Com. Vimal Ranadive addressed the rally. The successful holding of the Convention and the rally created considerable enthusiasm amongst working people and democratic sections of masses in the Cachar District.

Will the Assurance be Fulfilled

On August 10, 1990 the Railway Minister Shri George Fernandes answered in the Rajya Sabha a starred question (No. 62) put by two CPI (M) members Shri Sunil Basu Roy and Shri Sukomal Sen. It was on vacation of victimisation of several hundred rail trade union activists who had been removed or dismissed from service or penalised in other forms by the previous Govt. The Minister, really, had a hard time when his answer to the original question failed to satisfy the members and there came up consequently, a barrage of questions and comments leading him ultimately to concede points which he was resisting initially. He had to indicate a sort of a time frame for finalising the cases of victimisation as demanded by members: It would be completed much before the end of the year. He had to assure that he would see if the cases could be settled without review. Earlier in answering the original question the Minister said that the Govt had initiated the process of review, but precise date for completion of the process could not be indicated.

In the course of his supplementary question Shri Sunil Basu Roy wanted to know when did the process of review started, what was the strength of the review board, how many people were doing the job, how many cases had been decided till date, and whether the Govt was desiring to amend Article 311 of the constitution, which was the source of these penal action. He quoted the number of workers victimised in each of the different forms such as dismissal, break in service, penal transfer, and reversion. He demanded to know by which date the dismissed workers would go back to their job. He reminded the Minister that eight months were already over.

Shri Sunil Basu Roy complained in the course of his second supplementary that the Railway Administration, instead of implementing those decisions of the Central Administrative Tribunal which are in favour of the victimised workers, run to the Supreme Court for getting Tribunal Orders quashed. He wanted to know whether the Govt would change its policy and decide to implement the Tribunal awards.

He asked whether pension and other benefits would be given to those victimised workers who had in the meantime reached superannuation age, and whether family pension would be given to the families of those who died.

Shri Sukomal Sen said he was sorry that he had to ask questions of Mr. Fernandes who himself was a very eminent trade union leader and also led the historic strike of railwaymen in 1974. Referring to the question of review of the cases of victimisation Sukomal Sen reminded the Minister that during the 1974 strike a huge number of railwayman were removed/dismissed from service under rule 14 (ii). But

when Janata Govt came to power in 1977 and Madhu Dandavate was the Railway Minister, the victimised were taken back within 6 week without any review. Dandavate straightaway reinstated all the employees who stood dismissed/removed. He said he did not understand why Mr. Fernandes could not do it without review. Sukomal Sen wondered whether Mr. Fernandes is ruling over the Board or the Board is ruling over Mr. Fernandes. He asked whether the Minister is going to reinstate the victimised immediately and within a time frame.

In answering Sunil Basu Roy's supplementary question, the Railway Minister told the House that information had been gathered from the zonal railways, that the information was under process. The Minister said that the problem was that all cases of dismissal in 14 (ii) would have to be referred to the UPSC. And it was because of this that he was unable to bind himself down to any particular date. But, he said, he was committed to review the cases and do justice to the trade union activists punished under 14 (ii).

As regard non-implementation of Tribunal decision he assured that if specific instances were brought to his notice he would look into it. He assured that the case of those who are not receiving their pension, or whose dues have not been paid, and also the cases of the families of those who after their removal have passed away were also under review.

In reply to Sukomal Sen's supplementary question the Minister said that rules required the review being conducted and that the rules govern the entire gamut of civil service. Therefore if any departure was to be made from rules that had been specified by the President, he would have to go in for a thorough discussion on it. The Minister assured that as the member had made such suggestion, he would certainly take up the matter. He said at the earliest possible time the problems would be solved.

In answering the question put by Shri Yashwant Sinha whether the procedure had changed (since 1977), he said that in 1977 the procedure was not followed.

It was while answering the question asked by Shri Satya Prakash Malviya—whether the Minister could assure the House that a decision would be taken by the end of the year 1990—that the Minister said that a decision would be taken much before the end of the year.

Shri Gurudas Das Gupta also insisted on a specific time frame for reinstatement of the victimised. He said it was not essential that review should be done.

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Massive Dharna by Haryana CITU Workers

More than 2000 industrial and other workers belonging to Haryana CITU staged a day long dharna against anti-labour policies of Haryana Govt at Chandigarh on August 20. Workers participating in the dharna came from Faridabad, Gurgaon, Hissar, Sirsa, Rohtak, Jind, Panipat, Sonapat, Dharuhera and other places. A memorandum was submitted to Haryana Labour Commissioner expressing deep concern at the sorry state of labour and industrial condition in the state in the absence of any clear cut policies of the state Government, which came in power 3 years before through a massive mandate of the people. CITU was disgusted over the continuance of the old Cong (I) Government policies by the JD regime too.

Instead of setting up new industries, re-opening of the closed units and redressal of people's grievances, the elected representatives were indulging in shameless squabbles which involved no policy issues. No one knew the whereabouts of the State Labour Minister since more than a fortnight. A total anarchy was prevailing in the state and things were left at the mercy of the bureaucrats who were resorting to senseless and horrible acts like ordering police firing killing people as at Kosli.

Prices of essential commodities were rising at alarming rates and working class was hard hit. The speakers addressing the workers demanded immediate re-opening of the BST Ltd., Gannaur; Usha Spinning, Faridabad; HTM, Hisar and other closed factories, strict implementation of labour laws, reinstatement of adult education workers, an end to interference of police and anti-social elements in trade union activities and withdrawal of false police cases. Com. S.N. Solanki, CITU State General Secretary demanded setting up of Karnal refinery and criticised the Haryana Government for its efforts to sell-out the state sector units to private sector.

Com. Inderjit Singh, President of State CITU called upon the workers to close their ranks and fight against communal, separatist and divisive forces by forging unity with other sections of the people. He urged upon the Haryana Government to work for the solution of basic problems of the people otherwise CITU would build up a joint movement to force the Govt to behave.

Com. Satbir Singh and Com. Ram Briksh both State Vice Presidents criticised the labour department for its inaction and demanded fair representation to CITU representatives in all labour committee and Advisory Boards which are at present formed arbitrarily. Com. Ram Chander Siwach, State Office Secretary and Com. Inderjit, Secretary of Chandigarh U. T. CPI(M) Committee also addressed the workers.

Annual Convention of HSCL Co-ordination Committee

The IVth Annual Convention of All India Co-ordination Committee of HSCL unions (CITU) was held at Rabindra Bhavan, Durgapur on 30th June, 1990. M K Pandhe, Secretary CITU hoisted the red flag and inaugurated the convention. UCW Central Front, Durgapur presented the opening song.

A presidium consisting of K. C. Ghosh, S. B. Karmakar, P. R. N. Murthy, Bhimsen Saha and Basanta Das conducted the procedures of the convention. The welcome address was given by Dilip Majumdar. At the outset a condolence resolution was passed and delegates stood in silence for two minutes in memory of Com. B. T. Ranadive and Com. Saroj Mukherjee.

M. K. Pandhe in his inaugural address apprised the people of the current national affairs, and recent happenings in Eastern Europe and also the present conditions prevailing in HSCL. Thereafter, Dilip Majumdar, Mrinal Banerjee, Ardhendu Dakshi, Dipali Bose, Debanjan Chakraborty, Sisir Banerjee and Shankar Ghosh also addressed the convention.

In all 147 representatives from Bokaro, Bhilai, Visakhapatnam Korba, Rajghat, Singrauli, Vindychal, Supa, Kudra, Durgapur and Calcutta participated in the convention.

S. L. Bose, convener of the Co-ordination Committee presented the report including the income and expenditure report. While pointing out the defects of Industrial Policy he stated that the National Front Government has not encouraged the Small Scale Industries, rather it has followed the footsteps of the erstwhile Congress (I) Govt, which went against the national economy.

He further pointed out that because of the ill designed policy of the Govt, HSCL's order position was so poor that the fate of over 20,000 workers of the company was uncertain. Although, pay revision was made by the Govt after 16 years, upward revision did not mean much in the face of price hike of all commodities and curtailment of the several facilities enjoyed by the employees till now. He urged upon the delegates to carry forward united movements to pressurise the Government to change its policies. Fourteen delegates participated in the discussion, after which the report was adopted.

The convention elected 25 representatives in the Central Committee. S. L. Bose, S. B. Karmakar were elected as Convener and Joint Convener respectively.

Joint Delegation of HSCL Unions Meet Steel Minister

A Joint delegation comprising of K. C. Ghose, S. B. Karmakar, Dilip Sengupta and Debanjan

Chakraborty of CITU and Raj Ram and P. K. Ganguli of INTUC headed by Sunil Basu Roy, MP and Md. Amin MP, met Dinesh Goswami, Steel Minister, to submit the viability report on Hindustan Steel Works Construction Limited, a Government of India Undertaking.

The delegation demanded that (a) HSCL be taken as SAIL subsidiary; (b) all the construction works under the Ministry of Steel should be done through Hindustan Steel Works Construction Limited on priority basis; (c) HSCL should be given price preference; and (d) Departmental work to be ensured by minimising sub-contract system.

The Minister apprised the delegation that he will go through the details of the viability report and he will invite the management for discussions. Then the unions will be called for further discussions. He also informed that within two weeks, the Burnpur modernisation programme will be cleared where the case of HSCL as an executing agency was likely to be considered.

Joint Movement in ONGC

A joint meeting of the representatives of the recognised nine unions held at New Delhi on July 15 decided to serve notice to the ONGC management to settle the following issues before 31st July 1989-90: 1. Payment of incentive bonus on revised pay scale, for the 1989-90, (2) Anomalies in promotion policy to be settled, (3) protection of interim relief (4) filed establishment allowances to be settled and (5) regularisation and revision of pay scale of contingent/contractual Workers.

The meeting decided that if the management failed to resolve the issues within the stipulated time, all unions in ONGC throughout the country would go on strike in the third week of August 1990.

Dharna by ICF Workers

Integral Coach Factory (Madras) United Workers Union staged a mammoth dharna in front of the General Manager's office under the presidentship of Com. S. Krishnan. Com. Elango (DREU—S. RLY) inaugurated the dharna. Com. P.G. Krishnan (CITU) and Com. A. K. Padmanabhan (CITU) addressed the dharna. The main issues in the dharna were reinstatement of all railwaymen dismissed under Rule 14 (2) and filling up of all vacancies, selections with fairness and justice, grant of recognition to union in production unit on the basis of secret ballot, etc.

A memorandum was also submitted on the above issues which was handed over to the Secretary to the General Manager of ICF.

From page 14

In West Bengal, when the new Govt came, they straight away reinstated the dismissed employees. He also asked why should 1980-81 be a watershed, why not before. The Minister replied that he had already indicated a time frame when he said that he would complete the process much before the end of the year.

In reply to a categorical question of Shri Sukomal Sen "Are you going to reinstate them? the Minister said he would see that the whole problem was resolved. How exactly was some thing he would not comment upon at that particular moment.

Shri Sabbir Ahmed Salaria wanted to know whether the Minister personally considered removal of trade unionists justified. The Minister said in reply that by very definition victimisation is unjustified.

In response to a comment by Sourin Bhattacharjee the Minister said if a trade union worker was victimised it is unjustified.

The AIREC Programme

The assurances are there all right. Similar assurances have also been given by the Railway Minister on August 20 to a delegation of All India Railway Employees Confederation. However, the workers are yet unable to shed off all their doubts because they have been getting assurances since assumption of office by Shri Fernandes. The question is still hovering in their mind. Will the assurance by really fulfilled this time?

The AILRSA, and the AIREC of which the former is a constituent, have decided on a programme of agitation. Unless all victimisation is vacated in the meantime, they would stage demonstration at all Divisional head quarters on October 29, 1990 and a massive dharna in front of Prime Ministers residence in November.

T. U. Convention against Communalism

Date : September 19, 1990

Venue : V. P. House Lawns
Rafi Marg, New Delhi.

Inform about number of participants from each State to the CITU Centre.

Massive Dharna Against IDPL

The IDPL Kamgar Federation (CITU) and the Federation of Medical Representatives Association of India (FMRAI) organised a joint dharna before the Petro-Chemical Ministry, New Delhi on August 22, protesting against the anti-labour practices by the management of Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd, a Central Public Sector Undertaking and demanding action against the corrupt practices indulged in by the management.

Following identification of several corrupt practices by the management in its Karnataka Branch, which was substantiated by an Enquiry Committee constituted by the then Karnataka Government, the management derecognised both the Kamgar Federation and FMRAI and victimised a large number of the union functionaries of both the organisations by way of dismissals, transfers, suspensions, charge sheets, etc. It went ahead to form puppet parallel organisations coercing the employees to join them. A number of representations and deputation by the CITU to both the former Congress Ministers and the present NF Ministers failed to bear any fruit. Both the organisations therefore launched the joint movement to press the Government to concede the demands.

Despite threats by the management, the dharna was participated by about 1500 workers, employees and medical representatives coming from all parts of the country including the two major plants from Hyderabad and Rishikesh. Among others who addressed the dharna were Dr. Ashim Bala, M. P., P. K. Ganguly, Secretary CITU, J. S. Majumdar General Secretary of FMRAI, M. Krupender, Vice President of the Kamgar Federation and other leaders.

Later in the afternoon, a thirteen member delegation led by Samar Mukherjee, MP and General Secretary of CITU and consisting of four MPs and leaders of the CITU, the Kamgar Federation and FMRAI met the Minister of State for Petro-Chemicals, Bhajaman Behra and submitted a memorandum to him. After a detailed discussion the Minister assured to intervene to resolve the long standing dispute and also to probe into the corruption charges. He further talked to the Chairman of IDPL asking him not to take any action against the employees for participating in the dharna. Both the organisations resolved to carry forward the joint struggle till all the victimisations were withdrawn. It was also decided to meet the Prime Minister in a delegation in case the issues were not resolved.

Memorandum Submitted to the Minister

22.8.90

Shri Bhajaman Behera
The Hon'ble Minister of
State for Petroleum and Chemicals
Government of India,
Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi-110001

Memorandum on serious unfair labour practices in Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (IDPL)
Sir

On several occasions through memoranda with documents and personal representations, we have brought to notice of your Ministry about various unfair practices, both in respect of labour as well as in drug distribution, marketing etc in IDPL. Such unfair practices by IDPL management have caused serious industrial unrest and have caused serious damage to the reputation and stability in this premier Central Public Sector Undertaking in drug industry. We are briefly giving below some instances which are neither exhaustive nor complete. These are only to acquaint you again with the gist of some of the main issues, which we have already submitted to your Ministry earlier as mentioned above.

1. Some serious cases of corruption at its Karnataka Branch was identified in 1987 by the office bearers of the Federation of Medical Representatives Associations of India (FMRAI), an organisation led by the CITU and recognised by the management. The then Karnataka Government instituted a Commission of Enquiry headed by the Commissioner of Labour, Karnataka.

2. The enquiry report revealed that in the hospital purchase of medicines by the state government, the IDPL appointed several private parties as middlemen, indulged in corrupt practices in overpricing medicines, paid huge commissions to these private middlemen, caused substantial loss to the state government to the tune of Rs. 7.63 lakhs, sharing the loot by the middlemen and the officers of IDPL.

3. The management derecognised IDPL Kamgar Federation, an affiliate of CITU and floated a puppet organisation. They refused to call IDPL Kamgar Federation for wage negotiation. Such derecognition of the Kamgar Federation and recognition of a overnight created puppet organisation during wage negotiation is clear unfair labour practice of the management as defined under Industrial Disputes Act.

Similarly, the management of IDPL derecognised the Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Associations of India (FMRAI), the only recognised union for the Sales Promotion employees of IDPL throughout India and accorded recognition to another puppet Union.

4. The management have launched severe attack on the CITU affiliated union at Hyderabad viz. IDPL Hyderabad Kamgar Union. The CISF resorted to lathi charge at the instance of the management injuring several workers including women workers when they peacefully demonstrated at the call of IDPL Hyderabad Kamgar Union on 18th November, 1988, demanding their inclusion in negotiation. The management suspended its General Secretary and two other office bearers and issued charge sheets on a number of other workers on concocted charges.

5. The management of IDPL resorted to mass transfer of sales promotion employees, dismissed six trade union functionaries amongst them, issued hundreds of chargesheets to the field workers, changed their service and working conditions unilaterally imposing workload without giving notice as required under section 9 (a) of Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The management also refused to amend the certified standing order as applicable to workmen for sales promotion employees.

6: Just before the last Lok Sabha election, being politically motivated the management launched virulent attacks and spread canards against CITU, FMRAI and its members and particularly the left front Government of West Bengal through press statements and advertisements, resorted to illegal and unjust lockout of the West Bangal establishment on the concocted plea of lack of law and order. It may be noted that the court in Calcutta have already rejected the management's plea and exposed the falsehood in this regard.

7. The management of IDPL resorted to illegal deduction of wages for 8 days for one day strike. This also includes the participation of the field workers in 1989 Bharat Bandh for removal of the anti-people, corrupt and authoritarian Rajiv Govt. It is shocking to note that the management resorted to wage cuts for participation in Bharat Bandh even after the removal of Rajiv Government and installation of National Front Government at the Centre. Such illegal wage deductions are still continuing.

We are also giving below some instances of mismanagement and unfair practices in IDPL which unless stopped immediately, this Public Sector Undertaking will shortly become a seriously sick industry.

8. For supply to Government hospital and institutions IDPL management appointed private commission agents. Such Commission agents had high political connections in Rajiv Government. It may be noted that during 1989-90 financial year of IDPL the Company paid to the tune of Rs 1.1 crore as commission to these commission agents. Yet the Company had an outstanding of Rs 44 crores from the Government institutions and hospitals on 1st April, 1990. It may be noted that when these amounts

are also realised more commissions have to be paid.

9. The total number of sanctioned posts of the sales promotion employees was approximately 340. Today it has been reduced to about 170, whereas promotion have been accorded to more than 70 persons during last one year in gross violation of all norms and without giving promotional opportunities to eligible persons with the sole aim of breaking the movement.

10. At the close of financial year of 1989-90 with the co-operation of the field workers, IDPL for the first time had shown a growth rate of 124% in trade only which is amongst the highest in the entire pharmaceutical industry. After one year due to mismanagement and due to attack on the workers the sales turnover of the undertaking has been seriously affected, affecting growth rate, turnover, and profitability.

11. In desperation the management resorted to various unfair practices both in marketing and distribution by offering Maruti cars, entertaining the customers with drinks and dinner etc spending lakhs of rupees and by giving huge discount to the chemist or drug dealers which comes to approximately 58-60%, which is unheard of in the whole pharmaceutical industry. On the otherside the prices of the IDPL medicines are also being raised indiscriminately. This will lead to huge loss and collapse of IDPL as a premier Pharmaceutical Central Public Sector Undertaking.

Under these circumstances we urge upon you to intervene so that all victimisations are withdrawn to restore normaly in the undertaking. We further urge upon you to probe into all the corrupt practice s as above, take rectification measures and punish all the guilty officials to save this prestigious Public Sector Undertakings.

Yours Sincerely,

Samar Mukherjee (M.P)	Basudev Acharya (M.P)
Dr. Ashim Bala (M.P)	Naryan Kar (M. P.)
J. S. Majumdar	M. Krupender
(General Secretary,	(Vice President IDPL
FMRAI)	Kamgar Federation)
Ranjit Basu (Secretary	P. K. Ganguly (Secretary,
CITU)	CITU)

Hunger Strike by Hindustan Aeronautics Workers

Sixty five workers of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. Nasik (HAL), a Central Public Sector Undertaking launched hunger strike at Boat Club, New Delhi from August 10 demanding their reinstatement in job.

The management of HAL had suddenly terminated the services of 133 4th year trainees from February 1990. These workers were given specialised training in sophisticated and in most vital departments of HAL. They were working as regulars in their tenure of 4th year. Earlier all the trainees were absorbed as regular workmen of the company. But the services of these 133 trainees were terminated due to "surplus man power and financial crisis", as stated by the management, which is not tenable.

In response to a writ petition filed by the Nasik Workers Union (CITU), under which the workers were organised, the management had committed to reinstate the workers.

In a representation made by Samar Mukherjee, M. P. General Secretary of CITU, the Prime Minister had also assured him that the workers will be reinstated. But the Minister of State for Defence expressed his inability to take back the workers.

Several other Members of Parliament, namely, Basudev Acharya, Amal Dutta, Haribhau Mahale, Subhasini Ali. etc. had also made representations to the Prime Minister.

When all efforts failed, the workers were left with no other alternative than to start the hunger strike at Boat Club from August 10, 1990, till their demand for reinstatement was conceded.

Com. Samar Mukherjee M.P., Com. Hannan Mollah M.P., Com. Md. Amin, M.P., and Com. P. K. Ganguly, Com. Kanai Banerjee, Com. Jibon Roy, Com. Ranjit Basu, Secretaries of CITU and Com. S. B. Bhardwaj and Com. Mohanlal, the Delhi State CITU leaders visited the place and greeted the workers.

Ultimately on 16th August the Prime Minister met a delegation led by Com. Samar Mukherjee. On positive assurance given by the Prime Minister to look into the problem so as to reinstate them into services, the workers broke the hunger strike.

Anti-Price-Rise Day Observed

As per the call given by the General Council of the CITU held at Kanpur, from July 21-23, the anti-Price-Rise day was observed throughout Bengal on Aug. 23 in a massive way.

At the call of the CITU and other left trade unions, thousands of workers and other sections of people including students, youth and women assembled at Dalhousie square in one of the biggest rallies in recent times. Com. Manoranjan Roy, General Secretary of State CITU presided over the meeting. Addressing the rally, Com. Jyoti Basu, Vice President of CITU and Chief Minister of West Bengal, said that although the Left supported the N. F. Govt., yet the working class must wage struggles to change the economic policy of the Govt. After the Cong. (I) was ousted, it was expected that as per the promise of the National Front, it will pursue a new policy. But the last budget did not reflect any alternative in this respect. The Left had asked the Govt. to tax the rich instead of heaping any further miseries on the common people by indirect taxation. The Govt. did not abide by the suggestion. This has resulted in steep price-rise of all the commodities. The working class therefore, must carry forward the struggle to pressurise the Govt. to take positive steps to check price-rise.

Among others who spoke were Sunil Sengupta of UTUC, Prashanta Das Gupta of TUCC, Kamala Pati Roy of AITUC, Bhabatosh Roy of 12th July Committee, etc. (*Reports of the observance of the anti price rise day from other states will be published in the next issue as they come—Ed.*)

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(From page 8)

rous restrictive trade practices and trade barriers and subjects the poorer countries to humiliating discrimination has preferred to take upon itself the task of liberating trade of the "evils of restrictions".

Confronted with a staggering budget deficit, an increasingly adverse balance of payment position, colossal foreign debt, declining savings and stagnant industrial growth rates, the US economy is enmeshed in problems of almost insoluble dimensions. Such a situation is goading the US government towards transferring as much of the burden as possible to the poor underdeveloped third world countries.

Though the Government of India initially took the stand that it would not negotiate under threat, has, through the recently announced changes in industrial policy, provided cause for suspicion of changes being brought about under duress. While a detailed analysis of the changes effected is neither intended nor possible here, suffice it to say that what has been done in the name of liberalising, is nothing short of liberating the multinationals of all regulatory restrictions to invade Indian industry, liquidating the small-scale sector and rendering the future of industrial development dependent on the mercies of imperialism.

In such a scenario, this all India Convention held at New Delhi on August 23, 1990—

Calls upon the Government of India to stand firm against US threat and not to relent under pressure, to evolve an alternative strategy of self-reliant development that would do away with absolute dependence on foreign debt, encourage development of indigenous technology and open up the internal market and self-reliant economic development by adopting thorough going land reforms;

Calls upon Members of Parliament, State Legislatures and such august bodies to relentlessly demand the implementation of policies that would enable India to self-reliantly harness her vast natural and human resources to optimise development;

Calls upon the trade unions, students, youths and womens' organisations and public bodies to ceaselessly work to generate greater public awareness about the looming danger and to bring about sanctions for an alternative development and planning strategy to take shape;

And appeals to people in all vocations and in all walks of life to appreciate the challenge posed by the US threat and to work for a patriotic resurgence to make India the proud builder of a self-sustaining, self-generating, self-reliant economy.

The Convention urges upon all organisations to organise seminars/meetings/conventions and carry on the movement with a view to achieving the goals of national self-reliant progress.

Victory of CITU in Salem Steel

The CITU won a thrashing victory in the PF Committee elections in Salem Steel plant. The management of Salem Steel tried to distribute the PF Committee representation between the CITU & INTUC unions in order to protect the INTUC which has practically no base in Salem Steel. The CITU union opposed it & demanded election through secret ballot. In the election the INTUC union along with the UTUC (LS) and LPF union formed united front to defeat the CITU union. But the workers overwhelmingly expressed their total support to the CITU union and the CITU won all the three seats in the PF Committee.

CITU PUBLICATION

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(With recommendations of Mishra Commission report and other materials : Foreword by B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU and introduction by M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU)

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Prime Minister's Assurance to Anganwadi Delegation

A delegation on behalf of Preparatory Committee for Anganwadi Women met the Prime Minister on August 7 and presented two main demands among others; 1. to increase the honorarium to Rs. 400/- and Rs. 600/- for the helpers and workers respectively and 2. Maternity benefit for two children. The delegation also narrated to the Prime Minister as to how the CDPOs were threatening the women with dismissal if they attend the rally.

Shri V.P. Singh expressed his surprise as to how the increase has not been effected since the question was raised in Parliament sometime back. He also promised that these projects for rural women among whom many are widows and helpless will not be closed as it is reported. He promised to speak to Shri Madhu Dandavate, the Finance Minister about the increase in honorarium to the anganwadi women.

The thousands of women from all over India who were rallying at the Boat Club heard the report from the delegation with enthusiasm, while expressing their determination to continue their struggle with more vigour.

The delegation consisted of Mrs Ahilya Rangankar, ex M.P., Vimal Ranadive, Secretary CITU, Mrs Nilima Moitra, Mrs Surinder Kaur, Mrs Madhu Sethia, Ms Vallikutty. The delegation was led by Shri Samar Mukherjee M.P. and was accompanied by Subhashini Ali M.P., Mrs Sarala Maheshwari M.P. Com. Ranjit Basu, Secretary, CITU was also present.

The following memorandum was submitted to the Prime Minister.

Memorandum to the Prime Minister

Dear Sir.

We wish to draw your attention to the plight of lakhs of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers, who are employed in the ICDS projects under the Union Labour & Welfare Minister. The ICDS projects are for children of the 0-6 year age group and pregnant and lactating mothers. Nutrition, immunisation and elementary education to the children are the main services rendered, but we are forced to work for a pittance of Rs. 250/- to Rs. 300/- per month for workers and Rs. 110/- per month for helpers, as honorarium.

Our delegations met the Prime Minister in 1989 and the Minister of Labour and Welfare, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, in 1990, raising the main demands for regularisation of the workers and helpers as Central Government employees, and in the interim, an increase in the honorarium paid.

Our poor wages, denial of maternity benefits and

leave, corruption by CDPOs and sexual harassment by male employees are the conditions we work under. It is impossible to survive on the paltry amount paid to us and even the Rs. 325/- p. m. indicated by the Central Government Circular has not been implemented in most of the States.

Whenever, we have demanded higher wages and regularisation we have been told that our work is part-time, we are social workers' and therefore we have no right to make any demands, or that the ICDS scheme will be stopped if we persist in our demands.

As you are well aware, over 50 lakh unemployed women are on the registers, seeking employment, as a result of the economic policies, of the Government and the modernisation of industry. More and more women are therefore being forced into unorganised sector, to work in arduous conditions, at very low wages.

With your Government's acceptance of the principle of the Right to Work as a Fundamental Right, we assume that employment opportunities for women in India will be further generated and the existing conditions of work improved. We therefore, hope and expect that you will consider our demands favourably.

Our Demands

1. The Anganwadi workers and helpers should be regularised as Central Government Employees with the same service terms and service conditions.
2. Pending regularization, the honorarium should be increased to Rs. 600/- for workers and Rs. 400/- for helpers, for six hours of work per month.
3. There should be promotional avenues on the basis of educational qualifications and experience for both Anganwadi workers and helpers.
4. Maternity benefit for at least two children should be given, with full day for both workers and helpers.
5. Earned and Medical Leave, Sundays and Public Holidays should be given as per Government rules.
6. Festival Bonus should be paid in all the States, as is currently being done in West Bengal.
7. Training facilities with stipend should be made compulsory.
8. The Government should provide fuel, rice and cereals at Government cost and also provide for funds and land for construction of the Centres.

(Cont'd on page 23)

The National Commission on Women : A New Opening in the Struggle for Equal Status

Malini Bhattacharya

On 8th August last, a Bill providing for the setting up of a National Commission on Women was passed in Lok Sabha. It will become an Act after it gets through Rajya Sabha, and with the formulation of rules, the first step towards the formation of the national body will be taken. One of the remarkable features of this Bill, initiated by the National Front Government has been the way it has been shaped under the pressure of a continuing dialogue between the Government and a large number of women's organisations. The demand for a National Commission on Women with statutory powers was made by the All India Democratic Women's Association, All India Coordination Committee of Working Women, National Federation of Working Women, Mahila Dakshata Samiti and others for quite a few years now. The 1974 Report of the Committee on the Status of Women recommended that Commissions should be set up at the Centre and in the States for collection of informations, evaluation of policies, programmes and laws regarding women, recommendation of new laws, policies and programmes, as well as redressal of grievances. This recommendation was repeated in the 1988 Report of the National Commission on Self-employed women. But in spite of this, all that the then Congress(I) Government at the Centre came up with was a proposal in the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988) for a central 'Office of Commissioner for Women's Rights'.

The women's organisations, demanding a Commission with statutory powers and with a broad based and democratic mode of functioning rightly rejected the proposal as an eye wash. Subsequently, when the National Front Government, seeking to fulfil one of the promises made in the first Presidential speech of its regime, came up with the National Commission on Women Bill, it was found that it still left the Commission too much under Government control and gave it too little authority. This led to criticism and the Government conceded the demand for a fresh bout of discussion at the national level. The Bill as it stands amended in its final form bears the marks of the consensus which emerged out of these discussions. It leaves a few things still to be desired; some of the most important demands made by the women's organisations have, however, been met.

What have the women's organisations gained through this Bill after the protracted struggle? First of all, the fact that the Commission is being set up through an Act passed in Parliament ensures it statutory powers. Secondly, its authority has been enhanced through a number of amendments. When investigating any matter, the Commission is going to have

'all the powers of a Civil Court trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908', it would have powers of summoning and enforcing attendance of any person, requiring discovery and production of any document receiving evidence on affidavit etc. Without these powers, investigations cannot be carried on effectively. It will also, according to the amended Bill, be consulted by the government in all policy matters regarding women and participate in the planning process. Thus its investigations would not have a mere post mortem character, and intervention at planning stage would be possible. Again the Central Government will be answerable to the Parliament for non-acceptance or non-implementation of the Commission's recommendations. This will be done through the Commission's reports along with a governmental memorandum being placed regularly before the Parliament. The apprehension that the Commission will remain a 'watchdog without teeth', has been largely removed by these provisions. They have raised hopes that the projected Commission will be a weapon in the struggle for women's rights, providing a forum where these rights may be upheld and fought for. Rights of women in their place of work and within the family, legal lacunae which reinforce women's subordinate position in society, atrocities against women—will all come within the purview of the Commission.

The method of constitution of the Commission, however, should have been more democratic. The members, now, are to be directly appointed by the government, which leaves some space for ruling parties to wield their political influence in the appointments. Of course, it should also be remembered that the possibilities of such influence may only be diminished to some extent by adequate safeguards; there cannot be any completely foolproof infrastructure for this. Also political control does not have to be deployed per se, but only when it tends to introduce coterie rule and subvert the democratic process. It may also be pointed out that the amendments have given the Commission a degree of autonomy by removing clauses in the original Bill which had endorsed the Central Government with the right to terminate a member's term of office at will (Clause 4.2) and had insisted on the Commission carrying out the directions of the Central Government (Clause 16). To those who argue that if salaries of the members are paid out of government fund, they would become subservient, it may be pointed out that government fund is public fund and should not, in principle, be tied up with any servile allegiance to the ruling party.

The number of members of the Commission might have been increased to eleven, because these eleven would be able, more or less adequately, to

represent the kinds of special experience needed for this kind of task, such as experience in mass organisations, in legal matters, in education, health etc. The present number, seven, including one member each from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, seems too small. Again, while assuring that the Commission will be able to inspect jails, remand homes, women's institutions etc, the bill leaves out the Commission's prerogative to inspect factories and other places where women work. This is strange because women are oppressed not only in jails, but also in their place of work.

While the Constitution upholds sexual equality, in the 43 years after independence, we have found continued discrimination against and oppression of women. The mainstream of development leaves them by; when some big project goes up, women lose their traditional jobs and get marginalised most easily. Their labour power is devalued and they largely constitute a vast reserve army of unorganised labour. The immense burden of house work lies on their shoulders and illiteracy is rampant. This discrimination is the basis on which atrocities against women like rape, molestation and dowry deaths go on increasing. Incidences of female foeticide even deny women the right to be born. In these circumstances, the proposed Commission can be of some use only if it is decentralised, de-bureaucratised, and can maintain contact with the grass roots. At the moment, the bill allows for reports of the Commission which concern state governments to be laid before the State legislature. But only when there are state-level, block-level, even panchayat-level branches of the Commission stretching out to those women who need it most, can the Commission serve its function properly.

(Cont'd from page 21)

9. Creches for children should be provided near the centres.

10. Anganwadi workers and helpers should be placed in centres near to their place of residence, as far as possible. Residential quarters should be provided if they are posted to far off places.

11. Central Government circulars to the States should be implemented strictly.

12. One representative of the Union should be taken on the Project Committee.

13. Strong action should be taken against officials indulging in corruption and sexual harassment of the Anganwadi workers and helpers.

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely,

Vimal Ranadive

Convenor, Preparatory
Committee of Angan-
wadi Workers & Helpers
6, Talkatora Road,
New Delhi-1

Ahilya Rangnekar
(Ex. M.P, Maharashtra)
Rajender Kaur (Punjab)
Madhu Sethia (Rajasthan)
Nirupama Chatterjee
(West Bengal)
F. Valli Kutty (Kerala)

Modernisation of IISCO on Way

No other project, except perhaps, Haldia Petrochemicals, has drawn such public attention and worries as that of modernisation of IISCO in recent times. IISCO, one of the premier steel plants in the country, started producing iron and steel early this century. Situated in one of the best sites where the basic raw materials like iron ore, coking coal, lime stone are available in abundance and transport and port facilities through Calcutta being most developed in the country, this plant had all the potentialities to become a vibrating steel giant. But the private owners had bled it white.

Finally Govt. of India had taken over the plant in 1972. They wanted to save the plant by some patch work but that worsened the situation. The money went down the drains. The criminal executive nexus was so strong and bold that they looted the plant property and machinery in broad day light.

The functioning unions, worried over the gradual decline of the plant, formed a "Save IISCO Committee" in 1985 and led a campaign for its survival. Govt. of India at this stage took some interest to save this plant from utter ruination but the bureaucratic bungling continued almost endlessly.

There were detailed Project Reports (DPR's) made by MECON, by DASTUR & Co., by the Russians and by the Japanese. Govt. of India accepted the Japanese (JICA) proposal but did not, for unknown reasons, give the final clearance. Even the formalities like clearance from Planning Commission, P.I.B. (Project Investment Board) were not obtained. But a show was given by SAIL authorities that the entire programme was in the offing. Leveling of land started. The unions were told about the necessity of phasing out some out dated units and the consequent re-deployment of manpower which they agreed to.

After the change in the Government at the Centre it was revealed that the actual cost of modernisation was not Rs. 3000 crores but more than Rs. 6,800 crores of rupees and the projected return of capital was less than 2%, that too was uncertain. The new government started reassessing the entire project. Continuous persuasion by the trade unions and the Govt. of West Bengal, particularly by Com. Jyoti Basu personally, has finally induced the Govt. to expedite the decision. Shri Dinesh Goswami categorically stated before a delegation of MP's and representative of all trade unions of IISCO and from Steel Workers Federation of India (SWFI) that the project has received his ministry's clearance. PIB clearance will take about 2 more months and Cabinet approval will follow. He emphatically stated that it will be before December 1990 that all the formalities will be completed. The new size and nature of the project however is much smaller than the Japanese proposal. Some old units will be retained in the revised scheme. Only one redeeming feature is that IISCO is going to have flat products (Plates, Sheets, Corrugated sheets) which still can fetch a good price and as such, the return of capital has been worked out to be about 10%.

DPRK's Proposals For Peaceful Reunification of Korea

Recently, on July 4, 1990 a joint statement was released at the end of a joint meeting of representatives of the Government, political parties and organisations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea held at Pyongyang to mark the 18th anniversary of the publication of the historical July 4 Joint Statement, the key note of which is the three principles—Independence, Peaceful Reunification and Great National Unity.

Over the past 18 years, the statement notes, the DPRK Government, political parties and organisations have set great store by the idea and principles of the July 4 Joint Statement and have made persistent and sincere efforts to carry them into effect.

Though the North and the South agreed in the statement to make concerted efforts to put an end to the division and achieve reunification, the South Korean authorities betrayed this agreement, declared "Two Koreas" their policy and are now trying to legalise the permanent division of the country.

In order to accomplish the historical cause of national reunification in the 1990s, it is required to firmly defend and implement these principles.

DPRK has already put forward a reasonable and realistic proposal for reunification that embodies the principles. Proposal for founding the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo is the most just proposal for reunification which makes it possible to solve the country's reunification question independently in a peaceful way with neither side conquering the other or being conquered, under the condition where different ideologies and systems exist in the north and the south.

The South Korean authorities' negative stand towards the proposal for founding the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo only shows that they have no willingness to observe the three principles of national reunification and their outcry over "Threat From the North" is nothing but a lie.

Worse still, they availing themselves of the imperialists' anti-socialist moves are calling for leading the North to openness and even blatantly advertising the "Doctrine of Unification by Prevailing over Communism" based on the Liberal Democratic System."

The 40 odd years long history in which the North and the South have covered different roads fully shows the vulnerability of the corrupt and ailing colonial system of South Korea that has been reduced to a dumping ground of all the excrements of the capitalist world, and the incomparable superiority and solidness of the independent, sovereign and popular socialist system of DPRK's own style.

In order to accomplish the historical cause of national reunification in this hopeful decade, it is imperative to ease the tension on the Korean Peninsula, create a favourable climate for national reunification, tear down the wall of division, realise free travel and full-scale opening between the North and the South and develop external relations on the principle of creating an international climate favourable to the reunification of the country. Out of the desire to settle these urgent problems for national reunification. DPRK have already put forward to the South Korean side an epoch-making proposal for carrying out phased arms reduction and adopting a non-aggression declaration.

If the South Korean authorities are interested in peace and peaceful reunification of the country, they must accede without hesitation to DPRK's fair and aboveboard proposal for "non-aggression declaration and disarming which can substantially guarantee detente and peace.

It is important to actively develop north-south dialogue in order to smoothly settle all the problems in ensuring peace on the Korean Peninsula and reunifying the country by peaceful means.

Dialogues in political, military, economic, cultural, sports, humanitarian and other spheres and dialogues between workers, peasants youth and students, intellectuals, religionists, women and other people, are needed.

The most authoritative form of reunification dialogue is a political conference in which the authorities and the representatives of political parties, organisations and various stratas of the North and the South take part. The broad participation of the representatives of political parties, organisations and various stratas of the North and the South in the debate on reunification is an inviolable right of all the members of the nation. The subject of reunification, nobody should deny this noble right and go against the will of the people for participation in the reunification dialogue.

Under the present situation, whether the North-South top level talks are held or not, depends entirely on the attitude of the South Korean authorities.

Unshakable is the will of the entire Korean people in the North and the South and overseas to achieve the independent and peaceful reunification of the country on the three principles of national reunification.