



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITY

## FORWARD TO ELECTIONS

### Defeat Congress(I), Defeat BJP

R. Umanath

At last the treacherous Chandrasekhar government fell unsung, unhonoured and unwept. Rajiv's efforts to keep the corpse around also failed. In the fall of the Chandrasekhar government, the traditional Cong (I) treachery also stands exposed. The hung parliament which was being misused by the Cong (I) and BJP, also stands dissolved. Fresh elections to the Lok Sabha has been declared. These elections are going to open up a major political battle field. And the battle lines have already been drawn between power-mad authoritarian Cong (I) and communal, divisive BJP on the one hand and the Left, secular and democratic forces on the other. The outcome of these elections are going to be a turning point for the future of the country.

#### Defeat Congress (I)

Through these elections the authoritarian Cong(I) is making desperate bid to stage a come back at the Centre. Precisely because every day of continuance of Rajiv Govt at the centre was leading the country to disintegration, was pushing the economy to the brink, was endangering the country's self-reliance, was pulling down the country's federal structure and making the daily life of the people more and more miserable, it was thrown out of power in 1989 general election.

Even when deprived of power, it has behaved as the proverbial leopard which does not change its spots. At the slightest opportunity, it did not hesitate to use even its reduced strength in parliament to pursue its path of authoritarian assault on elected state governments, removal of governors who refused to behave as puppets of the centre, brought disaster to what little remained of federal structure—all, by using the imposter Chandrashekhar government as instrument. Even when it branded the Chandrashekhar government's act of permitting refuelling

facilities to US war planes as a shameless act, it had no compunction to vote for the government, for justifying the very shameless act. Even while in opposition, the Cong (I) continued to follow the disastrous policy of placating the VHP, which it had pursued while in power, which resulted in widespread communal riots. For the 4 months' notorious record of the defector government, of pushing Punjab almost into the hands of secessionists, surrender to the IMF, and capitulation to American imperialism, Cong (I) is answerable, since it was the Cong (I) which foisted such a set up on the country.

Allowing the Cong (I) to stage a come-back at the centre, will lead to naked authoritarianism, disaster to parliamentary democracy, aggravation of the economic crisis leading to unbearable burdens on the common man and disintegration of the country. Hence, to defeat the Cong (I) in the elections becomes an urgent task.

#### Defeat BJP : Uphold Secularism

The elections are to take place in the midst of grave threat to national unity from the separatists in Kashmir, Punjab and Assam. To make matters extremely dangerous the BJP continues to pose a grave threat to our country's unity and integrity by its inflammatory communal poisoning. On 4 h April, the VHP has planned to mobilise lakhs of communally roused mass in Delhi and gherao the Parliament, demanding the handing over of the disputed site. While the BJP has announced that its main election plank will be Ram and Roti, in the same breath they have demanded privatisation of public sector which means handing them over monopolists. Without any reference to land reforms they have demanded remunerative prices and more investment in agriculture which means to satiate the hunger of the landlords and rural rich. So, BJP's 'Roti' is to feed the

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## Vote For Left-NF Candidates

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monopolists and landlords. Ultimately only 'Ram' remains of the BJP's election platform. That is why BJP has announced that if they are elected in May election, they will demolish the Mosque and construct temple in October. In its desperate bid to capture power, the BJP/VHP-RSS combine, with the help of the religious leaders, are bound to rouse mass communal frenzy throughout the length and breadth of the country. Hence while defeating the Cong (I) it is equally important that this diabolical manoeuvre of BJP/VHP must be thoroughly exposed and BJP defeated at the polls. The election campaign must simultaneously turn out to be a massive movement to rouse secular awareness, protect communal amity, and prevent communal riots from breaking out.

### **Ensure Social Justice**

Our electoral campaign, while defending the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendation, must also put forward CITU's distinct standpoint, and simultaneously seek to convince the upper caste toilers the need for such reservation as a limited measure to ensure social justice, while forging unity of all toilers.

### **Disastrous Record of Congress (I), Janata Dal (S)**

The elections are taking place when the Indian economy is caught up in an unprecedented economic crisis as seen in the balance of payment crisis, inflation rising to over 12%, and the rise in prices, closures and unemployment imposing heavy burdens on the people. Despite taking a loan from the IMF accepting humiliating conditions like reduction in subsidies, dilution of public sector, freezing of DA, and increase in ration prices of essential commodities, the balance of payment difficulties have not been overcome. The IMF has openly announced that it is prepared to grant a second loan provided, these conditionalities are 'fully reflected' in the regular budget to be submitted to Parliament after elections. This means, if Cong (I) or the Janata Dal (S) were to win, the full budget will step up subsidy cut, will attack public distribution system, will dismantle the public sector, new taxes will be imposed, rates of electricity, transport and similar other services will be increased, and 'sick' mills will be closed for ever. This will spell disaster for the people, the working class and the nation.

The election campaign must turn out to be a massive mobilisation of millions of people to resist the path prescribed by IMF and followed by Rajiv Gandhi and Chandrasekhar. Millions of people who have experienced continuation of price-rise, unemployment, poverty, closure of undertakings under successive governments at the centre, will be eager this time to know the cause of the continuation of their misery and the way to get out of it. Hence to meet the yearnings of the people and to demarcate ourselves from other bourgeois parties who also mouth promises to curb prices, unemployment and closures, the election campaign must turn out to be

one which will identify the bourgeois-landlord policies pursued by Rajiv government and followed by Chandrasekhar government as responsible for the people's predicament. It must be a campaign which will thoroughly expose IMF conditionalities and its implications. It must be a massive campaign to win over millions of people in favour of the alternative proposals jointly evolved by the left parties in the recent seminar.

The people who are able to see through the policies that are responsible for the present disastrous situation, and the mass of the people of our country who are conscious of the alternative policies, will alone be the only guarantee to prevail on the new government after the elections, to effect a break from the past Cong (I) policies.

These elections, taking place in the midst of these serious challenges, are very crucial. Its outcome will determine whether the country is able to strengthen, its independence, unity and self-reliance or whether it will drift into subservience.

### **Vote for Left-NF Combine**

**Defeating Cong (I) and BJP will be the prime task in this election battle. And the only force that can successfully spearhead this battle is the National Front-Left Parties combination.**

The CITU calls upon all its affiliated unions to jump into the fray here and now and be in the forefront of this battle. CITU calls upon the working class to devote its entire energy and resources whether physical or financial—do defeat Cong (I) and BJP, and secure a decisive popular mandate for the Left-NF combine. Let every factory, office and mohalla be turned into a battle field in which authoritarianism and communal, divisive forces will be felled and the victory flag of Left-NF combine in defence of democracy, national unity, secularism, social justice and self-reliance will be hoisted.

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## Contribute to BTR Memorial Trust

With April 6th this year, a full year would be completed, since Comrade BTR breathed his last. The way the CITU faced the momentous developments during the past one year, and successful conduct of the 7th Conference of the CITU, showed that the revolutionary cause for which Com. BTR battled all his life, continues to throb in the trade union movement and revolutionary movement of the country.

It is most befitting of this great and simple man, that the very first conference of the CITU after his demise, approved with thunderous approbation and slogan shouting, the CITU Secretariat's proposal to raise a permanent memorial to Com. BTR in Delhi, the capital of the country and to contribute a day's wage for the purpose.

It was on 1st June 1990 that the meeting of the CITU Secretariat took the momentous decision to have a fitting memorial to Com. BTR in Delhi. That very day, a deputation headed by Com. Samar Mukherjee, called on Shri Murasoli Maran, the then Minister for Urban Development in the V. P Singh Cabinet, and requested the Govt of India to allot land to construct the memorial building. A trust under the name 'BTR Memorial Trust' was formed and registered on 7th November, 1990 in new Delhi with Com. Samar Mukherjee as Chairman and Coms. E. Balanandan, K.N. Ravindranath, Sukomal Sen, Manoranjan Roy, R. Uma-Nath, M. K. Pandhe and Ranjit Basu as members of the Board of Trustees.

On 6th November 1990, the then Government informed the CITU Head Quarters about the allotment of a plot of land (Plot No, 13 A,

Rouse Avenue, New Delhi) to the Trust. Since the then government fell, representations were pursued with the subsequent government for giving possession of the allotted land and it is hoped that the same will be handed over shortly as assured by them.

The Trust will raise necessary funds for the construction of the BTR memorial building. The Trust will publish, print and distribute progressive literature and take all steps to propagate ideas of scientific socialism and to propagate the ideas and philosophy which are in the interests of the working class and masses in general. It will undertake steps to arrange suitable training programmes for education of TU activists through running of schools and classes. Symposia, Conventions and Seminars will be arranged to educate the working class and raise its class consciousness. It will undertake research to organise a library with specialisation on books on labour economics. The BTR Memorial Building in Delhi will house these and carry forward other major activities.

As will be seen, BTR Memorial will be a Memorial to an entire revolutionary chapter in the Indian revolutionary movement that Com. BTR represented. It will be a monument to Com. BTR's ceaseless and indefatigable battle to uphold the purity of working class ideology and to defend scientific socialism. It will be a memorial to his militant life.

**By contributing a day's wage, every worker will be contributing a day's sacred toil to build this historic memorial.**

On 6th April 1991 let every one of us pledge to toil to keep this immortal flame, the load star of all struggles, bright for ever.

## Interim Budget Dictated by IMF

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement: The Secretariat of the CITU condemns the Chandra Shekar Govt. for presenting an interim budget which is totally in tune with the dictates of the International Monetary Fund.

The drastic cut in subsidies to fertilizers and food grains by Rs. 944 crores means that there will be a steep hike in the prices of food grains and all essential commodities in the coming days. While the subsidies in indigenous fertilizers have been cut by Rs. 350 crores, the subsidies in imported fertilizers have been increased by Rs. 450 crores. Thus while giving more preference to imports the Finance Minister has thrown the indigenous fertilizer units to the point of growing sick. The slashing of the export subsidies will further aggravate the trade imbalance and make the balance of payment position more precarious and push the country nearer to the debt trap.

The disinvestment in selected public sector units to the tune of 20 per cent is a step forward towards privatisation by denigrating the public sector. This has been done at a time when the public sector undertakings under the Central Govt. have earned a record net profit of Rs. 3781.73 crores in 1989-90, which is the highest ever profit achieved in a year so far. According to the Public Enterprises Survey of 1989-90 presented in the Parliament, the performance of the public sector units was characterised by substantial increase in turnover, high contribution to the exchequer, increase internal resource generation and an increase of 12.94 per cent in value added in production.

The claim of Finance Minister that the budgetary deficit has been checked, is a fraud on the people. The estimated deficit of about Rs 10,000 crores will no doubt go up enormously creating an inflationary pressure on the economy, further pushing up the prices of all commodities.

The claim that there is no increase in Customs and Excise Duty is another fraud on the people, because only recently both the Customs and Excise Duties were hiked to fetch Rs. 1430 crores in the year.

Keeping no provision for additional Dearness Allowance is a direct attack on the right of the employees to Dearness Allowance when prices of all commodities are freely allowed to be increased. So far as the public sector workers are concerned, the Govt. has deliberately flaunted their demand for realignment of DA so as to neutralise the price rise at all levels of wages, driving them to the point of direct strike action.

The CITU considers that the Vote on Account placed by the Finance Minister under the directive of

the Cong (I), is only the tip of the ice berg, keeping in view the forthcoming Tamilnadu elections. The argument of the Finance Minister that a full budget could not be placed because of the uncertainties of the oil prices due to the Gulf War is a clear indication of the further worse economic offensive on the common people that is in the offing.

All the exercises done in the name of reduction of fiscal deficit to 6.5 per cent have been to suit the demand of the IMF to get another loan of 2 billion dollars.

The Vote on Accounts thus placed in the name of Interim Budget is not only anti-people, but anti-national, forsaking the self-reliant national economy at the altar of the IMF.

The CITU is of the opinion that this puppet Govt. of Chandra Shekar which is acting at the behest of the Congress (I), which under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi had earlier embarked upon the path of destruction of a self-reliant economy following the dictates of the World Bank and IMF, had no mandate of the people and is not fit to govern. The government must resign forthwith.

The CITU calls upon the State Committees and the unions and appeals to all other trade unions to launch militant united actions protesting against the the Interim Budget and for ouster of the Chandra Shekar Government and immediate elections.

### FORM IV

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M. K. Pandhe, Publisher

Dated February 28, 1991

*N. B. The Form IV was not published in the March issue due to inadvertence. This mistake is regretted—Ed.*

## Communal Policies Obstruct Trade Union Unity

M. K. Pandhe

The Ninth Conference of BMS held at Vadodara on 21-22 February raised certain communal issues which will only put obstacles in trade union unity in India. The CITU has been co-operating with BMS in the National Campaign Committee, CPSTU and other joint movement on common issues facing the working class and will continue to do so in future. However, open communal propaganda made by the BMS seeks to disrupt the unity already achieved so far and puts spokes in the further advance of the united movement of the working class. It is indeed unfortunate that when the importance of the working class unity is never so great as it is today such detrimental policies are being pursued by a leading trade union centre.

When the prices are sky-rocketing, unemployment is increasing to alarming proportions, sickness, closures and retrenchment are threatening the source of livelihood of millions of our workers, when wage freeze offensive of the employers and government is becoming more ferocious, the trade union rights are under serious attacks, country's struggle for self-reliance is threatened by the World Bank and the IMF conditionalities, the foreign policy of non-alignment is at stake, the division of the working class on the basis of religion will spell disaster on the T. U. movement in the country.

According to BMS General Secretary's Report, construction of Ram Janambhumi temple after demolition of Babri Masjid is the most important National task today. There is no wonder that the Report of the General Secretary to the conference does not mention anything about the humiliating IMF or the World Bank conditionalities for the country, it does not condemn U. S. imperialists for their aggressive role in the Gulf or demand withdrawal of the U.S. troops from the Gulf region. It fails to denounce the permission given by the Govt. of India to refuel U. S. war planes during the Gulf war, where the national honour and prestige of our country in the whole world was at stake.

Further the writing is clearly hurting the sentiments of Muslim people in India.

The BMS General Secretary states: "Ayodhya is the birth place of Sri Ram. Sri Ram belongs to all Indians, nay to the whole world. In India most of the Hindus adore him as the incarnation of god. Some may not accept him as god. None can compel anyone to do so. But to every Indian whether Hindu or not he is a national personality a point of national honour".

No body will object if any one has feelings about

religion or God. One has religious freedom to have his faith. Ramayana as an epic is no doubt popular all over the world but there is no need to give religious twist to the popular feelings. And this is what the General Secretary's report did, when referring to Ramayana's popularity in Indonesia, it said: "It is also a fact that Sri Rama is adored outside Bharat, even in countries where majority of the people profess Islam, like Indonesia".

However, can this lead to the following conclusion? "They have changed the religion. But can they change their forefather and their heritage?" Such formulation is offensive against the sentiments of Muslim workers, and Muslim masses in general. Perhaps that is the purpose of making such a statement. The General Secretary continues: "But unfortunately, petty minded leaders, mischief mongers and religious fanatics in India are trying to raise controversies on every point concerning the restoration of Sri Ram's temple with ill intention. **This is bad, this shall not be allowed**". (Emphasis added).

The BMS leader is thus branding almost the entire T. U. movement in the country as parochial, mischief mongers knowing fully well that except BMS all the TUs in the country have called upon the working class not to associate in the destruction of Babri Masjid. It further leads to the conclusion that all the T. U. leaders who do not agree with BMS will be resolutely opposed. The BMS is thus isolating itself from the mainstream of T. U. movement. Moreover, this is a clear call to pit Hindu workers against Muslim workers and immensely harm the unity of the workers of all religions which is very necessary to fight the growing attacks on the workers. The BMS views thus go contrary to their hitherto professed view on unity of the working class.

For BMS, historical evidence is not necessary, archaeological evidence is not necessary, the matter need not be decided by the court on the basis of facts. It is only by force that the Masjid has to be demolished and the Ram temple has to be erected. This is the idea that is being preached.

BMS is opposing the proposal that all the places of worship as they existed on 15th August 1947 should not be disturbed. As a matter of fact it is advocating the so called "restoration" of all the Hindu temples by demolishing all the mosques all over India. The General Secretary of BMS further argues: "In every country which is a victim of aggression, the aggressor always tries to destroy the national monuments of honour. The first thing that is done after throwing out the aggressor is to restore the national monument to wash off the shame of defeat

and revive national honour and spirit". Thus, wherever the VHP, Bajrang Dal, RSS, BJP or BMS think that the former temple has been destroyed, they get a right to demolish the Muslim shrine in the name of restoring 'national honour'. All Muslims are invaders of India and their shrines are to be destroyed to protect the national honour; they argue. Instead of treating Muslim workers as class brothers, they are being treated as enemies. Their talk of T. U. unity amounts to only saying that "All Hindu Workers Unite."

BMS General Secretary further calls upon for demolition of Babri Masjid and construction of Ram temple. "In the same way when the temple for Sri Rama is planned to be reconstructed in Ayodhya, where it existed formerly and got destroyed when foreign army invaded Bharat, it is the duty of every true whichever faith he may profess, to be happy that a national monument is again restored. Every one should help this noble cause in whichever way one can". And it is strange that the General Secretary expects that the Muslim workers should also help in demolishing the Babri Masjid if they are to be considered as patriotic. This call itself is based on pure intentional presumptions.

If some one does not agree that the Masjid should be demolished and Ram temple should be constructed at the site of Shilanyas, then he is not a true Indian. Nobody will object if a temple of Rama is to be constructed in Ayodhya. But by distorting history, if a case is being made out to demolish the mosque, it will only hurt the religious sentiments of Muslim people and pave the way for communal riots all over India.

It is an established fact that RSS played key role in the recent communal holocaust all over India after the Kar Seva was prevented by the V. P. Singh Govt on the disputed site. The non-political claims of the BMS do not come in the way of supporting the BJP's attempts to make Ram Temple issue as an election issue. If Ram is a national personality why use him to catch votes. BMS Conference does not state that Ram temple issue should not be made an election issue.

The General Secretary concludes "B.M S feels that its rank and file should look upon the temple construction work as a national endeavour and participate in this proud cause". This amounts to instigation of Hindu workers of the BMS against brother Muslim workers.

Thus the common issues facing the working class are non-issues in comparison with the issue of construction of Rama temple.

Let the prices of essential commodities go up, let unemployment increase, let closures lock-out increase, let the T. U. rights be attacked, let World Bank and IMF dictate humiliating terms to India, Ram Janam Bhoomi temple is the most important issue,

at least till the forthcoming election.

If this is not communalism what else is communalism. We would like our BMS colleagues to ponder over it.

However, BMS considers that except it, all other trade unions are parochial. The General Secretary's Report states :

"But unfortunately in some of the constituents of NCC a spirit of parochialism has taken over in recent time. There is a tendency of one upmanship. On September 19, 1990 constituents of NCC and INTUC together held a conference in the name of opposing communalism without BMS. The meeting of the trade unions which was held in the office of CITU in July 1990 and in which decision to hold this conference was taken, was held without inviting BMS. When later BMS was approached it clearly told that, it would be willing to participate in the convention provided communalism and communal forces were properly defined and identified. But to this there was no response."

There is however no truth in the last sentence. The non-BMS trade unions have sent a copy of the draft resolution to BMS in which the communal forces were clearly identified. The resolution reads inter alia: "Bigotted fundamentalist organisations like the Viswa Hindu Parishad and Babri Masjid Action Committee are systematically whipping up the communal emotions of the people at large, thus bringing the country's unity and integrity into jeopardy. RSS Organisations and parties like the VHP, BJP, Bajrang Dal, Muslim League, Jamaite Islami etc are spreading communalism in a sustained manner to get their own narrow ends served".

If the BMS would have accepted the identification of the communal forces made out in the draft, there would have been no difficulty in having it inside the convention. However, BMS did not agree hence there was no other alternative but to exclude BMS for the anti-Communalism Convention and make it a convention of TUs holding secular views. When all the secular and democratic forces in the country are unitedly fighting against mixing religion with politics the BMS, we are sorry to note, is mixing religion with trade unionism.

The communal views of the BMS are seen in several of its activities. Every year BMS observes 'Hindu Samrajya Din' in June. The BMS diary which was earlier giving Muslim festivals now appears without mentioning them though they are recognised as national holidays. BMS is even seeking to change the names of cities with muslim background. The Ninth Conference was earlier scheduled to be held "in this ancient city of Kamavati—later changed to Ahmedabad". In the name of bringing old national glory they are trying to change the name of cities. These are only some examples of BMS attempts to increase communal sentiments and anti-muslim hatred among the workers.

## BMS from Delhi, 1986 to 'Kamavathi', 1991

A meeting of the Central Trade Unions including BMS held on 22nd March 1986, while expressing concern over the highly deteriorating communal situation, strongly criticised Muslim fundamentalists for their stand on Shah Bano case and arch Hindu communalists for their role in flaming up communal riots on Babri Masjid-Ram Janam Bhoomi issue. The resolution states: "Communal elements use any pretext to foment riots. Issues like Supreme Court judgement in Shah Bano's case and then court order in Babri Masjid-Ram Janam Bhoomi case, were used by the Islamic fundamentalists and arch Hindu communalists to flare up communal riots". The BMS is party to this resolution,

One would naturally like to know as to what made the BMS to change their stand between Delhi in 1986 and Kamavathi in 1991.

Barring BMS all other trade unions advocate secularism and the Delhi TU convention categorically opposed the call for destruction of the Babri-Masjid and construction of Ram temple on a disputed site. It appealed to the working class to directly oppose the communal and fundamentalist forces of all religions so that working class could advance on secular and democratic lines.

The Seventh Conference of the CITU has appealed to working class and trade unions of all affiliations to come together for launching countrywide movement on common issues facing the working class. It has also appealed for a united struggle against communal and divisive forces so that unity and integrity of the country can be saved.

The CITU is confident that the working class will not be swayed by the communal and divisive forces who seek to divert the attention of the toiling people from their real issues. It is only by countrywide united movement on common burning problems that the working class will be able to protect its standard of living, TU and democratic rights, and ensure country's march towards building a real democratic society for the people of India.

## Killing of Brick-Kiln Workers at Haryana

A jungle rule by gangsters is prevailing in Haryana. Two workers of the CITU were killed by firing by the brick-kiln owners in quick succession on March 14 at Hissar and on March 22 at Rohtak, the day when the gangster leader Chautala was reinstalled as the Chief Minister.

About 70,000 brick-kiln workers of Haryana organised under Lal Jhanda Bhatta Mazdoor Union (CITU) have been on indefinite strike since March 5 in pursuance of their 9-point demands including a minimum wage of Rs. 90/- per thousand bricks and implementation of labour laws. The union formulated the long pending demands and submitted them to the brick-kiln owners association in all the districts in January, 1991. Thereafter they submitted memoranda to and staged dharnas in thousands before the Deputy Commissioners in the districts. But as no action was taken either by the brick-kiln owners or by the State authorities, the union was compelled to launch the indefinite strike from March 5.

Reports of beating up of workers and CITU leaders by the gangsters hired by the owners in connivance with the police came from several places. A number of kidnapping of leaders and beating them up in police custody occurred at Hissar, where the CITU office was also ransacked. On March 14 the owner of a brick-kiln opened fire on the workers, killing one and injuring several. The CITU centre protested and made representation to the Chief Minister demanding judicial inquiry and punishment to the murderers. A massive protest rally was held at Hissar on March 15. But no action was taken.

On the contrary, firing took place at Rohtak on March 22. The son of a former Congress I) MLA, the owner of a brick-kiln resorted to indiscriminate firing of about 200 rounds along with his hirelings on March 22 in the heart of the city in close vicinity of the police station in broad day light. One worker was killed and a large number injured. The CITU Centre deputed Jibon Roy, Secretary, along with Hannan Mollah, MP. They visited the residence of the killed and the injured workers along with Raghvir Huda, the CC Member and State Secretary of CPI (M) and Inderjeet Singh, the State CITU President. As the District Magistrate was absent, the team met the S P. and DIG and demanded immediate judicial enquiry. But on the contrary, false cases have been lodged against the workers. The Haryana State CITU has decided to organise a state level mass rally at Rohtak on April 2. The strike continues and the workers are determined to wrest the demands by intensifying the struggle.

## Death Anniversary of Com. B.T. Ranadive



On the first anniversary of passing away of Com. B. T. Ranadive, founder President of CITU on 6th April 1991 the Working Class of India will remember the great revolutionary leader and teacher. While paying homage to his revered memory the working class will study and assimilate his valuable teachings and implement them in day to day practice.

As per call of the seventh Conference of the CITU the Trade Unions will take a pledge to carry forward his proud heritage and complete the task he left unfinished during his life time. The life and teachings of B. T. R. will always be with us to guide us to the path to be followed in achieving our cherished goal.

The struggle against imperialism, reliance on unity and class struggle, fight for socialism and leading role of the working class are some of the prominent concepts Comrade B T R used to consistently underline. His vigorous championing the cause of national unity and proletarian internationalism has given a new dimension to the day to day struggle of the working class in India. Our unflinching loyalty to these principles will be the bedrock of our activities and let us march forward with his teachings till we achieve our objective.

Let the working class and all unions renew the pledge to follow the guidelines of Com. B.T.R. dedicatedly while observing his first death anniversary on 6th April, 1991.

Long live the valiant memory of Com. B. T. Ranadive.

## **Resolutions**

*(We are printing hereunder the second set of resolutions adopted in the CITU Conference).*

### **On Economic Situation**

The Seventh Conference of CITU held at Calcutta from 12-17th Feb expresses deep concern at the alarming economic situation of the country and the consequent hardship imposed on the people due to the policies pursued by the Congress (I).

The spiralling inflation, adverse trade balances, continuing depreciation of the value of rupee and the acute balance of payment position, heavy external and internal debt burden and above all galloping unemployment all together prove that the plan of maintaining the economy through restructuring of industries towards elitism and exportism is preposterous. The conference notes with great distress that despite the annual growth of industrial production to be average of 7.5% and agricultural production by 4.1% throughout entire eighties, the Government at the Centre have resorted to heavy taxation and levies and also successive deficit financing which has aggravated to a colossal amount of Rs. 50,7111 crores during the said period, to which may be added another Rs. 15,000 crores at close of the year 1990-91.

The negative balance in trade, which had cumulated to Rs. 59,5444 crores between 1980-81 and 1989-90, together with increased debt service commitment which has crossed the ignominious ratio of 30% has pulled down the foreign exchange reserve to mere Rs. 2500 crores in November, 1990. The current reserve can hardly cater for 2 weeks' import. The gulf crisis has added further to the crisis of balance of payment by widening the trade gap and depleting the reserves by way of plugging considerably the remittance flow from West Asia. Internally too, the public debt is estimated to have increased from Rs. 9999 crores in 1970-71 to 1,44,563 crores in 1987-88 more than 14 times in 17 years. The interest payment of this internal debt has gone upto Rs. 12,199 crores in 1988-89 more than 60 times over 1970-71.

The conference firmly repudiates the claim of the Chandrasekhar Govt. that the IMF loan amounting to 1.8 billion dollars would help the country to tide over the present balance of payment crisis. Rather drift of the economy towards conditionalities of IMF loan and its servicing liabilities, as the previous experience dictates, would push the economy nearer to the debt trap in real effect.

The conditionalities of the IMF loan would inevitably lead to (a) further devaluation of rupee

which has already been depreciated by 88% against dollar during the eighties, (b) opening of rest of the industrial economy including trade to monopoly and multinationals, (c) withdrawal of labour protective clauses from industrial relations and enactments and wage freeze (d) privatisation of public sector industries (e) withdrawal of all poverty alleviation programmes as also statutory rationing, (f) withdrawal of all government subsidies including the agricultural subsidies.

The conference welcomes the steps taken by the former N.F. Govt. in bringing all land-reform legislations under the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. It however regrets that the National Front Govt. while in power had been unconcerned about the serious threat to Indian self-reliance and the unpatriotic role of Indian monopoly houses and to this end had formulated an industrial policy which would further contribute to the undermining self reliance of the economic structure.

The Conference condemns the U.S. threat to India under Super 301 and Special 301 of its trade regulation and also its role in the Uruguay round of GATT discussion recently held at Geneva. The Conference warns the Government of India that any element of surrender to U.S. pressure to dilute India's Patent Act adopted in 1970, allow the multinational investment in Insurance and Banking and also to withdraw subsidies on agricultural commodities would come as a serious blow to the country's self-reliance.

In view of the serious crisis of the economy the conference demands reversal of the policy of the Chandrasekhar Government of economic growth based on elitism in export and return to the policy enunciated by the 1956 industrial policy resolution with self-reliance and land reform as the basic foundations. The conference calls upon the working class and all shades of democratic opinion to raise their voice against the moves to subjugate the national economy to monopoly interests and to take up the cause of Indian self-reliance as the most important platform of mobilisation through all forms of campaign and struggles.

### **On Public Sector**

The Seventh Conference of CITU held at Calcutta on 13-17th Feb. 1991 expresses its grave concern at the serious move towards privatisation of public sector undertakings. The Central Govt. having been pressed by the vested interests, IMF and the World Bank has diluted the leading role of public sector to such an alarming extent that the influx of multina-

tionals and the monopoly houses in core sector is appearing as a great threat to India's self-reliance. Since the Rajiv Government had initiated the private investments in core sector during Seventh Plan, floodgates have been opened for a massive campaign for privatisation on the plea of making public sector more efficient and competitive.

Further, the industrial policy of National Front has advanced substantial concessions to the vested interests both in India and abroad. In steel industry, the Govt. has raised the limit of private investment from 25,000 tonnes to 1 million tonnes and now pressure is being built up for total release. In case of special steel the OGL facility and the wide concessions to build ministeel plant in private sector have already sealed the fate of Durgapur Alloy & Salem steel plants. In power sector private investment including multinationals are allowed in power generation. The decision to allow private airlines to operate upto 90 seater aircrafts and the rider to pay less wages, will land the Indian Airlines in stiff and unhealthy competition.

Despite the BHEL having developed higher capacity to manufacture thermal and hydel power stations, it has been allotted order to the tune of only 12000 M.W. against 26000 M.W. having been offered to multinationals. Though the Govt. has deferred the privatisation of Scooters India Ltd and the Talaja Unit of BEL due to united pressure of trade union movement the Govt. has not made any investment for their revival. In NITC no capital investment has been made since the mills were taken over.

High unutilised capacities, large inventories, wasteful expenditure, failure to involve workers in improving production and performance funneling out large funds of public undertaking through off-loading of jobs to private parties and contractors, rampant corruption and gross mismanagement have resulted in big drain of public sector funds causing consequent low profitability. The appointment of Chairmans in PSUs have not always been judged on the basis of capability but by their capacity to secretly mobilise funds for the ruling party. The Central Govt. instead of rectifying these obstacles and improving the performance of public sector by ensuring full participation of workers in the management is continuing the discredited policies which are responsible for the inefficient running of the public sector.

The conference reaffirms the commitment of working class to take all positive steps for preserving the public sector's role in Indian economy. The increasing participation of officers and engineers in the anti-privatisation campaign is helping in drawing larger democratic mass which alone may create real guarantee for safeguarding the public sector and self-reliance.

This conference expresses its resentment at the unconcerned attitude of the Govt. to meet its commitment to the public sector workers on full neutralisation of DA, Pension Scheme as third retiring benefit and other economic demands. The indifference to set right the discriminatory attitude towards working women concerning their rightful demand for equal medical facilities, promotions, training and implementation of various legislations is causing dissatisfaction. Similarly, the continuance of contract system in permanent and perennial nature of job and maintenance of semi-slave relations with contract workers are another major issue which is affecting industrial relations and requires immediate attention.

The conference supports the decision of the Bangalore convention to organise nationwide campaign against the policy of privatisation and inviting monopoly houses and multinationals in core sector, through conventions and other measures which will culminate in the observance of 15th March 1991 as "Defend Public Sector and Self-reliance Day".

It is the task of the working class, specially the public sector workers to rouse the people about the vital role of public sector in advancing self-reliance and in mobilising them for its support.

It calls upon the entire working class to come forward for similar actions alongwith the public sector workers as the struggle against privatisation merges into the common struggle of the entire people, the struggle for Indian self-reliance.

### On Left Front Government

The Seventh conference of CITU held on 12-17 February 1991 at Calcutta congratulates the people of Kerala for the decisive victory of the Left and Democratic Front in the recently held election for the District Council in the state. This victory together with the victory of Left Front in Municipal and Corporation elections in West Bengal embodies the clear cut ratification by the people of the glorious role of Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Kerala in the defence of common people's interest in offering a clear alternative approach to the problems faced by the country and the people. The results also prove that the people have not failed to take note of the fearless application of Left, democratic and secular policies of these two states against heavy odds and despite all discriminatory and hostile steps taken by the Cong (I) Govt at the Centre. The conference notes that the two Governments are serving as beacon lights in the country on defence of democracy, in fighting the communal forces and to safeguard the unity of the people. Despite limited powers and resources, the efforts and attempts exerted by these two Govts in defending the legitimate and urgent demands of the working people unlike other Cong(I) ruled states, demonstrated the basic difference between the approach and policies of the left polity towards

running a Government. The conference hails the Left Front Governments' firm determination in refusing to implement the anti-democratic laws which the Central Govt wanted to impose on the people.

The conference notes with high appreciation the steps taken by these two governments to democratise various institutions at various levels, to rouse people's initiative in the process of administration and to involve people's participation in these processes. The revitalisation of village panchayats through democratic elections and vesting of wide powers and resources with these elected panchayats, have made it possible to unleash initiative and participation of rural poor in the development work and improve the living condition in villages and also to ensure greater consolidation among the rural masses for further struggle.

The conference at the same time notes with concern that since the day of assumption of office by the left Front and Left Democratic Front in these two states, the forces of reaction and the ruling classes have been very active to carry on its campaign and conspiracy against these two popular governments in various forms. The basic limitation thrust the bourgeois constitution in the matter of rights and resources on these two State Govts in the face of rising prices, shortages of supply of basic essentials, power problem industrial sickness etc, are being sought to be capitalised by the ruling classes and the media to launch vilification campaign against these governments to tarnish their image. In Kerala, Cong (I) in association with other fundamentalist forces have been constantly active to dismember the LDF government. In W. Bengal, Prime Minister Chandra-shekhar is threatening and intimidating the Left Front Government and is openly inciting the Cong (I) in the state to create law and order problems.

The conference also records its appreciation of the relentless struggle of the working class and the democratic people of these two states in defence of these governments. People's funding for the construction of Bakreswar Power Plant in West Bengal is a powerful expression of their support to Left Front Govt.

The conference likes to point out in particular that the role being played by the West Bengal and Kerala Governments and also that of Tripura till its displacement, is of paramount importance to the toiling people of the country, who are in search of and struggling for an alternative to the present bourgeois-landlord policies of the ruling classes.

The conference calls upon the working class and democratic forces all over the country to extend their wholehearted support to West Bengal and Kerala Governments for the defence of the democratic rights of the people against authoritarian attacks

and to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country.

### On Industrial Sickness and Closures

The Seventh Conference of CITU, held on 12-17th February 1991 at Calcutta notes with serious concern the increasing incidence of closures and sickness of industries in our country throwing millions of workers in the streets. During the span of the last five years the number of closed and sick units has risen to the tune of more than forty per cent and according to Govt source the number of sick unit reached 2,06,098 in December 1987 and had further risen to 2,41,814 till December, 1988. The entire situation reveals that industrial sickness has already attained a cancerous character. Instances are common that the industry became sick, but the owner turned richer in the process of such sickness, leaving the workers in destitution. In fact, "industrial sickness has become a profitable business in the light of various relief measures that are available", as the committee set up by Andhra Pradesh Govt put it. Besides, in many units workers are being laid off and lockouts are being imposed on the workers. There are a number of undeclared closures as well, affecting thousands of workers. The trade union movement of the country as a whole has been agitating for remedial measures to be taken by the Central Govt for revival of the closed and sick units and putting curb on closures, but the situation is getting worse every day.

The conference points out that the erroneous economic and industrial policies pursued by successive central govts like liberalised imports, opening the economy to multinationals, creating a situation of unequal competition for small and medium units, the continuous inflationary trends leading to pauperisation of the masses and shrinkage of market and government policies of production for the limited elitist market, are responsible for the growing sickness and closures. Transfer of capital and finances by employers, mismanagement and corruption are adding to this situation.

The conference notes with concern that although the workers are in no way responsible for the sickness and closures, they are made the worst victims. Taking advantage of the sufferings of the workers, the employers and financiers compel the workers to accept derogatory terms of wage-cut, withdrawal of existing benefits, retrenchment, closure of the part of the units, increase in workload etc under the plea of revival of the sick units or reopening of the closed units.

The conference denounces the Board of Industrial Finance and Reconstruction for its policy of protecting the interest of industrialists and financial institutions at the expense of the workers. BIFR stipulates conditions for the workers as dictated by

the managements, private consultants and the financial institutions. BIFR is following the same dual policy in its dealings with State and Central Governments. While it is asking State Governments to give up their claims on dues on account of sales tax, share of incom tax etc and also to reduce or write off electricity charges etc, it does not ask the Central Govt to concede any matching concession.

Affected workers have been demanding for a very long time that BIFR should set up separate benches in states like West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamilnadu etc. where the industrial sickness has become rampant, as representing their cases at Delhi is difficult and costly. But the Govt. is ignoring this demand. The relevant Act should be suitably amended to change the structure of BIFR, so that it becomes obligatory on the BIFR to supply trade unions with the copy of viability report prepared by the Board. It also should be made obligatory upon the Board to act upon the specific recommendations of the trade unions. The Board should have power to recover the cost of revival from other assets of the owners of sick units.

The conference demands that the Govt. of India should take over the sick and closed mills and run them with full participation of the workers in the management. It must intervene when attempts are being made by employers to divert funds or resort to corrupt practices. The conference demands of the Govt. of India to enact appropriate laws to punish the guilty owners and to confiscate their properties, and take suitable steps to enforce the laws.

The conference calls upon the entire trade union movement to take initiative to organise a broad based united movement, to compel the government to accept these demands and mobilise all sections of people for the reversal of government's retrograde policies.

### On Centre State Relations

The Seventh Conference of the CITU reiterates its demand for giving more powers to the states ensuring full autonomy to the state governments.

Though the Constitution of India provides for a federal structure, Congress (I) government at the Centre has been persistently violating the spirit of the Constitution and trampling underfoot the limited rights of the state government, particularly of those which oppose its policies. It is to be noted that despite repeated demands made by the states, the Congress (I) governments at the centre spurned the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission recommending for more powers to the states both administrative and financial. The powers of Governors are frequently misused to suit the interest of the ruling party at the centre. State governments were dismissed despite their enjoying the support of the state legislature. In case of Tamilnadu the state government was dismissed despite the opposition by

the Governor, making a mockery of the whole concept of state autonomy.

The financial sources in the country are mainly controlled by the central government leaving little scope for the state governments to raise more resources for further development in the states. Despite recommendation of several Finance Commissions, the state governments do not get adequate share with the result that bulk of the developmental resources are left in the hands of the Central Government. The allocation of projects in different states are decided on political considerations leading to uneven development of economic growth in different states, which has given rise to regionalist tendencies adversely affecting the unity and integrity of the country.

The Left Front governments in W. Bengal and Tripura had taken concrete steps to make autonomous regions giving real powers to the backward areas. However, the Congress (I) policies have failed to develop similar autonomous regions in other areas.

Due to its authoritarian attitude and political influence, the Congress(I) Governments at the Centre always strained relations with non-Congress governments in the states. Even in Congress (I) controlled states the centre frequently imposed Chief Ministers making them virtual puppets at the hands of the centre.

The NF Govt. made positive efforts to improve the centre-state relations through constitution of Inter State Council and revitalisation of National Development Council. But the Govt. could not remain long and the break away group Govt. led by Chandra Shekhar is reverting back to the authoritarian policy at the behest of Congress (I) party. It is therefore a paramount task before the trade union and the democratic movement in India to strive for more powers to the state governments and make the concept of state autonomy meaningful which will ensure democratic advance in the country and maintain its unity and integrity.

The Seventh Conference of the CITU, therefore calls upon all its affiliated unions to vigorously campaign for more autonomy to the state governments so that centre-state relations are built up on democratic lines in the country.

### On Removal Of Ceilings On Bonus

The Seventh Conference of CITU strongly demands that the outdated ceilings on annual statutory bonus be abolished immediately.

The existing Bonus ceilings of Rs. 2,500/- for eligibility and 1600/- for entitlement were fixed long ago and have become irrelevant particularly in the present inflationary spiral. A large number of workers are now earning more than Rs. 25.00/- and are, therefore denied bonus outright. It is also a

(Cont'd on page 21)

## Report of Working Women's Conference

Vimal Ranadive

[We are publishing hereunder the report placed in the Working Women's Conference held at Calcutta on February 12-13, 1991 as a part of the CITU conference—Ed.]

We are happy to have our third convention of working women to be held in Calcutta, under CITU auspices from 12-13th of February 1991. We are proud that it is being held here where the Left Front Government is ruling and the movement of working women and women in general is strong and getting sympathetic support from the Left Front Government. The 6th CITU Conference held in Bombay in May, 1987 held a special session on working women and their problems which did help them and the leadership of the states and CITU to understand as to how far we have progressed with regard to taking up the problems of working women, their promotion on the higher bodies of the unions, federations or associations, and in the membership of women in the unions. It also took stock of the serious feudal tendencies still existing among the leadership of the unions which prevents the working women to come forward in the leadership or on the post of office bearers. The Bombay conference in 1987 and the report placed at the special session of working women while reviewing its work has stated that even after 7 years "we are not in a position to say today that the situation described above has changed considerably. Yes, changes are there to a certain extent. CITU unions have started paying some attention to the problems of working women, conferences of working women have been organised under CITU and other National Federations, Co-ordination Committees and other special wings under the unions have been formed in many places, composition of the executive committees where women constitute the majority is changing a bit, women are being taken on the executive committees. The most significant point is that the leadership of the union is slowly changing their feudal outlook towards these problems. But it is also a fact that the leadership of the CITU has to remind repeatedly about this to the states and district committees. Complaints from the states Co-ordination Committees to CITU centre continue to come and many times intervention has to be made" (P. 35—36 Bombay Report).

That conference also noted that after initial gains in the beginning after 1979, the 1st convention at Madras, a period of stagnation began with non-functioning of the co-ordination committees in some states. After a number of conferences held in Kerala, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Delhi, Andhra, Gujarat, etc some committees became defunct to a certain extent and some totally. It was also noted that even after a good and well attended conference in

Assansol in West Bengal years back, attended predominantly from our class of women, no marked improvement was observed.

It is still the job of the leadership from CITU to hammer and intervene time to time asking the state committees to hold the state conventions or form the women's wings or to take women on the leadership posts.

### Important Role Played by Tamilnadu State CITU

But the 5th conference noted the important role played by CITU of Tamilnadu committee which took up the issue seriously and worked to implement the decisions of the Madras convention. The continuous attempts by the State CITU and the other federations or associations are being made by the Tamilnadu Committee consciously to bring the working women in the various struggles launched in the unions or federations, to promote them on the committees and have close co-ordination between the union leadership and the women's wings of the working women.

The 3 main points raised by Comrade B T R in the 1st convention and also repeatedly taken up by him in every conference were how far our State Committees were able to take up the cause of working women, taking up their specific problems, their promotion and their unionisation, etc. Not a single convention or a conference in any state of any federation or union went without his serious intervention on this question. It was because of the circular signed by him personally, about 100 women delegates could participate in the Bombay conference and also have a special session of delegates together discussing the problems of working women. The necessity of such a session was pointed out by him here male delegates in the session participate and listen to the grievances of working women.

### The Background before Bombay Conference

The 2nd convention of working women was held in Delhi in April 1983 which reviewed the work since 1979. The convention was attended by about 300 delegates from a number of states. It was also noted that on the initiative of national campaign committee, "March to Parliament" held in Delhi during 1982-83 on various economic issues, the participation of women was significant. They marched shoulder to shoulder with their men folk with red flags and in uniform dress. The agricultural women too came in thousands from Andhra and other places. This shows the timely step, the CITU has taken by giving call to women on the basic demands taken up by the NCC. During this period, attempt

also were made to mobilise middle class women employees and a small meeting of 50-60 women office employees was held under the auspices of NCC and with the initiative of CITU and All India Co-ordination Committee. During this period a conference of women in Reserve Bank in Kerala was held. In Shastri Bhavan Central Govt. women employees in Madras launched a campaign for creche. Many conferences of working women were held and co-ordination committees formed such as in Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra, Gujarat, Delhi and other places. There were conference in Haryana, Rajasthan, UP, Punjab also. This shows that we took up the work seriously, but we were not able to carry it out consistently. We have to find out what are the reasons, where is the lacunae, whether state CITU were not able to continue due to lack of cadres, due to their non-seriousness on this issue, or due to not taking up the initiative on behalf of women.

### Complaints by Working Women Persists

Even after 11-12 years of taking up the issue by CITU working women, women workers in industries continue to complain to us that they are not taken up on the various committees; their problems are not dealt by the leadership of the union. It appears from the reports that many of our state committees of CITU are not paying attention to this issue as they should. While some committees take them consciously like Punjab or Tamilnadu, others like Bihar or UP remain still inactive. Some others like Delhi and Maharashtra express the difficulty of non-functioning of the committees due to non-availability of cadres as per the reports. While Madhya Pradesh has formed the new committee by holding a conference of working women along with CITU, Haryana and HP are yet to do much on this question. Rajasthan after holding their conference a few years back is still not able to function the committee, they formed years back, though they have done tremendous progress on the question of Anganwadi women. The recent all India conference of Anganwadi held at Udaipur was a tremendous success with thousands of women coming from many districts in Rajasthan.

### Middle Class Women Employees Take Lead

The Bombay report on the working women's problems noted the role of middle class employees in LIC, teachers, nurses and in other offices who started agitating on the question of provision of creche, toilet facilities, rest rooms, etc. The extra Developmental (ED) employees in P & T including men who are in thousands and working on daily rate basis for years are not yet made permanent. Delhi University teachers had a prolonged strike led by DUTA for their demands. Struggles on their demands were launched in Kerala, Andhra, Maharashtra etc by the NG employees, working women playing leading role. Many places their unions took lead and our state co-ordination committees supported. There were many spontaneous struggles during this period. At many places the women's conferences also were held

and wings have been formed.

### Growing Political awareness among the Working Women

The participation of working women in 19th January strike in 1982 at the call of the NCC was noticed by everybody. The women in Trichi, Municipal workers in Gujrat, in LIC, Banks came out spontaneously. The same enthusiasm was seen in the March to Parliament on 23rd Nov. 1982. This also showed and noted in the convention of working women held in 1983 in Delhi. The joining of working women in the common struggles and struggle against the ruling congress party on a large scale shows their growing political awareness, expressing solidarity with the trade unions and the calls given by the Left parties.

It was also noted that the continuous propaganda on the working women's problems, their unionisation in trade unions etc. taken up by the CITU had its own effect which caught the imagination of middle class women. Mainly associations and federations guided by CITU help them to move forward.

The P & T union organised a conference of wives of the workers in Udaypur in 1983 where 300 women attended and discussed as to how they could help the struggles. Such examples were many during the period mentioned before the Bombay Conference. Middle class employees were taking up the issues such as provision of creche equal remuneration, rest rooms, transfer and so on under the unions, associations and federations.

### Kanpur Conference Reiterates Decisions of Madras Conference

In the Kanpur conference of CITU held in 1983, this issue was taken up seriously by Com. P. Ramamurthy, General Secretary and Com. BTR, President who addressed the 50 women delegates and other delegates. Com BTR said in the conference "Our trade union movement has a common weakness. The trade unions by and large are indifferent to the demands of women workers."

In Kanpur the General Secretary appealed to the session to "bring women workers into working class movement..." While stressing the feudal deviations in the TU movement, Com. BTR sharply rebuked the state CITU committees, "Women workers constitute an important part of working class and all effort must be made to unite men and women workers in common struggle. If this is not done, then reactionary forces will snatch the opportunity to pit women against men in order to divide and break the unity of the class..." This was the warning given against the feminist movement. He said, "TU movement is not the preserve of men alone. To divorce working women's struggle from the general movement is a deviation, a feudal outlook..."

Com. BTR in this conference expressed his

regrets at the fact that "even today men dominate the leading posts in trade unions and this must change...."

Addressing the P & T workers in Pune, Com. BTR severely criticised the leadership for not including any demands of the women, although major section of the employees were women.

The guidance and consistent persuasion of the trade unions, or sharp criticism wherever required by Com BTR and Com. P. Ramamurthy on these lines, no doubt helped the working women all over India which created a deep impact on the working women as a whole. The middle class women employees no doubt took lead during this period.

The responsibility of drawing more women of our class in the CITU, and women under other federations, falls on state CITU and working women, the co-ordination committee and women's wings of the union and Federations.

In short, since the 1st convention of working women at Madras in 1979, we have gone ahead. The AICCWW, because of its growing influence among women workers, got recognition and invitation to attend international conference also. By this time no central trade union have seriously thought of starting the women wings of their trade unions. Some have their wings only in the name. No serious efforts have been done till now on the part of the other central trade unions as such to form wings under them.

### **The Present Position on the Problems of Working Women**

In the background which is mentioned in both the CITU conference and in between and the work done by the co-ordination committees at various places, reviewed in Chandigarh, Dhanbad and other meetings held by the AICCWW, it appears that we have still not been able to move our state CITU committees to work on the line of the 1st convention to our satisfaction. There are of course a few exceptions, but very few.

No doubt, struggles are launched by many sections of women from our own class and also by other women employees under their leadership. In West Bengal, women collect in thousands and lakhs at the call of CITU or AIDWA; nurses in West Bengal launch struggles. In Durgapur, Ranigunj and other places women hold convention when thousands joined. In Kerala too, women in coir, cashew, plantation come in demonstrations at the call of their organisations. In Tripura under our Govt. we could gather thousands of women for meetings in short time in the absence of the co-ordination committee. The women employees in P & T, electricity, AG, Govt. employees etc. come and join at the call of CITU and their Federation. The call from the LIC conference at Jaipur in Feb. 1988 given by their

leadership in their last conference in Jaipur has been implemented in a large number of the office. Central and State Govt. women employees have their own conferences with their unions. Most of these associations and federations have formed their women's wings as per the information including West Bengal. Most of the journals run by these organisations given news of the struggles of working women regularly.

We should take note of some conferences here. Divisional conferences in LIC were held in Tamilnadu with the initiative of the women LIC employees, alongwith the union leadership. The electricity women in Tamilnadu have shown what they can do to help their conferences by way of campaign in other offices, collection of money, sending invitations on their own for other offices, having common platform and so on in Tamilnadu and Kerala.

It is to be noted by us that P & T in Calicut observed a day on 7th May 1988 with a mobilisation of 500 women, all men and women employees observed a Working Women Demands Day for all by wearing special badges. This was observed by all male and female workers expressing solidarity with female members.

A huge rally was held in West Bengal on 10th April 1988 with the participation of all sections of women from coal, nurses, mines, LIC, banks, college, school teachers, etc. A large section of Muslim women too joined perhaps from beedi. The high political consciousness in West Bengal among women and the capacity to organise at the call of CITU was noted by everybody in Bengal and outside.

### **All India Anganwadi Federation Formed**

The recent conference of Anganwadi under CITU in Udaypur on 5-6th January, 1991 is a significant step in the working women's movement. Com. BTR had inaugurated the 1st convention in Delhi in 1989 April. The extreme exploitation of rural and tribal women who are treated as 'social workers' and given an honorarium of Rs 250/- pm and Rs. 110/- only for worker and helper respectively shows the extent of their exploitation. Unfortunately the delegates came from 8 states only while 1st convention was attended by 14 states in Delhi. But the rally and inauguration was splendid with thousands of women from Rajasthan attending both the rally and inauguration. The federation is now formed with a constitution and an all India committee has been elected.

I would like to inform you about the formation of a joint Sangharsh Samathi of 4 different organisations in Anganwadi existing in In which chalked out programme of action besides our own independent programme.

The Anganwadi womens strength lies in the main in the Hindi speaking states and the response is great from here. In Rajasthan, we have our organisation in almost all districts. The report of the Anganwadi

organisation is circulated among the AICCWW.

### Working Women under Public Sector

A new chapter was opened in the working women's movement, by the 1st conference, at Bangalore on 28th December, 1990, under public sector. Women in mines, Coal, nurses, air hostesses and many other joined in the conference for the first time under the initiative of CITU. The speech made by Asha Mulgoakar, General Secretary of the Air Hostesses Association was significant in the sense the blatant, and unimaginable discrimination against them by Air India management was brought out in her speech sharply. They are campaigning under their union against the discrimination of the retiring age of 58 for both, men and women. The air hostesses had to retire at the age of 35 which has now been extended to 45, provided they undergo medical examinations which the male steward need not. These women are now preparing for dharna. They made petitions to the Speaker, collected signatures, met the MPs and members of the NCC etc.

Already functioning of the State Co-ordination committees has been discussed earlier. Many State Committees are not functioning due to many reasons. They have to come from districts spending money. I was told by many women that they are not given money to attend the all India committee or state committees. There is no good attendance in the AICCWW meetings. Many times, therefore meetings are held alongwith other all India programmes like AIDWA or council meeting. Women have other difficulties as well as women. If the State Committees function well, the AICCWW work also will improve. In the last meeting, we have taken up some programme, but no report have been received except a few. The members here should discuss their problems so that our trade union leaders will be aware about them and help them to bring them forward to leadership.

Comrades, the members of the AICCWW are changed often after the conferences take place and new members are elected. The present list is from the 2nd convention and contain many names which were earlier there. This changes in the midst and its non-communication to the centre creates problems. Therefore it is suggested, this convention should finalise the quota for each, state and the names with full addresses be given before they leave for their destination.

### But What About our own Class ?

In Bombay conference of CITU, while addressing Comrade B. T. Ranadive said "CITU called upon the unions to give up its neglect of working women and fight against the discriminatory practices and attacks. A co-ordination committee was elected to ensure that working women's interests are protected, State Committees and unions were also asked so that there is a constant watch on the practices and activities of the unions. But the progress was extremely

slow. Though some state committees like Tamilnadu did take significant steps in the direction, the major part of the CITU committees either ignored the problems or made some cosmetic changes in their practices. It was, therefore, decided to involve the entire conference of CITU in the discussion".....the report revealed the step-motherly treatment given by the trade union leadership to working women and their problems. It also showed how the attitude led to ineffective participation of women in the activities of the trade unions and their failure to occupy important positions in the unions..." Comrade B.T. Ranadive noted "Lastly, all should note that the problem of working women is a part of the struggle of the working class against the capitalist society and just a question which concern women alone... What is the basis of this incorrect attitude? It is nothing but underestimation of woman and her work..."

During the last 10-12 years, there are some changes no doubt about the attitudes of state committees of CITU towards this issue. But when middle class women employees are coming forward to form the wings of their unions and federations, when the women workers are launching struggles everywhere under CITU including women in the unorganised sector, when unemployment reached sky high and women became the first victims in mines, tobacco, coir, coal, etc. the central leadership has to remind repeatedly about this to the.

Comrades, from the major states like West Bengal and Kerala complaints about this continue to come.

If the working women is a part of the total working class movement, without which no struggles will be successful on an all India basis, we have to consider as to how far we have been able to achieve our objective. We must accept that we have not been able to do much to bring women workers and other sections in the CITU, under their wings or promoted them on the committees, who have launched struggles side by side with the total working class on the common demands. In the conferences attended by the CITU leadership, many women workers have approached us, particularly me, to inform and complain about this situation.

Despite the decision, the state wise co-ordination committees are not formed in the conferences. Serious attempts are not made to approach women workers by taking up their problems, to persuade them to stand and speak in the conferences and take them on the committees. Those states where the work of organising women workers began during the period 1980-82 onwards by holding conferences etc. now stands still. The working women's question, their problems, etc. is not placed on the agenda even in the meetings of State CITU except when conferences are held. After the conference of working women is over, there is no persistent efforts to take it ahead and to utilise the enthusiasm created among women.

There are good number of women workers and

very militant in mines in Orissa and beedi in M.P., and garment etc. in Maharashtra, women in small scale industries in Delhi and Rajasthan, but no proper attempts have been made to approach them by CITU or our women comrades. The Kerala State Committee very recently has made efforts to bring all the sections including the women in industries together, chalked out district wise programmes etc. The women in coir, cashew, plantation also attended. The co-ordination between middle class women employees like LIC, electricity, NGOs and others too was there, with the formation of co-ordination committees statewide. Perhaps, it was because of our influence and Left Front Government it was possible. It may not be possible in other states, and therefore, different methods have to be adopted.

### What are the Difficulties ?

The difficulties mentioned by the CITU and the co-ordination committees of ours is the question of cadres specially to work among the working women. The weaker states like M.P. Delhi etc. have expressed this difficulty many times. It may be true to certain extent. Despite the fact of the cadre question, we would like to know how far the CITU has taken up this issue seriously and years, why there is no formation of state committees in Andhra, or Rajasthan or Maharashtra or Delhi.

There was very good discussion on the question in Kanpur General Council in 1990 as to why the co-ordination committee of West Bengal does not function. The report from Kerala of the last convention of working women, a mention of which has been already been made, when narrated, comrades from West Bengal enquired how it can be possible to bring all section of women in the co-ordination committee. It was a genuine question. The other comrades also expressed that many comrades feel that co-ordination committee is a parallel organisation to AIDWA. Some others asked what is the necessity of separate wings when CITU takes up the problems of working women. In general West Bengal CITU seems to be not enthusiastic about the functioning of the committee. Considering a large section of working women under CITU, their participation and politicisation in almost all struggles, women in other states do inquire about West Bengal and its position. Secondly, should we say that there are no problems for working women at large now in West Bengal, so the necessity of women's wings is no more there ? Unequal remuneration still exists, creche provision is yet to be implemented, unequal treatment in mines, coal continues and are bound to be there since our country is under the capitalist feudal rule. The questions are solved in a better way because of the existence of Left Front Government. The better conditions of Anganwadi workers in West Bengal is one of the many examples of the gains and benefits because of the existence of the Left Front Government. We are sure, the comrades in CITU will discuss this question.

Since the formation of the AICCWW another

question is raised about the utility of the co-ordination committee when AIDWA is already working in every state, and why there should be another organisation of women ? These are genuine questions no doubt. The AIDWA is a mass organisation of women, working women including. The women's wings are formed to fight the specific problems of working women which are neglected by the trade unions under the present existing society. Both the AIDWA and women's wings or co-ordination committee should hold each other, the work is complementary to each other and will strengthen both. This confusion about the specific roles of co-ordination committee and AIDWA was there in the beginning. Now many state CITU committees are clear on this point. Very recently Tripura CITU State Committee held a Conference of working women. It will be proper to state what Com BTR has said in the co-ordination committee meeting at Chandigarh held on 30.11.87 on this question.

“Our progress is slow. Not that some people are trying to put it off. Even among our leaders, the old ideas still prevail. Few comrades attend meeting because, the thinking is not serious enough on this issue. Some work is going on in Kerala, position is improving. The situation in Bengal is not good, and there is need to move faster. Yes, the women in Anganwadi's are the lowest section of working women. They are rural women and they must be organised. **There is no need of conflict between AIDWA and co-ordination committee of working women, We organise working women as workers and they must be a part of trade union movement. AIDWA sees women as women, citizen and workers. It won't be correct to organise Harijan workers as Harijans, the same way women workers being organised only as women is not correct. If trade unions are lazy then sometimes AIDWA takes initiative. But Working women must be organised in their class organisation, which can take them forward, working women's fight is against capitalism and urgent and trade union leaders should take it up...**”

I am sure, this statement should remove all the misunderstanding or confusion if there is any with regard to the roles of co-ordination committees and AIDWA.

If the division of cadre is done, since many states face this problem and priorities are fixed, then perhaps we will be able to solve the question in a better way. In many states we have educated comrades, they would help by coming forward to work for co-ordination committees. Secondly, unless the main cadre is available from those sections of working women, the work is still difficult. The better work is done where women comrades have come up to organise their own women as in electricity in Tamilnadu or comrades from NGO. Then the outsider comrades can do the rest of work.

Thirdly it is our experience that women workers who are illiterate no doubt, but are class conscious, make good speeches, take leadership of

the struggles, are not developed by the CITU leadership. The leaders later on express surprise for their daring to speak in the open meetings, or when they defend their union and struggle with all their might forgetting all the house work or children. This quality of women workers, if developed, our movement will develop quickly. The illiteracy should not come in the way of developing our cadre.

### Women too Must Come Forward

Fourthly, women workers and working women also have the feudal tendencies as all are the product of the same society. They are shy to speak, feel inferior to male, many do not attend the meetings called by the unions, unions also fix the meetings according to their conveniences, not of women. If they are sent as delegates, to the meetings, make them to express on the demands etc they will prepare in the next meeting. Here, the question comes of sending women delegates. CITU has to give quota for women. In fact, women workers should give their names which does not generally happen. The attitude of male comrades should change in the house or in the union. It should be comradely and helpful to our female comrades so that they can share the responsibility of the work of the union.

### Promotion and Membership of the Trade Unions :

The Bombay conference, the CITU had tried to tackle the problem of promotion of women on the higher committees on the basis of the questionnaire issued. This time too CITU has issued the circular on how many committee members, delegates, office bearers etc. have been elected in the conferences, on the basis of which we can see how far we have progressed from the last conference.

In Bombay report, some statistics from Kerala and W. Bengal have been given and is found, where we had more women members in unions like cashew and others, only 1 or 2 members were on the committee. The picture was not much different in Bengal at that time. This time, as per the reports received more women members are taken in the council, on the working committee. Still office bearers will be very much less. The last conference of Bombay we have noted, out of 2446 delegates, there were 134 women, out of 376 council members, there were 20 women, and out of 107 working committee members women's strength was 5 and only 3 out of the 36 office bearers were women. This is the record of the last conference. The figures of the women on the committees elected in the conferences etc if arrive in time from the states, we will be able to see, exactly how far we have progressed.

### Union Membership

The CITU has prepared a chart of annual returns as on 31.12.90 separating figures of men and women membership.

Year	Total Membership	Women Membership
1987	16,79,684	2,06,482
1988	19,16,095	2,64,195
1989	21,07,357	2,39,704

As per the chart, membership of women is better in Karnataka (13909), in Kerala (136909), West Bengal (41566), Andhra Pradesh (9631), Tamilnadu (7272), Bihar (3684). All others are in low figures.

The figures given above shows that in 1988 we had 2,64,195 women membership while 1989 we have 2,39,704. This is the position in 1989 as per the returns. This comes to 10% as such of the number of membership under CITU. Here, our members of the Co-ordination committee must play their role in enrolment of women membership. There are thousands of women in Public Sector, construction, beedi and plantation. But the male leaders, in general enrol the membership. This work can be possibly done by women also on the committee.

### The Functioning of AICCCWW and State Co-ordination Committees

The Functioning of the AICCCWW during last 1—2 years is not as it should be. The work is increased, representations, the bringing out two journals, writing, issuing circulars etc continues somehow. The working women are coming forward, launching struggles under CITU or independently, these are to be attended to, conferences are being organised on their problems. Issues are many and letters for representation, on discrimination on various types, like transfers, molestation, unequal remuneration, hostels and so on continue to arrive. There is a large scope to extend the work if help from some comrades is available at the centre.

The V P Singh Government called for a seminar on "Women in Trade Unions" where we—CITU—was invited. The document presented by the Union Labour Minister contained many quotations from Bombay CITU conference document in support of government views. Letters from various countries for conferences were addressed to us. There is a demand from foreign countries for our journal. The role of AICCCWW is acknowledged by WFTU, TUI, WIDF and other socialist countries and also in our country.

### Problems of Working Women

There are a number of problems for working women and they are increasing daily. The strength of the working women is being reduced day by day. Very few women are now employed in jute, textile, tobacco, mines etc. The new technology introduced in these industries made women workers the first victims. Now there are very few women in textile mills except in Bombay and Ahmedabad. Data processing machines are now being introduced in the offices slowly and women typists, clerical staff etc are being made redundant. Women are being thrown out from organised sector to the unorganised. The

tables given at the end will show the exact positions of the employment of women. The second problem and that too very urgent is the provision of creche near their residences or near the workplaces. This provision under the Factory Act, Mines Act, etc is not implemented. The question of Equal Remuneration is still hanging at many places like Beedi, construction, agriculture and plantation etc despite the passing of the Act in 1976.

According to the document presented by the Union Labour Minister of the National Front Government in the conference on "Participation of Trade Unions in Promoting Collective Bargaining For Women" on 20.9.1990, the data given there too shows the worsening position of women in the organised industries. It said ".....the number of women job seekers in employment exchanges rose from 11.25 lakhs in 1975 to 35.63 lakhs in 1988 (actually the figure of job seekers is 56 lakhs). But the placement of women has shown a declining trend from 7.27 lakhs in 1975 to 4.67 lakhs in 1988. The document also says "90 per cent of the total female work force operated within the unorganised sector." Many data also have been given in the document about displacements of women workers on a large scale due to technological changes. The document mentioned about more women going for casual, part-time, contract and homebased work, while some percentage of women in the organised sector and under public sector has grown.

Many other issues concerning women are coming now to CITU. Legislations concerning women are not implemented in general. But the question of promotion linked with transfers creates difficulties for women since the question of education of children is involved. The policy guidelines by the Central Government on this issue has decided that "as far as possible, the transfer should be nearby, so that the family life should not be disturbed". Many times these guidelines are not implemented and transfers are taking place all of a sudden and to far off places.

The maternity leave is now granted for one child only at many places which is also against the Maternity Benefits Act. The leave of 45 days is now not sanctioned for miscarriages or abortion in many offices. There should be special arrangement for conveyance for women going to the offices and for returning. The women workers in factories, small scale industries, etc. are not getting minimum wages. Nor is there any legislation for agricultural women or women unorganised sector. The minimum wages must be given to these women under the present economic crisis and high inflation.

There are many more issues of the working women which needs immediate attention. A charter of demands is presented at the end of the report. The data available on the number of creches provided, position of maternity benefits under different legislations etc. are attached at the end of the report.

## The Voice of the Working Women & Kamkaji Mahila

The position of both is not very happy, financially and with regard to the sale. V.W.W. is printed about 1200 copies and Kamkaji Mahila also about the same. The response for V.W.W. sale is not so well. Because of increase in the printing and other costs, we had to increase the price to Rs. 2.00 of both. Where organised efforts have been made, the sale increases. The English bulletin has marginal sale only among the English speaking, while Kamkaji Mahila also will be for Hindi region. The quality, material, reports etc can be improved with our common efforts. Now a days, many reports do come, foreign material also is coming from abroad. We can issue the bulletins in much better conditions if help is given from comrades.

Comrades, before I conclude I would like to say a few words. The task of working women, their problems, and their promotion on the higher committees etc has been taken since 1979. The women workers are the part and parcel of the total working class movement. Unless they are drawn consciously into the working class movement, on each issue, the total movement remains weak. They are to be brought ultimately into the main struggle of the democratic movement to fight against the capitalist rule, so that they can be emancipated from the exploitation they are facing under the present rule.

The present political situation is very grave. Communal forces are challenging the secular and democratic forces. Working women too have to play their role under the guidance of their unions. The Gulf crisis, and the war has created a situation which is bound to affect us. We will be asked to tighten our belt, prices are bound to increase. Under such difficult situation, we have to work.

Under the present political situation which is fluctuating rapidly, working women are faced with many problems. They are victimised, unemployment is growing, legislation of equal remuneration and provision of creche, minimum wages for the women and men are not implemented. Women in organised sector are thrown into unorganised with no legislation of any kind to protect them. The schemes for employment generation of the past and present Government is not very helpful but on the contrary taking them back home. Self-employment instead of 'right to work' and employment is not promised to each person in the society. The questions about the position of women in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are raised. Whatever be the mistakes or deviations were committed by the socialist countries, we firmly believe in socialism under which women and the common people will be finally emancipated from the capitalist system. Under such conditions we have to work under CITU and in other federations or associations where women constitute a large number.

An important point to remember is women are

launching many struggles under their unions or federations. Their economic conditions are worsening due to economic crisis, inflation, and now due to war in 'gulf'. This is certainly going to affect them and they are bound to come forward to launch struggles on a large scale.

Com. B.T.R., the late President has given inspiration to all the women. expressing his thoughtful views on every occasion. The women's movement and working women are very much in debt, and the loss of Comrade B.T.R. is a heavy blow for all of us. We can only lessen his debt by doing the work which is unfinished by building strong working women's movement under CITU while strengthening the common movement of the total Working Class in the united movement.

### Charter of Demands

The first charter of demands was adopted in Madras convention in 1979. During this period of 10-12 years, some changes are necessary as per the need of our demands of working women. Therefore, some discussion among our AICCW members is necessary. I am placing the tentative demands for working women for discussion which should be adopted by our committee and then circulate it for our members.

1. Right to work and its inclusion in the Constitution of India as a fundamental right.

2. Ban retrenchment of working women in any form and maintain the strength of women working at the 1948 level in industries and establishments. Create more opportunities for women by opening service avenues, as a matter of policy in all the places. No retrenchment due to introduction of new technology in the industry.

3. Unemployment benefit to those who have been retrenched and those on the employment register.

4. Eight hours work a day for all working women including the women in the unorganised and agricultural sector throughout the year.

5. Equal wage and opportunity for working women in all spheres. There should not be discrimination in retiring age of men and women in public and private sector.

6. No discrimination in promotion, training treatment towards working women. No dismissal on the plea of marriage and having more than one children.

7. Maternity leave with full pay for four months in all industries and establishments, irrespective of any size, as per the choice of mothers, including women in the unorganised sector and agricultural sector.

8. Payment of all medical expenses for predelivery and post delivery period with minimum of Rs. 1000/-.

9. The leave for miscarriage and abortion assured with the money sanctioned.

10. Strict implementation of legislation concerning working women, and punishment of fine and prison sentence to the offenders.

11. Minimum wages in states prescribed by the Government be paid to all including women in Anganwadi, and in unorganised sector.

12. Strict implementation of provision of creche near the offices or establishment of working women in rural and urban areas. Working women be given time to feed their babies. The creches should be provided with nurses, ayas, toilets, clothes and proper maintenance.

13. Hostels for working women, and adequate quota of finance be allotted by the Central Government.

14. The employers should be prevented to employ women in the night shift in mills or in small engineering factories.

15. Women be provided with gloves covers for eyes etc. against any health hazards in the industries such as mines, beedi, coal, tobacco, fisheries, match, etc.

16. Ensure security from the sexual harassment by the officers at work places.

17. Training be given free of cost with stipend.

18. Provision for a minimum one member of working women in the industries where they constitute a large number on the worker committee on a compulsory basis.

19. The hours of work for nurses and the nurse-bed ratio should be as per the ILO standards.

20. The government committees be appointed for implementation of legislation concerning women where representative from trade unions be taken up, regular meetings of the committees be held.

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reality that in many industries there is hardly any worker who earns less than Rs. 1600/- which will mean that none of them will be entitled to the payment of full amount that should have accrued to them. It is against this context that the trade union movement have been demanding the abolition of such meaningless ceilings which act as instrument for depriving large number of workers of their due statutory bonus. This conference calls upon the working class to wage a ceaseless united battle so that the demand is achieved.

### On Reservation

This 7th conference of CITU held at Calcutta from 12th to 17th Feb. 1991 welcomes the decision of the N. F. Govt. to extend reservation to Other Backward Classes in Central Services as per the Mandal Commission recommendations. The Conference is deeply disturbed at the large scale violence that erupted in opposition to reservation resulting in massive destruction of public property along with the spate of self immolation by the youth of both sexes. A great emotional divide has been created in the country between the people of backward communities and others by the violent resistance triggered off by obscurantist and reactionary forces at a time when the unity and integrity of the nation has already suffered serious setback in the hands of communal and other divisive forces. This conference calls upon all sections of people and the working class to take a sober approach to the question of reservation for the OBCs.

The conference reiterates the CITU's stand on the question of reservation that social justice demands providing of special opportunities for education, economic and cultural growth for the backward castes. In a society dominated by upper castes in the rigid frame work of caste system prevailing for centuries, the sections of people have remained backward in all the above aspects. It is for the upliftment of these historically backward sections of society that provision was made in the Constitution for reservation for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes as also other socially and educationally backward classes. While reservation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, were granted at the all India level, reservation for other backward classes was granted only by several states, which did not cover recruitment to central services. The N. F. Govt. decision to introduce reservation to the extent of 27% of jobs for the other backward classes all over the country would overcome this lacuna. It was a measure which would go some way in giving some relief to backward classes. The CITU therefore, welcomed the decision with the stipulation that within the frame work of reservation for the castes who represent the other backward classes, economic criteria should also be introduced to ensure that the benefit may reach out to those members of the castes who really deserve it.

The Conference is, however, clearly of the view that reservation by itself is not capable of achieving

the end. Uplift of the backward classes is inseparably linked with radical land reform which can free the exploitation and oppression of landlords, money lenders and other rural vested interests. Nor can reservation alone solve the acute problem of unemployment even among the backward classes so long as the economic policies of the Govt. continue to cause drastic shrinkage of employment potential of the country arising out of the capitalist path of development. For effective uplift of the backward classes and solution of employment problem facing the backward classes and others, together with reservation, it is necessary to develop mighty struggle for radical agrarian reform and for change of the whole gamut of the economic policies pursued by successive bourgeois-landlord governments which cause shrinkage of employment opportunities.

This conference expresses deep sorrow for the young lives lost during the course of anti-reservation agitation through self immolation or otherwise. While the anxiety of the youth about their future employment is understandable there is no doubt that the issue of reservation for the OBCs was exploited by the divisive political forces like the BJP and its allies as well as the opportunist attitude of Congress(I) which is responsible for the tragic developments, although they had supported it outwardly. The Conference however notes that such development could be avoided had the N.F. Government proceeded to implement the recommendations after thorough discussion with all political parties.

This conference congratulates the working class of the country that it could preserve its class unity in the emotionally surcharged atmosphere.

This conference calls upon the unions and the working class in general to actively work for restoring unity among all sections of population on the basis of recognition of the need for effective measures for removing inequality historically imposed on vast sections of our population.

### On Industrial Relations Law

The Seventh Conference of the CITU held on 12-17 February 1991 at Calcutta denounces the Cong(I) backed Janata Dal(S) Government at the Centre for its refusal to continue the process initiated by the NF Govt. to amend the Industrial Disputes Act and Trade Unions Act. Although the Bipartite Committee made some unanimous recommendations like coverage of all workmen irrespective of the nature of their employment under the new industrial relations law, safeguarding against the impact of modernisation, etc., yet it recommended the constitution of an extraneous Industrial Relations Commission with wide powers to oversee the trade union functions from registration to recognition, collective bargaining rights and the right to strike, which went against the basic trade union rights of the workers.

This conference endorses the note of dissent submitted to the bipartite committee jointly by CITU, AITUC, TUCC and UTUC(LS), as reflective of the interests of the working class of the country.

These organisations have rejected the constitution of Industrial Relations Commission and the grievance procedure suggested under IRC. - Provision of 14 days strike notice and strike ballot with 2/3rd majority would render a legal strike impossible. The dissenting note rejected the concept of treating lock out and strike at par, while demanding full right to strike as part of collective bargaining, had suggested prohibition of lock-out as a right of the employer.

The conference regrets to note that on the major reactionary provisions like constitution of the Industrial Relations Commission, grievances machinery, management's claim to lock-out as a right and on basic rights of working class to strike etc., the INTUC had favoured the employers with the support of BMS and HMS.

On the question of recognition of trade unions and the constitution of a collective bargaining system, while overwhelming majority of the trade unions opined for secret ballot, the INTUC favoured the obnoxious check-off system for the same. The conference calls upon these organisations to reconsider their positions and join the mainstream of the TU movement, upholding the basic rights of the working class.

This conference demands of the Government of India to finalise the new Industrial Relations Law, on the basis of the consensus recommendations and in line with the recommendations contained in the note of dissent submitted by CITU, AITUC, TUCC and UTUC(LS).

### On Secret Ballot

The Seventh Conference of CITU held on 12-17 February, 1991 at Calcutta draws the attention of the Government of India to the fact that absence of the recognition of the right of the workers to elect their representatives of their own choice at the negotiating table continues to disturb industrial relations in the country.

The demand for recognition of the unions through secret ballot has been pending since independence. In course of time, it became the demand of the entire trade union movement, barring the INTUC.

In the seminar held on 8th and 9th January, 1990, on workers' participation in the management, in which representatives of all central trade unions including INTUC, employers' organisations, and of the Government, participated, recognition of workers' representatives by secret ballot was evolved as the consensus.

The Conference points out that if the NF Govern-

ment had continued, legislation for recognition by secret ballot would have been passed by now. The Conference notes with concern the ominous silence of the Chandrashekhar Government on this issue.

The Conference demands of the Government of India to carry out this tripartite commitment by immediately enacting a legislation for recognition of unions by secret ballot.

The Conference calls upon all unions irrespective of affiliations to come forward to initiate a joint movement to compel the Government of India to carry out this commitment.

### On New Technology

This 7th Conference of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions held at Calcutta from 12th to 17th February 1991 takes note of the unprecedented advancement of technology in the advanced capitalist countries which places at the disposal of mankind the potentiality of immense expansion of production of commodities for wider and fuller satisfaction of human wants, if properly used. Far from being opposed to technological advancement the working class rejoices at the prospect of satisfaction of the needs of entire humanity offered by it. But in the capitalist world today the fruits of technological advance is cornered by multinationals and monopolies, by a small affluent section of society while the working class stand to lose their job, since advanced technology enables machines to take over huge volumes of skilled and unskilled job. This means huge profit for employers and more widespread unemployment and more acute poverty for the working class and common man. The working class does not fight against adoption of new technology, it only fight against such use of it that enables the grabbing of the benefit of scientific and technological revolution by a handful at the expense of the millions of common people, it fights for dissemination of the benefit to all, for the benefit of national economy.

This conference notes with concern that the technology policy which is being pursued by the successive governments at the centre provides for a drive for indiscriminate adoption of modern technology, labour saving processes and devices, regardless of huge surplus labour and an army of unemployed growing at an alarming rate in the country. Reckless drive for advanced technology is bound to be detrimental to India's labour surplus national economy by contributing to further aggravation of unemployment problem. The conference is of confirmed view that new technology should be introduced only in appropriate cases and with adequate measures to ensure maintenance of employment through expansion of production, reduction of working hours and others means.

This conference notes with serious concern that the weakness of the industrial policy of the successive govts at the centre is fully exploited by the IMF

and World Bank, by US imperialism and the multinationals to further their own interest to the detriment of India's national economy and its self reliance. The multinationals which constitute the source from which modern technology is secured in India charge exorbitant price for the supply of technology, almost always supply lower grade technology which become outmoded in their country instead of transferring the best they possess and use in their country, most often they refuse to part with the entire know-how so as to keep us perpetually dependent on them, in running the technology secured from them, or for the same purpose force us to acquire spare components from them, thus laying technology trap for holding developing economies like ours in their grip. Moreover, they supply equipments which are not suitable in Indian conditions and even dump such technology as is not required by us.

The conference further notes with concern that our technology policy is predominantly import oriented, leading to neglect of any serious effort for development of indigenous technology in which our scientists and technologists have amply proved their talent. The imperialist countries and multinationals are grabbing our talents and weakening our intellectual base for technological self reliance.

This conference also notes that the employers while introducing new technology resulting in displacement of workers associated with the old processes, do not care for their proper training for enabling them to be actually absorbed in the new process. In consequence the workers so displaced face economic and often emotional crisis.

The conference demands :

—reversal of present technology policy pursued by the govt. of India.

—A new technology policy, suited to the needs and interests of the national economy, working class and of the people, coupled with a plan for expansion of capacity and production, and reduction of working hours, is evolved in consultation with the trade unions.

—The conference demands that workers' consent, shall be a must, whenever introduction of new technology is contemplated and effective training for proper absorption of displaced workers, if any, must be ensured.

—The conference demands of the Government of India that substantial financial allocation, and special efforts be made for development of indigenous technology to ensure economic self reliance, and effective resistance to pressure blackmail, and conditionalities of the multinational companies.

The conference while calling upon the workers to unitedly resist the adverse consequences of government of India's present policy on their jobs and working conditions and also take initiative to build up an extensive movement of workers and other sections of toilers for an alternative and correct policy of application of technology in our country.

## Demonstration before USIS, Calcutta

CITU Calcutta District Committee had organised a massive protest sit-in demonstration in front of USIS (New building) against barbarous attack of U.S. imperialism at Middle East on 25.2.91. The workers had participated in large numbers with great enthusiasm, as the scheduled sit-in demonstration was scheduled at 11 am to 7 pm on the day, the workers' organised rally from all sides poured in and the place was completely filled-up much before the time and the place soon became jam-packed.

Com. Luxmi Sen, Working Committee member, CITU All India committee inaugurated the proceedings of the day and Com. Raghunath Kusari, General Secretary, Calcutta District proposed a resolution condemning the barbarous attack let loose by U.S. imperialism on Iraq, it was seconded by veteran T.U. leader Com. Haridas Malakar and other T.U. leaders viz. Com. Bijoy Bhattacharjee, Ashim Banerjee, Gargi Mukherjee, Rampunit Thakur, Vijay Tewari, Khokon Majumdar, Niranjana Chatterjee also spoke on this occasion. Revolutionary songs and recitations highlighted the day's proceedings.

Com. Chittabrata Majumdar, Secretary CITU State Committee urged the workers to take pledge to fight against U.S. imperialism. Later in the day and till 5 pm big protest rallies continued to join the demonstrations.

The rally was presided by Com. Rajdeo Goala, President, Calcutta District Committee of CITU. He thanked the workers for participation and concluded the day's proceedings after adopting the resolution unanimously.

### Massive Peace Rally

The West Bengal Left Front organised a massive rally for peace at Calcutta on March 13. Several lakhs of workers, peasants, students, youth women and common people joined the rally from various parts of the State. Innumerable processions converged at the Brigade Parade Ground, where the rally was addressed by Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of W. Bengal and other left front and CITU leaders. The rally denounced the US imperialists for their barbarous war against Iraq. It condemned the Chandrasekhar Government for its flouting the non-aligned foreign policy by allowing refuelling of US war planes and called upon the workers to wage continuous struggle for peace against the war mongering US imperialists.

### General Council List CORRIGENDUM

In the list of General Council members published in the Seventh Conference Special March, 1991 issue of the Working Class the name of K. Shankar of Karnataka has been printed twice in the 4th and 5th numbers by mistake. In the 5th number it should be V. Sukumar. The mistake is regretted—Ed.

## Anganwadi Workers Hold Rally: Delegation Meets Prime Minister

A delegation of the Akhil Bhartiya Samyukt Sangharsh Samity of Anganwadi Workers consisting of Vimal Ranadive (All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers), K.L. Mahindra (Akhil Bharatiya Anganwadi Workers Federation), B.K. Prasad (Akhil Bharatiya Anganwadi Kamgar Union), M.A. Patil (Akhil Bharatiya Anganwadi Karmachari Mahasangh) and B.N. Rajhans (HMS Anganwadi Union) met the Prime Minister on March 5, and submitted a memorandum of 6 point demands to him on behalf of about six lakh Anganwadi workers in the country.

The memorandum pointed to the deplorable conditions of the full time Anganwadi workers and helpers who are paid paltry wages of Rs. 325/- and Rs. 110/- respectively. They are treated as "Social workers" and not recognised as regular government employees. No labour laws or social security measures are applicable to them. There is no promotional avenue. They are subjected to victimisation, retrenchment and sexual harassment.

The memorandum of demands included among other points recognition and emoluments of Anganwadi workers and helpers as government employees and pending this, fixation of their minimum wages.

The Prime Minister assured that the Govt. will finalise a scheme within a month to reorganise and regularise the services of the Anganwadi workers after discussing with the trade unions and the Parliamentary Consultative Committee. He further said that the scheme will be included in the next budget to be placed in June, 1991.

In the course of discussion however, the Prime Minister held out a threat of retrenchment on the plea of keeping "competent" workers only. The delegation leaders warned the Prime Minister that no retrenchment of employees will be tolerated by the unions. The delegation further pressed for keeping in view the question of seniority also while formalising the scheme.

The Sangharsh Samity later reviewed the discussion held with the Prime Minister and decided to carry forward united actions to popularise and press for the demands. Direct agitational programmes will be launched if the Prime Minister fails to formulate the scheme and if retrenchment takes place. The Sangharsh Samity decided to meet by the first week of May to decide the form of movement.

Earlier, a massive joint rally of several thousands of Anganwadi Workers coming from different states was held at Boat Club on 4th March. The rally was addressed by several MPs of different parties and several Central Trade Union leaders. Among those who addressed the rally were Maheshwari MP CPI(M); Indrajit Gupta MP CPI; Vimal Ranadive, Ahiliya Rangnekar and P K Ganguly (CITU); K L Mahendra (AITUC); Kamala Sinha (HMS), etc. A

delegation met the Labour Minister also on the day. Apart from the above, a petition was also submitted to the Speaker of Lok Sabha on March 5 by Malini Bhattacharya, MP, CPI(M) and signed by Nilima Moitra, General Secretary of the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers.

## Unity Week Observed

In pursuance of the decision of the Seventh Conference of the CITU, several State Committees observed Unity Week from March 15 to 21, 1991. The conference discussed the serious economic situation developing in the country, which would have long drawn consequences on the working and living conditions of the people, the communal situation in the country and also discussed about the future of democracy and non-aligned foreign policy of the country in the light of the growing trend of authoritarianism and capitulation before the US imperialism by the three month old Congress(I) supported puppet Government of Chandrasekhar, and adopted a resolution with 16 point demands calling upon the unions to observe a week from March 15 to 21 appealing to all sections of the working class and the trade unions and federations to come together and wage a countrywide united movement to meet the challenges.

The Punjab State Committee organised a rally of about ten thousand workers at Central Bus Stop, Chandigarh on March 21. The rally was addressed by M K Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU, Mangat Ram Pasla, Balwant Singh and Chandrasekhar, the State President and General Secretary and others. The speakers explained the situation in the country, condemned the activities of the Khalistanis and called upon the workers to unitedly face the situation. After the meeting, a massive procession was taken out, which marched through the main streets of the city and culminated before the office of the Labour Commissioner.

A lunch hour meeting at Bokaro Steel Plant was also addressed by M K Pandhe, Ghosal and others on 19th March.

Another massive rally of about ten thousands at Sriganganagar, Rajasthan was addressed by P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU, Ravindra Shukla, General Secretary, Rajasthan State CITU and others on March 21. The procession started from the Central Bus Stand and culminated in a public meeting in front of the Collectorate. Overwhelming majority of the workers were from the unorganised sectors like brick-kiln, FCI contract workers, etc. The speakers explained the deteriorating economic and communal situation and the lot of the unorganised workers and called upon the workers to reject the reactionary parties like the Congress(I), Janata Dal(S) and the communal BJP and vote for the Left-NF candidates.

Street side meetings were also held at Jaipur on March 20 of unorganised workers, mostly of vegetable and fruit sellers and of road transport workers,

(Cont'd on page 28)

# The Gulf War and Its Aftermath

P.K. Ganguly

America's much desired Gulf War started and ended. Kuwait has been "liberated" and Iraq has been devastated. With the high tech war the U.S. imperialists have restored "peace" in a blitzkrieg manner by savagely destroying Iraq and establishing its long desired hegemony over the Gulf oil region to fulfil its dream for world domination.

For long years the USA was waiting at the bush like a tiger to jump over its prey. But the Soviet power was acting as a deterrent so long. The deterrent was removed with the collapse of the Soviet power under Gorbachev's "new thinking". The new theory of modification of contradictions and renunciation of class values helped America to become the monarch of all that it surveys. It only waited for the opportunity; and the one political mistake by Iraq—the annexation of Kuwait—provided this much desired opportunity. Being the only super power in the world, it went through the United Nations like knife through butter. The U. N. became U.S., and the passing of the Resolution No 678 in the Security Council was a mere formality. The world organisation which was established in 1945 to contain war, sanctioned the USA to unleash a most devastating technological war against a small third world country with savage vengeance. The Soviet Union with its veto power blunted by the "human values" turned its back against the small but anti-imperialist third world country and sailed in the same boat with its new friend America to vote for the resolution to materialise the imperialist definition of peace and democracy.

China which also had veto power, preferred to sit at the fences with its own argument, and instead of utilising its veto power, abstained from voting. It was only Cuba which remained steadfast with its staunch anti-imperialist outlook, voted against the resolution and repeatedly reminded the world about the American invasion of Grenada and Panama and the number of U.N. resolutions on Palestine, which remained unimplemented.

The Gulf war has amply demonstrated that imperialism does not change its war mongering character. It has also shown what revisionism can lead to. It has reiterated the truth that so long imperialism remains the danger of war remains. The struggle for peace has to be carried forward as a part of struggle against imperialism and to root out imperialism for world peace.

The victory of America has ensured its hegemony over the Gulf oil region. The region has got over 65 per cent of oil reserves in the world. Since the world, and particularly the third world including India has to depend on the oil supply overwhelmingly from the Gulf, the U.S. imperialists have now ensured its command over the world economy. Bush

had already declared that the Gulf war would be America's last war. No further war would be necessary for the imperialists. Hence a new world order and absolute peace. And to ensure absolute peace, America will permanently maintain its forces at Saudi Arabia. The cease fire terms will have to be as per its dictates. It will strengthen the position of Israel. The entire third world countries and the Arab countries will have to remain subservient to U.S. dictated peace. The neo-colonial exploitation will reach its peak. The U. S. economy which was nearing its doldrums, will thus be rejuvenated. America will become the El Dorado at the cost of the third world countries.

The USA therefore badly required this war to revamp its economy. It fought the war at a minimum cost. While the major share of the expenses will have to be reimbursed by its allies in Europe and the Arab countries, the lion's share of the profits accrued through the reconstruction of Kuwait is being already siphoned by the U. S. multinationals. Moreover, the arms race having got a boost from the war, America's hi-tech military-industrial complex will be at boom again. Contradictions will certainly develop with its imperialist allies. But for the time being the USA is right on the saddle.

The war has sharpened USA's contradiction with the third world countries. The anti-American sentiment which was reflected before and during the war not only in the Arab countries, but in the entire third world countries, has turned into a hatred against the imperialists. It is bound to get further sharpened with the neo-colonial exploitation. Its contradictions with the working class and the common people throughout the world, in the advanced capitalist countries including in USA is bound to get sharpened. Its contradictions with the Palestinians will reach new heights. To remove the thorn of PLO, Bush has floated a diabolical peace formula for the region. Thus Bush administration is still refusing to recognise the PLO and desperately trying to divide it and pick up pliant leadership within PLO. Repression on them has already been mounted. But it is unable to break through the fighting Palestinians, rich with their experience of anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist struggle and determined for a homeland.

The role of the Cong(I) backed Chandrasekhar Government before and during the war deserves to be severely condemned and denounced. It has shamelessly forsaken the established non-aligned foreign policy of the country at the altar of the U.S. imperialists. Even before the war, Chandrasekhar, the Prime Minister refused to recognise the Palestinian question and withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories to be linked with Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Shamelessly playing into the hands

(Cont'd on page 28)

## Motion Of Thanks On President's Address

E. Balanandan

*(We are publishing hereunder an abridged speech made by Com. E. Balanandan, M. P. CPI (M), President of CITU, in Rajya Sabha on March 5, '91 —Ed.)*

Mr Vice-Chairman, Sir the policy of the Govt. has been read out by the President. Many things have been said in it. There is a big advice for us: "The basic principles of democracy, secularism, and socialism, the very pillars of our nationhood, should be protected". A government came into existence at a time when this country's secular fabric had been threatened seriously and that occasion had been utilised by the minority section who broke away from the Janata Dal to conspire with the Congress (I) Party to see that the V. P. Singh Government was ousted. For what sin? The sin of upholding secularism. The BJP wanted immediately and physically to demolish the mosque and wanted to erect a temple there. That means India's secularism they wanted to give up and they threatened and that occasion had been utilised by Mr. Chandra Shekhar and others in connivance with Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's party, the Congress (I) party. That way this government came into being. Treachery and deceit were practised and a minority government under Mr. Chandra Shekhar came into being and they are telling us now to protect democracy, secularism and socialism. How do they protect it now? Mr. Chandra Shekhar, our Prime Minister, is a friend of many people, and I do not want to name many of them but only one Swami, Mr. Chandraswami. He has a great disciple, Mr. Adnan Khashoggi a Saudi Arabian citizen. The Prime Minister also went for a dinner with him, Mr Adnan Khashoggi had come here and he had discussion with the Prime Minister and other important personalities of the country. On what? He was offering to get Government of India out of the financial morass it was facing because of the Gulf war. You agreed to a condition by which they want that you should go with the American ideas and ideologies and demand that you should support the Gulf war. Though we are standing for high morals and high values, these kinds of people who are known to the world as spies, agents and arms dealers, etc., are the friends of our Prime Minister, to our bad luck. And they are now telling us that we have to follow high morals, democracy, secularism, etc. Is it being followed by them? The Prime Minister, Mr Chandra Shekhar, was elected from a constituency with a platform against the Congress (I) He forgot it after entering the House as a Member of Parliament and he instantly found an alibi for joining with the Congress, for receiving the support of the Congress and becoming the Prime Minister of India. What values does he uphold? Is it the democratic principles that he upholds? This is a situation created by Mr. Chandra Shekhar. Democracy he did not care for.

Values of normal decency he did not care for nor did he care for secularism which is the real foundation of India's Constitution, India's unity and integrity. Therefore, the claim which the President is making on behalf of the government has simply no substance. Truth has not been presented by the President.

Then, coming to the question of Gulf War. This country has been ruled by many Prime Ministers. All along after independence we were pursuing a foreign policy of non-alignment. Even though we are not strong in armaments, we are a country with the mighty strength of its people. We are trying to mobilise world opinion in favour of non-alignment as a correct policy for development of democracy in the world over. In the present situation what did Mr. Chandra Shekhar do? He found an alibi and he allowed the American war planes to refuel in India. The whole country, all the political parties, said "No, this should not be done" Yet, what was the attitude of the Govt? Mr Chandra Shekhar said in this House, "I take the responsibility for doing it". A wonderful statement he made. And how the Prime Minister stopped the refuelling is another question which should be discussed in the House. Mr Chandra Shekhar contacted the United States and the announcement came from Washington that they were stopping the refuelling of American war planes in India. Now these things are not decided here; these things are now decided in Washington. That is the plight into which this country has been drawn by the new set up, by the new government of Mr. Chandra Shekhar.

They are talking of democracy. In the address of the President it is said there is a serious situation in Tamilnadu. The Assam Govt was dismissed on the plea that the AGP Government had some connections with ULFA. A similar allegation they made to dismiss the Tamilnadu Govt. They said the Tamilnadu Govt was having connections with the LTTE and therefore the centre wanted to protect the law and order situation there. How the Centre is trying to protect law and order can be seen in Punjab and Kashmir. Whether the Central rule can restore law and order in the country, we have seen it for several years. If at all the government felt that the Govts of Tamilnadu and Assam were not taking effective steps against this kind of elements, what was the duty of the govt? The Govt of India should have given proper central police assistance to the Tamilnadu Govt as well as Assam Govt to tackle the problem. With an elected government there, with the people's support and the support from the Centre, it would have been able to do better than any body else. Then, why was it done. It was done to suit the politics of the Congress (I) party in the country. We have a federal system of government.

The state governments are elected by the people just like the Central government. When the state government is having a majority, how can the centre come and say, "you go out"? The people's will is being throttled like this. The law and order situation in Tamilnadu was better than any other state in the country. Take for example Andhra Pradesh. Six or seven districts there are more or less under the *de facto* rule of the Naxalites. What is the position in Tripura? In Tripura I submit there is the govt of Congress (I) party, but they are behaving just like goondas. With your permission I would like to quote here what our Finance Minister said once. Our Finance Minister went there once in a different capacity and this is what he said; "There is no legal government which is in existence". But they are continuing today. My point is that, if the Centre is concerned about the law and order situation, the first priority should be in Andhra Pradesh or Tripura. Why did they go to Tamilnadu? There is another question. Ms. Jayalalita is powerful now. She has the support of 11 Parliament Members. If these people decide not to support, this government will go. Therefore, she told this Government, "If my support is demanded, you should see that the DMK government of Shri Karunanidhi is dismissed." On the demand of Ms Jayalalita this has been done.

Shri Rajiv Gandhi also had his own game. He thought there can be a deal with Jayalalitha for parliamentary seats for himself and Assembly seats for her. This way some deal was struck.

Mr. Barnala, Governor of Tamilnadu at that time, did not send any report. Normally, the practice was that the dismissal of any Govt was done on the report of the Governor concerned, saying that the situation is bad, etc. Mr. Barnala found that in Tamilnadu there was no such serious law and order position. For dismissing the Tamilnadu Govt how did the President satisfy himself? Mr Barnala who did not send a report has been penalised. He was transferred to some other place. But he said: I am not a clerk of yours, I do not want to continue. And he resigned. Another Governor, Governor in Bihar, said in a public statement that the Govt of India wanted that Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav should not be allowed to seek a vote of confidence in the House and as such the Assembly should not be summoned. What is strange is that when the Chief Minister wanted to call the Assembly why should the Governor intervene in the affair of the Chief Minister, which is his own prerogative? For that what happened? He has been dismissed. Is it democracy? Is it for protecting the democratic framework of the country? Is it protecting the federal structure of the country? The country is a little bigger than the Congress (I) party and the country is a little bigger than Shri Chandra Shekhar's political party. The constitution cannot be tampered with like this. Therefore, these people are not protecting democracy and our federal structure.

Coming to the question of our economic situation, I would like to say one thing. Mr Yashwant

Sinha said that our finances are bad. I agree with him fully. What is the remedy that he is thinking of? As soon as he came to power, he imposed a lot of burden on the people. Already the people were suffering. Now, the latest position is that there is 12.2 per cent rise in prices, and that is the contribution of Mr Sinha. But what is the remedy that he has suggested? He has already taken a loan of 1.8 billion dollars from the World Bank and there are certain conditionalities attached to that. Now he is trying to get another instalment from them. With your permission, Sir, I would like to quote here something from the "Business Standard" of the 24th February, 1991 wherein the conditionalities have been mentioned.

"They are: Deregulation of industry, more encouragement of foreign investment, liberalisation of foreign trade, major reforms in public sector enterprises including privatisation, major reforms in the financial sector, particularly relating to the bank's lending rates to be determined by market forces, reforming financial institutions such as the IFCI, IDBI and the ICICI".

Along with these, sir, there is another conditionality which has been proposed and it is that all the subsidies should be reduced. There is yet another one and that is that there should be no wage rise without rise in productivity and there should be freezing of wages and possible retrenchment. They have also proposed that the total deficit of the country should be reduced from 8.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent. Now, before us there is a document which has been placed on the Table yesterday by the Hon'ble Minister in which these conditionalities, from A to Z, have been agreed to. The Finance Minister is placing the Vote-on-Account and the budget on the Table for the Indian Government. But the total policy of the Government is decided in Washington! So, what is it that is being sold now? The whole economic freedom of the country is being sold. That is one thing. There is another thing also. You know that the third world countries today are spending nearly 1,445 billion dollars per annum for servicing their IMF loans. Therefore many of the third-world countries are now in a debt trap and it is this way that Mr Sinha is going to put India in a debt trap. What is the panacea that is being suggested? It is suggested that the public sector will become effective if privatization comes in. What is the total worth of the private sector in the country now? If you take the question of employment, the organised private sector in India does not have much employment potential and the employment potential in the private sector in the country is coming down. The capital invested, the working capital invested, in the private sector is from the money from the financial institutions owned by the Govt of India which are in the public sector. So, the private sector today is being run with public money.

He did not say anything about the liberalisation policy by which everything is allowed to be imported in the country. Things which we produce and in which we are surplus in many sectors are allowed to

be imported under OGL. That means the total liability, external liability, increases by this policy of liberalisation. If this kind of economic policy under the guidance of IMF is going to be followed, India's economic freedom will go phut and our country will be in a regular, permanent debt trap.

What is the present position about the communal situation? Mr. Chandra Shekhar was discussing with everybody. But what is the result? The result is the same as it was before. Now, it is stated that the BJP is taking a stand that India should be a Hindu Rashtra. They are also telling us that they are opposed to secularism which is enshrined in the Constitution. They want to give some other interpretation. April 4 or some other day a big demonstration is going to come. Their demand is to demolish the mosque from there. The BJP had taken a stand and withdrew its support to the previous Govt. Therefore, Sir, he had and he has a soft corner for them. In totality, today the situation is further worsening.

Finally, Sir, before I conclude, I must say two or three things more. In the President's Address, there was a reference to workers. I am glad that the President has said that the workers are the people who are producing everything and keeping the country's pace of progress. But what this Govt is doing? During Mr. V P Singh's Govt, they had taken certain steps for the workers. The workers were told that they were going to be given participation in the management. They were also told that they were going to get a new law of industrial relations. And they were also told that the right to work was going to be made a Fundamental Right. And, Sir, one important step taken by Mr. V P Singh's Govt. was that victimisation against Railway workers was squashed. What did the new Govt. do? The decision of the previous Govt. is not implemented with regard to the Railway workers. And all other decisions taken by the previous Government have been put in cold storage. What is the position of the working class today in the country? 2,41,000 factories are sick. Many of them are closed and a majority of them are going to be closed. Major industries like textiles are in crisis. Jute is in absolute crisis. What is the result? Several millions of workers are finding it difficult to live. No word is said about it. What about the agricultural workers? Sir, you know the previous Govt. assured us that a Central law for the agricultural workers is going to be brought. Is there any talk about it? No, that is forgotten. Govt then took steps to bring in land reforms in the 9th Schedule. Is there any talk about land reforms? No, there is no talk about it. This Govt came to power as I told you by treachery and deceit, and is continuing a policy against our national interest, against democracy, against our own federal structure. Communalism is going on unabated. The situation in Punjab and Kashmir is also going out of hand. Today our Prime Minister is answering in this House that everything is fine. What are the statements being made by Mr. Mann? He is behaving just like a parallel Govt. He was offering that he will send one lakh of people in Gulf to join American army. Now

today he is saying "I am going to send so many thousands of people to Kuwait for the re-construction work", as if he is an independent Govt himself. But no reaction is coming from the Central Govt. This is giving encouragement to the militants there. Therefore, the country's unity, integrity, etc. is in danger. The country's freedom and the country's policy of non-alignment are being done away with by Mr. Chandra Shekhar Govt. Therefore, I want this Govt. to go as quickly as possible. That will be the salvation for the country.

(From page 24)

which was addressed among others by P K Ganguly and Waqar Hussain. Large number of women participated in the Punjab and Rajasthan rallies.

Jibon Roy, Secretary, CITU addressed meetings and conventions at Jhansi, Bhopal, Indore, Kota and Delhi during the week. The Kota convention was attended by about 500 workers and the Indore and Delhi meetings by about 300 workers.

S. Debroye and Tapan Sen, Working Committee members also addressed meetings at Bhatinda organised by the Lal Jhanda Union and the BHEL workers at Haridwar respectively.

(From page 25)

of the U.S. imperialists, the government went ahead with permitting refuelling of U. S. war planes ignoring the nationwide protests. The Prime Minister then told a lie that the refuelling had been stopped. It was USA itself that stopped the refuelling to save the government from further embarrassment with the ulterior motive to keep India under its bonds. The opportunism of Mr. Gandhi at the same was to be seen.

It is to be noted that the Chandrasekhar government has been functioning as a puppet under the Congress(I), following its dictated policies. It has to be recalled that when the Rajiv Govt. came in power in 1985, and formulated its new economic policies, the CITU and all progressive forces warned against its subservience to the U.S. imperialists and the international financial institutions commanded by it, which would endanger the country's non-aligned foreign policy also. The warning has come true. India, which is a founder member of the non-aligned movement and is committed to anti-imperialism, now behaves as a lackey of the U.S. imperialists under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi and Chandrasekhar. Internal reactionary forces, and the communal pro-U.S. forces like the BJP are already clamouring for a tilt towards USA on the plea of the fruitlessness of bargain from the Soviet Union, with the danger to its sovereignty lurking behind. The situation has brought India at cross roads. The responsibility lies with the trade unions to mobilise the entire working class under the vortex of anti-imperialist struggle and put pressure on the government to remain firm with the non-aligned foreign policy. The puppet Chandrasekhar and the puppeteer Rajiv have belied the confidence of the people. They must be removed from the scene to save the country from getting trapped by the U. S. lobby and meet disaster. It is only the Left National Front combine that can steer the country from the morass. The forthcoming elections must turn the table.

# On The Merger Talk Between AITUC and HMS

*The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement on the reported merger of AITUC and HMS :*

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions takes note of the reported discussion between the AITUC and HMS for merger of the two national centres and formation of negotiating teams by both the organisations. It is the considered view of the CITU that any merger between two central trade union-organisations should further strengthen and widen the united actions of the trade unions and the working class. And in this respect we consider it extremely important to initiate a national dialogue for evolving common programme of action on the burning issues facing the working class and the country.

Our country is passing through serious political instability. Communal and divisive forces have endangered national unity and integrity. With the conditionalities imposed by the IMF, the working class is facing more closures; wages of the workers are to be frozen; wages are not to be increased without linking with productivity. Government of India's refusal to provide for increased D.A to the central government employees is a pointer to the coming ferocious attack on the living condition of the workers and their T. U. and democratic rights. The CITU considers that the urgent need of the hour is to forge all in Trade Union united movement to repel these attacks, defend the interests of the working class and defend National Unity.

However, as the press reports indicate the AITUC and HMS merger talks became necessary due to the failure of the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions. The CITU wants to state emphatically that the NCC has played a significant role in launching countrywide united movement on several common issues. While there is urgent need for making NCC more broadbased and increase the involvement of the Industrywise federations in NCC activities, it would be totally wrong to talk about failure of the NCC.

The press reports further allege that the merger of the two central T.U organisations was necessary due to failure of the idea of the Confederation of all the Indian T. U. organisations. The proposal of the CITU for a Confederation is still under consideration and no concrete shape has so far taken in this regard. The proposal, if accepted, will enable a constant exchange of opinions and views among different T.U. organisations with a view to evolve a common understanding on the major problems facing the working class and the country.

The CITU hopes the central T. U. organisations and Industrywise Federations would give serious consideration to the CITU proposal and take steps in that direction which will be a milestone in the history of the united movement of the working class. In view of this it would be wrong to counterpose the merger proposal of AITUC and HMS with the

Confederation of the Indian Trade Unions.

The CITU will continue its efforts to strengthen the fraternal relations with AITUC and HMS alongwith other Central Trade Unions and Industrywise Federations so that united movement of the working class is further developed and common understanding is fostered to protect the vital interests of the working class.

## CITU Denounces Killing of Workers By Khalistanis

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions unequivocally condemns the dastardly killing of 30 workers of Swaraj Mazda Foundry at Ropar district of Punjab by the Khalistani secessionists on March 22, when they were returning home from work by bus. The cowardly killing shows that the Khalistanis have made the different sections of the democratic movement like the workers, peasants, students, political leaders etc who are fighting for the unity and integrity of the country, as the targets of their attack.

The brutal and planned killing of the workers has exposed the false claim of the caretaker Prime Minister Chandra Sekhar that the situation in Punjab has improved. The series of mass killings that have taken place during the past few days including the attempt on the life of the Governor have on the contrary confirmed that the situation in Punjab has gone worse during the period. This is the result of the policy of appeasement and surrendering by the Chandrasekhar Government before the extremists. It is reprehensible that the Prime Minister has not condemned the dastardly killing.

The CITU expresses its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of the families of workers killed in this dastardly crime. The CITU calls upon all State Committees and unions to raise their voice of protest and appeals to all other trade unions in Punjab to unitedly resist the attacks launched by the extremists.

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## **Massive AIREC Demonstration at Boat Club**

Once again the Boat Club maidan was reverberating with angry slogans in thousand voices demanding immediate implementation of the order which was passed, with full approval of the Cabinet, by George Fernandes, the Railway Minister of the NF Govt for reinstatement of the several hundred railway workers victimised during the past decade of Cong(1) rule for participation in legitimate trade union agitation and day to day trade union activity. It was a huge demonstration staged by the All India Railway Employees Confederation at the Boat Club on 13th March, in which over five thousand railway workers from all over India participated. Besides the demand for immediate reinstatement of their victimised comrades the demonstrators also pressed the demand for restoration of the channel of communication with the Rly administration, which was granted to by the Govt. of the Janata party but was subsequently withdrawn by Smt Indira Gandhi's Govt. when it staged a come back in 1980.

It is by now well known that though belatedly, George Fernandes issued a clear order for reinstatement of the Railway workers who had been removed/dismissed from service under rule 14 (ii) of Railway Servants Discipline and Appeal Rules (based on Art. 311(2) (3) of the Constitution). without enquiry, in connection with various trade union agitations and day today trade union activity since 1980. It is also known from press reports how the nefarious railway bureaucrats managed to stall the implementation of the Minister's order during the last days of the NF Govt. When the NF Govt. was replaced by the Govt. of Janata Dal (S), a delegation of the AIREC met the Rly Minister Shri Janeshwar Mishra who gave only some vague assurance regarding the cases of victimisation. As there was no progress in the matter during the 3 months that followed, the AIREC went ahead with their programme of Boat Club demonstration on 13th March, 1991.

The workers coming from all the different zones assembled at the New Delhi Station premises from where they marched to Boat Club in a huge procession. The demonstration continued for several hours. A delegation consisting of C M Singh, President, N S Bhangoo, Secretary General, C L Upadhyay and M L Banerjee both Dy Secretary General, of AIREC and S K Dhar, Secretary General, AILRSA and Working Committee member of AIREC submitted a memorandum to the President of India through his secretary.

The demonstrators were addressed by a number of MPs namely Samar Mukherjee, Basudev Acharya, Dipen Ghosh, Sunil Basuroy, Ashish Sen, A K Roy and Subhasni Ali, and trade union leaders such as

M K Pandhe, General Secretary CITU, K L Mahendaa, Secretary of AITUC and Kanai Banerjee, Secretary, CITU. All the speakers expressed their sympathy for the cause of the railwaymen and pledged support in their legitimate struggle.

They appealed to the Railway workers to join the struggle for communal peace and harmony, for unity and integrity of the country and the people, for democratic rights and against the anti-worker anti-people economic policies of the union Govt. They also appealed to them for ensuring that anti people anti-worker and communal forces may be defeated in the ensuing election.

C M. Singh, President and N. S. Bhangoo, General Secretary, called upon the workers to seriously prepare for struggle.

### **CLW Labour Union**

Chittaranjan Locomotive Works Labour Union, though not a constituent of the AIREC also joined the demonstration. The Chittaranjan union had staged a dharna at the Boat Club on the previous day ie, 12th March. Nirmal Mukherjee, Secretary of the Union accompanied by Basudev Acharya MP and Haradhan Roy MP met the Railway Minister and submitted a memorandum. The workers on Dharna were addressed by Basudev Acharya. Haradhan Roy, Dipen Ghosh, Sunil Basu Roy, all members of Parliament and S. K. Dhar, Secretary General, AILRSA, M L Banerjee, General Secretary, AITWA, Y P Kohli, LRSA And Samar Sengupta, Secretary, Workshop Council, NF Railway.

The Dharna was staged to press the long pending demand of the union for its recognition by the Railway Administration. From the very beginning the Govt. has been pursuing a policy of not granting recognition to any trade union in the production units of the Railways. The CLW Labour Union has been carrying on a persistent struggle for reversal of this policy.

### **Dakshin Railway Employees Union**

The DREU, a CITU union operating on Southern Railway, also joined the AIREC sponsored demonstration at the Boat Club on 13th Feb, although it is also not a constituent of the AIREC. The union has been agitating for years against victimisation of two of its office bearers. Participation of CLW Labour Union and the DREU in the dharna has given it a more broadbased character and this holds out the prospect of broader unity of railwaymen.

### **Rly Signal & Telecom Union**

The all India association of signal and tele-

communication staff of the Rlys which is a major constituent of the AIREC held a convention in New Delhi on 12th March. The convention has decided to launch 'work-to-rule' agitation in the month of August to press the long pending demands of the Railway signal and telecom workers. About 200 workers participated in the convention.

### **Rly Engineering workers**

A meeting of representatives of different organisations of Rly engineering staff scattered throughout the country was held in New Delhi on 14th. It was convened by the AIREC to discuss about the possibility of forming one all India organisation of the Rly Engineering staff, which might be affiliated to the AIREC. The meeting decided to hold a National Convention in New Delhi on 8th August 1991. A Preparatory Committee has been formed N. S. Bhangoo, Secretary General AIREC as its convener.

## **Trade Unions Urge for Direct Action Against Price Rise**

M.K. Pandhe (CITU), Gopeshwar (INTUC), Homi Daji (AITUC), Samant Rai (HMS), R.K. Bhakt (BMS), D.D. Shastri (TUCC) and R.K. Sharma (UTUC-LS) issued the following joint statement on March 2 :

The trade union centres are gravely concerned at the continuing trend of spiralling prices of all commodities. There have been three good monsoons as to yield good agricultural crops and there is no justification for the alarming rise in the prices of essential commodities. Though the stocks are in plenty, the consumers are being forced to pay higher prices. Even the seasonal fall in the wholesale price index is not experienced and the wage earning class is the worst hit.

Despite the never-ending assurances given by the official spokesmen to keep the inflation in the economy under check, the annual rate of increase in inflation is estimated at 12.5 per cent, the rise in practice is much higher than what the official statistics make out.

There have been loud and repeated pronouncements from the Government of India of initiating stringent measures aimed at disciplining the businessmen and traders who have been selling all essential commodities at unreasonably higher prices and no such action has been taken so far as to give unfettered freedom to the unscrupulous traders to fleece

the workers and the common people.

The fall out of the recent Gulf War is going to be severe and the businessmen are bound to exploit the situation to amass money. Hoarding, black-marketing and adulteration have been allowed to thrive freely. The jacking up of administered prices has further aggravated the price situation.

The all India cost of living index of industrial workers, with 1960 as the base year, during the 12 months of 1990 has gone up by 125 points—from 870 in January to 995 in December. Due to inadequate neutralisation of the increase in the cost of living, the standard of living of a very large section of industrial workers has been reduced drastically.

While strongly protesting at the skyrocketting prices of essential commodities, we demand immediate steps to bring down the prices and stringent action against the culprits responsible for the price rise.

Due to the complete collapse of the public distribution system, the people are being deprived of their supply of essential commodities. We, therefore, demand that the functioning of the public distribution system to be thoroughly overhauled. It should be subjected to monitoring by consumers for which people's committees should be set up.

The trade union movement cannot be a silent spectator when the common people of India are suffering in such a cruel manner. We, therefore, call upon the working class to be prepared for direct action before the end of March in protest against the rising prices. The detailed programme of DIRECT ACTION would be announced shortly by the central trade unions.

## **Mass Rally before Parliament on April 23 called Off**

The mass rally before the Parliament called by the four Left Parties, viz. CPI(M), CPI, RSP and Forward Block and their mass organisations on April 23, 1991, has been called off in view of the dissolution of the Parliament and mid-term elections. A Statement in this respect was issued by the four Left Parties on March 14.

The rally called by the students and youth on April 22 before the Parliament has also been called off.

## CITU Condemns the Installation of Chautala as Chief Minister of Haryana

*The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement on March 23 :*

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the installation of the discredited Om Prakash Chautala as the Chief Minister of Haryana just on the eve of the forthcoming Parliamentary elections. Considering that the enquiry into the unprecedented violence and rigging of Meham elections was sabotaged by the State Government, the step to reinstall Chautala as the Chief Minister is only meant to create Meham type rigging and violence all over the State during the forthcoming elections.

Chautala has also been the brain behind the so called gangster type TU organisation namely Lok Mazdoor Sangh which openly attacks the trade unions and workers during industrial disputes in Haryana. Workers have lost their lives in murderous attacks by the LMS gangsters while several others have been seriously injured in the recent past. These activities have made normal TU activities extremely difficult throughout the State of Haryana. These attacks are bound to increase after the installation of Chautala as the Chief Minister of Haryana.

The CITU therefore appeals to the trade unions and workers of all affiliations in Haryana to come together to resist the gangster methods of Chautala so that TU and democratic rights of workers are preserved. The CITU calls upon its affiliated unions to make a common cause with the left and democratic movement in the State so that the Chautala style authoritarianism and gangsterism is resisted throughout the state and atmosphere for a free and fair election is created.

This morning the CITU has received a news from Rohtak that one brick kiln worker was killed in police firing today when they were agitating for their legitimate demands. Only recently a worker was killed in Hissar by the management's hirelings with protection by the police. These are all portents of what is likely to happen in the following days in Haryana.

### Defend Public Sector Day Observed on 15th March

In pursuance of the decision of Bangalore Convention of the Co-ordination Committee of public sector trade unions, the workers of public sector undertakings observed 'Defend Public Sector Day' and 'Self-Reliance Day' on 15th March 1991 through

demonstrations, mass meetings, dharnas etc. all over the country. Reports are being received from different centres about the participation of the mass of the public sector workers.

In Bombay a massive demonstration was organised at Nariman Point by the workers and employees of Air India, Bank, LIC, GIC etc. which denounced the government's policy of privatisation of different public sector units and the latest govt. declaration on selling out 20% shares of selective public sector units.

Central Electronics Ltd. Employees Union, Ghaziabad observed the day through black-badge wearing and gate meetings.

Reports have also been received from the Calcutta based offices of Steel industry where gate meetings and demonstrations have been organised in all the offices.

In Durgapur Steel Plant and Alloy Steel Plant thousands of workers were mobilised in demonstration to voice their protest against the unscrupulous move of the Govt. towards privatisation endangering the self-reliance of the country's economy.

Reports have also been received of a massive dharna at the gate of Mussouri Phosphorite project at Dehradun which denounced the abject surrender of the Govt to the imperialist pressure in lieu of IMF loan.

In Bhopal, a procession covered the city demanding reversal of the Govt's anti public sector policy. In Jhansi, BHEL workers meeting was organised which was addressed by Jibon Roy, Secretary CITU.

**Defeat Congress(I),**

**Defeat BJP**

**Vote for**

**Left—NF Candidates**