



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Fight the Computer Offensive

B. T. Ranadive

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THE employees and the workers are now face to face with a cruel offensive of computerisation, automation and modernisation. The computer offensive has been announced in the recent budget and is virtually declared to be the official policy of the Government. The fact that the budget reduced or abolished the excise on computers and levied a new tax on pan masala is enough to give an insight into the mind of its framers. The computer offensive is a part of the new policy which opens the country to the full blast of the capitalist law of the market which gives full freedom to the big capitalists to run the economy as they like, to earn the profits they want without much hindrance from the Government. It arms them with the power to hire and fire as they like and play with the living conditions and lives of lakhs of workers. It denigrates the public sector and is bent on reducing its role in the country. The Government is being advised by its advisers to disband all public sector units incurring losses and privatise or close them. But the capitalist path of economy is so bankrupt that it cannot see any immediate relief unless it gets the succour of foreign multinationals. India's creditors, the World Bank the IMF have been demanding that she should open her door to the multinationals. The Government has agreed to do so. The most profitable market for these companies is in electronics, computerisation, modernisation of the communication system using electronic technology etc. That these companies will have a rich harvest is clear from the fact that out of a contemplated expenditure of Rs. 10,000 crores in the next five years for computerisation of communications, hardly 10 per cent will come from indigenous sources.

The computer offensive is not only against the workers and employees concerned. It is against our national economy, our entire people, who will be looted through these imports and whose economic independence would be compromised if these companies get a firm foot hold in our economy. It originates from the bankruptcy of the Government

to manage the economy, its desire to pander to the profit lust of the capitalists and its desire to reduce its man-power expenditure on Government departments.

The Government wants all financial institutions and production concerns to produce more and more surplus by economising on labour. It wants the capitalists to produce goods for exports at competitive prices which can again be done by using labour displacing processes. The capitalist path has landed the economy into an impassable crisis and the workers and employees are asked to pay for it.

Computerisation, automation etc are presented as the great triumphs of human mind, the triumph of our science which ensures human advance and opens new vista of progress before mankind. Those who oppose the introduction of these new achievements are dubbed as anti-progress, anti-social and anti-industrial advance. Some well-meaning innocence innocent of the class reality that dominates our society, fall into this trap and are unable to answer the charge. Overwhelmed by some immediate difficulties, some so-called pragmatists and men of 'practical' wisdom support the reasoning and walk into the treacherous trap of the employers, the monopolists and Congress rulers.

There is no doubt that computerisation, automation, the great strides in electronics, the big advance in space science, all underline a gigantic advance of human mind and intelligence. Properly used and guided they hold the prospect of releasing man from back-breaking labour over a greater part of the day to meet his material needs and release him for the development of his cultural life and personality, his individuality which today is crushed under the burden of daily overwork. These achievements hold out the prospect of eliminating the division between manual and intellectual labour which today is the cause of so much inequality.

OBSERVE PEACE DAY ON SEPTEMBER 1

What is meant by properly guided? It means if these achievements are placed at the service of the common people, the working class, employees, the peasantry, and are not used as instruments of exploiting them mercilessly. This can happen only if the means of production are socialised, they are under the control of the toilers, private production is abolished and political power is concentrated in the hands of the toiling people led by the working class. That is why in Socialist countries computerisation and automation are welcome, they lead to reduction of hours of work and a higher standard of living. They do not create any unemployment problem. Even if these basic changes are not achieved computerisation etc can be directed in the channel of social advance if it is made to subserve the interests of the common people under a drastically changed democratic outlook and economic policies.

When computerisation is proposed in a country like India or any other capitalist country the question that should be raised is in whose interest it is being introduced — in the interest of the common people or in the interest of the capitalists? And the answer is quite clear. Computerisation, automation, modernisation are in Indian conditions instruments of gathering more profits for the capitalists and financiers and imposing worsened conditions on the workers and employees.

Marx had pointed out that capital exploits science and the theoretical progress of mankind. Capital does not create science but exploits it, adapting it to the needs of the production process.

Speaking at the anniversary of the Peoples Paper (April 18, 1856) Marx said, "There is one great fact, characteristic of our 19th century, a fact which no party dares deny. On the one hand there have started into life industrial and scientific forces which no epoch in the former human history had ever suspected; on the other hand there exist symptoms of decay far surpassing the horrors recorded of the latter times of the Roman empire. In our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary. Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it. The new-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell are turned into sources of want. The victories of art seem bought by loss of character. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our inventions and progress seem to result in endowing material source with intellectual life and stultifying human life into a material force. This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand and modern misery and dissolution on the other hand, the antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch, is a fact, palpable and overwhelming and not to be conconverted." (Vol 14, Collected Works).

Marx pointed out that the use of achievements of science by the capitalist class was an instrument of class struggle and it sowed all round misery. The working class and the employees cannot forget this truth.

What are the concrete results of computerisation and automation in advance capitalist countries? According to one foreign journal, "trade union leaders are already aware that the time is not far distant when the workers displaced by automation will number tens of millions and these tens of millions will be unable to find employment in other industries. For instance, the rapidly growing electronic computer, space missiles, pharmaceuticals and other industries are practically unable to take up redundant labour. Since these high technology industry and science are capital intensive, the growth of production in them is not accompanied by a large growth of employment." In these countries electronics and automation are being rapidly introduced in trade and transport, communications administrative management, finances, the health services and education. In Western Europe 22 per cent of bank cashiers were replaced by machines by 1979.

What is the total result of this general assault on this new technological revolution? The problem of unemployment has become intractable. There are more than 30 million people unemployed in these countries. Now they say they have recovered from crisis of the last three years but unemployment continues to increase. This despite the fact that billions are spent on destructive weapons and the armament industry is running to full capacity.

Three years back the 10th World Congress of trade unions held in Havana described the situation in these countries in the following words: "Millions of people who are deprived of the possibilities of work are driven with their families into an agonising often tragic situation. Some categories of workers are hit particularly hard especially the young, women, immigrants and workers of a certain age. Workers demand the recognition of right to work, resolute common actions against reduction in unemployment benefits, they demand the introduction of social measures, promoting the solution of the problem of unemployment, the reduction of unjustified long working week, the prolongation of the paid leave".

Situation has become worse since then. The World Bank and other economic experts are of the opinion that the present recovery may not last beyond this year. If this happens the unemployment situation will get worse.

Now why should this situation arise in countries where computerisation and automation have made a big headway if there was to be no problem of unemployment resulting from their introduction. All those who assure the employees and workers that computerisation etc. do not lead to joblessness are indulging in plain cheating.

The computer and automation processes go on continually improving, each succeeding generation performs a fantastically larger number of operations than the previous generation and is capable of displacing larger and larger number of workers than the earlier generation. That is why trade union leaders in Europe are apprehensive of tens of millions losing their jobs in the coming years.

It is with this experience in mind that we have to view the computer offensive in our country which has already deprived thousands of their jobs and which is cutting the job potentials of many servicing industries.

The offensive has already been opened in banks, LIC, telephone, railways and income tax departments. It is still in the introductory stage. In the last two years it has been slowly moving forward and its full accumulated effect is yet to be felt. And now with the Government policy openly encouraging it and with certain treacherous leaders of the employees ever ready to oblige the employers, the job killing attack will be carried out with utmost brutality. The massive character of the offensive can be seen from the fact that the number of computers are estimated to increase from 3,000 in 1984 to 1,00,000 in 1990. This accelerated rate of computerisation is going to kill the majority of jobs in the servicing industries leaving behind a trail of joblessness and destruction.

It seems some organisations of employees like AIBEA etc. have signed an agreement with the bank management under which the banking industry will be opened to the blast of 200 large computers, 2,000 mini computers and 10,000 accounting machines. At the most modest calculation this may render some 40,000 employees surplus. Besides there will be no new recruitment for five years to come which will do away with 20,000 jobs.

Railways where computerisation is making progress consider that at least 6 lakh workers are surplus. At least this was the figure given by ex-Railway Minister Ghani Khan Chowdhury some time back. No one can guess how many thousands will be displaced when the Metropolitan Telephone system is handed over to autonomous Corporations for complete automation.

In the meanwhile the Central Government has put a ban on new recruitment depriving some tens of thousands of young men and women of jobs. Computerisation is being extended to the construction industries which will do further havoc to the employment situation in the country. The construction industry has always been looked upon as the labour intensive industry absorbing large number of workers and relieving to some extent the pressure on the labour market. Now this opening also will be gradually closed. Needless to say that the extension of computerisation and automation to coal mining, steel and other public sector industries will

have devastating effect on employment. The nationalised Coal Board in recent years has already retrenched 50,000 workers mostly women.

The shipping industry is no exception to this massive attack. The ships of Western countries carry reduced manning personnel; the loading and unloading operations are done by a decreasing number of workers. In India also containerisation is leading to loss of jobs. In Goa it seems, 3,000 workers lost their employment sometime back. In the main ports like Bombay and Calcutta the offensive is already in operation. It is going to multiply many times to keep pace with world developments and avoid delays for foreign ships discharging their cargoes. In the LIC a serious situation is developing with the management installing microprocessors in the branches. This may lead to an unprecedented loss of jobs.

In several concerns the management is covering the job killing offensive by making proposals for voluntary retirement. Those who decline the offer are harassed in every possible way to compel them to retire. In several concerns the managements are assuring the workers that there will be no retrenchment if they accept computerisation. They conceal the fact that within a couple of years after the retirement of those due to retire the job potential will fall by 15 to 20 per cent and young men from the families of the present incumbents will find no opening for them anywhere.

A well written article in the May-June, 1985 issue of Voice, Bulletin of Reserve Bank Employees' Association, Calcutta (the issue is devoted to automation) very precisely and correctly points out the effect of computerisation on work in the banking industry. It says, "Apart from eliminating all scope of new employment, the proposed computerisation of manual work in the banking industry will have far-reaching impact. Banking industry, in relation to division of labour consists of lower level operations manned by clerks and sub-staffs, supervision of operation manned by junior and top management personnel. It will be possible to automatically perform all these functions by the use of computers aided by electronic machines which are part and parcel of any plan of automation. Another visible impact will be disappearance of paper and pencil work since all the operations will be stored in the electronic memory of the machines and from which memory the required information for the customer or the bank could be obtained in a split of minute. With this switching over of the manual operations under the computer system the supervising duties will be totally eliminated. This means that the head clerks, special assistants, junior and senior officers will not be required at all." Such is the wide scope of the offensive. At present in a large measure it is concentrated against salaried employees, against clerical services, but it has also started against the industrial workers. As it gathers momentum it is bound to engulf all sections of workers — factory

and office. The textile workers are already facing it with the attack of modernisation.

The employees therefore must take a strong stand and resist the contemplated attack on jobs. They have to do it not only to protect their own jobs but to ensure that their sons and daughters are not compelled to remain jobless and seek the asylum of slums.

It is good that the Bank Employees Federation of India has given a call to fight this menace and appealed to all bank employees to brace themselves for the enormous task before them.

This appeal for unity of all banking employees irrespective of organisational affiliation, should be responded to by all. The question however is not confined to bank employees only. P & T, Railways and other sections of employees are being attacked and the widest possible unity of bank, LIC and the other affected sections is urgently necessary to overcome the attack.

The offensive besides cannot be met without the support of the country's trade union movement. Unfortunately a large number of employee's organisations are ploughing a lonely furrow standing apart from the common trade union movement. Most of them are not connected with any Central Trade Union Organisations, though they occasionally participate in the activities of the National Campaign Committee. This aloofness from the organised trade union movement will ruin us in the present conditions. They must appeal for the support from all trade union organisations and make every effort to secure it.

The CITU and all central organisations must lend all possible help to the employees against their struggle against computerisation. The CITU considers the computerisation offensive is nothing but an instrument of passing the burden of the crisis to the shoulders of the employees. The CITU is determined to fight these attacks. A trade union organisation is not worth anything if it shirks the fight when the jobs of tens of thousands are at stake.

CITU calls upon all trade unions to throw their full weight in the struggle. The Government and the employers must be compelled to retrace their steps and hold consultations with the trade union movement to discuss the ills of the economy and the way out. The CITU is not prepared to surrender the workers as sacrificial goats to satisfy the profit appetite of the capitalists and help the Government in its anti-people, anti-national policy. The policy of computerisation is not only anti-employees and anti-working class it is also against the interest of the nation and the people.

What are the ills of our economy? Are we suffering from shortage of labour? On the other hand, the central problem for a developing country like ours is how to utilise the huge manpower at our disposal. Already a huge productive force lies unused through the inability of the Government to use it. There are more than two and half crores of unemployed in the cities. There are more than 4 crores of unemployed in the villages. Closures and lockouts have added to this number. To steady the economy these people have to be provided with jobs. To steady the economy the small concern which is getting ruined has to be protected. But the Government policy moves in the opposite direction because it is protecting the interests of the big capitalists. Instead of providing more jobs it is eliminating them by thousands. Its textile policy is intended to throw thousands out of jobs as well as ruin the small handloom powerloom producers.

National interests, the interest of our economy cannot be protected by aggravating unemployment and mass misery and in the bargain inviting the multinationals to lord over us. There is no progress possible without proper attention to the problem of unemployment, to the non-use of the productive capacity of our labour resources. The right to work must be made a fundamental right under our Constitution so that all planning and all planned efforts, all policies of national advance centre round it. Backed by the right to work, a planning committee, representative of the interests of the people can decide where and how to introduce modern process in the interest of the nation. This will ensure that they are introduced where they are strictly necessary for national advance, that they are not introduced for private gains; this will further ensure that they do not cause unnecessary disturbances in the employment situation and the gains of advance in production are available to the people.

CITU Nominations

The CITU Secretariat in its meeting held on 11th July, 1985 has nominated the following comrades for going abroad:

1. T.K. Ranga Rajan (T.N.) and T.N. Singh (Bihar) as a two member delegation for trade union studies in Czechoslovakia from 9th September to 6th October 1985.

2. K.O. Habib (Kerala), Chandi Prasad and Narendra Mishra (Bihar), Kameshwar Singh (M.P), Bishamber Sahay (Rajasthan), Dalvi (Maharashtra) and Parameshwar Singh (Centre) to visit China for two weeks in September 1985.

Bank Employees Struggle Against Computerisation

The bank employees today stand face to face with the severe offensive of automation. Armed with unbridled power given by AIBEA, INBEC and NCBE, the bankers have come out with overt offensives in almost all parts of the country covering most of the banks. To disarm the employees' organised counter measures and resistance to automation, the bankers, as a first step, have resorted to mass transfers without any rhyme or reason and unwarranted huge cost involved.

To launch the offensive of computerisation, the Rangarajan Committee was appointed by the Reserve Bank of India which prepared a blue print to instal electronic machines, micro-processors and giant computers to take over virtually all types of banking operations in a phased manner. These will cost several hundred crores of rupees — Rs. 500 crore worth of sophisticated electronic gadgets including main frame computers in two stages — Rs. 137 crores earmarked for 1985-87, and the remaining amount in the next three years. According to a reported estimate of the Department of Electronics (DOE), the banking sector will account for 30,000 micro, 1000 mini, 60 midi and 15 large computers over the next few years.

The first phase of the programme includes installation of big computers at the Head/Central Offices of 20 public sector banks, 200 micro-processors in their zonal/regional offices and 10,000 sophisticated electronic ledger posting machines in the branches. These ledger posting machines alone will render more than 50,000 posts redundant. An idea of the extent of displacement of man power can be had from the projected automation plan of Grindlay's Bank, the multinational, the management of which disclosed before the national industrial tribunal, Bombay that out of their present staff strength of 4000, only about 600 will be required to run the bank's offices in India when the plan is put into effect.

The annual intake in the banking industry used to be nearly 25,000 to 30,000 on an average. But this number has drastically fallen during the last one year due to the embargo on fresh recruitment imposed by the Finance Ministry in June last year. Appointments in already sanctioned vacancies have been totally banned and the banks have started declaring the staff surplus in various offices. Even a partial implementation of the programme of mechanisation/computerisation in the first phase, more than 50,000 employees will be displaced. The Government of India has openly come out in support of this policy of computerisation. Thus, the very security of service which the bank employees had achieved through hard struggles is in stake.

In this background, the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, a giant multinational bank,

amalgamating the earlier Hongkong and Mercantile Banks, planned to instal a very powerful and large computer in their premises at Calcutta from July 1.

Led by the Bank Employees Federation of India, the bank employees launched a round the clock day and night vigil from the evening of May 30 in groups to resist the installation of this huge computer. The bank management promptly assured of "no retrenchment", "no redundancy" and "absorption of all surplus staff in other works". But when asked as to where from the additional work will come to utilise the services of the employees who will become redundant, the management's answers had been totally vague and evasive.

Programmed by the Bank Employees Federation, W. Bengal, seminars and conventions have been held in almost all districts and sub-divisions (Talukas) and various zones of Calcutta followed by demonstrations in all bank offices and squatting in respective central places. On July 1, the scheduled day of the installation of the computer, continuous squatting was staged before the bank's front and rear gates. 50 to 60 volunteers in each shift drawn from all units by rotation are mounting guard with unique militancy led by the BEFI leaders and leaders of other constituents. Over 5000 members twice by turn have already taken part in this resistance struggle, and the management have not been able to bring inside any material connected with the computer. Several mass rallies have also been held participated by the Federation of Mercantile Employees' Union, 12th July Committee, LIC, GIC, State and Central Government employees and others. Even the big bosses from Hongkong who came to supervise the installation process, returned without the work done. The CITU and other trade unions have issued statements congratulating the bank employees for their valiant struggle and demanding of the management to drop the idea of installation of the computer.

Convention of Sugar Workers

A Convention of workers in the Sugar industry will be held at Neoli, Dist. Etah, Uttar Pradesh on August 10 and 11. All unions in the Sugar industry are requested to send their representatives and inform the U.P. State Committee of CITU; 5, Naya Gaon (West), Lucknow about their participation.

West Bengal all Party Delegation Meets Union Ministers

An all-Party-Assembly delegation of West Bengal met Veerendra Patil, Union Minister for Industries, Bansi Lal, Union Minister for Railways and Madhav Rao Scindia, Union Minister of State for Railways at two separate meetings in Delhi on June 24. The delegation consisted of Patit Paban Pathak, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Santi Ranjan Ghatak, Minister of State for Labour, and 19 other MLAs from Cong(I), CPI(M), CPI, FB, RSP, DSP, WBSP and Gorkha League. On behalf of the delegation two separate memoranda were submitted to the Union Industries Minister and Union Railway Minister.

In the memorandum submitted to the Union Industry Ministry the problems of closed and sick industries in the State were mainly highlighted and the Union Government was requested to take positive steps in reopening closed units and in revival of sick units. It was demanded that all the taken over units for which the Central Government agencies were authorised controllers, should be nationalised by the Union Government. It was also suggested that the condition of insisting on payment of pre-taken over liabilities of taken-over units at the time of nationalisation should be dropped and three industrial units already denotified by the Central Government agencies be revived again.

In the memorandum submitted to Shri Patil references were made for either abolition of freight equalisation policy or extension of similar benefits to other raw materials of national importance like cotton, industrial alcohol, gas etc. decentralisation of licensing and capacity control of industries, clearance of applications pending before the Central Government for letters of intent for West Bengal, etc. The problem of the Hindustan Fertiliser Corporation at Haldia and the difficulties faced by a large number of industries in West Bengal for shortage of industrial alcohol were also mentioned.

In reply to the points raised in the memorandum and also during the discussions that took place with the delegation, Shri Patil stated that the Union Government was examining the problem of sick industries, not only in West Bengal, but throughout the country in all its aspects and he expected that a decision as to the strategy to be followed in this respect would be declared very soon. He informed the delegation that the question of not insisting on payment of pre-take-over liabilities for taken-over units had already been raised by him with the Union Finance Ministry and he hoped that the decision would be taken in this matter very soon. He also informed the delegation that the present schemes of incentives for backward and no industry

districts in the country were being examined now and he hoped that before the end of the present financial year a clear policy would be taken in this matter. Regarding Hindustan Fertilizer Corpn. he informed the delegation that he would pay a visit to Haldia to make an on-the-spot study of the problems of this unit under the management of his own Ministry.

In the memorandum submitted to the Union Railway Minister, Bansi Lal, the delegation drew his attention to the serious crisis that had developed in West Bengal as a result of the severe cut in the order for railway wagons. From about 25,000 4-wheeler railway wagaons, the order for 1985-86 has been slashed to 5000 only. The industries in West Bengal, mostly public sector undertakings, under the Union Government, such as Jessops, Burn & Standard, Braithwaite, Indian Standard Wagon and private sector units like Texmaco, and a very large number of ancillary industries in the State, are dependent on the manufacture of railway wagons. Because of the shrinkage in order for railway wagons these industrial units are virtually on the verge of collapse and about two lakhs of people are going to be thrown out of employment. The Railway Minister was requested to increase the order of railway wagons from 5000 to 20,000 this year.

Shri Bansi Lal and Madhav Rao Scindia informed the delegation that they were fully aware of the problems of the wagon industry and because of resources constraints, the order for wagons was slashed down. But they had already taken up this matter with the appropriate authorities and were quite hopeful that there would be some improvement in resources and it would be possible for them to give more orders for the manufacture of wagons in West Bengal.

Memorandum by Central Trade Unions

Prior to the all party delegation, all the Central trade unions in W. Bengal also met the Union Labour Minister at Calcutta on June 2 and submitted a joint memorandum to him on the alarming situation facing the industries and the working class of the state. The memorandum signed by Subrata Mukherjee (INTUC), Manoranjan Roy (CITU), Rash Behari Maitra (BMS), Bhabani Roy Chowdhury (AITUC), Prasanta Dasgupta (TUCC), Matish Roy (UTUC), Fatik Ghosh (UTUC-LS), Phani Bagchi (IFYU) and by both the factions of HMS demanded the following:

(1) Immediate reopening of the locked out and closed jute mills and other industrial units with all

AIDWA Delegation to Bhopal

workmen, failing which the management of all such units be taken over by the Govt. of India pending nationalisation. (2) Jute and textile industry be nationalised with meaningful participation of workers in the management. (3) Effective measures be taken to protect the indigenous industries from foreign competition. (4) Increase in wagon order for full utilisation of production capacity and solution of the problem relating to dearth of order in public sector engineering units. Full utilisation of installed capacity of all industrial units. (5) Immediate concrete measures be taken to save the sick industries and ensure their growth. (6) Immediate legislation to prohibit lockouts and closures and provide payment of unemployment benefit for the workmen for the period of lockouts and closures. Industrial laws to be suitably amended in favour of the working class to cope with the changing situation in consultation with the Central Trade Unions. (7) Effective measures be taken for realisation of due arrears P.F. and E.S.I. contribution with interest, suitable provisions in the Acts to treat workers' due benefit the first item of priority charge over other expenditure and for liabilities of the company. Strigent punitive measures be taken against the delinquent employers. (8) The benefit of freight equalisation be extended for cotton and other raw materials required for the industry pending total withdrawal. (9) More investment be made in public sector. (10) Persons responsible for making the industry sick should not be included in the management of taken over or nationalised units. (11) Imposing of new condition on the State Govts. for shouldering pre-take over period bank and financial institutions' liabilities require re-examination and a new policy be included in consultation with the state Govt. so that nationalisation of the units are not held up.

Pursing the memorandum Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU wrote a letter to the Union Labour Minister on June 20, to which the Labour Minister has not responded as yet.

Protest by SWFI

DEEPLY concerned with the news item that the Steel Ministry has decided to induct experts from the private company TISCO in the Board of Directors of Steel Authority of India Ltd.; Jibon Roy, the General Secretary of the Steel Workers' Federation of India addressed the following letter to the Union Minister of Steel on June 26:

Our attention has been drawn to some news paper reports which quoted Honourable Minister of State, Steel and Mines, Sri K. Natwar Singh to say that the Ministry was contemplating to induct experts from private company TISCO into the Board of Directors, SAIL. If this really happens, it will be detrimental to the interest of public sector Steel Plants. It is needless to say that steel workers will look upon this step only as a prelude to gradual privatisation of public sector and will never accept it with equanimity. It is our fervent request to you to desist from such suicidal steps.

A five member delegation of the All India Democratic Women's Association headed by its Vice President, Lakshmi Shagal and including Bibha Ghosh Goswami, M.P., Dr. Ruma Gupta, Meera Velayudhan and Mymoonah Mollah visited Bhopal and had extensive meetings with the gas affected victims. The delegation also met the Chief Minister Motilal Vora on June 3. The delegation was confronted by the shocking reality that only 10 per cent of the affected families had received the Rs. 1500 ex-gratia payment from the Government. The free ration supply of rice, wheat, sugar, rapeseed oil and milk had been stopped in most of the colonies. This had added to the misery of the people who were mainly engaged in casual manual labour and found their capacity reduced due to the physical exhaustion caused by the gas. Besides no alternate employment was available to them. Also many of the people who had fled from Bhopal during the gas leakage had not been able to make new ration cards and therefore were not receiving any ration supply. No specialised clinics had been set up for the gas affected people, very few had benefited from the self-employment schemes. Instead of receiving utmost consideration, the gas victims were harassed from all quarters by the authorities. In their poor physical condition, they were unable to visit the various offices to get the necessary documents. Most of them had in fact given up all hopes of receiving relief and were resigning themselves to a slow death by starvation and disease.

The AIDWA delegation put forward the following demands to the Chief Minister: 1. Government offices be set up in the worst affected colonies to deal with registration, issue of cards and for all other information required; 2. Special clinics to be set up for periodic examination of children and expectant mothers; 3. Anganwadies to be opened immediately in the affected areas where children should be given extra nourishment. Women from these areas should be provided with employment in these anganwadies; 4. Identity cards and cumulative health cards to be issued to all victims; 5. Registration of all victims regarding health, employment and rehabilitation; 6. A Life Insurance scheme to cover the victims and their dependants for the next ten years.

Unprecedented Record in Agricultural Development— tireless efforts of the Left Front Government yield spectacular result

West Bengal's economy is primarily agro based. Keeping this in view the Left Front Government—since it came to power—has continuously been striving to implement programmes for improvement of agriculture as well as agriculturists and development of irrigation,

Many and varied schemes like ensuring timely availability of agricultural inputs, agricultural price support schemes, improved marketing facilities, crop insurance, distribution of mini-kit, increased use of pesticide etc. have been drawn up to generate increased agricultural production and employment opportunities. Food grains production has surpassed all records. Emphasis has been laid on converting mono-crop areas into multi-crop ones. During the last eight years seeds of different crops worth about Rs. 210 crores have been imported from other states to meet the demands of local farmers. State Seed Corporation functions to make the state self-reliant in production & distribution of quality seeds. West Bengal is pioneer in introducing the farmers old age pension scheme in the country.

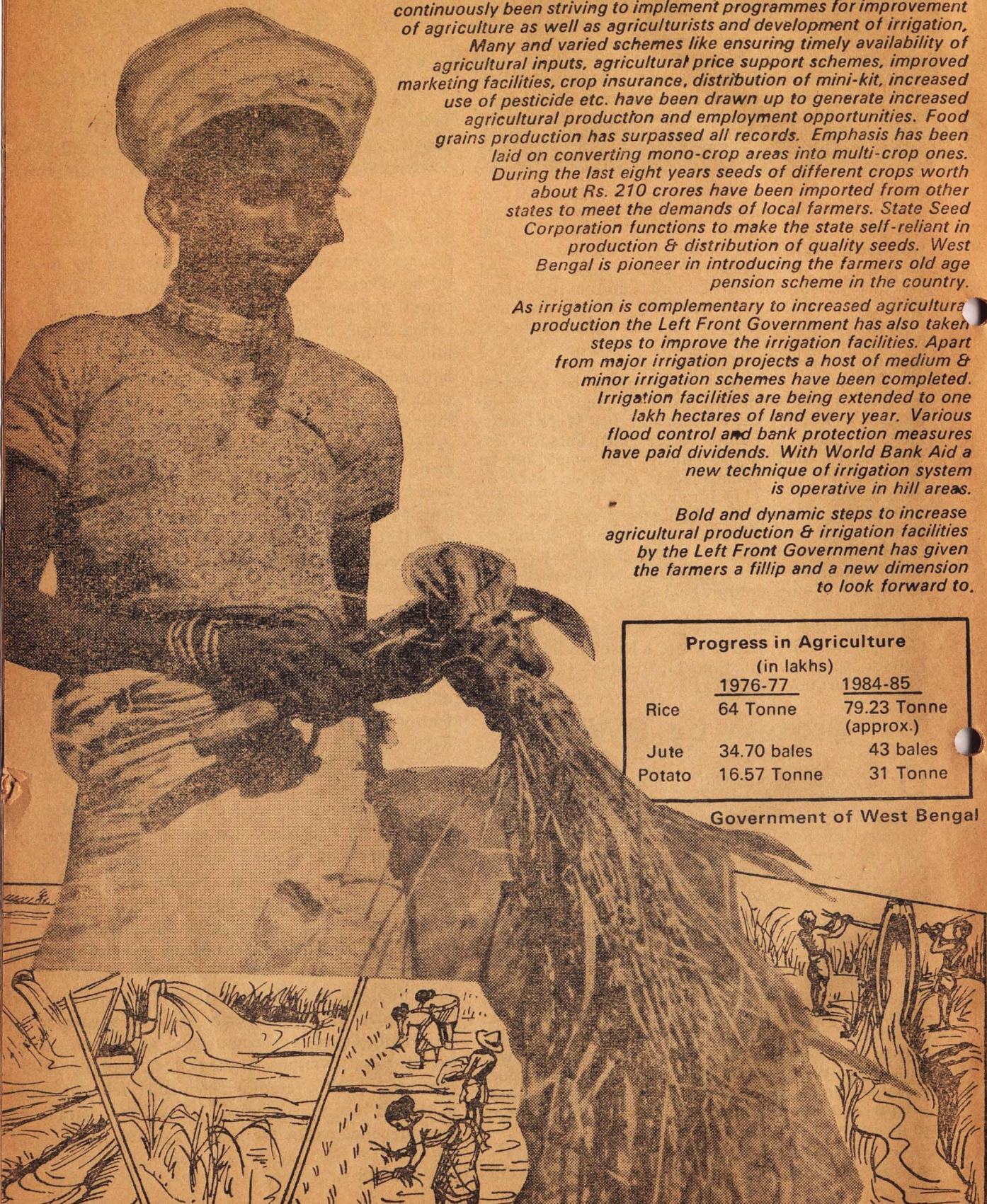
As irrigation is complementary to increased agricultural production the Left Front Government has also taken steps to improve the irrigation facilities. Apart from major irrigation projects a host of medium & minor irrigation schemes have been completed. Irrigation facilities are being extended to one lakh hectares of land every year. Various flood control and bank protection measures have paid dividends. With World Bank Aid a new technique of irrigation system is operative in hill areas.

Bold and dynamic steps to increase agricultural production & irrigation facilities by the Left Front Government has given the farmers a fillip and a new dimension to look forward to.

Progress in Agriculture

	(in lakhs)	
	1976-77	1984-85
Rice	64 Tonne	79.23 Tonne (approx.)
Jute	34.70 bales	43 bales
Potato	16.57 Tonne	31 Tonne

Government of West Bengal



Resolutions of the Working Committee Meeting

Following are the rest of the resolutions adopted in the Working Committee meeting of CITU held at Trivandrum from May 31 to June 2, 1985. The first set was published in the last issue.

On the Strike of Cochin Refinery Workers

THIS Working Committee meeting of the CITU holding its session at Trivandrum congratulates the striking workers of Cochin Refinery. From 10th May onwards all the workers of Cochin Refinery are on strike led by Cochin Refinery Employees Association. The main issues raised by the workers are: Inadequate safety measures in factory; Violations of the Tripartite Agreement on promotion policy by the management; Inadequate man power in the company; Non implementation of the incentive scheme formulated by the Central Govt. in the oil industry; Victimisation and anti-trade union activities of the Management. This meeting of the Working Committee supports the demands of workers of Cochin Refinery and demands of the Petroleum Minister of the Central Government to intervene in the dispute and settle the claim of the workers forthwith.

On Sri Lanka Ethnic Conflict

This Working Committee meeting of the CITU strongly condemns the Sri Lanka Government's continued atrocities on the Tamil speaking ethnic minorities in Sri Lanka. The Working Committee welcomes the recent joint statement of the three Sri Lankan opposition parties, viz, Communist Party of Sri Lanka, Lanka Sama Samaj Party and Sri Lanka Mahajana Party and twenty trade unions demanding an end to Government's military attacks on the ethnic minorities and finding a political solution to the problem as well as their firm desire that the Tamils and Sinhalese people must continue to live together as equal citizens with equal rights and opportunities and to defeat the imperialist game to incite one against the other. The Working Committee of the CITU expresses its warm solidarity to the Tamil speaking minority in their fight against the reactionary Jayawardene Government for their just rights. The committee hopes that the working class and left democratic forces in Sri Lanka will unite and intervene in the situation to compel the Jayawardene government to withdraw military operations against the Tamil minorities, give up the gruesome attempt at military solution, defeat American imperialist game and to find a political solution. The committee calls upon all the State Committees to explain the situation to the working class and people of all the states and rally them around this democratic stand.

On Cut Back in Wagon Manufacturing

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU held at Trivandrum from 31st May—2nd June, 1985

notes with grave concern that the Railway Ministry is drastically lowering its order for production of wagons. The decision of the Railway Ministry is illogical and fatal for the developments of Indian industries. The requirement of wagon manufacturing during the 6th Five Year Plan was 1,00,000 wagons. The government of India had in 1980 decided accordingly. But this decision was later reversed. The actual production during the 6th Plan was much less. There is no sign of any improvement. While in 1984-85 total production was 11,249, in 1985-86 it will be only 5,000. The wagon building industry has an all-India capacity of 32,000 per annum in 10 units. It employs 40,000 workers directly and 1 lakh in the ancillary industries. Moreover, there are hundreds of contractor workers working in the industry. As a result of the decision of the Railway Ministry of not producing wagons as per requirement, the industry is facing crisis. Thousands of workmen are facing unemployment. This meeting therefore demands an immediate reversal of the position taken by the Railway Ministry. Sufficient orders should be placed on the units to save the wagon building industry in West Bengal, Bihar, Delhi and Rajasthan, to save more than 1,40,000 workers including those in the ancillary industries and contractor workers from unemployment to utilise the full capacity installed in the industry.

This meeting urges upon the State Committees and the affiliated unions to continue the movement for saving the industry and defending the interests of the workers. They are further urged upon to unite all sections of the workers to achieve the task.

On RMS and MMS Employees' Strike

This meeting of the Working Committee of the CITU held at Trivandrum from May 31 to June 2, 1985 extends its solidarity and support to the proposed one day token strike on 6th June 1985 of RMS and MMS Employees of Postal department to resist the policy of dismantling of RMS and MMS services, against the policy of so called reorganisation and increasing workload, introducing fourth generation sorting machines, thus making about 16,000 class III and 8000 Class IV employees redundant. This policy of Postal Board is another version of computerisation, automation and mechanisation. The RMS and MMS Employees have spearheaded the struggle against the anti-worker and anti-people policy of damaging efficient postal service. The Working Committee calls upon the State Committees and affiliated unions of CITU to extend full support and solidarity to the one day strike on 6th June, 1985.

On Bangladesh Cyclone Tragedy

This meeting of the working Committee of CITU held at Trivandrum from 31st May to 2nd June 1985 expresses its deep sense of sorrow at the ghastly

tragedy in Bangladesh on 26th May 1985 when several villages in and around Sandip island were completely washed away, killing thousands of people and rendering 8 lakhs of people as destitutes. This meeting expresses its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of the families of the persons died in this natural calamity and conveys deep sympathy to the people of Bangladesh in this tragedy of great magnitude.

On the Strike by the Employees of Kerals State Financial Enterprises

All the workmen in Kerala State Financial Enterprises, a Kerala Government undertaking are on indefinite strike from 17.4.85. They are on strike to get a new wage settlement in place of the one that expired an year back. The Kerala Government and the management are taking a stand that the issues will be discussed only if the strike is withdrawn. The action is led by Joint Action Council of the three unions which represent all workers.

The Working Committee extends full support to the struggle and demands of the Kerala government to settle the dispute through negotiations with the Committee.

On ESI (Amendment) Act, 1984

The Working Committee meeting of CITU held at Trivandrum records its strong protest against the enactment of the ESI (Amendment) Act, 1984 without prior consultation with the organised labour. The Act has been amended in a calculated manner to the detriment of the workers in general and the women workers in particular. The eligibility criteria have been amended in such a way that they have thrown thousands of workers out of the ambit of getting Sickness benefits. The women workers besides, have further been deprived of the maternity benefits, thus falling prey to calculated discrimination.

Prior to the amendment, a worker was entitled to these benefits during any benefit period if during the corresponding contribution period weekly contributions were paid for not less than thirteen weeks, and contributions in respect of a worker were payable even if he worked only for a day in a week. But the amendment has made it obligatory to the worker to work for 92 days or more to be eligible for the benefits. The same amendment has been made for the women workers to be eligible for the maternity benefits. In various industries, particularly the crisis ridden ones, the workers do not get work for more than 50 or 60 days. The case of the casual, budli and the seasonal workers would be worse. By this retrograde amendment the women workers particularly have been doubly hit, i.e., debarred

from the maternity benefits and also from the usual sickness benefits.

Apart from above, the amendment has also unilaterally raised the rate of contribution by the workers without increasing the scale of benefits or increasing the medical facilities. The meeting therefore rejects the ESI (Amendment) Act and demands of the Government of India to scrap the retrograde amendments. The meeting calls upon the State Committees and the affiliated unions and appeals to all other trade unions to raise their united voice against the amendments.

On the Proposed Changes in Trade Union Legislations

This Working Committee meeting of CITU draws the pointed attention of the working class to the fact that the changes in the trade union legislations proposed by the Govt. is nothing but a further shift against the labour. Coming in the wake of a retrograde shift in the economic policies in favour of private sector particularly the monopolists and open-door policy for the multi-nationals, these proposed changes aim at further curtailment of trade union rights, interference with the internal affairs of the unions, restricting collective bargaining and scuttling all militant movements of the workers.

This meeting notes that these changes are being sought to be introduced in the background of a mischievous propaganda of inter-union rivalry and violence, while the reality is that the owning class with the help of police and political patronage of the Cong(I) Govts. at the centre and the states is mounting physical attacks on the struggling workers through their goonda hirelings.

This meeting strongly opposes the proposal of setting up of Wage Board in the sugar industry by the Labour Ministry. It also opposes the proposal of setting up Wage Boards in Public Sector as the organised trade union movement after its experience of several Wage Boards in the past which took inordinate time for giving Awards, has rejected the idea and has already established a collective bargaining system in several industries.

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M.K. Pandhe

This meeting also opposes the proposal of voluntary arbitration unless it is accompanied by the principle of recognition of union through secret ballot as otherwise the management with the help of servile minority unions may impose arbitration on majority unions without their consent.

This meeting specifically opposes the proposed Trade Union (Amendment) Bill which restricts the number of outsiders in the executive, raises the number of persons required to apply for the registration of the unions, provides for cancellation of registration of a union for participating in a strike declared illegal by the Govt. and disqualifies a person convicted for unfair labour practices under I.D. Act for election to the post of an office-bearer. It may be noted that while the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act of 1982 had deprived the workers of Hospitals and Educational Institutions, etc, the right to strike under the I.D. Act, the present proposals are in effect further propitiatory measures to create a situation favourable for the MNCs to invest in our country.

The meeting calls upon the working class to build up a rock like unity at the bottom to resist the attacks on the trade union rights and right to collective bargaining. This meeting also appeals to the other Trade Union Centres to build up a united reistance against these attacks.

On Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention Act)

This Working Committee meeting of CITU held at Trivandrum from May 31 to June 2, 1985 denounces the enactment of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act through which the Central Government has armed itself with unprecedented draconian powers. While condemning the acts of terrorism unleashed by the Khalistani secessionist group backed by imperialist powers, this meeting expresses total opposition to the Act, as the past experience shows that such acts are invariably used against the democratic movement of the people. The Government is already sufficiently armed with powers to deal with terrorist activities. Yet it has not been able to contain terrorism. On the contrary, a number of trade union activists has become the target of the Acts. Moreover, the Act also empowers the Central Government to exercise any power on the issue of law and order which is constitutionally vested on the State Governments. It is another attack on the legitimate powers of the States.

While demanding withdrawal of the Act and other draconian legislations, the meeting calls upon the State Committees and the affiliated unions and appeals to all trade unions and democratic forces to raise their voice against these enactments and build up united campaign to fight the extremists and their terrorism.

Consumer Price Index Numbers (Base 1960)

State/Centre	Feb. 1985	Mar. 1985	April 1985								
				Bangalore	653	648	656	Coonoor	664	654	652
				Chikamagalur	599	588	580	Madurai	630	610	612
				Kolar G.F.	589	570	580	U.P.			
Audhra Pradesh				Kerala				Kanpur	558	562	574
Gudur	533	524	524	Alleppey	664	641	643	Saharanpur	558	590	603
Guntur	630	626	635	Alwaye	638	638	630	Varanasi	653	666	667
Hyderabad	589	585	592	Mundakayam	584	582	582	West Bengal			
Assam				Madhya Pradesh				Asansol	579	585	589
Digboi	579	589	600	Balaghat	588	599	604	Calcutta	566	569	579
Doom Dooma	457	462	491	Bhopal	619	626	639	Darjeeling	481	481	487
Labac	480	476	480	Gwalior	573	578	594	Howrah	524	532	539
Mariani	512	506	517	Indore	600	604	615	Jalpaiguri	483	489	493
Rangapara	494	497	505	Maharashtra				Raniganj	598	503	511
Bihar				Bombay	614	626	638	Delhi Territory	600	606	616
Jamshedpur	525	534	546	Nagpur	608	613	613	Other Centres			
Jharia	513	514	520	Sholapur	615	609	614	Berhampur ('49)	812	809	848
Kodarma	581	581	593	Orissa				Cuttack ('49)	790	787	795
Monghyr	593	584	590	Barbil	545	548	555	Jabalpur ('49)	743	775	779
Noamundi	517	527	528	Sambalpur	513	624	650	Beawar ('51-52)	679	676	683
Gujarat				Punjab				Tripura ('61)	540	542	551
Ahmedabad	567	572	577	Amritsar	591	596	603	H.P. ('65)	425	429	432
Bhavanagar	588	592	607	Rajasthan				Goa ('66)	444	447	453
Haryana				Ajmer	583	583	585	Bhilai ('66)	397	396	396
Yamunanagar	572	584	603	Jaipur	603	603	609	Bhilwara ('66)	346	345	351
J. & K.				Tamil Nadu				Chhindwara ('66)	308	311	311
Srinagar	617	645	652	Madras	594	582	598	Kothagudem ('66)	387	380	384
Karnataka				Coimbatore	643	638	641	Rourkela ('66)	385	387	392
Ammathi	604	593	595					All India ('60)	585	586	594

(Figures in bracket indicate base year)

Secretariat Decision

THE Secretariat of Centre of Indian Trade Unions, which met at Delhi on July 12 under the Presidency of Com. B.T. Ranadive heard reports of repression and instances of authorities going back their earlier assurances. The Secretariat condemned the Maharashtra Government for detaining Nar-sayya Adams, a CITU leader of Sholapur, who had been leading the Textile Workers struggle by going back on its assurances that National Security Act will not be applied against the trade union and political leaders. The grounds of detention of Shri Adams show that he is being detained for "making inciting speeches before the textile workers" and this exposes the Maharashtra Govt's repressive step against CITU.

The Secretariat also denounced the arrest of Balkar Singh and 20 workers of Anandpur Sahib Hydel Project under Special Courts Act for their movement against retrenchment in violation of assurance given in Parliament. In this case also the Punjab State Electricity Board Authorities, the Secretary, Irrigation and Power, Punjab Govt. and Governor of Punjab had given assurances that the workers in Anandpur Sahib Hydel Project would be absorbed in the on-going projects after the work there is concluded which has been violated and 3000 workers have already been retrenched, while 3000 others are expecting retrenchment any day. The Secretariat demanded immediate release of Adams, Balkar Singh and other trade union leaders who have thus been detained on false charges.

The Secretariat heard reports about the feasibility of holding a convention of textile workers after the New Textile Policy has been announced. The Secretariat desired that the efforts should be made to have the convention sometime in September 1985.

The Secretariat heard the report of the meeting with the Planning Commission which was attended by M.K. Pandhe. It noted that even INTUC had to accuse the Planning Commission for neglect of labour issues and anti-labour policy of the Govt.

The Secretariat heard the report about holding of State level Convention on Closure, Lock-out and Retrenchment. In Orissa, West Bengal and Bihar preliminary steps have been taken. In Uttar Pradesh, such a Convention is being held on July 21st. The Secretariat decided that Narsingha Chakrabarty would attend the same.

The Secretariat heard the report of holding of a Convention of Workers in Sugar industry to be held at Neoli, Dist. Etah on August 10 & 11. Unions in the Sugar industry were advised to attend the same.

The Secretariat heard the report from P.K. Ganguly who attended a seminar on Workers Participation in NTC. He had raised the question of closing down 26 NTC Mills which appeared in the press and said that workers were never consulted before such a decision was taken. This goes against the spirit of workers' participation. Shri C.S. Singh while replying to the discussion referred to this point

and assured the gathering that it would not be closed. M.K. Pandhe added that the Scheme in NTC is a different one and the workers' side can send only 2 representatives while the management sends five representatives. It was decided to take up the matter organisationally.

The Secretariat heard reports about the Safety And Health Accident Reduction Action Plan (SAHARA) and found the plan to be deficient on many counts. It decided to submit a rejoinder to the plan expressing the views of CITU on the subject.

The Secretariat heard the report of the meeting of workers in Building and Construction Industry. It fully supported their decision to observe an All India Demands Day of Construction Workers. It directed the State Committees to pay more attention to the organisations in the Building and Construction Industry.

The Secretariat also reiterated the decision of the Working Committee Meeting held at Trivandrum and called upon the CITU State Committees and affiliated unions to make preparations for unitedly observing 1st September as the 'Day of Peace' this year. This year being the 40th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the meeting as per the call given by WFTU also called for holding solidarity actions on August 2 and 9 as international days of united action for total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Com. B.T. Ranadive, Com. Samar Mukherjee, Com. M.K. Pandhe, Com. Narsingha Chakrabarty, Com. P.K. Ganguly, Com. E. Balananda attended the meeting.

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Central Trade Unions Meet Planning Commission

ALL the representatives of the central trade unions participating in the meeting convened by the Planning Commission at Delhi on July 1 to discuss the Seventh Five Year Plan, strongly criticised the basic approach of the Plan itself. They insisted with one voice that the Plan policies required drastic change if it was to serve the objective of economic growth with social justice.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission who presided over the meeting, stated in his introductory remarks that the Planning Commission did not claim to have adequate solutions to all the problems facing the economy. Noting that the organised working class had a crucial role to play in planning he appealed to the trade unions to suggest improvements in the Plan approach so that a national consensus could be developed. K. R. Narayanan, Minister of State for Planning, observed that the Seventh Plan was much bigger than the earlier plan and that emphasis on higher technology was bound to have its impact on the economy and employment pattern. Prof. M.G.K. Menon, Member of the Planning Commission, emphasised that with the advancement of sophisticated technology the question of protection of labour displaced by its introduction assumed importance. Hiten Bhaya, another Member of the Planning Commission raised the problem of public sector undertakings whose performance was much below the mark. "We have got into a rut" he said and wanted to know from the trade unions in what manner the economy could come out of it.

G. Ramanujam, President INTUC, expressed his anxiety over the growing unemployment of meanacing proportions, noting that after completion of every Plan more and more people remained unemployed. He opposed giving a blanket permission for computerisation and stated that jobs which could be done by men should not be given to computers. Criticising the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Textiles he noted that no representative of labour was included in it on the plea that T.U. representatives have no expertise. As a result, bureaucrats who have not even seen a textile mill have prepared the Report.

M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU, demanded periodic discussions with the trade unions on all aspects of planning. He criticised the permission granted to multinational companies and Indian big business houses to enter the core sector of economy, contrary to the industrial policy chalked out by the Government. The idea of winding up of public sector units which are not considered viable must be given up as it will lead to unemployment of lakhs of workers. In the name of import liberalisation the Government of India permitted import of products which could be produced indigenously. This would only lead to the closure of several more units, when according to official figures, more than 80,000 units have already been declared either as sick or closed down. He expressed concern at the reported decision of the Planning Commission to cut down the targets sug-

gested by the Working Group, in the core sector. The outlay on oil has been cut by about 50 per cent. Similarly the outlays on steel and coal have also been brought down.

This would only mean that the country's dependence on foreign countries would continue to grow. The power crisis also continued to be serious and unutilised capacity was increasing due to repeated power breakdowns. The inadequate supply of wagons was causing serious bottlenecks in the transport of goods, and had posed a serious threat to the wagon building industry itself. He further pointed out that the acceptance of the conditionalities of the IMF by the Government of India considerably affected the growth rate of our economy. The multinational companies are being permitted to operate in areas in which they were not allowed in the past. By refusal to nationalise the foreign drug companies as per the recommendations of the Hathi Committee, the Govt. was giving green signal to these companies to exploit the Indian people. The preference given to foreign technology, ignoring the development of Indian knowhow had already evoked strong reactions from wellknown scientists in India.

Coming to the new textile policy M.K. Pandhe stated that it would spell disaster for lakhs of workers engaged in the industry and crores of consumers of textile cloth. It would benefit only the profit hungry millowners whose cry for further modernisation was being accepted by the Government. The CITU demanded nationalisation of the jute, textile and sugar industries. He further observed that the talk of a national wage policy was meant only to freeze the wages of organised workers on the old plea that wages in the unorganised sector were very low. But the very wages fixed under the Minimum Wages Act by the Government were much below the poverty line, and there was no machinery to enforce even these paltry wages. Though the Planning Commission had shown lip sympathy for women workers nothing tangible was done to protect their jobs and discriminatory working conditions. As a result of the failure of the Government to introduce genuine land reforms in the rural sector, the people below the poverty line have been increasing day by day. Whatever money has been injected into agriculture has been pocketed by the rural rich, When the Government talked of lack of resources it failed to take any tangible step to mop up black money. Hence the CITU opposed the claim of the Planning Commission regarding lack of resources, he said. Concluding his observation, he said that the net result of the policies visualised in the Approach to the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) would only be a further concentration of economic power in the hands of fewer persons and a phenomenal increase in the number of people below the poverty line.

Others who spoke were A. N. Buch (NLO), R.K. Samant Rai (HMS) and R.K. Bhakt (BMS). Dr. Manmohan Singh agreed to meet the trade unions periodically so that their views could be taken into consideration even at the implementation stage.

Kota Workers Fight Repression

THE annual conference of J. K. Tyre Cord Mazdoor Union, one of the three unions which led the historic struggle against retrenchment in 1983, was held in Kota on June 25. Nrisingha Chakrabarty, Secretary, CITU attended the Conference. The success of the Conference dispelled the apprehension that there may be some adverse reaction against the CITU since only in May 85, the agreement signed by the CITU was defeated by 144 votes. But the loyalty of the workers to the CITU once again established itself over disruption and repression. It was now clear that a section of the workers was swayed by the opportunist propaganda that no one could be deprived of whatever was secured through the agreement and if the workers voted against the agreement, the Tribunal might give something more. Hence some workers voted against the agreement. The Secretary of the J. K. Tyre Cord Mazdoor Union said that 77 per cent of the workers now supported the agreement, which showed that the workers still followed the CITU.

New Attempt at Disruption

The renegade Dhanda-Punamia group did not remain idle. As soon as they knew about the annual conference they started a campaign that now an agreement on the workload was in the offing and this meeting was a prelude the same. They alleged that Singhanian had travelled with the CITU Secretary by the same train. One of the newspapers helped them by publishing this lie in the form of a letter to the Editor. The lie was, however, nailed down and the workers later on accosted those who sent the letter to the Editor.

Tirath Ram, Secretary of the Union had prepared a written report. Democratic functioning of the mass organisation was the key slogan in this conference. As stated by the General Secretary of the union, the workers were finding for themselves how democratic functioning in the trade union organisation can be secured.

The meeting was addressed by Hariram Chauhan, Secretary, Rajasthan State Committee of the CPI(M), Krishna Kant Verma, President and Prem Krishna Sharma, General Secretary of the Rajasthan State Committee of CITU, besides Nrisingha Chakrabarty, the CITU Secretary. Sumitra Swamy, Secretary of the Rajasthan Democratic Women's Association greeted the conference. She urged upon the delegates to encourage the women members in their families to participate in the activities of the Janwadi Mahila Samity so that the organisation could provide real support to the working class movement.

An executive committee of 40 members and 14 office bearers was elected unanimously. R.K. Swamy and Tirath Ram were re-elected as President and General Secretary of the Union respectively.

CITU Denounces Retrenchment and Repression in Punjab

B.T. Ranadive, President, Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement on July 10.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions denounces arrest of Shri Balkar Singh and 20 others on 3.7.1985 from Anandpur Sahib Hydel Project Under Special Courts Act. The workers were agitated, because over three thousands workers of Anandpur Sahib Hydel Project have been retrenched in clear contravention of the assurances of the Punjab State Electricity Board Authorities, the Secretary, Irrigation and Power, Punjab Govt. and the Governor of Punjab. While all of them are committed to adjust the workers in the on going projects without being retrenched, the Anandpur Sahib Hydel Project Authorities issued the retrenchment orders on three thousands workers, while five thousands new workers are being recruited in Thien Dam Project. Another 3000 workers are also going to be retrenched. What is most reprehensible, is that, instead of honouring the past commitments and solving the case of retrenchment by directing the workers straight away to report to the Thien Dam for absorption, the management caused brutal police lathicharge on 1st and 2nd July, 1985 on the workers who were in dharna before the authorities and had Shri Balkar Singh and 20 others arrested under the Special Court Act. Thus the fears expressed by the organised trade union movement that such arbitrary powers are actually used to break the legitimate trade union struggle are once again proved true.

The CITU demands that the Central Government should intervene immediately and ensure that the earlier assurances are duly honoured and Shri Balkar Singh and other arrested leaders are immediately released. The CITU directs all its unions in the Building and Construction Industry to express their solidarity by fully supporting the struggle of these workers by sending protest telegrams and resolution to the Government, as has been decided by the Co-ordination Committee of Indian Construction Workers Union in its meeting held on 10th July, 1985. The CITU also directs all its State Committees to protest against increasing attacks of CITU Unions in Punjab.

AIREC Plans Mass Dharna

IN the recently concluded meeting of its Working Committee at Mughalsarai the All India Railway Employees Confederation (AIREC) has decided to stage mass Dharna at all Divisional Headquarters from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. on August 22, 1985 in order to draw attention of the authorities and the public to the urgent demands of railwaymen. The demands include early publication of Pay Commission Report, fixing minimum wage at Rs. 1000.00 at consumer price index 500, which is equivalent to the minimum pay of the public sector organisation ONGC at the same level of prices. The other demands the AIREC wants to highlight are: Withdraw all existing victimisation and stop further victimisations; Stop introduction of 3rd, 4th & 5th generation computers, adopt democratic norms for recognition of unions. The units will submit memorandum embodying these demands to the Divisional authorities during Dharna.

The Working Committee further decided that unless adequate positive response is forthcoming, the AIREC would stage Dharna before the Parliament (at the Boat Club) in November 1985.

In a resolution the Working Committee recorded its protest against the inadequacy of the second DA instalment.

The main occupation of the Working Committee was with the review of its organisational position. A detailed discussion of the organisational position of all the constituents of the Confederation took place to identify the weak spots so that appropriate steps might be taken to remove them.

The Working Committee decided to resume the tour programme by the leaders to cover the railways which were left out during the earlier programme.

The Working Committee admitted the All India Canteen Workers Federation as its affiliate.

AIRF to Stage Dharna

The Working Committee of the All India Railwaymen's Federation meeting in Mysore last month, expressed its serious concern over non-implementation of agreed decision at various forums by the Ministry of Railways, meagre amount of second instalment of Interim Relief, inordinate delay in submission of Pay Commission Report etc.

The Working Committee criticised the current year's budget for imposing further burden on the common man, for its highly inflationary effect. It has criticised the ban on recruitment which not only aggravates the already serious unemployment situation, but also causes safety hazards for the commuters as well as the staff because of inadequate maintenance of rolling stock due to staff shortage resulting from the ban. The resolution criticised the authorities for not fixing rational duty hours speci-

ally for the running staff, demanded abolition of casual labour system etc and warned the Govt. to stop victimisation.

To highlight the failure of the machinery, miserable plight of railwayman and also to bring it to the notice of the Prime Minister, press and the public, the working committee has decided to stage two-day Dharna commencing on 27th August 85 in front of the Prime Minister's residence. Simultaneously, Dharna, processions, demonstrations and meetings should be held at all important Centres of Indian Railways.

Authoritarian Attitude

The Assistant Labour Commissioner (Central), Bilaspur is reported to have summoned the President of the Indian Railways Traction Workers Association (IRTW W) to his office and warned him, reportedly under instruction from the Labour Ministry not to make any representation to the Labour Ministry in regard to staff of other establishments. This is the sequel of the Traction workers Association submitting memorandum to the Labour Ministry protesting illegal transfer of a leader of Madhya Pradesh Medical Representatives Association, R.K. Srivastava.

The Railway Workers are highly resentful of what they consider to be an authoritarian attitude of the Labour Department.

Erratum

In the June '85 issue, it was erroneously reported that T. Hamumaya addressed the open session of the 10th Annual General meeting of the LRSA, Chakradharpur Division. It was actually addressed by M.N. Prasad, Joint General Secretary, A.I.L.R.S.A.

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Onward march to a greater success

The Left Front Government in West Bengal is the culmination of a long history of struggles and sacrifices on the part of the democratic masses. Its eighth anniversary is an occasion as much to remember the significance of those struggles as to assess objectively its record of performance.

No State Government can afford to overlook the shackles imposed on its acts and activities by the existing constitutional arrangements. The Left Front Government is fully aware of these constraints. It has none the less used the two successive mandates it has received to serve the cause of the people with the limited resources at its command. Even as it has struggled to reorient the relationship between the Centre and the States, it has made major strides in ushering in a structure of decentralised administration. Its experiment with panchayati raj institutions has been an eye-opener to the rest of the nation. Its endeavours in the sphere of land reforms and

primary education has unleashed the dreams and hopes of millions of the agrarian poor, who have learned that they can win their rights only if they learn to assert their rights.

Within the ambit of given resources, the State Government has tried to channel funds into agriculture and irrigation and into small and cottage crafts so that income and employment opportunities could multiply for the poor and the dispossessed. In the organised industrial sector, despite the negative attitude of the Union Government, it has in recent weeks created new openings which have thrown up possibilities of a major upsurge in output and employment. Installed power capacity has nearly been doubled since 1977, leading to a transformation in the climate for industrial growth. Similar advances have taken place in the transport sector too.

For the hitherto neglected sections belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes and those inhabiting the slopes of the Himalayas, the State Government's quiet efforts have released fresh hopes.

There are certainly some weaknesses which the Left Front Government has not been able to overcome in the eight years of its existence. Its endeavours will continue to correct the negative features. It however takes pride in one solid achievement. It has given back pride and dignity to the millions who constitute the majority of the State's population. It is this dignity which provides the capital stock on which the State will build its democratic destiny in the coming years.

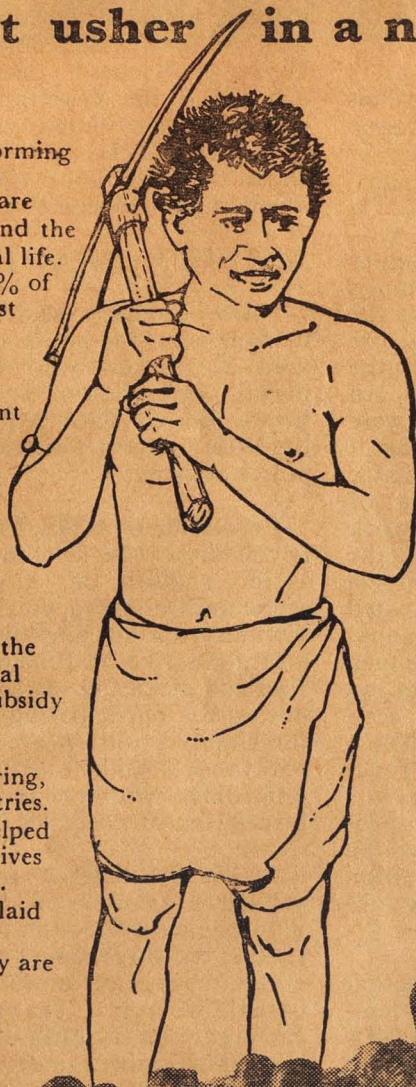
Government of West Bengal



BEENAS/CA/1983

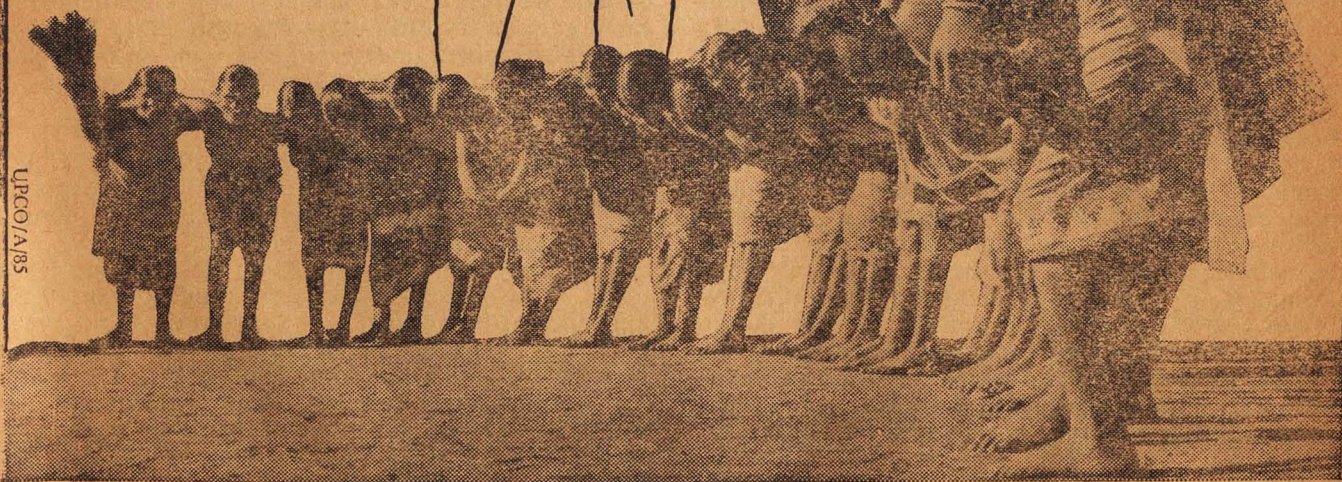
From Social Backwardness to Enlightenment— Determined Efforts of the Left Front Government usher in a new era

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people forming the bulk of backward class population of our society are economically lagging behind the mainstream of our national life. They constitute almost 28% of the total population of West Bengal and are divided in 38 tribal communities of which 50% are Santhals. The Left Front Government of West Bengal rightly feels that they deserve more assistance from the Government. Hence, for the last eight years, it has been persistently trying to uplift these classes through various programmes. As a part of the welfare programme, special financial assistance and subsidy are offered to them for promoting agriculture, pisciculture, livestock-rearing, forestry and cottage industries. Young people are being helped in small trades. Co-operatives are also being encouraged. Special emphasis is being laid on their education. Besides free schooling, they are



being provided with text books and exercise books, dresses and midday meal. And a scheme of maintenance grant has been introduced for the students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Santhali script 'Ol-Chiki' has been officially recognised and it is being encouraged for development of Santhali language and spread of education among the Santhali students in their mother tongue. Despite constraints, several projects are under progress to preserve tribal culture. Setting up of Sidhu-Kanu Cultural Centre at Suri, Jhargram Tribal Cultural Centre and opening of two more centres at Purulia and Alipurduar for development of tribal culture are but honest efforts of the Left Front Government in this direction. Measures have been taken to preserve 'Totos' of Jalpaiguri—the tiniest tribe numbering 600 from extinction. The Left Front Government is committed and determined to bring up the backward classes to their rightful position in society and lead them to a bright and proud future.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL



UPCO/A/85

AROUND THE STATES

TAMILNADU

Convention of State Sector Workers: A State level convention of CITU unions in the State owned Corporations, Boards and industrial establishments was held at Madras on June 30. About 200 delegates from twentyfive establishments like electricity, transport, local bodies, water and drainage board, rubber plantation, cooperatives and small industries attended the convention. K. Vaithinathan, the State CITU Secretary presided over the convention and A.K. Padmanabhan, the State Assistant General Secretary moved the resolution. The resolution condemned the State authorities for their blatant attack on the elementary trade union rights of the workers. Their attitude in this respect had no difference with the private sector employers. In the Electricity Board even demonstrations, dharnas and meetings were punishable offences. Mass illegal transfers, even of women employees, were being resorted to. Vigilance officers of the Board under the Inspector General of Police were being deputed to do surveillance work over trade union activities of the workers. In the State Transport Corporation, dharna and demonstrations even after the duty hours were being treated as strikes debarring the workers from the annual incentive scheme. Over and above, the musclemen of the ruling party were being deputed to beat up the workers participating in such trade union activities. In the water and drainage board and in some local bodies circulars were issued banning the functioning of the CITU unions. The convention formulated a six-point charter of demands and a programme of actions in pursuance of the same, which included observance of July 15 as the trade union rights day and mass relay fast in all the state establishments on July 30.

State CITU Meeting: The State CITU met at Nagercoil from June 12 to 14 under the president of M. Nanjappan. R. Umanath, briefed the new orientation of the economic policy of the Central Government in the light of the deliberations in the CITU Working Committee meeting. A.K. Padmanabhan placed the work report which dealt with the various struggles of the workers in the state. It extended support to the struggles and discussed plans to carry forward the struggles of the State sector workers. It called upon the unions to mobilise women workers for the success of the all India Demands on August 15 as decided by the AICCWW. It was also extended support to the protest day to be observed by the handloom worker on July 8 and to the proposed indefinite strike by the textile workers. The meeting also adopted a resolution supporting the peasants' struggles in the state.

Indefinite Strike by Textile Workers: Over two lakh textile workers of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry

went on an indefinite strike from July 16, defying a ban order by the State Government. Called by the Joint Action Committee of all unions including that of AIADMK, the strike protested against scuttling the collective bargaining right of the workers and reference of the demands of the managements under SIMA, for adjudication under 10B of the I.D. Act, and demanded negotiated settlement of the workers' demands. Congratulating the workers for their valiant strike defying the ban orders, R. Umanath, General Secretary of the State CITU denounced the Government-SIMA collusion and demanded negotiated settlement. B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU also issued a statement on July 19 extending full support to the strike and demanding a negotiated settlement of the workers' demands.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Police brutality protested: At the behest of the management, the police brutally lathi charged and fired at workers who were agitating against the illegal termination of eight workers in the Venkateshwara Boiled Rice Mill. All the CITU unions in the West Godavari district demonstrated against the police atrocity.

Repression on RMS, MMS Workers: In a specially convened state level meeting, the RMS Employees Union chalked out a programme of relay hunger strike and non-cooperation in protest against the victimisation of employees for taking part in the all India strike on June 6. Six hundred RTPS and six hundred casual workers were not allowed to join duties for participating in the strike. In a letter to the Union Minister of Communications, P. Satyanarayana, President of the State CITU demanded immediate withdrawal of the victimisations and restoration of normalcy.

Strike by Samrat Investment Employees: On serving a charter of demand by the union, the management of Samrat Investments, Hyderabad transferred three main activists to Kashmir, terminated the services of another three and dismissed 60 casual workers. The management also deployed hired goondas to intimidate the workers. But the workers remained undeterred and went on one day's complete strike on June 25. All other unions have extended full support to the struggle.

Meeting of State CITU: The A.P. State CITU met at Vijayawada on July 10 under the Presidency of P. Satyanarayana. N. Prasad Rao submitted a report. The meeting decided to convene a convention of all trade unions on closures and lock-outs. It also decided to observe August 6 and 9 as anti-nuclear bomb days and September 1 as Peace Day. The meeting also decided to hold state level meetings of Hamalies, municipal workers and textile workers separately and hold demonstrations of the work charge employees and working women at Hyderabad on their various demands during the Assembly session. The meeting also adopted resolutions on various issues facing the working class.

KARNATAKA

Meeting of State Council: The Karnataka State Council of CITU met at Hubli on June 29 and 30 under the presidentship of Suryanaraya Rao. In his General Secretary's report C. Nanjundappa reviewed the struggles since the last State Conference in May, 1984. Suryanarayana Rao gave a report of the last Working Committee meeting of CITU. The meeting adopted a resolution on the burning problems of the workers in the state. It also adopted a resolution demanding starting of the Vijayanagar Steel Plant, Mangalore Oil Refinery and against the decision to shift the BEML third unit from the state. It also called upon the workers to picket the Central Government offices and launch Rail Roko agitation on July 8 on the issue of several railway projects. M.M. Rajamma reported about the meeting of AICCWW. The all India demands day of Working Women will be observed at Karnataka on August 6. The meeting also adopted resolution on peace, the new textile policy, on demands of the Kolar Gold Mine workers and other issues.

Minimum Wage Convention: The State CITU organised a Minimum Wage convention at Bangalore on June 23 which was presided over by Suryanarayan Rao. The convention was greeted by M.C. Narasimham of AITUC and P. Ramachandra Rao of AIKS. V.J.K. Nair placed a note on the problems of the unorganised workers. 19 delegates including two women participated in the discussions. On the basis of the discussions, C. Nanjundappa placed a draft declaration containing 13-point demands and calling for a statewide one day strike and picketing of Government offices on August 9. The declaration which was adopted unanimously called upon the workers in the organised sector and appealed to all other central trade unions to support the strike call. The convention decided to hold district and regional conventions before the end of July in preparation for the strike.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Strike by Hotel Workers: Initiated by CITU, the hotel workers of Simla went on an indefinite strike on June 28 demanding minimum wage. The Himachal Pradesh Government had issued a notification on May 30 allowing a very meagre increase in the minimum wages of the hotel workers, which they rejected and went on strike. Initially with a prior decision, the strike was jointly conducted by CITU and AITUC. But the leadership of AITUC suddenly back-stabbed the struggle and in collaboration with the Government surrendered before the owners of the big hotels. Taking advantage of the AITUC's surrender, the Government in collusion with the managements started vindictive actions against the CITU activists. They deducted wages during the strike period and forced a number of workers to sign apology letters. 21 active workers have been arrested and involved in false cases. The CITU however decided to continue the strike and

raise struggle fund to maintain the worker's families. Over Rs. 10,000/- have already been collected and the morale of the CITU workers is still high.

Similarly at Parwanoo, the Kamla Dial workers are on indefinite strike for about two months. At Kala Amb, the workers of Olgi Paper Mill are also on struggle against closure. The State CITU organised two public meetings at Simla and Parwanoo in support of the struggling workers which were addressed by Ajay Biswas, M.P. (CPI-M).

HARYANA

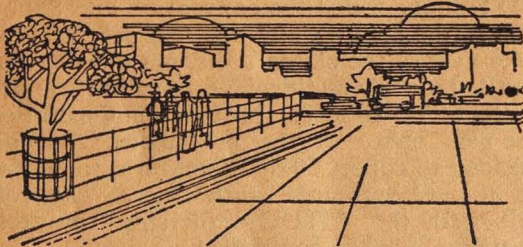
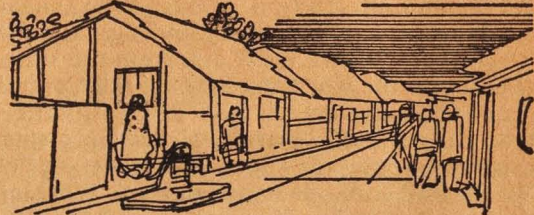
Trade Union Convention: The State Campaign Committee organised a convention at Hissar on July 14 on closures, lockouts, computerisations and on minimum wage. The convention was attended by more than 200 delegates from 20 trade unions. The Convention was held in pursuance of the call given by the State level convention held at Faridabad on May 28. Ram Kishan, President of Hissar district CITU inaugurated the convention and Sahbir Singh moved the main resolution. The resolution demanded take over of the closed units, nationalisation of the textile industry and decided to submit joint memoranda at Tehsil levels through demonstrations. For the next phase of the movement, the convention decided to collect 50,000 signatures to be submitted to the Government authorities. The convention criticised the AITUC leadership who refused to participate in the convention.

Com. P. Laxmidas

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the death of Com. P. Laxmidas on June 20 at Hyderabad at the age of 74. Com. P. Laxmidas was a member of the General Council of CITU, Vice-president of A.P. CITU State Council, a secretariat member of Hyderabad City Secretariat of CPI(M) and a former Member of Parliament. He was in the leadership of several workers' unions and the founder of the work charge employees' movement in Andhra Pradesh. Com. Laxmidas was attracted to the Communist ideology at an early age and took active part in building up the Communist Party in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. He directly participated in the Telengana peasants' armed struggle and had to work underground for five years during the period. On his death the CITU and the communist movement have lost a dedicated worker and leader. The CITU dips its red banner in memory of Com. Laxmidas and sends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family.

PROGRESS ON THE URBAN FRONT

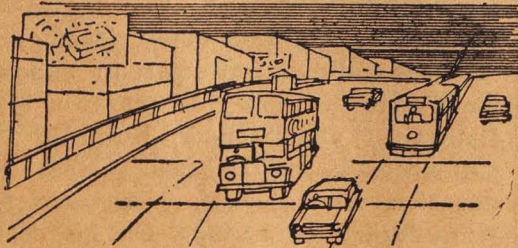
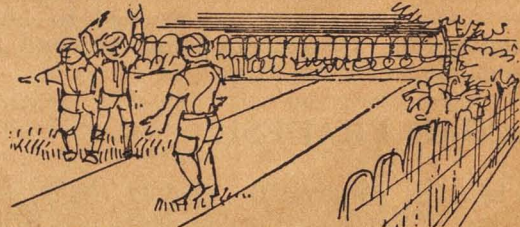
- ★ Elections were held in 110 municipalities and their administration turned over to the elected representatives. 14 new municipalities were set up over the past eight years. There are 111 Municipalities in the State at present.
- ★ Number of 'Notified Area' and 'Town committees' grew from 100 in 1977 to 114. Proposals for 15 more municipalities are under consideration.
- ★ Facilities like increased wages, pension scheme, group insurance scheme, ex-gratia schemes etc., have been extended to employees of Calcutta Corporation. The 28 employees, whose services were terminated between 1972 and 1977 on political consideration, have been reinstated. State aid to ease the financial crisis of municipalities exceeded Rs. 175 crores over the past eight years.



- ★ To render faster municipal services a 'Wireless Network' has been set up at Calcutta Corporation.
- ★ Drinking Water Supply in Calcutta has increased by 6 crore gallons over the past eight years. 2.5 crore gallons are being supplied now from the Garden Reach Water Supply Project. 2 new pumps have been installed at Tala. Booster Pumping Stations have been commissioned at Auckland Square and Subodh Mullick Square.
- ★ 85% of slum development work in Calcutta is nearly complete extending benefit to 11.5 lakh out of a total of 13.5 lakh slum-dwellers. Programmes for the development of the rest 2 lakh people have been taken up.
- ★ Garbage clearance has been accelerated with the help of modern equipment and vehicles.
- ★ A broad-based afforestation scheme has been taken up to prevent environmental pollution in Calcutta.

The Left-front Government's urban development measures over the past eight years.

- ★ In the five years 1972 to 1977, the internal income of Calcutta Corporation and state subsidy were Rs. 78.42 and Rs. 33.44 crores respectively. During the tenure of the Left-Front Government this income and state-aid increased to Rs. 205.44 and Rs. 174.99 crores respectively. Total expenditure of Calcutta Corporation between 1972-'77 was Rs. 90.96 crores. Over the past eight years this expenditure has gone up to Rs. 321.31 crores. It may be mentioned here that the total state-aid for Calcutta Road Development between 1972-'77 was Rs. 16 lakhs and 50 thousand. Under the present Government this aid has increased to Rs. 22 crores and 45 lakhs.



- ★ Automatic Traffic Signals have been installed at several important street crossings. The Metropolitan By-Pass has been opened to the public upto the Rash Behari Avenue Connector.
- ★ Work on the 2nd Hooghly Bridge will be completed by 1987. Ferry services across the Hooghly have also been expanded.
- ★ Fire Services in Calcutta have been modernised. All the Fire Service Centres in the city now have 'Wireless' facilities.
- ★ Mechanical means have been adopted for cleaning of the sewerage system and an allotment of Rs. 5 crores has been made under this head.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

Declaration of Socialist Countries on the Position in the International Labour Organisation

[The Declaration, circulated in Geneva at the beginning of May as an official ILO document, was approved by the member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (except Romania) at the tenth meeting of the permanent working groups of the CMEA Executive Committee held in Moscow this February at deputy foreign minister and deputy foreign trade minister level.]

THE socialist countries which adopted this Declaration attach great importance to the promotion of international cooperation on issues within the ILO's competence. This is what motivates their numerous concrete proposals designed to attain the aims of the ILO Constitution, as well as their desire to use this Organisation's potential for strengthening world peace and protecting the workers' vital interests and rights. The ILO has drafted and adopted a number of conventions and recommendations which, on the whole, serve the interests of the working people and their trade unions. The Organisation is making a palpable contribution to the efforts of the international community to eliminate the odious apartheid system. Useful activities are being carried out on a number of specific social and labour problems. Yet, our overall assessment of the results of the activities of the ILO and of its Secretariat administration remains negative; there is a need for a radical change in the Organisation's work.

The ILO's basic concept and structure were worked out in 1919 and have remained essentially unchanged since then. The Organisation virtually ignores the fact that among its members are socialist and developing countries. By following its old course, the ILO in effect serves the interests of only one socio-political system, that of capitalism, and attempts to impose its will and ways on other states.

In its present form, the principle of tripartism does not reflect the realities existing in the member states and moreover, is used to discriminate against non-governmental representatives of many states.

The socialist countries are gravely concerned over the abnormal situation in the ILO, whose activities, particularly in the recent time, have been characterized by:

— a clear disregard for, and a playing down of, the importance of issues that affect the workers' basic interests, above all the right to life and the right to work;

— attempts to use the Organisation for unseemly political ends against socialist and other progressive countries in order to interfere in their internal affairs;

— discrimination against socialist countries, making their full participation in ILO activities impossible; a number of politically biased decisions adopted by its bodies; an absence of necessary prerequisites and possibilities for equal cooperation of all countries and parties in the ILO.

All this undermines the ILO's universality and makes its practical activities ever less corresponding to its constitutional aims.

1. The steady growth of unemployment in the non-socialist countries, which brings suffering, disease, hunger and despair to the people who lost their jobs or never even had one, calls for vigorous and urgent action on the part of the ILO. The ILO's contribution in dealing with this problem remains, however, quite modest at best. Its activities in this field are marked by a dispersal of efforts on numerous issues and projects of secondary importance. The World Employment Programme, proclaimed a few years ago, has proved unable to influence appreciably the solution of the employment problem in the non-socialist world.

The ILO has made no progress either in an area where, it would seem, it should have been the first to have its say — in contributing to inclusion in the Convention of the right to work, the worker's fundamental right which was long ago proclaimed by the United Nations, in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1969 Declaration on Social Progress and Development, and which was incorporated in international law by the adoption in 1966 of the international Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The ILO has not so far sufficiently assisted the developing countries in the realisation of the right to work.

Nor has the ILO been active enough on such important issues, as protecting the working people's incomes against inflation and safeguarding trade union freedoms at TNC-owned factories. Everything that has been done so far in these fields is of no assistance even in exposing the real causes behind the infringement of the workers' right and interests so as to help them protect their rights.

Despite the numerous proposals of socialist countries, the above issues, so crucial for the workers of the overwhelming majority of the ILO member states, have not been the subject matter of ILO conventions, which substantially impairs the ILO's potential in tackling its fundamental tasks under present conditions.

2. Within its terms of reference the ILO ought to assist in dealing with the pressing problems of today, particularly by contributing to the preserva-

tion and consolidation of peace and international security, to the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe, and to a halt of the arms race which places a heavy burden on the shoulders of the working people. Of late, however, we are witnessing a deliberate slowing down of ILO activities related to peace and disarmament. Specifically, unlike other specialized agencies, the ILO has taken no appropriate action effectively to help implement U.N. Resolution A 38/188j on organisational arrangements, relating to the process of disarmament or other relevant decisions and resolutions adopted both by the U.N. and the ILO itself.

The Publication of several articles on the socio-economic aspects of disarmament and the carrying out of one study can hardly be considered a fitting contribution to the cause of disarmament by such a major international organisation as the ILO. A greater financial provision is required for the ILO activities in studying the issues of peace and the socio-economic aspects of disarmament. Pursuant to the resolution on the economic and social aspects of disarmament adopted by the ILO International Labour Conference in 1981, the socialist countries have proposed working out a special ILO programme which would provide for analysing and studying available information and for holding international conferences, symposiums and seminars, including those on a regional level, on the socio-economic aspects of disarmament. Though the progressive forces put forward appropriate proposals, neither the Governing body nor the Director-General of the International Labour Office deemed it necessary to ensure fulfilment of the above-mentioned resolution.

At the same time we have witnessed, especially in recent years, widespread anti-war actions by working people in many countries of the world and their growing awareness of the danger of nuclear conflict. To ignore the opinions of millions of workers and of their trade unions on this cardinal issue of today, including the opinions voiced at ILO International Labour Conference, means deliberately to preclude the ILO from expressing or even reflecting the workers' interests.

The socialist countries expect that the ILO will be making its contribution to international cooperation in the interest of peace and disarmament, in particular, in view of the U.N. decision to proclaim 1986 the International Year of Peace, and that this event will be reflected in preparations for the ILO International Labour Conference and other activities.

3. The reactionary forces use the Organisation for ideological subversion against the socialist countries and attempt to interfere in our internal affairs under the pretext of supervising compliance with ILO conventions, going as far as demanding changes in the socialist countries' political and social structures, which is unacceptable in international relations.

Although called upon to promote equal cooperation among countries with different social systems, the ILO has proved unable to secure conditions necessary for the attainment of that objective within its own framework and is in fact becoming an instrument for undermining such co-operation.

The ILO's unseemly role has been particularly visible in respect of the Polish People's Republic. The Organisation has openly sided with the imperialist circles most hostile to socialist Poland and has become an instrument for gross interference in its internal affairs, an instrument for destabilizing the situation in that country. Despite repeated warnings by the Polish Government, by socialist and other countries about possible grave consequences that the continued anti-Polish campaign may have for the ILO, in November 1984 the Governing Body took another decision hostile to Poland, voted for mainly by the representatives of Western countries, employers and reformist trade unions. As a result, the Polish Government had to declare its decision to withdraw from the ILO.

The discussion of the so-called Polish question in the ILO confirms that the structural and political crisis in this Organization has deepened. Such actions, by raising obstacles in the way of equal cooperation among states with different social and political systems, put in question the very nature of the Organisation and may start the process of its disintegration.

As an act of their full solidarity and support for Poland's position and for its actions directed against the anti-Polish campaign launched by the imperialist and other reactionary forces within the ILO, the socialist countries will take appropriate steps to counter these forces and resolutely fight them so as to prevent the Organisation from being used as a vehicle of anti-communism by having its objectives distorted and its activities directed against the basic interests of the working masses, the socialist community and all progressive forces of the world.

4. The socialist states and a number of other countries have on many occasions expressed their dissatisfaction with the composition and functioning of the so-called ILO supervisory machinery charged with supervising the application of international labour standards. Instead of assisting its member states to effectively apply international labour standards in the spirit of constructive co-operation, mutual understanding and dialogue, the so-called supervisory machinery is increasingly assuming the functions of a judicial body in respect of a certain group of countries. If implemented, the socialist countries' proposals for restructuring the ILO's so-called supervisory machinery, submitted at the ILO conferences in 1983 and 1984, would strengthen the elements of cooperation in the Organisation currently overshadowed by the elements of confrontation, improve and democratize that machinery and assure its credibility among all member countries. However, the Director-

General has completely ignored the opinions of all those who spoke at the 70th session of the International Labour Conference in favour of seeking ways to improve the functioning of the existing supervisory machinery.

We flatly reject the allegations that socialist countries demand a special treatment in the ILO "supervisory" bodies. We have consistently held that these bodies should be objective in their activities, that they should recognise without bias the realities of socialism and of the socio-political development of our countries and should not cast aspersions on our realities and on the achievements in our social policy benefiting all working people. There is a striking contrast in the approach towards dealing with representations and complaints lodged against socialist or against imperialist states. Regardless of the subject under discussion be it trade union pluralism or relations between trade unions and ruling parties, the socialist states are in fact told to change the foundations of their social system, whereas gross violations of the workers' rights in capitalist countries are either passed over in silence or cynically justified, as was the case, for instance, with the disbanded air traffic controllers union in America.

Representatives of socialist countries are not admitted to such important bodies of so-called supervisory machinery as, for example, the Governing Body's Committee on Freedom of Association.

5. The socialist countries are profoundly interested in changing the ILO's existing structure and methods of work and bringing them in conformity with the present day political, social and economic realities.

The role of the International Labour Conference as the ILO supreme body is currently played down, and the Governing Body is composed in violation of the principles of equality generally recognized in the UN system. For instance, private capitalist employers are using their majority to block participation in the Governing Body of representatives of factory managers from socialist countries. In this connection the organisations representing socialist factory managers express their profound concern over the fact that they are being denied the possibility of fully participating in ILO activities at all levels. The socialist countries will continue their efforts to ensure that the process of democratisation of the ILO structure involve the adoption of all the decisions which meet the interests of the countries and parties, with due regard given to their legitimate interests.

6. National trade union organisations in socialist countries are deeply concerned about the stubborn reluctance of the ILO Secretariat administration to contribute to the development of cooperation and understanding among trade union movements of different political trends. In their view, political bias alone lies behind the Secretariat's refusal to promote the dissemination of objective and truthful

information about the role and place of trade unions in socialist society, about their real participation in running the state affairs at all levels, and about their rights and possibilities. Even a very modest proposal along these lines — to hold an international seminar on the situation of trade unions in socialist countries — is resolutely opposed. National trade union organisations of our countries certainly have sufficient means, besides the ILO, to reach world public opinion with true information about their activities. However, we are deeply convinced that it is the duty of the Organisation towards countries and parties participating in its activities to protect them from slander and false accusations.

7. The system of geographical rotation is applied inconsistently in filling elected posts in the ILO bodies, clearly discriminating against socialist countries. Contrary to any logic, socialist countries are barred from chairing major committees of the International Labour Conference, and in all their years in the ILO they have never held the chairmanship of the Governing Body. No similar situation can be found in any other organisation of the UN system.

The national trade union organisations in socialist countries are gravely concerned about open discrimination against their ILO representatives. Suffice it to note in this context that they are under-represented in the ILO bodies and elected posts. No trade union representative from socialist countries has ever been elected to the post of vice-president of an International Labour Conference or of any ILO committee.

If the ILO is to function normally, it is crucial that all of its bodies with a limited membership should have an equitable composition. But this problem is far from being solved. The unbalanced composition of the industrial committees is a case in point. For many years now the ILO has been discussing the question of changing the composition criteria for these committees, but a fair and non-discriminatory system of seat distribution has yet to be adopted, since the Western countries are unwilling to give up their privileged position.

8. Nationals from a narrow group of Western countries hold key positions in the International Labour Office in violation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts generally recognized in the UN system. The Director-General of the Office is adamant in refusing to take effective action to remedy this abnormal situation. The fact that the Western countries are unjustifiably over-represented in the Office has only introduced a certain political and ideological trend in ILO activities which does not reflect in a balanced way the legitimate interests and aspirations of the entire ILO membership. It is no accident that the socialist countries' rich experience in resolving social and labour problems is deliberately ignored in both the ILO's practical activities and its publications. As a result, the ILO is increasingly becoming a tool for

propagating and implanting Western models of social development, the so-called social partnership. This is actively used to the detriment of the worker's basic interests. Such a situation in an organisation that claims universality is intolerable and should be remedied as soon as possible so as to assure its Secretariat's credibility among all member states.

9. The ILO should strive to develop equal cooperation among states with different social systems in various regions of the world.

Yet, the Organisation's activities in Europe have been reduced to an extremely low level, although every ILO member can benefit greatly from cooperation among European countries which have considerable and varied experience in economic development, in the trade union movement, and in the tackling of social and labour problems. Numerous concrete proposals of European socialist countries to step up these activities and work out appropriate institutional arrangements to that end (the establishment of a European advisory committee) have yet to be incorporated in ILO programmes. As for the ILO's decisions on European cooperation, in particular those adopted by the third European Regional Conference, they are being carried out in a lopsided and unbalanced way and to the West's political advantage. These socialist countries insist that the ILO take practical steps with a view to developing constructive and equal cooperation among European countries.

10. An alarming aspect of ILO activities is its increased assistance to employers' organisations, which is inevitably done to the detriment of the needs of workers' organisations. The socialist countries hold that employers' organisations in the ILO must assume specific obligations to apply at their factories social and labour standards worked out in the ILO and aimed at improving the workers' conditions. Attempts to ensure within the ILO an equal treatment of workers' and employers' problems run counter to the spirit of its Constitution and the very *raison d'être* of the Organisation and raise the question as to whose interests—those of labour or capital—the ILO primarily serves today. Of course, the employers, too, may have their own specific problems, related to management or the organisation of the work process, which may be and are considered by the ILO, but this should not be done to the detriment of its main activities, and surely not in the context of assistance to employers' organisations.

11. An ever increasing share of the financial resources available to the ILO, including those from its regular budget, is being spent on technical co-operation programmes. However, the policies pursued by the Office administration in this major field of ILO activities cannot but cause grave concern.

On the one hand, a trend jeopardizing the attainment of economic independence by developing countries has recently begun to emerge more and more clearly in the ILO, a trend to give preference

to projects which encourage the activities in developing countries of Western private companies, primarily the transnationals. In the field of technical assistance the ILO is made increasingly dependent on international financial institutions instrumental in promoting imperialism's neo-colonial policies in developing countries.

On the other hand, the participation of socialist countries in the ILO's technical assistance projects is being intentionally and artificially restricted. Under various pretexts the Secretariat administration is preventing the Organisation from applying the wealth of experience gained by socialist countries in their social and economic development and, in particular, from recruiting their experts.

The position of socialist countries on ILO technical assistance is widely known. They hold that ILO activities in this area should promote the social and economic development of developing countries and not subject their economies still further to the domination of the industrialised capitalist countries' monopolies, above all TNCs. ILO technical assistance must be closely tied up with the developing countries' national plans of economic and social progress.

The socialist countries are prepared actively to participate in ILO programmes for technical assistance to developing countries on a fair basis and in the framework stipulated by the ILO Constitution.

12. The socialist countries, like many others, have repeatedly voiced their concern over the questions of efficient use by the Organisation of its budgetary resources. They are convinced that the ILO must take effective measures to stabilize its budget, seeking maximum streamlining of, and austerity in, spending, particularly for administrative purposes. The development of the ILO's programmes if they accord with the needs and requirements of the day is quite possible and should be carried out using the available resources on the basis of a more flexible reorientation of the Organisation's priorities and a discontinuance of obsolete and low-efficiency programmes.

The socialist countries demand that the ILO enhance the efficiency of its activities, focusing on major social problems of vital importance to workers all over the world, establishing truly equal, non-discriminatory cooperation among all states and parties in the social and labour fields and actively promoting the cause of peace and disarmament.

Otherwise, the Organisation will stray further and further away from the path leading to the attainment of its primary objectives — improvement of workers' living and working conditions and promotion of international cooperation in the social and labour fields — will isolate itself even more from the broad masses of the workers and once and for all become a tool of unseemly political manipulations.

The socialist countries are prepared fully to cooperate in radically improving ILO activities so that the ILO could effectively fulfil the goals of its Constitution.

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