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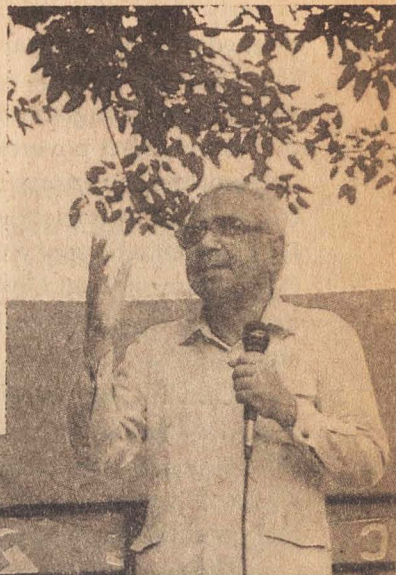
THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

CITU HOLDS CHILD LABOUR RALLY

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions organised countrywide rallies of Child Labour on September 30. The Rallies were a part of the CITU-ILO programme on elimination of child labour.

At Delhi a rally of over 500 working children was held at Jantar Mantar Park. The working children came



from delhi and adjoining areas of Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya pradesh, etc., who are working as child labour in various unorganised sector of industries like Brick-kiln, Beedi, Tailoring, hotel and Restaurants, Construction, Carpets etc. A large number of girl children working as child labour in the industries also joined the rally. The children came with placards, banners and CITU flags and shouted slogans demanding of the Government for removal of poverty of their family. They demanded free education, equal wages at par with the adults and maximum 6 hours work. A number of children spoke in the rally narrating about their compulsion to work due to the abject poverty of their parents who were also workers in various unorganised sector of industries or agricultural labour or poor peasants. Among the children who spoke were Kumari Radha Shakya (MP), Kumari Rinu Goswami (MP), Vinki (Rajasthan), Md. Ismail (Rajasthan), Chetram (Rajasthan), etc.

The CITU leaders who addressed the rally were M.K. Pandhe, (General Secretary), Vimal Ranadive P.K. Ganguly (Secretaries), R.K. Swamy, Wagarul Ahad, Darshan Koda (Rajasthan), Badal Saroj (MP), and Darshan Singh (Punjab).

The speakers criticized the policy of the Government which further aggravated the poverty of the people and thereby increasing the number of child labour.

The rally demanded land reforms, employment generation, check on price rise, need based wages in the unorganised sector etc. which would go a long way in alleviating poverty of the people and reducing child Labour s a consequence. It further demanded opening of free schools in the child labour infested areas, free books, tiffin etc.; equal pay to the working children at par with the adults and a maximum of six hours work for children with half-an-hour recess.

The rally called for carrying forward the struggle in pursuance of the demands.

CHILD LABOUR DEMONSTRATION IN ORISSA

A child labourers demonstration sponsored by ILO-CITU got organised on 30th September at Bhubaneswar which was participated by 50 child labours from different districts of the state mainly

from the occupation of Mining, forestry, agricultural operation, beedi, Salt pans and rag pickers of Bhubaneswar city. The rally started from Krusak Samaja at 11 AM towards the state secretariate and got obstructed by the police at PMG square. The demonstrating child labours were addressed by the CITU state General Secretary Com. Lambodar Nayak including other CITU state leaders Com. Pradeep das, Com. Com. Amiya Das, Raghunath Das, Padharman Sadangi. While moving through the main thorough fare of the city the demonstrating children were seen appreciated and welcome by large number of people of the city and news media. This the biggest demonstration of child labours in the state capital in comparison to several such demonstrations so far organised by various voluntary organisations in Orissa.

CITU-ILO-IPEC

WEST BENGAL STATE WORKSHOP ON CHILD LABOUR

West Bengal State Workshop on Child Labour at the joint initiative of CITU-ILO-IPEC were held from 21-23rd August at Yuva Kendra, Calcutta. In the inaugural ceremony on 21st August hundreds of organisers of various child labour oriented industries as unorganised sector as also hundreds of working children from different districts of the State assembled at the auditorium. In the inaugural speech, K.V. Raghunath Reddy, Governor, West bengal, pointed out that high-sounding measures were detailed out in different provisions of the Constitution as also in various resolutions of the ILO but child labour had not been eradicated due to growing poverty in the society. Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister, West bengal, in his speech as the Chief Guest announced that the State Government would look into the proposals, recommendations formulated by this workshop. He emphasized that since eradication of child Labour would not be a reality under the prevailing situation, the workshop should identify and specify some measures that would deliver, even within the limited scope, some relief to child labour. He also stressed for three-point immediate task : firstly, to conduct an extensive survey in guard to child labour;

secondly to attach special attention in awareness campaign programme; thirdly to extend non-formal education to the child labourers. While speaking on this occasion Com. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITY informed that the problems of child labour and would also observe All India Demand Day on September 30th. He alleged that the Rao-Government had sanctioned Rs.850 Crores for eradication of Child Labour from hazardous industries and the money were being pumped out through NGO (s) but no tangible progress had so far been made. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by Com. Niren Ghosh, president, CITU, West Bengal Committee. Com. Chittabrata Majumdar, Com. Arati Dasgupta also spoke in the occasion. Among the distinguished leaders Com. Shanti Ghatak, Labour Minister, Com. Md. Amin, Com. P.K. Ganguly, Com. Vimal Ranadive, Com. Mrinal das were also present.

The presidium comprised of Com. Rajdeo Gala, Com. Arati Das gupta and Com. Mrinal Das conducted the delegate session held on 22nd & 23rd August. 60 delegates from childlabour oriented industries situated in different districts attended the session.

Com. Mrinal Das tabled the Discussion Paper in the delegate session. The discussion Paper dealt with the basic causes of child labour and its ever increasing growth, education, laws in regard child labour, wages and working conditions of childlabour and the action-programme. Dominant features of the action-programmes were to develop awareness against the practice of deployment of childlabour through seminars, group discussions, rallies, conventions etc; to cover the child Labour under Minimum Wage Act, stipulated six-hours work, equal wage for equal job, introduction of health scheme for childlabour and compulsory free non-formal education etc. Delegate session was addressed by Com. Partha dely, Health Minister, Com. Shanti Ghatak, Labour Minister, Com. Kanti Biswas, Primary Education Minister, Com. Nishit Adhikari, Law Minister, Com. P.K. Ganguly and by Com. Vimal Ranadive.

The delegates were hen divided in to four groups to discuss at length the specific issues highlighted in the discussion paper namely, socio-economic condition and child labours; education and child labours; working condition-wages-labour laws and child

labours; safety and security of child labours. All the delegates actively participated in the discussion and concrete proposals on each separate issue were drawn.

On 23rd. August the rappoters of the four groups delivered the text of the discussion and placed the proposals/recommendations in reard to four specific issues. Com. Chittabrata Majumdar expressed the observation of WB Committee, CITU and requested the deletes to analyst the problem keeping the reality into consideration. He also urged upon the delegates to intensity the awareness programme by a large intensity the awareness programme by a larger intensity involving people from every strata of the Society.

On compliation of the deliberations, Com. Mrinal Das declared that: (a) the Government would be requested to constitute a cell on child labour under the Labour Department; (b) Child Labour welfare centre to be opened in child labour oriented districts/localities so that the child labourers would be covered by welfare programmes; CITU would approach to all the people belonging to every cross section of the society irrespective of their political affiliation to strengthen these Centre; (c) the Union Government be requested not to pump-out the money only to NGOs as per declared package-programme of eradication of child labourers from hazardous industries; the sanctioned amount should be passed through the State Government to the local bodies including some NGOs of reute under specific programmes.

The workshop further decided to wage struggles demanding land reforms to alleviate poverty, for employment generation, for curbing price rise, to implement need based wages and socio security measures in the unorganised sector of industries where child labour, is predominant, to open free compulsory schools and free books and tiffin in child labour infested areas, to give equal wages to Child labourers at par with the adults, six hours work to Child Labour, etc. The workshop also decide that WB Committee, CITU would examine the other recommendations in death and adopt appropriate steps to implement the same in due course.

Com. Rajdeo Goala delivered the concluding speech from the Presidium and the workshop was concluded.

COM. GODAVARI PARULEKAR

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses profound sorrow at the passing away of Com. Godavari Parulekar, the legendary leader of the Adivasi and Kisan movement, and a member of the Central Committee of CPI(M). Com. Parulekar died at Thane (Maharashtra) on October 9 at the age of 89. Com. Godavari joined the freedom movement at an early age and was imprisoned. She later joined the trade union movement and led working class movement on the ideological moorings of socialism.

She further joined the Kisan movement and was a pioneer in organising the Adivasi of warli. She became a legend in this respect during her life time organising revolt of the Adivasi against the feudal oppression. She became the President of the Maharashtra

Kisan Sabha and then the president of the A.I. Kisan Sabha in 1986.

Soon she became a front line leader of the communist movement in the country, firm on the basic tenets of Maxism-Leninism. She became a member of the Central Committee of CPI(M) in 1964. She voluntarily retired in 1992 due to ill health. As a legend in Adivasi and peasant movement, as a social reformer and as a revolutionary for a period over six decades, Com. Godavari Purulakar will be remembered by the posterity, by the working class, peasantry and the oppressed sections of the society in their struggle against the capitalist feudal system and for socialism. The CITU dips its red banner paying homage to Com. Godavari Parulekar.

Com. Satyabrata Sen

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions express deep sorrow at the sad demise of Com. Satyabrata Sen, a revolutionary, noted econo-

mist and a member of the W.Bengal state committee of CPI(M).

CITU CONDEMNS BURNING OF CITU OFFICE BY RSS HOODLUMS AT GWALIOR

It is a matter of grave concern that in the early morning of 27th September 1996, CITU office at Gwalior was set on fire by a group of gangsters known to be RSS activists of the locality. Besides setting the office on fire, they have also burnt and destroyed a CITU vehicle parked in front of the office.

The whole misdeed was done in the early morning in order to avoid resistance from the people residing around.

The CITU secretariat condemned such dastardly and heinous act by the RSS and urges upon the MP Government to arrest the culprits who are still moving

around freely.

CITU also calls upon the workers and toiling people to realise the real fascistic face of RSS and get united to fight back the communal gangsterism.

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TRADE UNIONS AND MASS ORGANISATIONS TO RELAUNCH UNITED MOVEMENT

A meeting of the Platform was held at 15, Talkatora Road, New Delhi under the presidentship of B.D. Joshi, Deputy General Secretary, AITUC and was attended by the representatives of the constituents trade unions and the mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, women, youth and students.

The meeting expressed strong opposition to the UF government's move to privatise the Insurance sector, initiative to pass the Patents amendment Bill in the forthcoming winter session of the Parliament. It voiced serious protest against the steps of the Govt to dismantle the public sector through dangerous deregulation and massive disinvestment of shares and that too in large number of cases reducing the public sector unit minority shareholder. The meeting sharply criticised the government for not implementing many of commitments to the nation and the people

The meeting unanimously resolved to carry forward the united struggle launched against the World Bank and IMF dictated economic and industrial policies. The platform reiterated its resolve to mobilise the masses for protecting the rights and living standard of the people and economic development of the country.

It has been decided that to chalk out the next phase of agitational programmes throughout the country in a massive national convention of trade unions and other mass organisations to be organised at Delhi. The date and other details of the convention will be finalised in the next meeting of the Platform which will be held on 13th November 1996.

In the meantime the programme of demonstrations and mass campaign already chalked out by the respective mass organisations on various issues such as comprehensive legislation for agricultural workers, reservation of one-third seats for women in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies and other elected bodies, in defence of the rights of working class and right to work for all and also issues related to youth and students shall be actively supported by all the constituents of the platform.

The meeting has decided to extend active support to the joint demonstration of women's organisations before Parliament on 26th November 1996 on the question of reservation of seats for women in

Parliament and Assemblies and also the demonstration at Bangalore on 8th December 1996 to protest against the holding of Beauty Contest.

Further to stall the passage of the Patents Amendment Bill in the Parliament, National Protest Day will be observed on 27th November 1996 by all the trade unions and all mass organisations by sending protest telegrammes to the Lok Sabha, wearing protest badge and holding joint demonstrations at state capitals, districts and sub divisional headquarters, area, local and plant levels.

The meeting also supported the programmes of the Sponsoring Committee of trade unions and expressed its solidarity with the Sponsoring Committee in its struggle in defence of the trade union rights and welfare of the working class. The National Platform also extended its full support to the decision of Central Govt Employees organisations to go in for strike from 23rd October 1996 onward demanding removal of ceilings on Bonus payment and called upon all its constituent organisations to come forward in support of the striking Central Govt employees.

The meeting appealed to the working class and other mass of the people to intensify the agitation and propaganda to compel to govt to implement the pro-people policies and give up the anti-people programmes.

PLB for all on Railways Ab Achievement for Rail Trade Union Movement

After prolonged agitation by railway workers conducted jointly and also under the banner of their respective organizations, culminating in demonstrations leading to disruption in train service in many places, the Govt. at last relented and conceded the demand of the employees for removing the eligibility ceiling which was at the level of Rs.4500/- Consequently all group C and group D employees will be getting productivity linked bonus.

AIRF and NFIR jointly conducted agitation. AIREC also pressurized the Govt.

Trade Unions Contradict Labour Ministry's Statement on Minimum Wage in ILC

The Central Trade Unions contradict the statement made by the Ministry of Labour that the 33rd session of the Indian Labour Conference decided to fix the daily floor level national minimum wage in the Unorganised Sector as Rs 35/-.

The statement given by the Ministry is totally wrong and misleading, as there was no declaration like this made in the Conference by the Labour Minister.

All the Central Trade Unions, while emphasising on the five norms fixed by the 15th ILC of 1957 as the criteria for fixing the floor level minimum wage to be linked with price index for full neutralisation, plus 25 per cent as per the verdict of the Supreme Court in 1991, asked for a daily wage of Rs 50/- with automatic linkage with price index. There was no objection from the Labour Ministry, including the Labour Minister on this. On the contrary, the Labour Minister himself assured that this will be incorpo-

rated in the conclusions which the Drafting Committee was preparing.

In fact, the session was declared over even when the Drafting Committee had not even completed drafting the conclusions. It was expected, as assured by the Labour Minister, that the Drafting Committee will put it in the report.

It was therefore unwarranted on the part of the Labour Ministry to declare to the media a decision which was never arrived at, contradicting the actual conclusions in the session.

The trade unions therefore reject the Rs 35/- and reiterate the demand for Rs 50/- as the daily floor level minimum wage, which should have automatic linkage with consumer price index.

Sd/- P K Ganguly
(CITU)

Sd/- K L Mahendra
(AITUC)

Sd/- R M Mittal (HMS)

WORKERS' RALLY DENOUNCE ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE GOVT.

DEMAND REVERSAL OF DECISIONS ON DISINVESTMENT

September 27, 1996, The massive rally of the workers of Delhi demonstrated before Teen-Murti square where they have been stopped by police on the way to their march to Prime Minister's residence at the call of sponsoring committee of Indian Trade Unions comprising of CITU, AITUC, UTUC (LS), UTUC, HMS, AICCTU and IFTU.

The demonstration was held to observe All India Demands Day as per decision of the Sponsoring Committee to protest against pursuance of the same Economic policy of Cong (I) regime by the Deve Gowda Govt.

The rally was addressed by Com. M.K. Pandhe (CITU), A.B. Bardhan (AITUC), R.K. Sarma (UTUC/LS), Ashis Ganguly (UTUC), Ranjan Ganguly (AICCTU), Com S.B. Bharadwaj (CITU), among others. The speakers expressed concern over the

pursuance of the same Fund/Bank dictated Economic Policy by the UF Govt, casting adverse impact on the self reliance of Economy and on the livelihood of workers and common people.

Speakers also denounced the Govt decision of disinvestment of shares of profitable PSUs and urged upon the Govt to reverse the decisions. From the rally call was given to workers of all affiliations to prepare for struggle in the days to come to force Govt change their policies.

From the rally a delegation of all TUs comprising Tapan Sen (CITU), Mr. Gope (AITUC), R.K. Sharma (UTUC/LS), Ranjan Ganguly (AICCTU), J.B. Singh (UTUC), S.R. Saini (AIIEA), submitted memorandum to Prime Minister's office consisting of 13 point demands.

CITU Strongly Opposes Off-loading shares of VSNL & IOC

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

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions totally opposes the decision of the UF Government to disinvest the shares of two core sector profit making public sector industries namely VSNL and IOC @7% and 5% respectively. The government has also approved the handing over of more discovered oil fields to foreign multinational companies. This decision of the government is against the policy pronounced in the Common Minimum Programme wherein they said that the UF Government will "make the public sector strong."

The CITU considers that commencement of the process of privatisation of the most efficiently run core sector PSUs by off-loading shares and gifting out soft oil fields having established reserve of crude oil to the foreign oil cartels are steps against the national interest, more so when the disinvested money is taken away by the government to meet their budget deficit.

It is to be mentioned that with the proposed disinvestment the total percentage of off-loading shares of VSNL and IOC will go up to 22% and 7% respectively.

The CITU is of the firm view that if the public sector units in the key areas of our economy are

converted into the junior partners of private sector then the economy of the country shall be controlled by the foreign and Indian private capital, planned economic and industrial development shall be sacrificed at the altar of private profit hunters and regional economic imbalance is bound to aggravate dangerously.

Apart from this, the Govt has also planned to open the non-core and non-strategic sector to the multinationals by selling off equity to the tune of 75 per cent, to which the CITU is totally opposed.

The CITU maintains that the act of selling the national assets against the declared policy as announced in the CMP amounts to betraying the trust of the people and toeing the Fund-Bank dictated policies of the previous Cong(I) government rejected by the people in the last election.

The CITU strongly demands the reversal of the decision of disinvestment of PSU shares and contracting out the discovered oil fields to the private contractors. It further reiterates it resolve to organise countrywide united movement to save the public sector and against the economic policies and appeals the trade union movement of the country irrespective of affiliations to launch powerful movement to compel the Govt to stop further disinvestment of shares of PSUs.

CONFERENCE, CONVENTIONS, MEETINGS

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| Punjab State CITU Conference | - 1-3 December at Hosierpur |
| Himachal State CITU Conference | - 14,15 December at Solan |
| M.P. State CITU Conference | - 19-22 January,1997 at Indore |
| Rajasthan State CITU Conference | - 25-27 January, 1997 at Jaipur |
| Delhi State CITU Conference | - 1-3 March, 1997 at Delhi |
| Tamilnadu State CITU Conference | - 5-8 March, 1997 at Madras |
| Karnataka State CITU Conference | - 13-16 March 1997 at Bangalore |
| A.I. Coal Workers Federation Conference | - 24-26 November at Korba |
| A.I. Plantation Workers Federation Conference. | - 17-19 December at Dibrugarh. |
| A.I. Committee of Beedi Workers Conference | - November 29 - December 1 at Solapur. |
| A.I. Coordination Committee of Public Sector Workers Meeting | - December 4 at Delhi |
| Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) meeting. | - December 5 and 6 at Delhi. |
| A.I. Joint Convention of Textile Workers. | - December 5 at Delhi |
| General Council Meeting of CITU | - November 17-20 at Visakhapatnam. |

CITU GAINS IN SECRET BALLOT IN BHEL

On 28th September 1996, Secret Ballot election was held in various plants/offices of Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for the purpose of reconstituting the National level Joint Bipartite forum for BHEL.

CITU unions in various BHEL units could enhance their position substantially in the recent election and all other Central Trade Unions had to withstand loss.

So long CITU unions had the negotiating status only in the plants at Trichy and Bhopal. In the current election besides retaining negotiating status in Trichy and Bhopal, CITU unions could gain negotiating status in the plants of Hardwar and Jhansi. In Jhansi, CITU union occupied the number one position.

After long eighteen years, Secret Ballot Election has taken place in BHEL. In the Current phase, election was held in all the BHEL units except Bhopal and Hyderabad and Bangalore. In Hyderabad election took place about a year back as per Andhra Pradesh Statute and in Bangalore unit only one independent union is functioning of which Com.

Suryanarayana Rao, Vice President CITU was elected President, only a year back.

In Bhopal, taking the shelter of notorious MPIR Act the INTUC union opposed election.

Notable is that even in the state like UP, BMS lost miserably at BHEL units at Hardwar and Jhansi. INTUC, AITUC and HMS unions lost their negotiating status at Hardwar. At Jhansi INTUC & AITUC union could not secure even hundred votes out of around 1500 workers. In Trichy also INTUC, and AITUC unions have drawn blank.

Also notable is the victory of All India BHEL Employees Union in the Corporate office of BHEL at Delhi defeating the BMS union. The same union i.e. AIBEU also won in power sector of BHEL in huge margin. In Industry Sector also said union came up victorious.

CITU Secretariat has congratulated the BHEL workers all over the country for freely exercising their opinion through secret ballot for the reconstitution of the Joint Committee of BHEL.

CITU DEMANDS INCLUSION OF TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES IN THE OFFICIAL DELEGATION OF WTO MEETING.

The letter written on 11.10.96 to Prime Minister by M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU, is hereby released to the Press:

October 11, 1996

Shri H.D. Deve Gowda, Prime Minister,
Government of India,
New Delhi

Dear Shri Deve Gowda,

As you are aware, the First Ministerial Meeting under World Trade Organization is going to be held at Singapore from 9th December 1996 which will discuss among other things the question of Social Clause in the trade agreements.

All the trade unions in India have opposed any linking of social clause with international trade. The last Indian Labour Conference as well as meeting of the Labour Ministers of non-aligned countries have also expressed their opposition to the social clause. It is therefore necessary that India should take initiative in mobilising other developing countries to check the efforts of the developed countries to impose conditions which restricts markets of the third world countries in the advanced countries.

While we are of for improvement in the working and living conditions of workers, its linkage with

international trade is objected by us. We will however continue to make efforts nationally to ratify more and more ILO conventions by the Government of India.

In the meeting of the standing Labour Committee held in New Delhi on 13th September 1996 a view was expressed by several participants that some trade union representatives should be included in the official delegation so that they can campaign during the conference among the other developing countries. It was also noted in the meeting that some countries are including trade union representatives in their official delegation at Singapore.

I would therefore request you to include the trade union representatives in the official delegation so that the question of social clause is not allowed to pass in the conference.

The CITU hopes that you would give a serious consideration to this proposal and include some T.U. representatives in the above official delegation.

With personal regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
(M.K. PANDHE)
General Secretary

FMRAI HOLDS PROTEST RALLIES

The Federation of Medical and Sales Representative Associations of India (FMRAI) organised massive rallies in the East, West and South Zones of the country in pursuance of several long pending demands:

East Zone Rally:

In one of the biggest ever mobilisation of medical and sales representatives of the country about 5,000 field workers, coming from different parts of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland staged a massive protest rally at Nazrul Manch auditorium at Calcutta on 15 Septemebr. The protest rally was held to register protest against attacks of the employers on the field workers' profession; on job security, trade union and bargaining rights and on existing work system and facilities.

After the rally an impressive procession was brought out which paraded through the main throughfare of south Calcutta culminating into a public meeting at Hazra park which was addressed by FMRAI's Zonal Secretary L N Chakraborty and General Secretary D P Dubey.

The rally at Nazrul Manch was inaugurated by the veteran trade union leader and CITU's Vice President Samar Mukherjee who called upon the field workers to note the political, social and economic changes taking place in the country in the background of which the field workers movement is a part of working class and other toiling masses of the country. He greeted FMRAI and their members for their protest and strike against Patent Bill in defence of country's interest. Earlier, Reception Committee Chairman, Robin Deb MLA welcomed the participants. The rally was presided over by five members presidium consisting of Nikhil Chatterjee, S K Padi, Robin Deb, C S Sharma and A K Roy.

Zonal Secretary, L N Chakraborty presented the background of the issue before the rally. The rally was addressed amongst others by CITU's West Bengal State General Secretary Chittabrata Majumdar, FMRAI's General Secretary, D P Dubey, vice President J S Majumdar, State Unit secretaries of entire eastern zone D Bhattacharya Asim Dasgupta, Prafulla Sarmah and A K Ghosh; FMRAI's West Zone Secretary M K Nandy, Joint General Secretaries Sudhir Kumar and C S Sharma, FMRAI's Secretary

Amitava Guha, Bengal Chemist and Druggist Association leader Atul Duitta and 12 July Committee leader Baroda Bhattacharya.

The rally adopted four resolutions moved by Arun Ghosal, S K Khastagir, Bijan Das and N Mahapatra raisings demands to the employers, to Central Government, to State Governments on field workers issues related with these attacks and also against the proposed Patent Amendment Bill.

West Zone Rally:

The West Zone rally was held at Bombay on 2nd October which was participated by about 3000 representatives of FMRAI from the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, MP and Goa. The rally was preceded by a convention, which was inaugurated by M K Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU. Among others who addressed the convention and the rally were Com.K L Bajaj, General Secretary, Maharashtra State CITU, D P Dubey, General Secretary of FMRAI, S V Prabhu, Secretary of FMRAI, M K Nandi, Zonal Secretary, FMRAI and leaders of the four state units. The rally adopted resolutions on the demands as stated above.

South Zone Rally:

In Madras the South Zone rally was organised on 5th October. More than 4000 representatives participated from all the four southern states. The zonal convention preceding a march by the participants was guided by a presidium comprising of the President of the State unit. The convention was inaugurated by A k Padmanabhan, Secretary CITU. Among those who addressed the participants were George verghese, President FMRAI, D P Dubey General Secretary, FMRAI, Sudhir Kumar, Jont Secretary, FMRAI and leaders of the four state level affiliates of FMRAI. Resolutions on various demands were adopted. A massive procession was taken out after the convention with a number of tablaus, etc Workers and employees belonging to various unions greeted the rallyists on their way.

These rallies will culminate in another massive rally at Delhi on 27th November. The Delhi rally will be preceded by a convention on the above demands and against the amendment of the Patent Act, which will be inaugurated by Com.E Balandnan, President of CITU. The rally against the amendment of patent Act will be joined by the constituents of the National Platform of Mass Organisations.

FMRAI TO OBSERVE A.I. PROTEST DAY AGAINST AMENDMENT OF PATENT ACT.

FMRAI organised a national convention at Constitution Club, New Delhi on September 28 against the move of the Government to amend the Indian Patent Act.

The convention was presided over by Sudhir Kumar and inaugurated by Arun Ghosh, the noted economist and for Planning Commission member. Apart from FMRAI delegates from the various states, the Commission was participated by the National Working Group on Patent Laws and leaders of various Central trade Unions and mass organisations like Kisan Sabha, Agricultural Workers Union, etc.

Among those who spoke were M.K. Pandhe, P.K. Ganguly (CITU), Mishra (INTUC), P.K. Tandon (Kisan Sabha), Sunit Chopra (Agricultural Workers

Union), B.K. Keyala (National Working Group on Patent Laws), Dr. Amit Sen Gupta (Delhi Science Forum), D.P. Dubey (FMRAI), etc.

The Convention unanimously adopted a resolution protecting against the Government's move to amend the Indian Patent Act under pressure from the imperialist countries. The resolution decided to wage joint struggles with all other mass organisations against the amendment and observe A.I. Protest day on November 27 by involving the National Platform of Mass Organisations and then prepare for strike action. A massive rally will be held at Delhi on the day, when several thousands of representatives of FMRAI from the northern states of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, MP, Himachal and Rajasthan will assemble at Delhi.

Resolution adopted in the Convention

FEDERATION OF MEDICAL & SALES REPRESENTATIVES' ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

372/21 Russa Road East, Calcutta-700 033, Phone:4731862

RESOLUTION ADOPTED IN THE NATIONAL CONVENTION IMPACT OF PATENTS AMENDMENT BILL IN DRUG INDUSTRY.

This convention organised by Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives' Associations of India participated by the field workers from all over the country; National Working Group on Patent Laws; Leaders of central Trade Unions; different mass organisation; eminent Economists, Scientists, and experts in the field of Patents unanimously resolves as under.

The government of India is again going to place Patents Amendment Bill to change the Indian patents Act, 1970. The existing Patents Act has been considered as amongst suitable law for the development of indigenous industry. This Act has helped to develop self reliance in drug industry in India. Indian drug industry has successfully competed the multinational drug companies in producing all life saving and essential drugs and have become capable to meet the need of drugs for the country. They are producing appropriate quality of drugs and are exporting them even to the developed countries.

It is observed that since a long time the U.S. government had been pressurising us to change our Patents Act for which they have, on repeated occasions threatened of imposing trade sanction under

Special and Super 301 clauses of U.S. Trade Act. Now after becoming a member of World Trade Organisation, our government is further pressurised to change the Act. former government had introduced an amendment to the Act which could not be passed in the Parliament.

If the said amendment is passed, there will be tremendous adverse effect on the drug industry and in other sectors like agriculture also. it will impose product patent on drugs which will not allow the Indian drug industry to introduce any new drugs. There will be virtual abolition of Compulsory Licensing system for which there will be no obligation to multinational companies to produce them in our country. Already almost all multinationals are closing their drug production unit in India. In near future, manufacturing of drugs in India shall cease completely, converting the country to import dependency fully.

Nearly a million of workers, employees, scientists will become jobless. This apart, through Exclusive Marketing Rights, the multinationals shall be able to dump irrational and hazardous drugs in our country. Control being impossible, prices of drugs will rise to unlimited extent. Procurement and distribution of drugs will go out of the limit of the government institutions also.

Anganwadi workers staged dharna in front of Secretariat

Santosh Sharma

Anganwadi workers and helpers union staged a day long dharna in front of state secretariat in pursuance of their 12 point demands on September 30. The president of University and College Teachers Union Prof Theke Dutt while addressing the workers assailed both Rajasthan and Maharashtra State governments for their anti-teacher policies. He said that these governments ignore the interests of working class completely. That is why the workers have to be united and launch struggle against these policies. The leaders of CITU com. Babu Lal Lugaria, Champa Mukherjee, Sushila Sharma, Savitri Sharma, Durgesh Sharma Santosh Sharma, Sumitra Chopra and Prelata Verma etc also spoke on this occasion.

Main Demands

Stop privatisation of Anganwadi projects (2) make all workers and helpers working in Anganwadi

projects permanent (3) to raise the honorarium of workers and helpers to Rs 1200/- and 800 respectively. (4) All workers and helpers should be given medical and maternity leaves (5) Raise the fuel expense from one paise to ten paise per child (6) all the workers who have passed the primary course in Hindi literature equivalent to the 10th class and completed three years in service should be given promotion as Gram sevikas. (7) Release soon the seniority list of all workers and helpers (8) Uniformity of Anganwadi service rules in whole state, Rs 50 should be given per month for extra work load, (9) Appointment of workers and helpers where posts are vacant and payment of overtime.

A seven member delegation met the secretary, women and child development of the State Government later on. The secretary assured the delegation to look into all the demands.

Madhya Pradesh State Conference Anganwadi Workers

Bhopal: The state conference of Anganwadi workers and helpers union, Madhya Pradesh will be held on December 2 1996 in Bhopal. Com. Manyata Saroj said in a statement that the work of anganwadi has been extended in different districts of the State. Previously it was limited in three districts only.

Dist Conferences: The districts conference of Reewa, Satna, Bhopal, Sehora, Bhind, Gwalior, Moraina, Shahdol and Baitool will be held in the month of November. While Indore, Guna, Ujjain district conferences will also be held soon. Dalli-Rajhara district conference was already held in Durg.

About Gird Project: Com. Saroj said that state government had privatised the Gird project of Anganwadi in Gwalior district. It was handed over to the so-called leader of Cong(I) for three months. Anganwadi workers and helpers union launched struggle against this move. This project has not given back to the "integrated social service committee. The union has gone into the court against this.

Joint Convention of Unorganised Sector and Agricultural Workers

The Haryana State Committees of the CITU and Agricultural Workers Union organised a joint convention of unorganised sector workers and agricultural workers at Rohtak on 6th October. About 300 delegates representing workers from various unorganised sector of industries and agricultural workers from all the districts of the State attended the convention.

The convention was inaugurated by Sunit Chopra, Joint Secretary of AI Agricultural Workers Union. It was presided over by a presidium consisting of S N Solanki, Prabhat Singh, Mohan Kumar Singhra and Darmavir Chiri. From the CITU Centre, P K Ganguly and Rajit Basu, Secretaries attended the convention.

The resolution of the convention with 15-point demands was placed by Satvir Singh, the State CITU General Secretary, and seconded by Prakash Chandra of the State Agricultural Workers Union. The

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS
(BASE 1982 = 100)

Centre	Linking factor for Old Base		Pune	361	363	—	
	July.96	Aug.96					
			Solapur	359	368	5.03	
			Barbil	335	335	5.00	
			Rourkela	306	310	3.59	
			Amritsar	304	309	5.19	
			Ludhiana	301	304	—	
All India	339	343	4.93	340	345	5.01	
Gudur	342	360	4.33	326	328	5.17	
Guntur	330	340	5.60	337	332	5.35	
Hyderabad	310	313	5.23	359	362	4.80	
Visakhapatnam	322	325	—	367	369	5.05	
Warrangal	328	334	—	353	352	5.27	
Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	311	320	4.05	364	367	—	
Guwahati	345	348	—	368	376	—	
Labac-Silchar	299	307	3.96	319	320	—	
Mariani-Jorhat	319	336	3.95	Agra	318	327	—
Rangapara-Tezpur	324	335	4.29	Ghaziabad	336	335	4.69
Jamshedpur	324	329	4.68	Kanpur	311	314	5.06
Jharia	291	295	4.63	Saharanpur	356	356	5.12
Kodarma	297	300	5.43	Varanasi	316	315	4.77
Monghyr	320	323	5.29	Asansol	349	354	4.74
Noamundi	311	316	4.58	Calcutta	295	300	4.55
Ranchi-Hatia	323	332	—	Darjeeling	356	354	—
Ahmedabad	339	343	4.78	Durgapur	365	372	—
Baroda	341	345	—	Haldia	351	358	4.12
Bhavanagar	359	364	4.99	Howrah	305	307	4.16
Rajkot	341	340	—	Jalpaiguri	300	306	4.40
Surat	365	365	—	Raniganj	313	328	—
Faridabad	331	337	—	Chandigarh	347	350	4.97
Yamunanagar	314	322	5.53	Delhi	391	395	—
Srinagar	330	330	5.47	Pondicherry			
Bangalore	334	340	5.66	<u>Additional series of Labour Bureau</u>			
Belgaum	355	357	—	Kothagudem	363	374	3.25
Hubli-Dharwar	342	347	—	Himachal Pradesh	317	321	3.75
Mercara	348	349	—	Bhilwara	338	344	3.20
Alwaye	355	348	5.19	Chindwara	350	358	2.59
Mundakayam	368	361	—	Tripura	322	324	4.37
Quilon	365	367	—	Goa	380	385	3.40
Trivandrum	390	390	—	Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number.			
Bhalaghat	330	336	5.24	—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series,			
Bhilai	304	308	3.49				
Bhopal	354	363	5.46				
Indore	354	358	5.18				
Jabalpur	347	351	6.41				
Mumbai	364	366	5.12				
Nagpur	346	347	4.99				
Nasik	358	360	—				

No Unanimity on Raising the Income Ceiling for ESI Benefits

Kali Ghosh

Two important meetings on ESI schemes were held in New Delhi on October 4 and 5, 1996.

Besides the various problems of management, the main agenda for discussion was raising the ceiling of income for receiving the benefits of ESI.

Labour Ministers of different states met on October 4, 1996 under the chairmanship of Labour Minister, Govt of India, Mrs Chaya Bera, Minister of the concerned department, represented government of West Bengal.

On the identical agenda, the meeting of the ESIC was held on Oct 5, 1996. The ESI authorities proposed

a) Income ceiling for coverage be raised from Rs 3000 to Rs 6500

b) The rate of subscription of management and employees be escalated @ 0.5% and 0.25% respectively.

It may be worthwhile to mention that previously employees receiving salary of Rs 1600 pm were eligible to get the benefit under the scheme. The rate of contribution was 7.25% (Employer's share was 5% and employees' share was 2.5%).

Subsequently, in year 1992, the income ceiling was raised to Rs 3000/- pm, and the rate of subscription was reduced to 5.5% (Employer's share 4%, Employees share 1.5%).

With the increase of salary and DA, many workers went out of the scheme. Workers of different industries, raised the demand for increasing the income ceiling to get the benefits of the scheme. The Labour Minister of West Bengal too requested the Labour Minister, Govt of India, to consider the proposal. On March 7, 1996, a proposal was given by the government to increase the upper limit of salary to Rs 5000/- pm but there was no proposal of increasing the subscription rate. Sanjiva Reddy, President, INTUC, opposed the proposal for increasing the income ceiling in that meeting. The representatives of workers and management, by and large, supported the proposal. But the then Labour Minister Venkataswamy, deferred the decision.

At present, a proposal has been given by the Central Government to include the workers and

employees receiving Rs 6500/- pm with a higher rate of subscription. To raise the rate of subscription, the government have given following reasons, such as high price of medicines, inflation, yawning gap between expenditure and income, etc.

Kali Ghosh representative of CITU, strongly opposed the proposal of the government and said that the workers for whom the corporation was dedicated, have lost their faith in it. The corporation should not be run the way in which it is being run now. Whatever limited scope of benefits are there, had these reached the workers properly, the aim of the august scheme would have been achieved. The present condition is so sordid that most of the workers are averse to take the medical facilities. To them, the subscription for the scheme is an extra burden. When the real condition is this, any increase of subscription will add fuel to the fury of the workers.

The autonomy of the ESIC is only in paper. The ESIC Act was framed in such a way that without the approval of the Central Government no decision could be implemented. Here is an instance. To increase the financial benefit of each worker, the corporation decided to enhance the "Standard Benefits Rate" in 1993. Till today, the Central Govt has not approved the decision. Moreover, the fund of the corporation will be invested only in Government Security. The interest paid by the government is far below the market rate. Though the State governments contribute to the Corporation, they have little say. On other other hand, the Central Govt without contributing a single paise, controls and regulates the Corporation in all respects. The resource of the Corporation has been kept in RBI in a special deposit account of the central government. From the corporation source, it is known that the central govt will give corporation only the interest of the fund and not return the principal. It is really horrible. So Kali Ghosh demanded that the central government should bear the administrative expenses of the corporation. The corporation will be given liberty to invest its fund and the rate of interest paid by the government be enhanced.

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WORKERS, PEASANTS RALLY AGAINST DROUGHT AND PRIVATISATION AND FOR MINIMUM WAGE IN ORISSA

A state level workers peasants rally of twenty thousands participants was held at the state capital of Orissa Bhubaneswar on 30 September on 21 point demands mainly against the state government's apathy and callousness to serious draught situation, privatisation of 36 state owned industrial undertakings and for revision of Minimum Wage Rs. 50/- per day plus VDA. The rally draw the large section of peasants and agricultural laborers from draught effected areas of Balasore, Bhadrak, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Cuttack, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Puri, Khurda and Sayagada districts. The CITU led unions from various districts particularly from Sundergarh, Keonjhar, Dhurda, Cuttack, Ganjam also mobilised large number of workers to rally. The colorful rally started from the Railway Station Square and moved through the main thorough fare of the city to the meeting place at Lower PMG sqaue. The meeting started at 3 PM underthe presidium of Com. Sivaji Patnaik. Iswar Das and Bansidhar Das who also addressed the rally. Com. Samar Mukherjee, CITU Vice President, addressed the rally with call that the

miseries of masses at this present juncture can only be overcome and fought by the united struggle of toiling masses of the society. He appreciated the CITU, AIKS & AIAWU effort in the state for united fight against Cong (I) misrule and BJP drive to divide people. Com. Hanan Mulla, M.P., the Joint Secretary of AIAWU in his speech emphasized the curse of people against Cong (I) BJP during last general election for which they are oust from centre of power at Delhi and grilled or to be grilled inside lockup today or tomorrow. He called on the Untied Front Government to stand by the novel experience of the untied front government in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and remain careful to all out opposition to anti people policies by workers and peasants. The rally was addressed among others by the state General Secretary of CITU Com. Lambodar Nayak, AIKS President and General Secretary, Com. Iswar Das and Jagnath Misra. AIAWU President and General Secretary of State Com. Bansidhar Das and Com. Prafulla Padhi. The rally concluded with the call to orgnsie resistnace against the government inaction to fare serious draught situation and anti workers peasants policies above the political and organizational affiliations at the grass root level and steadily head to state wide direct action.

Joint Convention. . .

[From Page 11]

demands included, central legislation for agricultural workers, special ratio cards with half price for the poor, old age pension of Rs 500/- food for work scheme, minimum wage of rS 2500/- for unorganised sector workers, implementation of labour laws and social security measures, check against privatisation, closures, and lock out, abolition of contract system, improvement of conditions of Anganwadi workers, etc.

The convention was greeted by Divendra Hudda, the District Secretary of Sarva Karmachari Sangh and Chief organiser of Haryana State Electricity Board employees. A number of delegates participated in the discussion. P K Ganguly gave the concluding speech.

The convention decided to carry forward the struggle in pursuance of the demands of holding joint district level conventions, workshops and rallies, which would culminate in a massive state level central rally at Rohtak on 14th December.

No Unanimity . . .

[From Page 13]

Many representatives of workers and management participated in the discussion. Sanjeeva Reddy, president INTUC, gave his whole-hearted support to the proposal of the government.

As there was no unanimous decision, Mr Arunachalam, Labour Minister was empowered to take the final decision

The representative of CITU categorically stated that

- a) the highest salary limit for the benefit of the scheme be Rs 5000/p m
 - b) no increase of subscription of workers be made
 - c) the standard benefit rate recommended in 1993 be implemented
 - d) the present rate of per capital medical expense be raised from Rs 410/- to Rs 500/-.
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EMPLOYMENT GENERATION: THE REAL CHALLENGE

Kanai Banerjee

(Abridged and revised version of the presentation made in a workshop on "Employment Generation: Challenge of Human Resource Management and skilled Development in the context of economic reforms. The workshop was organised by the Labour Law Association before Lok Sabha elections).

Economic Policy is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end. When a government of a country which claims itself to be an ideal democracy pursues some policy there can be only one end: Well-being of the entire population. Everyone may not agree on every point but nevertheless there is a wide area of agreement as to what constitutes well-being of the whole people. There is broad unanimity about the basic need concept: People must have productive employment sufficient food giving adequate nutrition, clothing, house to live in, adequate provision for health care, full opportunity for education, access to amusement and so on. Economic policy pursued by a government must aim at all these. All of these may not be fully achievable in the short-run, some may be available in the medium-run, others may require long and even very long time for their achievement. People may have to wait, but they would like to be reassured that things are moving in the right direction. The policy of economic reforms pursued by the Govt has totally failed in this.

Though many people do believe that the "reforms" have come to stay, for us it is difficult to fully subscribe to their view. Trade unions do not want them to stay.

The trade unions' views about the Rao-Singh reforms is by now well known and need no detailed restatement here. Most trade unions are totally opposed to them while others are opposing the manifestations in specific cases to avoid misunderstanding. It is necessary to reiterate as has been done many a time that none of the trade unions are opposed to reforms per se, they had constantly been suggesting changes in the structure of the economy such as would benefit the multitude. They are opposed only to the particular brand of reform which has been sought to be implemented during the past five years. And though the government led by P V Narasimha Rao with Dr Manmohan Singh as his Finance Minister championed the reforms, it is also by now well known that not withstanding denial by them the blue print of these reforms is the product of IMF-World Bank and imposed by them upon our country. Of course it is not a special distinction for us, they had imposed it on many other countries before with a devastating consequences. While opposing Fund Bank brand of reforms, apart from studying their blue print in Indian context, the trade unions also took note of what happened in those ill-fated countries.

However, it is true that inspite of opposition from trade unions many aspects of the so-called new economic policy has been implemented in accordance with Fund-Bank blue print and the effort will continue as the opposition will also continue.

Now to come to the aspect which constitutes the

subject of this session's discussion, namely, "Employment Generation, the challenge of human resource management and skill development." Over the past years a serious situation has been developing on the employment front in our country as well as else where. It has developed almost to an alarming proportion as a global phenomenon. The International Labour Organisation is found to be much concerned over this development. It envisaged this situation in late eighties and brought out publications such as Employment Challenge of the Nineties and the like. It conducted studies through seminars, workshops, etc regarding the situation in Asian countries including India where stabilisation and structural adjustment exercise is going on and published documents. The report of World Employment 1995 is well known. Even in recent publications ILO has expressed much concession about unemployment problem. concern for employment generation in our country is natural and of course welcome.

A question of emphasis is not only not out of place but important: What is the real challenge? Is it really the challenge of HR management and skill development that we are facing today? The real challenge is employment generation. this is not to deny the importance of HR management and skill development. They of course deserve attention. But no amount of HR management efficiency and effective measure for skill development are capable to contributing substantially towards employment generation. On this question I am tempted to quote a few lines from ILO publication entitled "Can training solve the job problem?" The quotation is from an unsigned article published in World of Work, the ILO Magazine, Sept-Oct 1995.

Improved education and more training are not a proven recipe for overcoming the twin ills of high unemployment and wage decline. Touting them as such only distracts from finding real solutions to these major problems.

Common sense as well as experience in our country fully corroborates this view. It is proper not to mix up the HR and skill development issues in any serious discussion of employment generation, their inter-dependence is extremely limited. They may be discussed separately.

That employment generation is contingent on the nature of the economic policy pursued at any time is indisputable. One cannot evade the question how far do our stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes conduce to employment generation in the country. The theoretical position that free play of market forces lead automatically to full employment equilibrium has long been abandoned. ILO reports that in G-7 countries, which of course are models of market economy, between 1979 and 1994 total number of unemployed rose from 13 million to almost 24 million, along with 4 million unemployed who have stopped looking for work and 15 million who work part time but would rather work full time. The overall G-7 work force rose from 273 million in 1979 to 322 million in 1994 according to OECD. If this be the condition in highly

industrialised economies under free market condition what this so-called liberalised market has to offer for underdeveloped economies with huge idle human resource is unimaginable.

It is some times posed as if high rate of growth will automatically lead to increased in employment. This is neither theocratically tenable nor supported by experience. It must be recognised that "a high rate of growth of GDP is a necessary but not always a sufficient condition for a correspondingly high growth of employment.... It is observed in a number of countries, higher growth rate has not necessarily resulted in corresponding growth in employment. In fact, employment of growth has declined in recent periods as shows by declining employment elasticities.... The employment content of a given rate of economic growth is determined by its structure. Simply stated the larger the contribution of employment intensive sector and activities to the aggregate growth the higher would be its employment impact." Again "employment is to be treated not only as a residual variable and technical coefficient reflecting the relationship between output but needs to be built as an objective into the growth strategy.†

All studies make it abundantly clear that without planning of the entire growth strategy it is not only not possible to make a dent in the problem of employment generation left to the private sector the economy will show definite decline in employment generation. We may recall Sudipta Mundles well known contribution to ILO-SAAT workshop in which he presented a calculation of probable redundancy of labour in the organised sector due to the impact of structural adjustment, published in Social Dimensions of Economic Reforms in India (ILO-SAAT).

The diminishing employment potential of large industries was also noted by the pioneers of Indian planning. Therefore while much stress was laid on development of heavy industry, they took care to ensure that small industries are also developed in sufficient degree to balance negative employment impact in addition to supplying consumers goods. Measures were adopted to protect small scale industries. At present all the various ILO and other studies have pointed to the importance of planning for development of small and medium sectors, specially in view of their employment potential. This is of course a sound idea. But in our country some of the major small industries are threatened with extinction in the face of competition and other factors. Obsessed with free market idea the government is paying scant attention to these sectors. This definitely require reversal of the policy if employment is considered important.

Employment in rural sector has not been discussed here. The problem of vast rural unemployment is far more complex. the rural employment schemes have so far been marginally successful. Without government's success and active role it cannot be tackled. However, thorough going agrarian reform without which no effective plan for rural development is conceivable has extremely important bearing on the question of employment generation ven in the urban sector. Agrarian reform throughout the country would have created vast home market for industrial product thereby creating condition for enormous industrial growth which in turn would have expanded the employ-

ment potential. But our reforms programmes totally ignores this all important question.

Thus we see that instead of adopting effective measures for it the structural adjustment programme with its main thrust on privatisation and the market, itself stands in the way of employment generation adequate to wipe out, gradually, if not at one stroke the scourge of growing unemployment which is threatening the country's stability defying all so-called stabilisation programme. The real challenge therefore is for changing this dangerous threat of the reforms.

Modernisation, introduction of state-of-the-art technology ensuring competitive level of productivity, is important and welcome. True, some times workers and even trade unions a technology leap adopt an attitude somewhat similar to British Luddites. But generally this is the reaction to the approach made by employers according to which all losses are to be borne by workers while all gain will accrue to the employer some time by human resource management is meant technics employed to induce the workers to accept the employers position smoothly without resistance. Naturally the trade unions will not be enthusiastic about this type of human resource management. The world has changed, today's workers are also not exactly the same as yesterdays. The changed situation demands a changed approach on the part of the employers. Sound principle for the human resource management of today to rest is the principle of sharing. Workers have to be given legitimate share in management, legitimate share in gains due to change, full protection in view of its vulnerable position in economic structure and so on. Genuine social partnership approach is the key to effective human resource management in todays condition. But again the question arises how far this is compatible with the free market philosophy.

Probably lack of skilled labour has not so far created any bottleneck in industrial development. Indian artisans and crafts men over the centuries excelled their counterparts in other lands in technical skill. British rulers have often praised the natural aptitude of the Indian workmen for work requiring high skill. But it is undeniable with change in technology the skill also requires to be constantly updated. As technology developes to higher level, formal training becomes more and more necessary. at the moment workers with a fairly high level of general education and even with a certain level of general technical education is abundantly available. Arrangements have to be definitely made for specialised training for meeting the requirements of jobs requiring special skill. For all cases however, training has to be arranged according to requirement. In house training of those already in job is of supreme importance and this has to be arranged generally by the employers whether in private sector or public sector. But if and when there will really be considerable industrial development, the abundant supply of skilled hand will be exhausted, the present scale of arrangement for general technical training will prove inadequate. Therefore any plan for industrial development, there should be incorporated plan for training and skill development. Though basically this is the responsibility of the government the employers should also share the responsibility. Trade

unions of course has important role to play in this. Therefore in the phase of planning for technical training and skill development, trade union should be properly involved.

However, it is necessary to repeat here, training does not create job. Employment generation is a different matter and is of supreme importance demanding highest priority.

To conclude, real challenge is that of employment generation. In underdeveloped economies, without government planning, regulation and participation even as entrepreneur, employment generation is not possible for wiping out the scourge of unemployment. Excessive reli-

ance on market forces will seriously aggravate the situation. For expansion of employment opportunity we are to turn our eyes specially to small and also medium sector. Sincere effort on the part of government is indispensable in order to tackle the problem of vast rural unemployment. Principle of genuine partnership is the only sound basis for effective human resource management. The government and employers should share the responsibility for arranging appropriate training for skill development. For all these the idea of allowing unrestrained operation of market forces must be suitably changed.

MASSIVE RALLY OF BEEDI WORKERS

The Madhya Pradesh Beedi Mazdoor Ekta Federation (CITU) Organised a massive rally of Beedi workers at Jablapur on October 3. The rally was participated by about ten thousand Beedi workers. Who came from 16 districts of the state. The rally was the culmination of a series of movement launched by the Beedi workers after the formation of the federation a few months back. The federation had launched agitation in pursuance of several impending demands like declaration of a minimum wage of Rs.50/- for rolling 1000 beedis, implementation of welfare and coal security measures including pension, housing scheme, abolition of contract system, supply of identity cards, sufficient amount of good tendu Leaves, equal wage to women workers, etc. The rally was presided by a colorful position, eagerly participated by women.

The rally was presided over by Badal saroj the state CITU president and President of the Federation, Tanulal Mandalwar, the federation General Secretary, Md. Nizamuddin, the Joint Secretary of A.I. Beedi Committee from W.Bengal, Sailenda Shailey,

sandhya Shaily of AIDWA, P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU etc. The rally adopted a resolution to carry forward the struggle till the demands were conceded.

30 the August: Earlier on 30th August the Beedi workers held rallies and picketings in difficult parts of the state. At Bhopal the police made lathi charge on the picketing workers and arrested a large number of them. The picketing was held at the call of the A.I. Committee of Beedi workers demanding withdrawal of the excise concession given an mini cigarrates.

Tamilnadu: Beedi workers all over the State of Tamilnadu participated in rallies and picketing on 3rd August. Thousand of workers were arrested at Nagercoil, Chidambaranar, Chengalpet, North Arcot District, Madras and other places. large number of women were also arrested in all these places. The CITU leaders addressed then at different places.

Similar jathas and picketing were reported in Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN COAL

The issue raised by the Central Trade Unions in their strike Notice dated 21st/23rd Sept 96 were discussed with the representatives at length. After protracted negotiations, the following understanding has been arrived at:

Pending finalisation of the Productivity Lined Bonus Scheme (PLBS)/profit linked reward scheme (PLRS) for the year 1995-96 the workers will be paid an advance as under:

Wage/Salary upto Rs. 3,500 ...Rs. 2,500 Pro-rata

Wages/ Salary 3501-4500 .. 2,500 based
Wages/ Salary 4501 & above ..Rs.1,700 on attendance

The unions have agreed to withdraw the one day's strike call on 7th Oct 96 and it has been agreed that the management and unions will discuss this matter further for arriving at an early settlement of the Bonus under PLBS and PLRS within 2 months.

2) The advance will be paid before the Durga Puja.

WILL THE CONSUMER COURT CONSUME WORKERS' RIGHT TO STRIKE?

SAROJ CHOUDHURI

The question is no more confined to the realm of conjecture; it has since grown into a real threat following the judgement delivered by the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, New Delhi on May 9, 1996. The unanimous judgement, by a 5-judge Bench, presided over by Shri Justice V.B. Eradi, arose out of a petition filed by Shri H.D. Shourie, a retired government official, consumer protection activist and Director of consumer organisation, Common Cause. The petition was to seek redressal of "grievance of air passengers who were put to great amount of inconvenience and hardship on account of disruption of a large number of the flights of Air India caused by the reasons of the Indian Flight Engineers' Association (Respondent No.3) in February 1993". The complainant, Shri Shourie contended that during the period of 6 weeks from February 27, 1993 nearly 200 flights normally operated by Air India had to be cancelled due to the strike by the Flight Engineers. The complainants' estimate the loss suffered by roughly 30,000 passengers whose flights were cancelled on account of the strike at the figure of Rs.30 crore. The complainant prayed that a "nominal compensation" of Rs.10 lakhs be paid by Air India and Rs.5 lakhs by the Indian Flight Engineers' Association and the amounts be paid to the Consumer Welfare Fund established by the Union of India. It was also prayed that the Flight Engineers' Association "should be directed to take appropriate steps to ensure that in future strikes of this nature do not come about..."

The facts of the dispute and the sequence of developments are unusual. The Flight Engineers' Association (FEA) had been pressing for certain demands, most notably, equality with the cockpit crew over a long-time. After pressing their demand for a solution and as a part of the agitation there was a call to step wearing 2 striped epaulets and half wings as part of their uniform. In the negotiations that followed, the management refused to concede any of the demands. In the conciliation proceedings initiated by Regional Labour Commissioner (Central), the management bought 10 days time for arriving at

a solution of the problem. Since no offer came from the management, no serious negotiation took place during this 10 days. The FEA members from the midnight of February 26 reported for duty without the usual epaulets and half wings. The management retaliated by suspending two Flight Engineers. This needs to be told that the Flight Engineers were prepared to undertake the flights. No operation was to be affected if the Flight Engineers wore not wearing a part of the uniform. A stalemate arose since the management would not allow any Flight Engineer to report for duty without the epaulets and the half wing and had also suspended two member of the FEA. This agitation continued for 56 days. It was finally resolved by a settlement arrived at the intervention of the Chief Labour Commissioner (C) between Air India and the FEA on April 23, 1993.

The government which could have intervened much earlier and facilitate a settlement, allowed time to pass and through a notification issued in the Gazette of India on April 2 referred the dispute to an industrial tribunal. Thereafter, the government acted quickly and on April 6 declared the strike illegal. This was apparently done to pressure the Flight Engineers and to expose them to various other punitive actions. Even the prospect of using criminal law was distinct. The dispute eventually was settled through a settlement on April 23 as already said hereinabove. Some of the substantive demands were settled.

For the purpose of this piece no other details need be gone into as to the attitude displayed by Air India management or the labour machinery. All these are stated as to provide as to how a dispute that could be solved with foresight was allowed to drift put both the Air India and Flight Engineers to loss and harassment and deterioration of industrial relations. The petition by Shri Showri that followed took advantage of such a situation.

The Commission did not award any compensation as not a single person who had purchased ticket to travel by any of the flights of Air India had appeared before the commission. But the following

remarks of the Commission is required to be noted by all trade unions and their members as their fall-out goes far beyond Air India and the Flight Engineers. Not only the Commission chides the Air India employees, but issued a stern warning for all. Says the Commission in its judgement:

"In addition, we also think it necessary to administer a strong word of caution that in case similar instance of disruption of services by illegal strike or agitation come to the notice of the Commission, in future, on the part of the employees of any organisation rendering service to the public for consideration or any Association or Union of such employees, we will be dealing with the matter in a very strict manner and will have no hesitation to award proper compensation to the consumers who are directly affected or aggrieved."

With due respect to the Commission, it is required to be stated that while it scolded the Air India employees and issued a stern warning to others, it did not think it appropriate to disapprove the dilatoriness of the management and to mention the inherent inequality of the scheme of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947. In the instant case, the settlement that was signed on April 23, 1993 could have been arrived at much before had the government so desired. It is a common practice for the government to foist an industrial tribunal rendering a strike ipso facto illegal just before its commencement after having slept over the issue/issues involved for months. There are also innumerable instances where industrial tribunals were foisted on some peripheral issues leaving aside the major ones which caused the agitation. The Industrial Disputes Act 1947 has been used by employers and government to frustrate agitations and strikes: seldom has it been invoked to help settlement of a dispute.

The various consumer groups in the country are using the Consumer Protection Act 1986 to advance the cause of monied and affluent sections of the population. It is common knowledge that numerous consumer items are sub-standard. Quality control is only talked about and employers even now consider investment in quality control as wasteful. In large parts of North-Central India Sub-standard, spurious drugs are sold aplenty. The situation is more acute in rural, remote and tribal areas. Has any consumer

group or organisation so far shown any initiative to raise and espouse such cases! Sub-Standard and unhygienically made food items, which are ready for eating, are selling throughout the country without hindrance. Instances need not be multiplied.

The warning issued by the apex Commission unfortunately may serve as an instigation to intransigent employers to remain unreasonable and adamant and the government bureaucracy to intervene at a juncture to render a strike, however justified, illegal.

Just one more point can be pertinently raised. In the last 50 years, how many strikes have been legal strikes! In the cases of strikes in relatively small or non-strategic undertakings government preferred not to invoke the unjust provisions the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. In most other cases, as said earlier, recourse was taken to referring the issues to a tribunal. In the case of central government employees' strike in 1960 what all were done have remained as a black chapter. The then Prime Minister Nehru characterized it as 'civil rebellion'. The same phenomenon repeated in the Central Government employees' strike in 1968. But all these were surpassed in 1974 when the Railways employees embarked upon a continuous strike. The coercive apparatus of the state was let loose on the employees and, in many case, even on their families. Though it was known that a strike was being prepared for an due notices were served, illegality was thrust on the railway workers. The railways strike was suppressed in the most brutal way that would put even a dictatorship regime to shame. Without increasing the number of instances, we can surely refer to the extreme highhandedness with which a strike by the Haryana State government was suppressed only a few years ago. The government used the weapon of illegality to bail the employers out and to frustrate a strike though for very genuine and, in all cases for long-pending demands. Thus the concept of legality or illegality cannot be put in a straightjacket.

In the circumstances, warning administered by the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission is fraught with dangerous consequence. The rights to strike therefore, faces the fresh danger of being consumed by the Consumer Court.

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INDEFINITE COUNTRYWIDE STRIKE BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

About 18 lakhs central government employees all over the country have commenced indefinite strike from October 23 demanding removal of eligibility ceiling for grant of Bonus. The central government has scrapped the eligibility ceiling for bonus in the case of railway workers thus aggravating the discrimination already existed. Employees of Postal, Telecom, Income tax, Audit & Accounts, Census, GSI and other departments under the Government of India have joined the strike throughout the country. In New Delhi, two major posts offices - New Delhi GPO and Delhi GPO - have been virtually closed. Mails have not been delivered from almost all offices in the capital city as postmen went on strike. The RMS offices remained closed and mailbags reached from different parts of the country have not been unloaded from mail-wagons. Hundreds of mailbags are lying unattended in different platforms in north India. Staff of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited too resorted to sit-in-strike. Central Telegraph Office at Janpath and the 28 zonal telegraph offices in the city were totally affected resulting in shutting down of the computerised network.

The Bombay GPO, Bombay CTO and all other offices remained closed since today morning while MTNL staff started the agitation, P & T services have been badly affected in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, UP, MO, Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Assam, North eastern states due to the total strike by the employees.

Employees in Andhra, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Kerala also stopped work. Andaman and Nicobar island remained totally cutoff on the communication network. The employees refused to postpone their

Strike in Tripura and other North-Eastern states despite requests were made by the local authorities in view of the Prime Minister's visit to the arc.

The Income tax and Audit & Accounts employees also took part in the strike in a massive manner in almost all states. Income tax office in New Delhi was closed in the morning itself and only the officers were allowed to enter the office.

The P&T employees expressed their resentment over the attitude of Sri Beni Prasad Verma, Minister for Communications who did not attend the Cabinet Meeting yesterday where the issue could have been taken up had the Minister was present. They rejected the arguments put forth by the Department of Posts ridiculing the strike decisions by the Employees Federations. The Postal authorities had pointed out the federations had submitted a long list of demands. The Federations, dismissing it as

baseless, pointed out that only two demands have been placed in the strike notice; i.e. Removal of eligibility ceiling for grant of bonus and grant of full bonus as per the mutually agreed formulae.

Various federations and associations of central govt employees have expressed their resoluteness to continue the strike till their demands are conceded to by the Govt.

The Central Government employees have intensified their countrywide strike by spreading it to more offices. Staff of Auditor General and Comptroller General office in New Delhi and Civil Audit staff also joined the strike in large number today. Parliament Street Post Office which worked with truncated staff on 23rd was closed down as remaining staff also joined the strike. Sarojini Nagar and Krishna Nagar head post offices were also closed on 24th. Entire staff in the Indian Space Research Organization in Trivandrum and staff of Doordarshan and Akashvani in some stations are also on strike. Central Secretariat Staff working in different offices in the Capital city organised demonstrations at the lunch hour. Massive demonstrations were held in the Eastern Court, Income Tax office, AGER office, New Delhi GPO, Delhi GPO, RMS Bhavan etc., also.

Central Government employees organizations dismissed the allegation of Shri Beni Prasad Verma, Communication Minister that sufficient notice was not given to him before resorting to strike. They pointed out that all over the country the employees conducted demonstrations and sent savingsgrams and telegrams to the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and the Communication Minister on 19th September demanding removal of eligibility ceiling limit for grant of bonus. On 30th September 1996 the Unions wrote separate letters to the Minister on the Issue. Again on 11th October they wrote to the Minister pointing that a decision in the matter would be taken in the case of railwaymen and it would have its repercussion on the P&T employees. The unions allege that the Communication Minister did not respond to any of the communications.

The Unions also pointed out that every strike action was declared by the government in the past since 1957 and hence there was nothing new or surprising in the statement of Shri Beni Prasad Verma that the present strike was declared illegal. Some of the leaders said that they have conducted only 'illegal strike' during the last four decades in P&T services. The unions expressed their resoluteness to continue the strike till the eligibility ceiling is removed for grant of bonus to all central government employees.

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF TEXTILE WORKERS

The Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers comprising the INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS, and BMS met at Delhi on 1st October and reviewed the situation in Textile industry in the country.

The JAC noted with serious concern that the unanimous agreement for modernization of the NTC mills was virtually being flouted by the Government. The loans of the former NTC subsidiaries of Bengal, U.P., M.P., and Gujarat have not been written off by the Government, thus threatening the liquidation mills throwing out about 55 thousand workers jobless. The revival schemes of the other subsidiaries of Maharashtra (North), Maharashtra (South) and DPR, which were sanctioned by the BIFR, have not been implemented as yet.

In private sector also, 132 mills have been closed rendering nearly two lakh workers jobless. In the handloom and powerloom sectors also the government has not yet taken any steps to determine minimum wages, nor implement the labour laws and social security measures.

Over and above, despite strong opposition from the trade unions the government has taken a move to open up the non-core and non-strategic sectors including at the Textile Industry to the multinationals to the tune of 75 per cent of equity. The JAC condemned the retrograde step taken by the Government.

The JAC further condemned the Gujarat Government for its decision to close down the eleven textile mills under the GSTC. The JAC also condemned the lathicharge on Textile workers rally at Delhi on 30th September.

Several representations made to the Prime Minister, textile Minister Labour Minister and Finance Minister had no effect so far.

In the above background, the JAC decided to mount up local level countrywide agitation of all Textile Workers to meet the situation in each Textile Centre in the country.

The JAC decided to meet the Prime Minister and the Textile Minister again in this respect.

National Convention: To draw up an All India Programme of militant united action, the JAC decided to hold a National Convention of Textile Workers at Constitution Club, New Delhi on 5th December, 1996. The countrywide united action Programme will be announced from the convention.

Sd/- Haribhau Naik (INTUC), Sd/-B.D. Joshi (AITUC), Sd/- P.K. Ganguly (CITU), Sd/- R.A. Mittal (HMS), Sd/- Prabhakar Ghate (BMS).

M.P. STATE COMMITTEE OF TEXTILE WORKERS

The M.P. State Committee of CITU organised a state level convention of Textile Workers at Indore on 29th September. The convention was attended by about 300 delegates from different textile centres of the state.

The Convention was inaugurated by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU. The convention was presided over by Pritam Seth Thakur, Narayan Joshi. The report was placed by Kailash Lambodia, General Secretary of Mill Mazdoor Sabha (CITU). Among those who participated in the discussion were Rajaram Mindole, Rajindra Singh Atal, Kailash Sharma, Bhagirath Katchwa, etc. The convention was greeted by Ramesh Vyas of AIIEA and Gourishanker Sharma also.

The Convention demanded immediate opening of all the closed private mills, ...of the loans and revival of the NTC mills, wages at par with Bombay workers, pension as third benefit, regularisation of the casual workers, recognition of union by secret ballot, formulation of a new Textile Policy, etc.

The convention adopted action programmes of demonstrations, rallies and conventions at district levels and in all Textile Centre in pursuance of the demands. In another resolution, the convention decided to participate in the joint convention at Delhi on 5th December, being organised by the JAC.

On organizational matters, the convention constituted a 9-member state level coordination committee campaigning of mill, powerloom, and handloom workers, with Kailash Lambodia as the convenor. It was decided to raise fund and contribute to the A.I. Coordination committee of Textile workers of the CITU.

ORISSA STATE CONVENTION OF TEXTILE WORKERS

In Orissa a State Level Co-ordination Committee of textile workers has been formed taking representatives from Mills, Powerloom and Handloom sectors. A state level convention was organised by CITU Orissa State Committee on 17th March 1996 at Bhubaneswar. This convention was addressed by Comrade Sivji Patnaik and Com. Lambodar Nayak, President and General Secretary of CITU Orissa State Committee respectively along with tower leaders. Com. Pradeep das presented a report on the Textile industries and the workers as well. On the

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Only Debate - No Conclusions!

M K Pandhe

The Thirty-Third Conference of the Indian Labour Conference held in New Delhi on 24-25 October merely debated at length the issues faced by the working class and the trade union movement but failed to draw any conclusions or to evolve a proper wage policy to meet the present challenges.

The conference had some important issues like the comprehensive Industrial Relations Law, workers participation in management, recognition of trade union through secret ballot and fixing the floor level minimum wages at the national level. However, the government of India had not made up its mind on any of these issues and was indulging in adopting dilatory tactics to delay any decision on these issues.

For instance, the United Front in the Common Minimum Programme had firmly committed to implement workers participation in management. The previous Janata Dal government introduced a Bill in Parliament in 1990 but the Congress Government during the five years of its tenure kept it in cold storage and did not move in the matter. It was only on the eve of the last Parliamentary elections that the Congress Party announced its intention to introduce workers participation in management through a statutory provision.

The Standing Labour Committee in its meeting held on 13th September decided that the Labour Ministry should separately discuss the issue with trade unions state governments and the employers organisations. But the Ministry did not hold such meeting as per the decision and again kept the matter undecided.

The UF Government is hesitating to get the Bill passed in Parliament due to the opposition of the employers who want that due to liberalisation of economy, the employers should have more powers to deal with the management of industry. They also wanted to restrict it to the public sector keeping private sector free to tackle the problem as they like. If at all it was introduced they wanted to confine it only at the shop level and not to allow it at the Board of Directors level. In the name of flexibility they only wanted an enabling legislation without any teeth in it. It was clearly an attempt to sabotage the whole concept itself.

Though the trade unions wanted more powers to the managements councils and more representation at the Board level they wanted the government to take decision at an early date so that the Bill gets passed in the next session. Further improvements could be done after seeing the experience of the scheme of workers participation in management. The INTUC was not in favour of election of workers' nominees on the Board of Directors and wanted nomination by the union directly. Their argument was that it would create complication as different unions emerged as recognised unions and majority unions in the participative forum.

As expected the debate in the Conference remains inconclusive and if the Central Government does not take a decision in the matter in the light of various suggestions made, the concept of workers participation in management may remain on paper. The attitude of the government is to delay as much time as possible in the name of arriving at a consensus.

The same attitude was taken by the government on the question of Industrial Relation Bill. The UF Government brought forward the same Bill which was drafted by the Congress Government and no worthwhile change was proposed by the Ministry of Labour. Despite commitment in CMP, the exit policy was sought to be introduced through the back door. The CITU strongly criticised the attitude of the Union Labour Ministry and opposed the proposal made by the New Bill. The CITU further demanded that the UF Government should consider a pro-labour approach and modify the Bill to protect the working class interests.

The representatives of the employers argued that the present labour law is coming in the way of economic development and is unable to attract foreign investment. They wanted changes in favour of the management which in reality would be anti-labour.

CITU sharply criticised the functioning of the legal machinery during the course of discussion. In several tribunals, there are no judges and practically no cases are being taken up. Even the cases referred during 1990 to adjudication are not yet settled so far.

The government admitted shortage of judicial officials and pointed out their salary scales are not sufficiently attractive to get qualified judges. The Labour Secretary expressed the hope that after the Fifth Pay Commission the matter may be sorted out. Meanwhile the tribunal benches remain without any judges for several months.

The CITU condemned the action of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) to prosecute the 4 leaders of the bank employees for organising "illegal" strike action. The approach the Ministry only helped the bank managements to take anti-employee position. The CITU also criticised the CLC(C) for giving incorrect report that all laws were implemented in Export Processive Zones when the complaints have been made all over the world that the employers violated all the labour laws in these zones and trade union rights are practically not in existence. All trade unions criticised the wrong reporting by the CLC(C). The central government had to issue a circular that in future the trade union representatives would be associated inspections in the export processing zones. The employers representatives objected to this on the ground that it would affect the functioning of the EPZ. The Labour Minister of West Bengal Shanti Ghatak who was elected as the vice chairman of the conference admitted that he found violation of Labour Laws in west Bengal and his government had to take action in the matter. Several representatives of the state governments admitted that no labour laws were properly implemented in the EPZ.

The trade unions opposed the proposals made by the government attacking TU rights of workers. Ultimately it was agreed to constitute a Bipartite Committee of 16 persons to make proposals for comprehensive industrial relations bill by the end of January 1997 so that the entire aspects would be considered at length before coming to any conclusion.

The strike of 18 lakh Central Government employees commenced only one day prior to the ILC was forcefully raised by all the trade unions. They demanded removal of ceiling for the payment of bonus. An appeal was distributed among the delegates of the ILC by the Confederation of the Central Government employees and workers and National Federation of Postal Employees to support the demand of the striking workers. The employers group, as expected, opposed the demand and suggested that there should be a thorough discussion on the entire question of bonus for the workers. After the lengthy debate, the Labour Minister agreed to bring to the notice of the Cabinet strong feelings of

the trade unions regarding the removal of ceiling on bonus. The CITU however warned the government that unless it takes decision early there would be series of strikes in several undertakings all over India on the question of bonus.

On the question of secret ballot the Arunachalam Ministry continues its prevarication and avoiding to take firm steps to introduce secret ballot to determine the representative character of the trade unions. The government is making a farce of consultation despite the fact that it knows the views of all trade unions. Except INTUC all trade unions support secret ballot and the government's attempt to arrive at unanimity is only giving veto power to INTUC. The Central Government could have easily implemented its own commitment through executive order and later bring it in the form of legislation.

The CITU was not in favour of again referring the matter to a bipartite committee since no new argument was likely to be advanced during the course of discussion. However, in a meeting of workers the leadership of the INTUC agreed to review their stand and fall in line with others provided their point of view was heard before taking a final decision in the matter. The INTUC leadership gave the example of recently held BHEL elections by Secret Ballot. The elections were accepted by the INTUC president himself. The CITU accepted the proposal to refer it a bipartite committee on the condition that a decision in the matter will be taken within one month.

The Central Government has enhanced the ceiling on gratuity for the central government employees to Rs 2.5 lakhs but for the other workers it is restricted to Rs 1 lakh only. The trade unions opposed this discrimination and demanded that as in case of central government employees the ceiling on gratuity should be raised to Rs 2.5 lakhs. The Union Labour Minister agreed to consider the matter at an early date.

The question of floor level minimum wages came up for consideration in the meeting. According to Central Government the poverty line wages for urban areas comes to Rs 39 and rural areas Rs 35 per day at 1991 prices. The CITU drew the attention of the government to the Supreme Court judgement providing 25 per cent of the wage for providing other human needs for a worker and proposed that for the urban workers the minimum should be Rs 50 per day at 1991 prices. It further demanded that statutory provision should be made to link the minimum wages with prices so that the unorganised strata of the working class should be given compensation

against the price rise. The CITU advocated revision of minimum wages every two years and law should be amended to ensure that employers do not go to the court and bring stay orders on the notification of the minimum wages fixed by the central and the state governments.

The employers expressed their reservation to this proposal on the ground that it should be beyond the capacity of some of the industries. However the above are only floor wages below which no employers should pay wages to the workers. There has to be minimum wages higher than the floor level minimum in different states depending on the local conditions.

The Union labour Minister however announced in the Press conference that it is decided to fix Rs 35 as the national floor level minimum wages. He did not mention about the Supreme Court decision and linkage of wages with price index.

The meeting also discussed the question of employment exchanges and vocational training. These issues were exhaustively discussed in the Standing Labour Committee and hence there was no discussion in the Indian Labour Conference.

The government of India wanted to move a Bill in the next session of Parliament to amend the TU Act. In a separate meeting with the trade unions all the unions pressed for not bringing the legislation and refer it to a tripartite committee. Though there was reluctance on the part of the Labour Ministry officials ultimately the Labour Minister had to agree to refer it to a Bipartite Committee which will be considering the Comprehensive Industrial relations Law.

The conference appointed a drafting committee but it could only partially finalise the draft. The Labour Ministry would now finalise the draft conclusions and circulate them to the trade unions, employers and the State governments for their approval. That will only delay the process of finalising the conclusions.

Thus as CITU pointed out in advance the Indian Labour Conference was converted to a debating society without drawing much conclusions and formulating a new labour policy. The progress of implementing the decision of the last ILC was so tardy that several hours were taken only to consider the action taken report which was almost an action not taken report. The CITU express its strong disapproval of this style of functioning of the Central Government.

The CITU was represented in the meeting by comrades MK Pandhe, General Secretary, SSuryanarayana Rao, vice President, A K Padmanabhan, P K Ganguly, S Dev Roye, secretaries and S Raghavelu General Secretary, Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU.

National Convention—

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basis of this report the delegates discussed and it was adopted unanimously. In this convention a co-ordination committee (state level) was formed with Com. pradeep Das as met twice. It has finalised a 22 point Demand Charter.

Recently the co-ordination committee has decided to observe 4th November 1996 as demand day in the date. On that day the workers will demonstrate before their respective industries and handover the 22 point Demand Charter to the Authorities.

A State Level demonstration of Textile workers will be organised in the last week of November during the winter session of the State Assembly at Bhubaneswar. Mass signature campaign on 22 point Demand Charter is also going on and it will be submitted to the Chief Minister, Orissa on the day of demonstration.

Since the Orissa Government has decided to privatise 10 State owned co-operative and non-co-operative spinning mills and 9 power looms this will endanger and harass 20 thousands textile workers in the state, the co-ordination committee is able to attract other independent unions for united movements. One Union of Baripada spinning mill led by Jharkhand Mukti Morcha M.L.A. Mr. Sudam Marni has also joined the co-ordination committee recently.

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