



THE WORKING CLASS

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The Killing of Rajiv Gandhi

The killing of Rajiv Gandhi, the Congress (I) President and the former Prime Minister of India on May 21 night at Sriperumbudur near Madras has shocked the entire country. The ghastly manner in which he was assassinated with the mutilated head blown away to a distance, was unthinkable awesome, which dumbfounded all sections of the people.

The killing of the national figures by the communal, secessionist and separatist forces started with the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi immediately after India's independence from British imperialism. That time it was the Hindu Communal RSS. In 1984 Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister and Chairperson of Non-Aligned Movement was assassinated by the Khalistani secessionists—ironically her own security guards, who are brazenly abetted, trained and financed by imperialists. On these occasions however, these killers were open and caught red handed. But Rajiv Gandhi's assassinator is not yet known, although circumstantial evidences have reportedly pointed to a suicidal squad allegedly belonging to some LTTE groups. However, the sophisticated way the explosive was used, does not require any argument to establish the deep penetration of the imperialist agencies in the country, who are backing the divisive forces of all sorts to destabilise it. Their alarming penetration deep into the network of the security machineries down to the grass root level of even the party workers was revealed from the fact that the main suspect, an unknown figure, could come so close to Rajiv Gandhi to garland him and she stood in between two workers of the Cong(I) itself while switching on the explosive device. This makes all the much-trumpeted security measures absolutely meaningless before the imperialist agencies.

The CITU and the CPI(M) have since long been warning against the communal and divisive forces, which make the country a breeding ground for the imperialists to fulfil their designs. After Indira Gandhi's murder, the late Com. BT Ranadive, the founder President of the CITU struck the warning bell and especially exhorted upon the Indian working class and the trade union movement to fully grasp the why and which-for of the murder politics of the imperialists, who through remote control utilise

the internal reactionary and fissiparous forces to do away with the leaders of the Governments and the people who come in their way. He cited the examples of Aung Sang, the leader of Burma's liberation struggle; Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan; Egypt's President Sadat; Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh; Soloman Bandaranayak, the Prime Minister of Srilanka, etc, apart from Mahatma Gandhi and Indira Gandhi. Now Rajiv Gandhi has been added to the list.

India has been targetted by the imperialists for obvious reasons. Because it has got a tradition of anti-imperialist struggle, because it is the founder member of the Non Aligned Movement, because it has been a supporter of the national liberation movements, because it developed friendship with the

CITU Condemns the Assassination of Rajiv Gandhi

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses its shock at the dastardly assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, President of Congress (I) and former Prime Minister of India on May 21 at Sriperumbudur near Madras.

This heinous act of terrorism should be squarely condemned by the working class and the people of India. The communal, separatist and divisive forces in the country have created an atmosphere of murder and killing all over the country which has culminated in this palpable crime.

The CITU expresses its heartfelt condolences to Mrs Sonia Gandhi and other bereaved members of Rajiv Gandhi's family.

The CITU appeals to the working class to carry forward the struggle against communal, separatist and divisive forces with more vigour so that they are not allowed to indulge in such senseless act in future.

The changing world scenario has boosted the imperialists' designs. The collapse of the Soviet power and the East European Socialist States consequent to the new thinking of the Soviet leadership have removed the rock like collective obstacle from the US imperialists' drive for global domination to usher in a new world order. Its savage destruction of Iraq, first in the name of liberation of Kuwait and then the continuing depredations in the name of creating a haven for the Kurds, making United Nations a pawn in its hands, serve as a pointer to the danger to the sovereignties of the third world countries.

The Indian sub-continent was the aim of the US imperialists since long. It was successful in making Pakistan a base to boost the secessionist depredations in Punjab and Kashmir. The ethnic strife in Sri Lanka went on helping its designs. Taking advantage of the Bangladesh cyclone, it could land its troops in that country without any hindrance.

And in India itself, the rise of divisive forces, the communal inferno created by the neo-fascist RSS-BJP-VHP nexus and the wavering anti-imperialist stand of the Cong(I) imposed Government of Chandrasekhar did create conditions for the imperialists to come nearer to the door steps.

The murder of Rajiv Gandhi has to be seen in this background. While several condemning the dastardly murder by the agents of the imperialists and expressing the profoundest shock at his most premature death, the working class and the democratic, secular and patriotic sections of the people cannot afford to get swayed away from the political realities.

To save the country from further derailment, it has to be brought to focus that the impasse of the things was progressively created by the long rule of the big business led Congress(I) party itself. The continuous struggles launched by the left, democratic and secular forces in the entire country since the past decade had been repeatedly warning against its pro monopoly, pro-multinational and pro-feudal policies. It is because of its economic policies, tuned to the demands of the World Bank and the IMF, that gave a lever to the imperialists to try to subvert the economic sovereignty of the country, putting it in a state of economic destabilisation, unprecedented since the independence. The consequential chain reaction can be seen. Systematic privatisation and infiltration of the multinationals—the tentacles of imperialism, subversion of self reliance and denigration of the public sector, alarming growth of unemployment and all pervasive price rise, the galloping closures and industrial sickness, progressive pauperisation of the rural mass, severe crunch of foreign exchange, unmanageable balance of payment crisis threatening the country to get into the whirlpool of debt trap, and above all, growing authori-

tarianism and attack on democracy—all heaping miseries after miseries on the people going beyond the elastic limit of their tolerance. While this is the condition of the common people, the big business went on reaping the harvest gleefully all these years. Nero fiddles while Rome burns!

But that is not the end of the truth. It is because of the policy of the Congress(I) to make compromises with and appease the divisive forces of all sorts, that boosted these fissiparous forces to threaten and tear apart the united fabric of the country. The party sacrificed national interests before the altar of the divisive forces for its narrow political gains. But ironically it boomeranged in all the cases. Be it at Kashmir or Punjab or Assam, or the Ramjanam Bhoomi case, the Cong(I) got beaten up, made these forces audaciously aggressive, helped the imperialists to make further inroads and pushed the country to the dangerous point of national disintegration. It is the Cong(I) party that aligned with the BJP to pull down the National Front Government and abet the rape on secularism committed by the BJP. It is this party that through sheer opportunism engineered the split in the Janata Dal and imposed the puppet Chandrasekhar Government on the people against their mandate and compromised the long established non-aligned foreign policy of the country bowing to the pressure of the USA. It is this party that allowed the imperialists to enter the economic life of the country, now trying to enter its political life and cause its destabilisation. It is this party that caused the rape on the democratically elected Government of Tamilnadu and made its own leader victim of the imperialist conspiracies in that centrally ruled state itself. It is ironical that having pushed the country in a state of economic and political instability, the Cong(I) now urges upon the people to vote for it for a "stable" Government.

The bankruptcy of the Cong(I) and the self-centredness of the rest of its leaders are further pathetically exposed with the death of Rajiv Gandhi, when it is unable to select a President. In is again ironical that the party itself having become unstable, still claims to form a stable Government.

The crocodile tears shed by its leaders and cadres stand exposed at the same time. When it is high time for all to take lessons from the tragic death of Rajiv Gandhi and get united to fight the divisive forces and the imperialist conspiracies, the so called mourners of the party have launched a virulent attack on the left, democratic and the secular forces in the country. In Tripura the semi-fascist Congress(I) led regime has been fully exploiting the situation to intensify the attack on the CPI (M) and killing its cadres. Similarly in W. Bengal, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and other places the CPI(M) and the National Front cadres are being attacked. The mourning hoodlums in conjunction with other anti-socials are trying to create a jungle

(Cont'd on page 22)

Sixth CITU Andhra Pradesh State Conference

The Sixth CITU Andhra Pradesh State Conference which concluded at Com. B T R Nagar, Hyderabad, in April decided to launch a macro-level struggle on the issues like employment wages, legal protection and terminal benefits in order to unite the entire working class of the State by interlinking all micro-level struggles on various demands. The fulfilment of such a task of building up a common struggle of the entire working class, integrating different streams of working class struggle, is expected to bring a qualitative difference in CITU led organised working class movement on the state.

Mass Mobilisation : The significance of the conference, held for the first time in Hyderabad, which is not only the state's capital, but a big working class centre, was reflected in the mass mobilisation for the rally, formation of the reception committee, creation of an inspiring environment, the higher levels of discussion and, above all setting out of certain clear cut and important tasks for the revolutionary trade union movement in the state.

The conference assumed added significance as it emphasised the political and economic tasks of the working class. The declaration adopted by the conference impressed upon the working class in the state that it is impossible to achieve the economic demands and defend the rights of working class without fighting for alternative economic policies and for democracy. These will be the major ideological and immediate organisational planks of the CITU in the state.

The conference identified sectors like textiles, sugar industry, banking, electricity, etc as major areas where CITU organisers should concentrate in the coming days. The CITU activity among the middle-class employees has to be improved, the conference emphasised.

Most of the delegates who participated in the discussions spoke at a higher organisational and ideological plane, thus reflecting the qualitative improvement in the state CITU. The membership increased by 30 percent since the last conference in 1986, taking the total tally to one lakh.

The state council of the CITU had organised a political school at Visakhapatnam last year with the sole aim to train the organisers. The school was conducted with a specially designed syllabus for the purpose. The conference revealed that this school has paid dividends.

Important Struggles

The quantitative and qualitative development in the State CITU is the consequence of a series of struggles launched during the last years.

During the period, the CITU mobilised thousands of unorganised workers in the first ever big struggle for minimum wages. Over one lakh unorganised workers participated in a state-wide strike in 1987. About 5,000 rallied in one of the biggest demonstrations of unorganised workers before the Labour Commissioner's office at Hyderabad, demanding implementation of the minimum wages. The struggle enthused the urban underdog who were reeling under miserable living conditions due to a paltry wage of about Rs. 200 per month. As a result of this CITU led massive struggles, the State Government increased the minimum wages of unorganised workers to Rs 500 per month and for the first time introduced the compensation for rise in prices at 100 per cent neutralisation.

The CITU initiated united struggles on the demands of the working class in sugar, textiles and cement industries.

The CITU mobilised all the trade unions into the united struggle and could achieve a highly appreciable agreement in the sugar industry benefiting about 35,000 workers. The all round admiration the CITU received due to this struggle is borne out from the fact that workers in the sugar industry, irrespective of their union affiliations, contributed Rs 74,000 for the CITU fund last year.

In the textiles sector too, on the initiative of the CITU a united struggle achieved an agreement benefiting half a lakh workers. For the first time, struggle was launched for job security, forcing the Wage Committee to make a recommendation which enables the regularisation of the thousands of workers who had hitherto been exploited in the name of being apprentices and trainees.

The united action at the CITU initiative took up the problems of contract workers and safety in cement industry Bonus has been achieved for the contract workers in the Cement Corporation of India (CCI).

Movement Expanded

As a result of these struggles, the CITU movement expanded in the electricity sector, banking and among other middle class employees. The movement expanded to all the districts and all the sectors in the State.

The CITU expansion among workers, especially Anganwadi workers is impressive. Such an expansion was made possible as the CITU concretised the demands of workers in different sectors and forged struggles to achieve them. These experiences of the micro level struggles around the State prompted the sixth state conference to concretise the common demand-

of the entire working class to unite them into a macro-level struggle.

The CITU led movement to save the public sector caught the imagination of officers too. The multifarious activities brought the CITU much goodwill and recognition among the working class in different sectors and the people in different walks of life.

Broad Based Reception Committee

Against this background a 200 member Reception Committee under the chairmanship of Dr A S Rao, eminent scientist and founder Managing Director of ECIL, was formed on February 9 at Hyderabad well in advance. Alampally Pochaiiah (Mayor of Hyderabad), Basheeruddin Babu Chan (former Minister), Katragadda Srinivasa Rao (a veteran from the film industry), Parachuri Hanumantha Rao (eminent entrepreneur), V Madhusudhan Rao (popular film director), C V R Prasad and Chittaiiah President and Secretary of A P Film Chambers of Commerce) and editors of all English, Telugu, and Urdu newspapers coming out from the city were the patrons in the Reception Committee.

Eminent personalities from all walks of life were the members of the Reception Committee with D G Narasimha Rao (CITU City Secretary) as its General Secretary.

After three weeks of hectic efforts, a fund of Rs 11 lakhs both in cash and kind, was raised for the conference. Encouraging response was received from all sections of society. The middle class employees in the city made an exemplary contribution to the process of fund-collection.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU inaugurated the conference.

Huge Rally

On the opening day of the conference, a huge rally of about 30,000 people was taken out in Hyderabad. The response was appreciable even though the election environment had already set in and the climate was disturbed due to heavy rain, about 50,000 people attended the public meetings. Braving the heavy rain, thousands of people remained at the meeting venue covering their heads with chairs, carpets etc compelling the organisers to continue the meeting. Even Jyoti Basu, S Jaipal Reddy and others addressed the meeting while it was heavily raining. The volunteers covered the stage by standing on the four sides.

The meeting was also addressed by M Hanumantha Rao, member of the CPI (M) Central Committee, M K Pandhe, CITU General Secretary, and Dr V M Reddy, TDP, MP among others.

Earlier in the procession portraits of Alluri

Seetarama Raju, and Lenin as well as caricature of Advani using Ram for his political ends were exhibited, attracting the attention of everyone. Large contingents of women were seen both in the procession and public meeting.

The conference elected a 182 member State Council and a 61 member Executive. Parsa Satyanarayana and N Prasada Rao were re-elected President and General Secretary of the State CITU with 15 others elected as office-bearers.

To monitor the entire preparations for the conference, 13 sub committees were formed which looked after finance, souvenir, exhibition, publicity, food and a accommodation.

The significant feature of the conference was that most of the delegates were young and educated.

AIDWA Condemns Attack on CPI(M) Activists in Tripura

The All India Democratic Women's Association and the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women issued the following joint statement on the situation in Tripura :

The AIDWA and AICCWW express concern at the targetted attacks on men, women and children in the violence that has erupted after the dastardly murder of Rajiv Gandhi. The AIDWA is particularly concerned about the situation that has been created in Tripura where already in the last elections constitutional and democratic norms had been flagrantly violated by the Cong(I) and TUJS. A delegation of the National Front which visited Tripura after the 1989 elections had indicted the Cong(I)-TUJS alliance of gross violation of constitutional procedures. Subsequently joint delegation of women's organisations investigated the atrocities on women in Tripura pointing out that in the state of Tripura the law of the land had ceased to exist. The targetted attacks on activists of the CPI(M) and other democratic organisations squarely pose the question of the exercise of political right and choices. Today this is directly linked with the survival of democracy in one country. The AIDWA seeks to draw the attention of the Election Commission to the matter and points out that elections should not be held under such circumstances where the people of Tripura, particularly women, are sought to be terrorised in a manner which directly impedes the exercise of their franchise, leave alone the feasibility of a free and fair election being held under the circumstances.

Special 301, an Attack on India's Sovereignty

P K Ganguly

The imposition of the clause Special 301 of the US Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act, 1988 is a new form of neo-colonial exploitation by the USA in pursuit for its drive for new world order. Though Super 301 and Special 301, the US imperialists want to unilaterally and arbitrarily determine "unfair trade practices" of any country. While it does not dare to impose the penal laws so easily on other advanced capitalist countries the pressure is particularly on the third world countries, especially on India which is its largest trade partner in the third world.

The US Government is brazenly demanding that the Government of India must bow down to accept greater access of US multinationals to Indian market, or face severe retaliatory actions. The full gamut of the draconian laws Super 301 and Special 301 go beyond the confines of market access and are contemplated to change the trading partner's industrial, trading and economic policies demanding absolute powers for the multinationals. The US imperialists thus want to undermine the sovereignty of the third world countries.

The attack on India is both direct and through the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. It is a three pronged attack through what is called TRIMS (Trade Related Investment Measures), TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) and Services. In services the USA wants the Government of India to handover its service sector, especially the nationalised insurance industry to the US multinationals. By TRIMS it wants that the Government must do away with all regulations and controls regarding foreign investments.

While retaliatory action through Super 301 is still hanging over India like a Damocles's Sword, the USA has already invoked the TRIPS and placed India on the priority list under Special 301. By this penal measure, the USA demands of the Govt. of India to amend its intellectual property laws to protect the US intellectual property rights. This coercive method is being applied to India and other third world countries by the USA and other developed countries in the GATT forum as well, so that the South surrenders to the dictates of the North. The USA is thus utilising both the multilateral GATT forum and the bilateral fora with India and other countries to impose its monopolistic intellectual property regime on all countries with the clear objective of global dominance.

Paris Convention

The pressure on India is since long to make it a party to the Paris Convention on Patents (an Inter-

national Treaty) laws, and amend its intellectual property laws like the Indian Patents Act of 1970, copy rights, trade marks, etc. to the benefit of the imperialist countries headed by the USA. The salient feature of the Paris Convention is to guarantee strong patent protection to the developed countries. If India joins the convention, it will have to make wide ranging changes not only in its Patent laws, but in several other laws like in Trade and Merchandise Mark Act, Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, Atomic Energy Act and so on. According to the former Chief Justices of India like Justice Hidayatullah, Justice J C Shah, India has to amend the Constitution also, as Article 51(c) calls for fostering respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another.

Indian Patents Act

The Indian Patents Act, 1970 came after years of intense debate and struggle after independence. The original Patents Act enacted in 1856 during the British rule was amended several times. The earlier patent system was misused by the foreign companies to ensure protected markets for themselves. Over 90 percent of the patents in India registered by foreigners were not being worked in the country. Most of the goods were imported from abroad at high prices. It even denied the country to obtain goods for its essential requirements from competitive sources in the international market. It failed to stimulate invention among Indians and to encourage the development and exploitation of new inventions for industrial purposes in the country. The current Patents Act of 1970 was therefore enacted with the basic objective to encourage inventions to be worked in India on a commercial scale and that, patents are not granted to enable patentees to enjoy a monopoly.

Although not a panacea of self reliance as itself, the Indian Patents Act does keep at bay the thrust of the imperialist countries and national interest is given priority for the country's economic growth and development. It helped development of processes in pharmaceuticals, chemicals and pesticides aiming at self-reliance and development of the national sector in these industries. Process patent has enabled development of alternative technologies to suit Indian conditions and promote research efforts. Despite the pressure of the multinationals, the Indian drugs and pharmaceuticals industry has achieved diversified growth since the current Patents Act came into being. There has been development in in-house R&D, creation of indigenous technological base and near self sufficiency in production of formulations and bulk drugs including surpluses for exports. In 1975 the foreign sector produced 38 percent of bulk drugs and 50 percent of the

formulations, while the national sector produced 62 percent and 50 percent respectively. In 1987 the foreign sector produced 18 percent of bulk drugs and 40 percent of formulations, while the national sector produced 82 percent and 60 percent respectively.

Similarly, pesticide production also picked up in the country after the current Patents Act. It also helped the indigenous industries and the SIR laboratories to develop innovative process technologies.

The present Patents Act provides several safeguards and conditions which put some check to the multinationals to impose their monopoly regime on India. Hence the Special 301, to blackmail India to remove all the obstacles if she wants access of her products into US markets, which of course is already protected by its strict protectionism. So the diabolical game of the USA is to obstruct entry of Indian products in USA on one hand and to get free access with monopoly intellectual property rights of its products in the Indian market.

The Axe has Fallen

Retaliatory measures against Indian pharmaceutical products have already been taken by the USA. Ibuprofen, an important anti-inflammatory drug, which is being imported by USA from India, has already been taken out by the USA from its list of Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). Removal of items from the GSP means an automatic imposition of 8 to 10 percent duty on such items entering the USA. Almost all the chemical based products exported by India to USA are currently under the GSP. Removal from the GSP list is only the beginning of the retaliatory steps to be taken by the USA. The US Government may further impose penal duty on such imports. As per reports, some more drugs which are exported by India, like Methylopa, Denazole, Chlorpropamide, Menthol, Papain, etc are likely to be taken out from the GSP by the USA.

US Economy in Deep Crisis

The concern of USA is obvious because of the deepening crisis of the capitalist economy which has not received any succour from its victory over Iraq. USA is in the middle of recession. Unemployment has grown to over 6 percent in early 1991. GDP is decelerating since the last three years, now recording a negative growth of about 2 percent in 1990. It has become the biggest debtor country in the world. Its trade balance is getting growingly negative with other advanced capitalist countries, particularly with Japan. Budgetary deficit is likely to reach a colossal figure of 253 billion dollars in 1991. Under such

circumstances it is desperately trying to gain by resorting to all forms of neo-colonialism and undermining the economic sovereignty of the third world countries taking advantage of their weak bargaining position.

Consequences of India's Surrender

If the Government of India surrenders to its demands, it will mean stoppage of research work for new drugs, chemicals and pesticides. No new products can be introduced by the Indian companies. The process of indigenisation will have a severe set back. The country will become entirely dependent on imports not only for patented raw materials, but also for patented finished formulations of drugs and pesticides. Moreover, the products will be available only at exorbitant prices. Further, because of more imports and a set back to exports, India's already alarming trade imbalance will get a further jolt.

Thwart the Danger Unitedly

So long India has successfully averted the pressure from the USA and other developed capitalist countries. But the policies formulated by the Congress(I) Government of liberalisation, decontrol, deregulation delicensing and destabilisation of the public sector indicate its growing surrender of the long established policies which were in the interest of the country. The past few years have seen further strides in this direction. The interim budget of the Chandrasekhar Govt which was imposed by the Cong(I) made further surrenders. The recent move by the Law and Commerce Minister of the care taker Govt of Chandrasekhar to review the Patent law is a danger signal.

The USA is trying to blackmail India to enable it to get the second and larger instalment of the IMF loan as a measure to get over its balance of payment crisis. Some monopolists' organisations like the ASSOHEM, subserving the cause of the multinationals are also singing to the tune of the USA calling upon the Government to tune its mind to the likely conditions to be imposed by the IMF, as well as to the related matters like the Intellectual Property Rights, Patent Law, etc. What is required, is an united move by the working class, the trade unions and all progressive and patriotic forces to face the situation to rebuff the American threat in national interest. America is anxiously waiting for the reinstallation of the reactionary and pro-US forces in the Govt in the forthcoming elections. The rebuff has to be given by installing the progressive and democratic forces led by the Left-NF combine, which only can save the country from the US wrath and safeguard the national interests.

Air India Pilots Fight Back Victimisation

M. K. Pandhe

The Air India management callously violated the agreement signed with the Indian Pilots Guild regarding Flight and Duty Time Limitations (FDTL), which was responsible for great inconvenience caused to the 244 passengers at London Airport on 28th October 1990. The bad planning by the Air India management also led to a loss of foreign exchange of Rs 8 lakhs.

Capt. Manohar Sharma who was co-pilot in the Flight No. 130 from London to Delhi on 27th October 1990 joined duty in time. However due to inordinate delay in the taking off of the Aircraft due to late arrival and later due to development of some snag in the aircraft, Capt. Sharma informed the management that his FDTL would be exceeding and hence suggested making alternate arrangements. The Air India management however failed to do so and

Capt. Sharma left the Aircraft due to excess flight time.

The Air India tried to cover up its failure by complaining against Capt. Sharma to Director General of Civil Aviation. The Air India management did not issue any charge sheet or any disciplinary action against Capt. Sharma since his action was perfectly within the flight operation Manual and the agreement signed by the management with the Indian Pilots Guild. Surprisingly, on 8th November DGCA issued show cause notice against Capt. Sharma and despite his reply, the DGCA decided to hold departmental enquiry. Capt. Sharma was not called for the enquiry to defend himself and the whole enquiry was converted into a farce. Since the action of the co-pilot was not illegal the Air India management refused to treat it as industrial dispute. The Air India was not prepared to go even by the prevalent standing orders.

CITU Condemns U.S. For Imposition of Special 301

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU has issued the following statement to the Press on April 28 :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns the U.S. Government for placing India, China and Thailand under Special 301 under U.S. Trade Laws on the plea of protecting U.S. intellectual property such as patents, copy rights and trade marks. This act of the U.S. Government is sheer blackmailing tactics and amounts to gross interference in the internal affairs of India, and will directly hit the pharmaceutical industry. Ibuprofen, an important anti rheumatic drug has already been cut out from the U.S. duty free access list.

The CITU is firmly of the opinion that U.S. government has no right to dictate India's policies on these issues and pressurise the Government of India to succumb to the dictates of U.S. imperialism.

The CITU disapproves the appeasing policies of the Govt of India which is not taking a firm position on these issues and urges upon the Government not to surrender before the U.S. dictates. In the wake of impending IMF loan to India the U.S. government is trying to extract further concessions from the Government of India which will only adversely affect India's struggle for self-reliance.

The CITU appeals to working class and trade unions in India to raise their powerful voice of protest against U.S. blackmail so that the Govt of India is forced to take a firm stand against this insulting treatment given to India.

If the DGCA is permitted to take disciplinary action against an employee of Air India all rules relating to industrial relations lose all meaning. It will further create a bad precedent and other employees of Air India face a threat of such actions. Hence this attitude of DGCA and Air India created strong resentment among all employees of Air India.

In the Extraordinary meeting of the Indian Pilots Guild on 5th May 1991 the Air India Pilots decided to stop work in protest against the high handed policy of Air India management. Instead of seeing reason and come to settlement with the pilots the Air India and DGCA threatened the pilots with punitive action.

A large number of Air India flights were affected due to stoppage of work by the pilots and Air India's reputation nose dived in the international world. Excessive flight timings cause fatigue to the pilots and passenger safety involved. However the Air India non-chalantly was ignoring the safety requirement of the passengers.

M. K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU discussed the situation with the representatives of Pilots Guild at Bombay on 10th May 1990 and issued the following statement to the press :

"The serious situation created by the show cause notice issued by the Director General of Civil Aviation to Capt. M. Sharma, Air India Pilot, is causing concern all over the country and the threat of suspension of Air India services is looming large in the country.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions is firmly of the opinion that the stand taken by Indian Pilots Guild is justified, particularly from the point of view of safety of passengers and aircraft. The Civil

Aviation authorities should allow the matters to be resolved amicably as per bipartite agreements agreed with the Indian Pilots Guild and the Standing Orders of the Air India.

The taking up of the issues of Labour-Management by the DGCA Will create a bad precedent and will further vitiate Industrial Relation in Air India.

The CITU therefore appeals to DGCA to keep in abeyance the show cause notice against Capt. Shrama so that Air India Pilots can also withdraw their agitation. The matters can be then amicably resolved through the intervention of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central).

In view of the elections in the country the CITU urges upon the Government of India not to take any vindictive action in the matter.

The CITU appeals to the trade unions of all affiliations to support the Indian Pilots Guild so that the DGCA does not take any vindictive action against Capt. Sharma."

Pandhe also wrote to Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) Govt of India and requested him to intervene in the dispute with a view to arrive at an amicable settlement across the table. Some pilots met CLC() with Pa dhe s letter at Pune on 12th May and appraised him of the developments.

Meanwhile, DGCA unilaterally announced the strike of the pilots as illegal and threatened punitive action against them. However, due to the remarkable unity and determination shown by the Air India pilots the Govt of India had to come down and the Secretary, Department of Civil Aviation had to start negotiations with the representatives of Indian Pilots Guild. Ultimately the Govt of India was forced to withdraw vindictive action against the pilots and agreed to settle the dispute through talks. The pilots agreed to withdraw their stoppage of work in view of the Central Govt's decision.

Air Corporation Employees Union, Bombay organised a powerful demonstration before the Air India Headquarters at Nariman Point demanding withdrawal of vindictive action against the pilots and observation of all safety rules.

CITU Condemns Declaration of Pilots' Strike as Illegal

P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU issued the following statement on May 17:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the declaration of the Air India Pilots' Strike as illegal by the Government. It is reprehensible that while the Labour Ministry of the care taker Government has illegalised the strike applying Section 22, of the Industrial Disputes Act, it decided not to refer the demands of the Indian Pilots Guild for adjudication

on the plea that they fall outside the ambit of industrial disputes.

The CITU holds the management of Air India as solely responsible for the circumstances that led to the lightening strike by the pilots. The Director of Operations, Air India instead of observing the principles of natural justice by proceeding with domestic enquiry as per rules on any misconduct by Capt. M. Sharma, went ahead unilaterally and arbitrarily to induct extraneous agencies like the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in an inhouse matter concerning service condition of employees connected with implementation of bilateral agreements on flight and duty time limitations.

The above deviation from normal procedures by the management makes it clear that Capt. Sharma did act within the rules of Air India and in the best interest of safety, which is being impudently violated by the Air India management. The entire gamut of the dispute exposes the growing authoritarianism on the part of the Air India management and the Government.

The CITU extends full support to the struggle jointly launched by all the unions and associations in Air India and Indian Airlines and urges upon the Government and the Air India management to withdraw the penal measures and settle the dispute amicably.

Appeal For Bangladesh Cyclone Relief

Bangladesh has been hit by a severe cyclone which according to reports is one of the biggest natural calamities recorded in history.

It has been estimated that around five lakh people have died, lakhs of people have become homeless and properties worth crores of rupees have been washed away. Disease and starvation are stalking the hapless survivors. A number of places have been cut off from the rest of the country.

In this period of this great calamity, the people of Bangladesh are badly in need of urgent relief. It is necessary that our unions and workers should rise to the occasion and come forward to give succour to the suffering people of Bangladesh in this emergent and unforeseen situation by contributing funds to the maximum possible extent. ♥

We therefore send this appeal to the unions to send their contributions to the Centre which will be sent to Bangladesh at earliest.

CITU Secretariat

Air Employees Condemn Air India's Action

The Representatives of the Air Corporations Employees Union (ACEU), Indian Pilots Guild (IPC), Indian Flight Engineers Association (IFEA), Air India Engineers' Association (AIAEA), Indian Flight Despatchers Union (IFDU), Air India Cabin Crew Association (AICCA), Air India Hostesses Association (AIHA) and Air India Officers Association (AIOA) met on 11 May 1991 in the office of ACEU at Vima Bhavan, Old Airport, Santacruz East, Bombay to discuss the deteriorating Industrial Relations situation in Air India with particular reference to the on going dispute between the Indian Pilots Guild and the management of Air India.

The meeting unanimously condemned the action of the Air India management with particular reference to letter dated 6th November 1990 from the Director of Operations to the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) seeking intervention of the latter in an inhouse matter concerning service conditions of the employees connected with implementation of bilateral agreements on Flight & Duty Time Limitations (FDTL).

The meeting was of the firm opinion that the Director of Operations, Air India was already vested with sufficient powers to take appropriate departmental action after conducting a domestic enquiry as per rules with regards to misconduct if any by Capt M. Sharma in connection with the incident involving Flight No. AI 130 dated 27.10.90 at London. Instead of following the laid down channels, the management opted to seek the intervention of the licensing authorities only because they had no case of misconduct against the employee since Capt. M. Sharma had not violated any rules/regulations/laid down procedures/practices of the Corporation.

The meeting was thus of the opinion that Capt. Sharma had acted within the rules of Air India and in the best interest of Air Safety. However, if Air India had any different view point on the subject matter they were still free to conduct a departmental enquiry as per laid down rules. It was shocking to note that the Air India management, which was expected to defend and safeguard the interests of its employees from malafide action of outside agencies (in this case DGCA) had instead resorted to instigating an outside agency whose functions were well defined and quite different, to initiate proceedings against an employee of the Corporation.

This meeting therefore, called upon the Air India management to immediately withdraw its letter of 6th Nov. 1990 to the DGCA and consequently the DGCA to drop any proceeding that has been initiated arising out of the above letter of Air India. If the management failed to withdraw the above letter by Tuesday, the 14th May 1991, then the employees

would be left with no other alternative but to embark upon a programme of agitation. The 15,000 and odd employees belonging to flying crew and ground personnel both technical and non-technical of Air India cannot remain as silent spectators to this denigration of Air India and its personnel. The meeting cautioned the Government of India and the management not to precipitate the crisis by resorting to any punitive or strike breaking unfair practices which may lead to suspension of Air India services or a lay off lockout and to refrain from issuing such threats. The meeting therefore decided in such an eventuality to hold a demonstration outside Security Gate (behind THQ, Old Airport) on Thursday 16th May 1991 during lunch time commencing at 12.30 hrs. and a day long dharna outside Air India Headquarters at Nariman Point on Friday, 17th May 1991 commencing at 900 hrs. and ending at 1700 hrs. in order to focus attention to the issues involved.

The meeting further resolved that if the management continued to remain adamant and vindictive, the Unions/Associations/Guild would not hesitate to launch further action to express their solidarity with the agitating Pilots of Air India.

General Council Meeting of Air Corporation Employees

The General Council Meeting of the ACEU was held at Chembur on 26/27th April 1991. 135 delegates from 9 regions of Indian Airlines and Air India from Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Hyderabad attended the meeting. The General Council elected a Central Committee in which A R Bala Subramaniam (from Air India, Madras) was elected as President and S M Sharma (Indian Airlines, Delhi) was elected as General Secretary. From Bombay R Ramanathan was elected as Joint Secretary and C D Soman Treasurer.

The General Council which is the highest forum of the union then addressed itself to the most burning issues facing the industry. The two immediate dangers threatening its very existence were privatisation and the deprivation of the right to collective bargaining. A resolution was passed against privatisation which expressed deep concern at the growing trend of denigrating and privatising public sector undertakings ever since the acceptance of Dr. Arjun Sen Gupta Committee's report, thus diluting the very fabric of self reliance of the Indian economy. The resolution also noted with appreciation the services rendered by the public sector especially in generating employment. It recorded that the conspiracy to privatise airlines in a phased manner was

in conformity with the policy of denigrating and privatising public sector in general. The resolution noted that the dictates of IMF and World Bank were reflected in the economic policies which aimed at making the public sector sick and handing over the same to monopoly houses and multinationals.

On the other hand, the govt. had appointed a National Industrial Tribunal depriving the airlines employees the right of collective bargaining. The confires of legalities would deprive the workers and their unions even the opportunity of defending the erosion of their wages and service conditions. The meeting was unanimous in resolving to campaign and struggle to uphold the interest of public sector and fight back the conspiracy to denigrate and privatise them, by building up a powerful movement together with the CPSTU.

Two other resolutions were passed. One opposing employment of casual and parttime/daily rated workers in I A, and Air India and the other demanding workers' participation in management as per the tripartite conclusions reached in a seminar in Delhi called by the National Front Government.

The G C session concluded successfully forgoing unity and giving a call for building up wider unity amongst Indian Airlines and Air India workers and the CPSTU.

Vayudoot Employees Oppose Privatisation

Vayudoot Employees Association in its General Body meeting held on 19th April 1991 at the Airport Club with Dipen Ghosh, M.P., on chair adopted the following resolution :

The members express their serious concern over the reported move of winding up Vayudoot and unani ously support the contention of Dipen Ghosh's letter dated 9 4.91 written to the Rastrapati and Minister of Civil Aviation.

Policy of the Govt. of India on Air transport was determined in the year 1953 and it was implemented through enactment o Air Corporation Act-'53. Since then the said Act has been amended several times only to dilute the initial stand of nationalisation of Air transport and to build it as 2nd line of defence. The idea of reversing the entire process by allowing the private capital to penetrate into the industry at the cost 'providing safe air transport' is a recent and dangerous step. Such reversal of policy is indeed detrimental to the interest of the country.

The concept of Feeder Airlines taken up by the Govt of India is in line with the Experts' opinion, both national and international. Yet adhoc decisions at various points of time and improper planning have

given rise to the present crisis.

The Vayudoot has never been allowed to function as a true autonomous body. It was more or less a subsidiary to IA and AI. It is a good rehabilitation centre of the retired top notches of IA & AI. It was never provided with the right type f aircraft and personnel to discharge its responsibility. Phased out and loss-making HS-748 and F-27 aircrafts of Indian Airlines became the main fleet of Vayudoot with a few ill proposed Dorniers. Nevertheless Vayudoot did earn profit in 1983-84 and 1984-85 even with these aircrafts. The mounting loss thereafter is because of 'fancy schemes', 'rent an aircraft' and lavish expenditure on bureaucracy. Mismanagement and misplanning added to the losses. Promised Govt. subsidy for operating the loss making routes was not materialised as well. Employees' opinion was hardly taken into account to make the Airline via le.

This meeting therefore urges upon the concerned authority to rethink over the entire issue in order to relaunch the feeder airline after correcting the ills already experienced, without which the opportunity to serve remote areas of the country will remain a dream. Closure or handing over to private capital cannot be the answer. It may be done to yield at the premiere of the vested interests and to gladden their hearts at the cost of suffering public.

Vayudoot Employees' Association takes this opportunity to request all the workers of the public sector in general and aviation workers in particular to record their protest against such sinister move of privatisation. Vayudoot employees are confident of defeating any move of winding up or handing over to private owners with the help of the workers of public sectors, the Central Trade Unions, the press and the public.

Com. M K Kelu

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the passing away of Com M K Kelu, former member of the Kerala State Committee of CPI (M). He was reveredly called as Kelu Ettan (elder brother). Com. Kelu died on May 20 at the age of 85. Com. Kelu was a great revolutionary, freedom fighter and a militant Kisan leader. He had to undergo jail life both during the anti imperialist freedom struggle and thereafter during the Congress rule. During the Emergency period of 1975-77, he was subjected brutal torture by the police, which caused severe set back to his health. Despite his ill health and advanced age he took a leading role in the current election campaign for the CPI (M) and the LDF throughout the Kozhikode distr ct. The CITU dips its red banner paying homage to Com. Kelu Ettan and sends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his Family.

CITU's Note on ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration

[We are publishing hereunder the comments of CITU on the observation of the ILO Committee of Experts on the application of ILO Convention No 100 concerning equal remuneration. The comments were sent by Vimal Ranadive, Secretary of the CITU to the Labour Ministry in reply to a query sought by it.-Ed].

We are glad to note that the complaint submitted by the CITU in 1976 with proper documentation and information on the actual functioning of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, the lacunae in the enforcement machinery etc was discussed in the meeting of the ILO Committee on Convention. It is indeed unfortunate that despite the passing of the Equal Remuneration Act in 1976, there remains still many short comings and loopholes and if the Government of India takes firm measure to implement it, it can serve the interest of the working women.

We do not agree that the steps the Government of India has taken are concrete measures to increase an awareness among workers or employees, organised and unorganised both, about the Equal Remuneration Act and its implementation, as claimed in the official note. This can be established by the non-implementation of the Act in various industries, including public sector undertakings.

The CITU also is not aware of the information provided to the ILO by the Government of India as to the centrally sponsored scheme to create the post of Labour Inspector with supporting staff to enforce legislation, relating to women and child labour on a 'pilot basis' in four states. If it is really taken up seriously, it might help to some extent to enforce the Equal Remuneration Act also. The documents regarding this pilot work should be made available to the trade unions which will be helpful to implement the scheme.

The CITU reiterates what it had said in earlier note, that the Government and its enforcement machinery is not serious about the implementation of the Act and relies only on the written reports submitted by their officers. Otherwise how is it possible that women workers in Beedi, Construction, Garment, Agriculture and other industries continue to get less wages compared to male workers. Regarding the payment of equal remuneration for the same nature of work, or similar nature of work, the official reply that "it may not be possible to introduce it at the present stage of development" and "it would be necessary and more important to implement effectively the Equal Remuneration Act 1976 as amended," only highlight that the Government of India is not prepared to take positive measures to ensure full implementation of the concept of equal remuneration. This was the view taken by the employers at that time to avoid equal wages to women workers under plea that "nature of the work differs

among men and women and so to pay equal wage was out of question". In our meeting with the then Labour Minister in 1977, the issue was made clear that no such differentiation be made where both men and women work at the same place. We have quoted at that time in our note as to how the plantation owners in Karnataka placed women as a whole in one category to avoid equal pay. In fact the nature of work in Beedi or Construction for men and women is the same or of similar nature. Despite that, women get less wages in Beedi in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and other states. In construction industry, male and female workers work as head load workers, or women workers loading coal in wagons are denied equal wage at par with men. Quite often the piece rate system is being utilised to deny equal remuneration to the women workers. Therefore this argument forwarded by the Government of India that "the concept of equal pay for equal work of equal value is an advanced concept," does not hold good. Under this plea an attempt is being made to deny implementation of the principle of equal remuneration.

The powers given under the Equal Remuneration Act 1976 to grant exemptions are grossly misused to harm the interests of women workers without any justification. The notification issued by the Govt of India under the Act excludes Air Hostesses of Indian Airlines and Air India from the purview of the clause relating to equal remuneration. Professional workers are similarly excluded as a result of which a woman stenographer lost the case in the Supreme Court in the Mackinnon and Mackenzie case.

When the Act was amended to include the working conditions within the purview of the Act a clarification was issued by the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) that the notification applies to only remuneration and not the working conditions. Yet the Air India management went to the Bombay High Court to challenge the jurisdiction of the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) to intervene in the complain filed by the Air India Hostesses Association. Though the complaint was filed in May 1990 by the Association regarding the discrimination on the age of retirement, promotion etc. the Air India management is resorting to dilatory tactics and not allowing any decision to come from the appropriate authorities on the violations of the Act. It is necessary to plug the loopholes of the Act so that certain time limit is fixed for giving decision by the appropriate authorities on a complaint filed by an aggrieved party.

As a result of this short coming in the Act and Rules framed under it, the Air Hostesses of Air India are forced to retire at the age of 45 while the male flight pursers are allowed to do so till the age

of 58. Though the work of Air Hostess and flight purser is of a similar nature, this discrimination is allowed to be continued on the plea that they are two distinct categories. It is significant that though the management of Indian Airlines has enhanced the age of retirement of Air Hostess to 58 years, the Air India management is violating the provision of the Act without any effective action by the Government of India.

The Air Hostesses are discriminated by the managements in the matter of promotional avenues and other working conditions which also need to be stopped.

It is necessary to take urgent steps to ensure that the attempts of the management to utilise the loopholes of the Act and continue discrimination against women workers should be put to an end forthwith.

The ILO document has raised a pertinent point regarding getting detailed information about the visits of the inspectors to the site of the working. We have no information with regard to the number of visits of the inspectors to check whether Equal Remuneration Act is implemented or not. We have noted our experience in our last note that the inspection machinery is in hand in gloves with the employers and is corrupt. The situation has not changed materially since then. The women workers thus lose their rights to get equal wages. We still hold the view that the records are not maintained properly at the work places. This particular criticism made by CITU is vindicated by various studies appeared in Indian Labour journals of which mention has been made in our last note. The situation has not improved since then.

The point made in the ILO note about the wages in plantation fixed by bilateral agreement between management and the workers union is correct. In Assam, the wages are still lower for the women workers. We appreciate that the ILO Committee has requested the Government of India to see that in such agreements, the principles of Equal Remuneration Act are not violated.

Finally, we would like to mention a few things. The consciousness among working women and men is being raised due to efforts of trade unions. The women's wings under the trade unions work among them on their specific problems while raising their consciousness about their rights. The result is they come forward to fight for equal remuneration, for minimum wages etc.

The Central Government held recently two conferences on the women in trade unions and their rights, on family planning etc where they invited employers, trade unions, voluntary organisations etc. These efforts, no doubt, help to understand the views and lacunae in implementation of various laws conce-

ring women. However steps taken so far are symbolic and do not touch even the fringe of the problem. More concerted action on the part of the Government of India is urgently necessary.

We feel therefore, these efforts should not stop there. The follow up of these attempts should continue, so that more encouraging results will be available in implementation of Equal Remuneration Act. The Government of India should try to remove earnestly the disabilities and discrimination against women in every field giving social justice all around. The further initiative by ILO on these matters will immensely help in ensuring equality for working women.

The CITU would earnestly request the ILO to take expeditious steps so that the ILO Convention regarding Equal Remuneration is fully complied with by the Government of India. Though the CITU complained more than 15 years ago, the Government of India is not yet doing justice to the working women regarding wages and working conditions. We hope the ILO will take a serious view of the matter and prevail upon the Government of India to put an end to all discriminations against the women workers.

Com. Prabhas Roy

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses profound grief at the passing away of Com. Prabhas Roy, the former member of the W Bengal State Committee of CPI (M). Com. Prabhas Roy died at P G Hospital Calcutta on May 23 at the age of 84. Com. Roy joined the freedom struggle at a very tender age of 12. He came into contact of other great revolutionaries like Master Surya Sen, Ananta Singha, Bipin Behari Ganguly, Ganesh Ghosh, etc and was fully associated with several militant and historic struggles like the Khilafat movement, capture of Chittagong British Armoury, Tebhaga Movement of the peasants, etc, and was arrested several times and had to remain underground frequently. In 1937 he came into contact of Com. Muzaffar Ahmed and joined the Communist Party the same year. He was a Minister of W Bengal for two terms both during the United Front and Left Front Governments in the state. The CITU dips its red banner to pay homage to Com. Prabhas Roy and sends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family.

Observance of Com. BTR's Death Anniversary

More reports of the observance of the first death anniversary of Com. BTR on 6th April have been received since the publication of the May issue of the Working Class.

Maharashtra

In Bombay glowing tributes were paid by the workers to Com. BTR. The Public Meeting organised at Dadar was addressed by Com. Ahiliya Ranganekar and Com. K.L. Bajaj, members of Secretariat of CITU. Com. P. Sanzgiri, Vice-President of CITU presided over the meeting. In Ichalkaranji of Kolhapur Distt workers brought out a procession with portraits of Com. BTR in their hands. Powerloom workers union and the local CPI(M) committee organised a meeting in the afternoon which was addressed by Com. K.K. Malabade and Com. Suryaji Salunkhe. The Public Meeting organised at Nagpur was addressed by Com. B.P. Kashyap, Com. Gangadhar Appa Burande and by Com. Udayan Sharma. The veteran CPI(M) leader Com. Prabhakar Dande addressed the meeting at Oran City of the Raigad dist. The anniversary was also observed in Kolhapur, Sangli, Wardha, Solapur, Nasik, Aurangabad, Jalna, Dhule, etc.,

Tripura

Com. Dasaratha Dev, the Central Committee member of CPI(M) while addressing a meeting at Agartala, organised by the Tripura State Committee of CITU, described Com. B.T.R. as an outstanding creative faculty.

Orissa

In Bhubaneswar, leading trade union functionaries of different unions in the state capital gathered in CITU State Committee Office to pay tribute to the beloved leader. In the afternoon a Public meeting was organised at Bhartiya Bidya Bhawan.

The meeting was addressed by Coms. Ajeya Rout, Joydev Nayak, Dushmantha Das and Lambodar Nayak, the state General Secretary. The meeting was presided by the state CITU President Com. Shivaji Patnaik. In Paradip, Port City, the day was observed through Public meeting organised jointly by Paradip Bandar Sramik Union and other unions. The Meeting was addressed by Bijoy Das and Maheswar Mahapatra. The anniversary was jointly organised by all the unions at Barbil. The Public meeting organised for the purpose was addressed by Com. Indramani Behera.

Bihar

In Bihar workers and employees along with other sections of the toiling mass came forward in large number in most of the industrial cities of Bihar and the capital town Patna. The City co-ordination

committee of unions in Patna along with other trade unions organised a seminar to discuss the life and work of Com. B.T.R. The seminar was presided over by the local CITU leader Com. Akshaybat Nath Singh. The State Secretary of the CPI(M) Com. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was the main speaker in the seminar, who released a pamphlet published by the Bihar State Committee of CITU on the life and activities of Com. B.T.R. He explained the contribution of Com. BTR in building up revolutionary trade union movement in India. Com. J.S. Mazumdar, the state General Secretary explained the need of ideological struggle by the working class in the present international situation. Com. S. Girijashankar Pandey, Krishnakant Singh and Sachidanand Singh also addressed the seminar. Similarly, Seminar was organised in Ranchi jointly by all the leading unions in the region which was addressed by All India CITU Secretary Com. Niren Ghosh. The Seminar was inaugurated by Com. Chandi Prasad. Other speakers who addressed were Coms. Jagadish Das MLA (W.B.), Mihir Chowdhury, President, NCOEA, Com. J.N. Sen Sharma, Com. R.S. Munda, MLA

Public Meetings were organised in Bhagalpur, Hazaribagh, Pakur and Rajgir to mark the anniversary. The Bhagalpur Rally was addressed by Com. Subodh Roy, Central Committee member of CPI(M)

Gujarat

The anniversary was observed at various places in Gujarat. The meeting was addressed by Com. Subodh Mehta, Nagin Bhai Patel, Raghuvir Mali and other leaders.

Erratum : Internal Debt.

One erratum has been noticed in the General Secretary's report of the Seventh CITU Conference, in the May day Manifesto of the CITU and other write ups, which have been published in The Working Class.

The internal debt of the Government has been printed as Rs. 1,44,536 crores in all these documents. It should be Rs. 2,44,536 crores. The correction should be noted while making use of the information. The mistake is very much regretted—Ed.

Wage Settlement in HSCL—a Big Victory

The long awaited wage settlement in HSCL was finalised. The Joint Negotiating Committee after a protracted negotiation, signed the agreement on 4th May. In this context it may be said that the HSCL follows the CPC pattern in respect of wage and DA. The last agreement for the staff was signed in 1974 and that for the workers in October, 1977 both on CPC line. But the management refused to follow the same principle in line with the 4th Pay Commission, which had recommended 100 percent neutralisation of price rise in DA for the Central Government staff. The HSCB authorities had even refused to implement the recommendation of High Power Pay Committee constituted by the Supreme Court finalising the wage and other fringe benefits for the workers of the central public sectors which were hitherto following the CPC.

There were other disputes too. Though the HSCL was following the CPC pattern, yet 20,000 workers were deprived of the fringe benefits like education allowance for children, pension scheme, conveyance allowance etc. Certain categories of workers were left out because of the scale revision recommended by the IIIrd CPC. Workers were demanding the rectification of these anomalies. The co-ordination committee of HSCL unions took up the issues, when other organisations all along were wavering in the struggle. A number of demonstrations and dharnas had been organised throughout the country.

Thus, due to the persistent struggle of the employees and workers the management started meaningful discussion since August last. After a series of discussions terms were settled on 4th of May and the agreement was signed.

According to the terms of settlement, the management has agreed to implement the recommendations of the HPPC. Fixation of pay will be made after adjustment of SLAS that was agreed in 1987 and for the purpose of individual fitment the cut off date was taken as 1.4.1991. Wherever, the basic pay determined on the basis of the above principles does not fit in the revised recommended scale, it will be fitted in the revised personal scales.

The management has also agreed to consider the merger of W-7 and W 7 scales and also the implementation of HPPC recommendation under clause 8.76 and 8.67 which concerned the fitment of Technical/Non-Technical and highly skilled scales. This merger of scale and fitment will provide a higher scale to a large number of workers. It is agreed that the arrears payment will be made latest by June 30, 1991.

The CITU has played an effective role in materialising the settlement backed by struggles. The CITU congratulated the HSCL workers for their victory in achieving the wage settlement.

CITU Condoles The Passing Away of Com. S. A. Dange

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses its deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of Comrade S.A. Dange, one of the pioneers in the Indian trade union movement on May 22 in Hinduja Hospital, Bombay. Commencing his activities in the city of Bombay, Com Dange came to the prominence in all India T U movement in early twenties. He came to the forefront in the Communist movement in India during Kanpur conspiracy case in 1924 and Meerut conspiracy case in 1928.

As a General Secretary of All India Trade Union Congress and later its president he made important contribution in Indian Trade Union movement. His powerful speeches against Bombay Industrial Relations Bill and Police Firing on textile workers in Amalner in Bombay Legislative Assembly castigated the Congress Government for its anti-labour policies. He was Vice-President of the World Federation of Trade Unions for over three decades.

The CITU expresses its heartfelt condolences to his daughters Roza and Shailaja and other bereaved members of his family.

CITU Protests against Stoppage of Publication of Collected Works of Marx and Engels

(We are publishing hereunder the letter written by the CITU on April 26 to the Government of FRG protesting against the stoppage of publication of the Collected Works of Marx and Engels, which was undertaken by the MEGA Foundation, and confiscation of its property by FRG Government—Ed)

Dr. Christian Von Hammerstein,
Ministerial Director,
Independent Commission
for Investigation into the
Capital of Political Parties
in GDR
Mauerstrasse 34-38 0-1086
BERLIN
(Federal Republic of Germany)
Dear Sir,

Dr. Richard Weizsacker,
President of FRG,
Villa Hammerschmidt,
Adenauerallee
W-5501 BONN 1
(Federal Republic of Germany)

We have come to know that the Government of Germany has stopped the publication of the Collected Works of Marx and Engels, which was undertaken by the MEGA Foundation. Further, the Independent Commission for Investigation into the Capital of Political Parties of GDR under the German Interior Ministry has also confiscated the property of the MEGA Foundation.

The works of Marx and Engels are the richest contributions to the scientific and philosophical understanding of the laws governing the social development of the world. They serve as invaluable guidelines to the teachers, students, research scholars and social workers of philosophy, history, science, economics, politics and sociology throughout the world irrespective of any political position.

In our opinion, the task undertaken by the MEGA Foundation in publication of the Collected Works of Marx and Engels would have immensely contributed to the development and progress of mankind in all countries of the world irrespective of the social system. The stoppage of the publication and the confiscation of the MEGA Foundation's property and capital will greatly hamper this process and is therefore absolutely unjustified. Any law or judicial decision justifying such action cannot be accepted by the progressive and democratic forces of the world.

We therefore demand that the property and capital of the MEGA Foundation be returned to it and the publication of the works of Marx and Engels be allowed unhindered.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
P K Ganguly
Secretary

CITU Publications

The following CITU publications are available for sale :

	Rs. Ps
1. Public Sector and Self-Reliance (991)	5.00
2. Public Sector Workers Forge Ahead (1987)	2.50
3. Labour Hand Book (1974)	5.00
4. New Series of Consumer Price Index Numbers (1982=100) (English & Hindi) (1987)	2.50
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6. Sarvajanik Chetra Ke Khilaf Napak Sajis (Hindi) 1985)	5.00
7. A Ferocious Attack on Trade Union Rights (1988)	3.00
8. Right to Work As a Fundamental Right (Approach Paper as adopted at Durgapur) (English & Hindi) (1990)	1.00
9. All India Plantation Workers Federation's 4th Conference (all documents including speech of Com BTR and Secretary's Report) (1982)	3.00
10. —do—5th Conference 1986)	7.00
11. Real Face of Cong (I) brand of Socialism (Com. Samar Mukherjee's Speech in Parliament on 27.2.1984) (1984)	0.50
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18. Constitution of CITU (1990)	1.50
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20. Rising Attacks—Growing Struggles (1981)	0.80
21. The employees State Insurance Scheme—A Hoax	1.00

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Convention on Self-Reliance

The Forum of Scientists, Engineers and Technologists (FOSET) organised a two day all India seminar on Self-Reliance and Certain Techno-Economic Issues at Calcutta on April 26 and 27. The convention was preceded by an year long campaign and programme comprising of workshops, seminars, rally, publications and signature campaign among professionals with the basic demand for adopting a self-reliant techno-economic development for the country.

The convention was divided into three technical sessions, viz (i) Official Secrets Act—right to information and democratisation of the research institutions, (ii) Super 301—Patent Laws and self-reliance, and (iii) Utilisation of public sector undertakings and industrial policy.

Inaugurating the Convention, Dr. Ashok Mitra, the noted economist pointed to the dangers of debt trap and neo-colonial domination looming over the national economy. He said that the path of import liberalisation embarked upon by the Cong(I) over the past decade had endangered the economic sovereignty of the country. He called upon the scientists and technologists to resolutely resist the imperialist pressure on the country's economy. The inaugural session which was presided over by Dr. Shankar Sen, former Vice Chancellor of Jadavpur University, was also addressed by Prof. J Ghosh, Director Indian Statistical Institute and Prof. A N Bhaduri, Director IICB.

In the technical session, the FOSET placed a paper on the Official Secrets Act. The Paper focused the need for its amendment to enable the scientists and technologists to participate in discussions on the policy matters on science and technology. Among those who participated in the discussions were Sadhan Gupta, the noted lawyer, Tarun Dutta, the former Chief Secretary of W. Bengal Government, etc. JACARI and CS R Scientific Workers' Association placed a theme paper on Democratisation of Research Institutions. Among those who participated in the discussions were P N Chowdhury, Chairman, KVIB and S. Bhattacharya, PBVM.

On 27th April, addressing the session, M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU assailed the policies adopted by the Government of India, of undermining the public sector under pressure of the multinational lobby. He said that the process which was initiated in 1980 in the form of first IMF loan, had taken its shape through the Super 301 and Special 301. He called upon all sections of professionals and trade unions to launch united struggles against this. Among others who spoke were Dr. Biplab Das Gupta, former MP, Naresh Das, Secretary, BEFI and Shanti Bhattacharya, Secretary,

AIIEA. The PBVM and FMRAI placed theme papers on Super 301 and Patent Laws, and stressed that despite the capabilities of the Indian drug industry to produce all the life saving and essential drugs required for the entire population, the multinationals are being pampered by the Central Government. Dinesh Abrol, convenor of the National Working Group on Patents, emphasised that the Indian Patent Act, 1970 has within its scope to build up a self-reliant economy. The advanced capitalist countries are trying to subvert it by moulding it according to Paris Convention in the name of Intellectual Property Rights, and the main task is to resist it. The session was chaired by Prof. Nirmal Chanda of IIM, Calcutta.

The last session on Utilisation of Public Sector Undertakings and Industrial Policy was presided over by Anshuman Ghatak, Chairman, DPL. Among those who spoke were K. Ashok Rao, President of the Confederation of Central Public Sector Officers' Associations, Dr. Deb Kumar Bose, Chairman, WBSEB, Dr. Amiya Bagchi, the noted economist and Chitta Brata Majumdar, General Secretary W Bengal State Committee of CITU.

The valedictory session was addressed by Nikhil Chakrabarty, the noted journalist. The convention formed four working groups on (i) Official Secrets Act, (ii) Patent Laws, (iii) R&D Institutions and (iv) Public Sector Undertakings to carry on further campaign and programme in the respective fields. The resolution of the convention with 14-point demands would be forwarded to the concerned authorities within July, 1991 after collecting signatures of more than 10,000 professionals all over the country. A booklet based on the proceedings of the convention will be published with an appeal by leading organisations and personnel. The convention resolved to carry forward the campaign for self-reliance among all sections of patriotic citizens under the present complex national scenario.

Com. A D Shastry

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses deep sorrow at the demise of Com. A D Shastry, a General Council member of the CITU and Vice President of its Maharashtra State Committee. Com Shastry died at the age of 64, while undergoing a by-pass surgery at Jaslok Hospital, Bombay on May 2. Com. Shastry was associated with several trade unions in various industries, guiding the workers in their day to day struggle. He was also a leading advocate arguing for the worker's cases in the law courts for over 25 years. The CITU sends its heartfelt condolences to his bereaved relations.

Renew the Pledge to Uphold the Revolutionary Traditions of May Day

E. Balanandan

[We could not publish the article in the last issue due to late receipt. However, considering the matter still relevant, we are publishing it in this issue—Ed.]

Saluting the valiant Hay Market heroes the working class throughout the world, recalling the struggles and sacrifices made by the working class movement and the accomplishments made, will with renewed vigour pledge to carry forward this struggle on the occasion of May Day, the day of international solidarity of the working class.

The international working class movement is in the midst of a challenge unprecedented in dimension and scale. It is on the one hand confronted with the enormous task of repudiating the theories being propounded by the CPSU leadership the setbacks and reverses suffered in the East European countries. and on the other the mounting attacks of imperialism on the freedom and sovereignty of nations the increasing burdens and depredations that the capitalist system imposes on them. It is in the face of this unprecedented challenge that the working class the world over will renew its pledge to uphold the revolutionary traditions of May Day and vow to carry forward the struggle.

Imperialism which for the past few decades had a countervailing balancing power to prevent its world wide ambitions, is today on a renewed offensive seeking to establish its hegemony. Nowhere was this more explicit than in the case of its aggression against Iraq. Not only was the UN bulldozed into being a plaintiff of the US endorsing its line on the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait, but for the first time this comity of nations entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring peace in the world, permitted an aggression against a member nation. Even when the US and its allies under the cover of UN Resolution No. 678 resorted to carpet bombing and merciless killings of thousands of civilians, near total destruction of its infrastructure and everything worth the name in Iraq, which far exceeded the UN mandate, this world body could but stand as a mute spectator. The humiliating conditions that were strung to a total cessation of hostilities is but evidence of the declining say of other countries in this world body and the near total capitulation before US dictates.

For the first time after the Great October Revolution, the world was witness to the shameful spectacle of the USSR voting along with the USA in favour of an aggression against Iraq. Vested with the power to veto, China too belied the expectations of the third world countries and it was left to the tiny states of Cuba and Yemen to caution the world

against the imperialist designs and oppose the UN being manipulated into a US tool.

The war brought sharply into focus the main contradictions of our epoch, which were sought to be repudiated by the present CPSU leadership. The war also vindicated the CITU's apprehensions about the disastrous consequences which the world will have to face as a result of such theories.

Emboldened with its success in the middle-East the US is all set to seek the establishment of its hegemony world wide. This poses a grave danger not only to the countries of the region but also to the third world as a whole.

Capitalist countries are once again finding themselves in the midst of a recession. Against a overall global output of 4% in 1988, 1989 recorded 3% and in 1990 it was further reduced to just 1%, this is the lowest since 1982. The number of people registering a decline in per-capita income rose from 700 million in 1989 to 1200 million in 1990. In the developed capitalist countries growth rate is estimated to be just 2% in the year 1990, whereas in the US it sharply declined to 1% as against 2.5% in 1989 and UK from 2% it came down to 1% in the corresponding period. American debt is steadily on the increase and it is reaching crisis proportions, showing an all time high at \$3,000 million. In the 24 advanced countries which includes the USA, according to official figures unemployment has crossed the 40 million mark and 45 million people are living below the poverty line. Combined with the mounting attacks on their living standards, is the further erosion of employment opportunities and reduction in the number of jobs on account of the introduction of new technology.

Increasing unemployment coupled with redundancies due to the introduction of new technology, cut in social security benefits, attack on trade union rights and the right to strike, increasing resistance to rise in wages commensurate with the rise in prices has resulted in the sharpening of the contradiction between the working class and the capitalist class in these countries.

The workers of the East European countries who were lured into the capitalist "heaven" now finding themselves in a virtual hell are increasingly realising how they had been duped with false promise. Around 50% of the active working force in the erstwhile East Germany have been thrown out of their jobs, same is the situation in Poland, Czechoslovakia etc.

Already a big struggle is on in Germany demanding job security and employment and against any cut in the social security benefits which they had hitherto enjoyed under the socialist system. Cheated by the lure of consumerism and tall and lofty promises, it is increasingly dawning on the workers of the erstwhile social countries that capitalism is not the alternative to socialism. The crime graph registering sharp increases by the passing of each day, the other attendant evils of capitalism which were alien to these peoples, they are confronted with a situation which they had never faced before.

The inter-imperialist rivalry and the race for the capture of markets by the advanced capitalist countries especially the US, Japan and Germany is intensifying. The third world is being imposed with severe trade conditions and is subject to imperialist loot and plunder. The IMF and the World Bank, together with multinationals are leading the countries of the third world into debt traps. The sovereignty and independence of these countries are being increasingly threatened and at times subverted.

In the midst of such an international scenario during the last year, nationally too, we found ourselves in the midst of an all embracing crisis of the bourgeois-landlord system. The policies pursued by the ruling class in pursuance of the capitalist path of development has resulted in the crisis manifesting itself in all spheres of life—economic, social and political.

The severe economic crisis confronting the country spells misery and depredations for the working class. To meet the resource crunch the government at the Centre have been relying heavily on the IMF-World Bank. The stringent conditionalities attached to the IMF borrowings will mean a further erosion in the living standards of the people. The mortgaging of our economy to foreign capital, the pledging of our sovereignty to the IMF and acceptance of the conditions to reduce the subsidies on food, fertiliser etc are but a reflection of the rulers of the country surrendering to the dictates of the IMF.

The authoritarian danger still looms large over the Indian working class. Utter contempt for the people and their mandate was clearly revealed when the V P Singh Government was brought down. With scant respect to the people and institutions a bunch of defectors headed by Chandra Shekhar was catapulted to power by the Congress (I). This ramshackle dispensation displayed utter contempt for democratic institution and trampled underfoot all democratic traditions by dismissing the DMK government of Tamilnadu and earlier the AGP government in Assam. The trivial issue on which the Chandra Shekhar government was pulled down reveals the hypocrisy of the Congress(I).

The nation has been brought to a sorry pass,

thanks to the depredations of the Congress(I). The talk of holding elections in the strife-torn Punjab without creating the necessary conditions that can ensure a free and fair poll but spell disaster for this border state and repercussions nationwide. The messing that has been indulged in by successive governments at the Centre with regard to Kashmir has resulted in a situation which has alienated the Kashmiri people from the Indian mainstream. The situation in Assam has worsened with the ULFA menace combined with the declaration of the entire state including the non-affected areas as Disturbed. Combined with these is the volatile communal situation in the country.

The V. P. Singh government made a departure from its predecessors by strengthening the democratic institutions, forming the inter-state council as provided for in the Constitution, for the first time, recognition of secret ballot as the means to decide the representative trade union, recognition of the need to incorporate the right to work as a fundamental right in the constitution and for workers' participation in management and inclusion of land reforms in the 9th schedule of the constitution, end of discrimination against states, acceptance of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission etc. These measures though not effecting any fundamental departure from the capitalist path of development, in the long run will ensure far reaching changes.

For the first time in the history of independent India the working class of the country was witness to a Government being pulled for its unrelenting stance in the face of the onslaught of communal forces. The aggressive communal propaganda unleashed by the BJP/VHP/RSS had led to large-scale riots throughout the country and an unprecedented polarisation on communal lines. Demanding the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the construction of a Ram temple in its place, the BJP blackmailed the V. P. Singh Government and ultimately withdrew support, precipitating a crisis.

The events that were to follow led the countrymen to hang their heads in shame. We saw the shameless spectacle of the Congress (I) with its tall claims on secularism voting alongwith the communal BJP which was responsible for the crisis and also encouraging defections within the Janata Dal and supporting them to form a ministry. The balance sheet of the 4 months of the puppet regime saw humiliation after humiliation being heaped on the country. The refuelling facilities granted to US war planes virtually bidding goodbye to the country's non-aligned foreign policy, the certificates issued to the enemies of the nation, the receptions and entertaining of international arms dealers and men of dubious-records are but a few of the many misdeeds of the Congress(I) supported dispensation. Ultimately, the supporting party pulled the rug from below on a trivial issue and the nation found itself in the midst of a general election just within a period of 15 months after the last Lok Sabha poll.

All those responsible for the present state of affairs are approaching the people with tall promises. the Congress (I), the BJP and the Chandra Shekhar outfit. The National Front and the Left parties too are approaching the people with an alternative.

With the pledge of May Day the working class of the country amongst other things will have to tirelessly work to ensure the defeat of the Congress (I) and the BJP in the elections on the basis of their performance and record. The working class will have also to tirelessly work for ensuring the success of the candidates of the Left and the National Front parties whose record of performance is there for all to see.

While exposing the authoritarian and anti-people Congress (I), its rank opportunism and the miseries that it has heaped on the people during 40 years of its rule at the Centre and the State; while exposing the BJP's communalisation of the national political scene and the politics of murder that it has indulged in; the working class is called upon to propagate the achievements of the 14 years of Left Front rule in West Bengal which has been able to provide relief to the people, effect land reforms and ensured the increased participation of the masses in the democratic process in the state, all under limited powers under the present Constitution, and similar achievements by the Left Democratic Government in Kerala and the ten year rule of the Left Front in Tripura; and call upon the people to strengthen the Left forces in the country. Only an increased strength of left forces in the country can ensure a viable and stable alternative. We will also have to appeal to the people to vote the National Front parties to power who in combination with the left is the only alternative in the present circumstances.

The May Day therefore brought innumerable challenges before the Indian working class. The international situation with imperialism on the offensive with the intent of establishing its hegemony world wide; nationally, the challenged posed by the communal, divisive, separatist forces and the threat of authoritarianism, the subjugation of the economy to imperialist capital and loot; mounting attacks on the living standards of the people, the spiralling price rise, throws a big challenge before the Indian working class.

Meeting these challenges head-on, holding high the banner of Marxism-Leninism, scientific socialism and proletarian internationalism and repudiating the theories aimed at disarming the working class, we will have to pledge to uphold the revolutionary traditions of May Day and reaffirm our commitment to achieve the broadest possible unity to accomplish these tasks.

Lock out at Hoograjuli Tea Estate, Assam

On 12.4.91 at about 3.15 P.M. a vehicle loaded with some boring pipes was passing through the Hoograjuli tea garden gate. The garden chowkidar Ugradeo Jha approached the garden head clerk in the absence of the garden manager at the garden office for permission. The clerk gave him verbal permission to pass through the gate. Later when the manager came, he abused Ugradeo Jha with filthy language and tried to over run with his vehicle. On this provocative attitude of the manager the workers stood by the side of Jha. Besides this there were several acts of misbehaviour by the manager, Mr Kanaria.

The manager called a meeting on the incident on 16.4.91. Accordingly the workers came to the garden office in the morning. The manager could not take any decision. In the meantime some unruly elements started shouting that the manager should go. They indulged in violent activities. The security and the police forces arrived at the spot after the incident. Com. Debu Mazumdar of Akhil Bharatiya Chah Mazdoor Sangh got the prior information and left for the spot. He tried to control the mob and tried to disperse it. The workers of the garden assembled there. They had great discontent against this manager. In the meantime after getting report, Michael Lagan, General secretary of the Union, also arrived at the spot. On that day the factory and the garden was closed. The District CITU leaders and the union leaders intervened and tried to diffuse the situation amicably.

But on 17th morning the management declared a lockout of the garden. The manager was out of station. And it is reported that he was under treatment at Tezpur. On the 18th the matter was reported to the Asstt. Labour Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, Tezpur. The Assistant Labour Commissioner intervened and called a conciliation on 19.4.91 at Tezpur Labour office. Representatives from management and the workers' representatives from both the Singhas, Akhil Bharatiya Chah Mazdoor Sangh (ABCMS) and the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (AMS) attended the conciliation. Discussion was held. Due to some unacceptable conditions from the management side the parties could not arrive at a settlement.

The lock out is continuing. In the meantime the police has arrested 14 workers of the garden on 19.4.91. It is apprehended that more workers can be arrested. The union has launched a struggle programme.

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Metro Lockout Withdrawn

The lockout in the construction work of Metro Railway in Calcutta which was clamped unilaterally on 19.11.90, was withdrawn following a tripartite agreement signed on 26.4.91

Following the unilateral retrenchment of 52 departmental workers by the Hindustan Construction Company management and also 87 workers of a subcontractor under it and the refusal of the management to discuss the matter of such retrenchments with the union, the Hindustan Construction Co. Workmen's Union and the Paschimanga Nirman Karmi Union had given the call for strike which was effected from 12.11.90. Alongwith the re-instatement of retrenched workers, the unions demanded the redressal of several long standing grievances. But considering the serious impact of the strike over the vital project like Metro the unions withdrew the strike from 18.11.90.

In the meantime, the management despite taking effective steps to settle the dispute amicably, by the union decided to stall the entire work. They declared unilateral lock out in the entire construction work

from 19.11.91. The Management disregarding all initiative of negotiations both from the unions and the state labour department continued the lock out and went on with the wild campaign against the unions to make them responsible for the stoppage of metro work. Only when the sustained campaign by the unions and other fraternal organisations in Calcutta could mobilise a powerful mass opinion favouring an amicable settlement, the management agreed to negotiate the matter.

Accordingly, negotiation which was initiated by the Labour Department of West Bengal took a purposeful turn and found the terms of amicable settlement. Both the unions and the management had agreed to refer the issue of retrenchment to the Labour Secretary who in turn will communicate his recommendation within one month after the resumption of the work. The settlement has provided specific procedure of retrenchment. It has also stipulated norms for jobs and duty hours in respect of different job loads which the unions were demanding since a long time.

Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers

(Base 1982 = 100)

Centre	Jan.	Feb.	Linking factor for Old base												
	1991	1991													
ALL-INDIA	202	202	4.93	Belgaum	208	206	—	Varanasi	220	219	5.12				
Gudur	189	188	4.33	Hubli-Dharwar	304	201	—	Asansol	197	197	4.77				
Guntur	195	202	5.60	Mercara	186	188	—	Calcutta	212	207	4.74				
Hyderabad	191	192	5.23	Alwaye	184	184	5.19	Darjeeling	194	193	4.55				
Visakhapatnam	202	201	—	Mundakayam	194	193	4.67	Durgapur	213	211	—				
Warrangal	190	189	—	Quilon	185	190	—	Haldia	220	222	—				
Doom-Dooma-Tinsukia	182	183	4.05	Trivandrum	198	201	—	Howrah	220	217	4.12				
Gauhati	196	198	—	Bhalghat	203	200	5.24	Jalpaiguri	188	188	4.16				
Labac-Silchar	174	175	3.96	Bhilai	187	187	3.49	Raniganj	189	192	4.40				
Mariani-Jorhat	191	195	3.95	Bhopal	207	210	5.46	Chandigarh	204	204	—				
Rangapara-Tezpur	185	189	4.29	Indore	214	212	5.18	Delhi	208	209	4.97				
Jamshedpur	195	197	4.68	Jabalpur	225	228	6.41	Pondicherry	219	216	—				
Jharia	188	189	4.63	Bombay	209	210	5.12								
Kodarma	182	181	5.43	Nagpur	213	214	4.99	Additional Series of Labour Bureau							
Monghyr	199	204	5.29	Nasik	215	216	—	Kothagudem	222	221	3.25				
Noamundi	194	195	4.58	Pune	206	205	—	Himachal Pradesh	197	197	3.75				
Ranchi-Hatia	212	208	—	Sholapur	208	205	5.03	Bhilwara	202	204	3.20				
Ahmedabad	208	209	4.78	Barbil	194	194	5.00	Chindwara	206	210	2.59				
Baroda	209	210	—	Rourkela	186	184	3.59	Tripura	203	201	4.37				
Bhavnagar	209	210	4.99	Amritsar	196	196	5.19	Goa	211	215	3.40				
Rajkot	207	208	—	Ludhiana	200	200	—								
Surat	220	218	—	Ajmer	209	210	5.01	Other Series of Labour Bureau							
Faridabad	196	197	—	Jaipur	101	200	5.17	<i>Centre</i>		<i>Base</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>			
Yamunanagar	193	193	5.53	Coimbatore	182	187	5.35			1990	1991				
Srinagar	188	190	5.47	Coonoor	205	208	4.80	Ammathi	1960	873	895				
Bangalore	186	197	5.66	Madras	200	201	5.05	Chickmagalur	1960	887	894				
				Maduri	202	199	5.27	Kolar Gold Field	1960	910	914				
				Salem	192	196	—	Gwalior	1960	1022	1025				
				Tiruchirapally	212	210	—	Sambalpur	—	—	—				
				Agra	104	200	—	Berhampur	—	—	—				
				Ghaziabad	205	214	—	Cuttack	—	—	—				
				Kanpur	210	213	4.69								
				Saharanpur	203	207	5.06								

Note: Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number.

—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series.

Successful Struggle of the Unorganised Workers

Haryana

With the acceptance of the demands of Brick Kiln workers of Rohtak dist. the workers have achieved a glorious victory of their month old militant struggle during which one young worker Surat Singh was killed by the armed kiln owners on 22 March at Kalanaur and many others were seriously injured. This feudal repression by the owners could not suppress the agitation and on 20th April the demands of revision of rates for various categories of workers had to be accepted. Rohtak Deputy Commissioner gave an award to accept the revised rates which were accepted by the CITU union in Hisar dist earlier. The D C. was accepted as arbitrator in the dispute by both the Brick Kiln Association and CITU led Lal Jhanda Bhatha Mazdoor union. On announcement of the award Com. Dharambir, the union convenor of the dist ended his fast unto death which was started on March 13. Com. Raghbir Singh Hooda, State Secretary of CPI (M) offered juice amidst victorious slogans by hundreds of workers on the dharna site. With this significant victory the CITU led Lal Jhanda Bhatha Mazdoor Union has reached to thousands of men and women workers in Hissar, Jind, Sirsa Panipat and Rohtak districts of Haryana.

The workers had to pay valuable sacrifices of two of their young comrades. Besides Com. Surat Singh, another Com. Hawa Singh was martyred at Chaudhriwas village brick kiln in Hissar district. The victory could be achieved with widespread support extended by all CITU affiliated unions of the state, solidarity of different mass organisations and timely guidance and intervention of the CITU Centre.

One day solidarity strike was observed on 2 April at the call of CITU State Committee. A big workers' rally was held at Rohtak the same day which was addressed by Com. M K Pandhe, CITU General Secretary and other leaders of CITU and mass organisations. Com. Jibon Roy, Com. Hannan Mollah M.P, Com. R S Hoda and Com. Inderjit Singh attended the last rites of Com. Surat Singh in his village and paid revolutionary homage to the martyr. They met the parents and relatives of the martyr and expressed their heartfelt condolences.

A victory rally was held in Rohtak on April 21, which was addressed by Com. S N Solanki, Com. Inderjit, Com Sunder Singh, Com. Ram Chander and other office bearers of the State CITU.

Bihar

Fifteen thousand workers engaged in about 200 Crushers and 250 mines in the hilly areas of Pakur in Sahebganj district of Bihar resorted to a day's

strike on 23.3.91. and about 300 workers under one employer, M/s Madhyayan Lal Mineral Corporation resorted to indefinite strike since 25 3 91. This is a significant development in the area. There are four unions existing in the area. These are CITU union, SUCI union, INTUC union and BMS union. Barring CITU union, a tripartite settlement was signed on bonus in presence of the Regional Labour Commissioner, Patna, for the year 1989-90. Earlier these unions and the association of the employers entered into bipartite agreement on the same issue. These agreements were not acceptable to the workers in the entire quarry area wherein about 15,000 workers are engaged. In absence of proper records of actual payments the INTUC, BMS and SUCI unions accepted an average per day payment for the semiskilled and unskilled workers covered by the settlement. This was in fact lower than the actual payment made, resulting into loss to the workers.

Against these agreements all workers of stone quarry in Pakur region resorted to strike. To break the indefinite strike, the police, administration and goonda elements made desperate attempts, but due to solidarity of the workers the indefinite strike in M/s Madhyayan Lal Mineral Corporation continued. On 8th April 1991, a rally of the workers was held, which was addressed by Com. J S Majumdar, Com. Jyotin Soren, Com. Krishna Mondal and other leaders. Thousands of workers participated in the rally, which included Adivasis, muslim minorities and others. The Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) at Patna called for urgent conciliation meeting. After four days' negotiation a settlement was arrived at. The highlight of the settlement was that the tripartite settlement between the association of employers and other unions was broken and a new settlement was signed wherein the CITU union will have the right to claim bonus on actual payments instead of average decided by other unions. Further, the workers also received ex-gratia payment of Rs. 10,000/- for the strike period which will be disbursed to the workmen according to the recommendations of the union. The employers also agreed to maintain records of actual payment hereafter. The Association of the Employers also participated in the discussion. A dispute is pending between the association and the CITU union covering the entire quarry workers of this area on this issue. It was mutually agreed that the CITU union and the association will have further discussion at bilateral level to find acceptable solution before referring back to the Regional Labour Commissioner as CITU union rejected the bipartite agreement signed between the association and the unions.

This was a big victory for CITU union and created a big impact in the entire stone quarry area of Pakur. Workers from the entire quarry area are rallying under the banner of CITU.

Massive Rally Marks Dr. Ambedkar Birth Centenary in Bombay

April 14, 1991, the Birth Centenary Day of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was celebrated as a massive festival in every nook and corner of Maharashtra. Glowing tributes were paid to him from all across the political and social spectrum.

The biggest rally was held under the banner of the Phule Ambedkar Vichar Samvardhan Samiti, which comprised the PFI constituents in Maharashtra, like the Janata Dal, PWP, CPI(M), CPI, Kamgar Aghadi and other smaller groups of the RPI. Before this meeting, a large procession of thousands of people began from the Bhoiwada Maidan near Naigaum in Central Bombay. The major share of the mobilisation in this impressive procession was undoubtedly that of the Left parties, the CPI(M) and the CPI.

The procession wound its way to the Dadar Chowpatty sands, and culminated in a massive public meeting near the cremation ground of Dr. Ambedkar which is called "Chaitya Bhoomi". The public meeting was well over 75,000-strong, and brought back memories of another mass rally organised in Pune by the same Samiti on November 28, 1990 to observe the Death Centenary of another great social reformer of Maharashtra, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. It was at this Pune rally that the National Front-Left political campaign began in Maharashtra after the fall of the V P Singh Government.

The main attraction at the public meeting were the all India leaders of the NF-LF alliance, and they included former Prime Minister V P Singh, CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Harkishan Singh Surjeet, CPI Central Secretariat member A B Bardhan, Janata Dal leaders Madhu Dandavate and Ram Vilas Paswan, while the state leaders who spoke at the rally included N D Patil (PWP), R S Gavai and Jogendra Kavade (RPI), Dr. Datta Samant (Kamgar Aghadi), while Janata Dal State President Mrinal Gore presided.

The speakers hailed the contributions of Dr. Ambedkar to the uplift of the downtrodden dalit masses, his stands against religious fundamentalism of all hues, and his relentless campaign for the defence of democracy, national unity and social justice. They then linked Dr. Ambedkar's legacy to the present political challenges facing the country, and came down heavily on the authoritarian and opportunist antics of the Congress(I) and the communal cauldron being stirred by the BJP-RSS-VHP-Shiv Sena combine. Finally, they said that the best tribute to Dr. Ambedkar would be to fight on relentlessly for the realisation his ideals, which hinged around the principle of social transformation.

rule while the State mourning still continues. The leaders of the Cong(I) have not condemned these actions. On the contrary, one of its great leaders, Siddharta Shankar Ray, the author of the Emergency and the semi-fascist rule in W. Bengal, has castigated national leaders like Jyoti Basu and V. P Singh in most uncivilised terms. He led a procession in Calcutta with filthy abuses openly inscribed in banners.

The BJP on the other hand is trying to exploit the situation and has now become a claimant for forming a stable Government. It has to be noted that the economic policies of this party as propounded in its Manifesto are the same as those of the Cong(I), rather more pro-US. It debunks the non-aligned foreign policy. The party audaciously proposes to abrogate the Article 370 and the Minority Commission, thus further alienating the muslim community of Kashmir and the minority communities of the country. With its objective for a Hindu Rashtra, it has vulgarised the secular concept and already plunged the country into a communal inferno. Making a lip service to the formality of condemning the killing of Rajiv Gandhi, this party along with its cohorts—the VHP and the RSS has been instrumental in the new flare up of communal riots in Kanpur, Meerut, Varanasi, and other places and launched a systematic attack on the CPI(M) and Janata Dal cadres. Not confident of having the people's confidence, it has again launched its ridiculous propaganda for a National Government, which, not to speak of the left parties, no democratic and secular parties can accept.

The aftermath of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination with the rest of the elections in the offing has posed new challenges to the working class and the people. The point is, while the dastardly killing deserves strongest condemnations and the grief for Rajiv Gandhi's death has to be from within the core of the heart, yet there cannot be any compromise with the anti people policies of the party he led. The situation has to be met with an uncompromising struggle against the policies of the Cong(I). Similarly, the rabid communalism of the BJP has to be fought squarely and effectively to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country. The only viable alternative and stability can be ensured by the combination of Left-NF parties. With the influence of the Left parties, the path for an alternative people's oriented economic policy can be paved, free from the dictates of the World Bank and the IMF, the non-aligned foreign policy can be safeguarded, and at the same time the imperialist backed divisive and communal forces can be defeated, upholding the secular fabric of the country. A great responsibility lies with the working class at this juncture. It must face the situation boldly and successfully.

May Day Celebrations

May Day, 1991 was observed all over the country in a befitting manner. The May Day Manifesto of the CITU was translated in regional languages and distributed among the workers. Colourful processions, rallies and gate meetings were held with red flags, banners and placards organised by the unions at various state levels. The speakers called upon the workers to carry forward the revolutionary traditions of the May Day by holding high the banner of proletarian internationalism and intensifying the struggle against imperialism and for peace, democracy and socialism. The rallies and meetings especially focused at the forthcoming elections and called upon the working class to unite to defeat the forces of reaction and authoritarianism represented by the Congress(I) and the BJP and ensure victory of the Left-NF candidates for alternative people's oriented policies. In several places joint rallies were held along with other trade unions. Following are the reports:

W. Bengal

A massive joint rally was organised at Saheed Minar, Calcutta. The rally was joined by thousands of workers, who came in processions from the different industrial centres of the city and the adjoining areas. The entire Maidan became red with flags and festoons. The rally was presided over by Ranen Sen, the veteran AITUC leader. Among those who addressed the rally, were Samar Mukherjee, Vice President of CITU; Minoranjan Roy, the State CITU President; Sunil Sengupta of UTUC; Kamalapati Roy of AITUC; Bhabatosh Roy of 12th July Committee; Kedar Bhattacharya of Mercantile Federation; Naresh Das of BEFI; Prashanta Das Gupta of TUCC; Shyamal Chakrabarty, Secretary CITU and Santi Ghatik the W Bengal Labour Minister. The speakers called upon the workers to carry forward united struggles in keeping with the revolutionary pledge of the May Day. Pointing to the forthcoming elections, they called upon the workers to defeat the reactionary and communal forces represented by the Cong(I) and BJP and ensure victory for the candidates of the left parties and of the National Front.

At Durgapur the celebrations were held for three days by the Durgapur and Alloy Steel units of Hindustan Steel Employees Union. May Day also coincided with the foundation anniversary of the Alloy Steel unit of the union. On 1st May the workers came in procession to the Martyrs' Column in Ashis Market. Dilip Majumdar, the union President hoisted the red flag and Jibon Roy, Secretary CITU addressed the meeting. On 2nd May a public meeting was organised at Tilak Maidan, which was addressed by Jibon Roy. On 3rd May the rally was presided over by Subichar Roy and addressed by Ashim Das Gupta, the Finance Minister of W. Bengal.

The day was observed all over Bengal and in various industrial centres by holding big rallies and meetings.

Tripura

The Day was observed all over the state by CITU and 6th July Committee jointly, braving the terror and threats unleashed by the semi-fascist Cong(I)—TUJS regime. Red flags were hoisted by the unions in all industrial units. At Agartala, the rally was presided over by the veteran CITU leader Chitta Chanda and addressed by Sudarshan Das, the State General Secretary and other leaders.

Andhra Pradesh

At Rajahmundry, the Andhra Pradesh Paper Mill Staff and Workers' Union observed the day by opening the B T Ranadive Bhavan. The building was opened by Vimal Ranadive, Secretary of CITU. The building was constructed by the union with a contribution of Rs. 2 lakhs made by the workers. The workers marched from the Synthetic Centre to the paper mill area, a distance of 7 km., where a public meeting was held. The first conference of this union was addressed by Com. BTR in 1972. Addressing the meeting Vimal Ranadive called upon the workers to carry forward the revolutionary pledge of the May Day for ushering in a socialist state. She focused at the forthcoming elections and called for the defeat of the Cong(I) and BJP and ensure victory of Left-NF candidates. The meeting was attended by a large number of women workers. Among others who spoke were leaders of the AITUC, Janata Dal and some women workers.

Delhi

This time the May Day was observed at Delhi jointly by CITU, AITUC, HMS and UTUC. The procession marched from Ramlila Ground and converged at Town Club crossing, where a public meeting was held. Apart from the leaders of the other trade unions, the meeting was addressed by M K Pandhe, General Secretary CITU and S B Bharadwaj, General Secretary of the Delhi State CITU.

Rajasthan

The CITU observed the day in all the industrial centres and places like Jaipur, Kota, Beawar, Udaipur, Sri Ganga Nagar, Bikaner, etc. At Bikaner the public meeting and the gate meeting at the Railway Workshop was addressed by P K Ganguly, Secretary CITU, Ravindra Shukla the State CITU General Secretary, Hari Ram Chowhan, the State CPI(M) Secretary and leaders of several other trade unions. Thousands of workers came in a procession to join the public meeting in front of the Railway station.

Tamilnadu

CITU unions along with other fraternal trade

unions and mass organisations observed May Day all over the state with massive processions and rallies. As usual, there were flag hoistings at factory gates and union offices in the morning hours. In the evening, processions were taken out and meetings were held.

In Madras city, a massive procession was taken out from the gates of Ambathur Industrial Estate. The meeting was presided over by W R Varadharajan, Secretary State CITU and addressed by R Umanath, State General Secretary of CITU, Muthili Sivaraman (DWA) and leaders of DYFI, BEFI, AIEA and other organisations.

Rallies and meetings were also held in almost all the industrial centres. Leaders of CITU and other mass organisations including K Ramani, N Sankaraya, P R Parameswaran, N Varadharajan, AK Padmanabhan, TK Rangarajan, G Ramkrishnan, A Soundhajan, S P Agasthialingam addressed the rallies at various centres.

Explaining the revolutionary heritage of May Day and pledging to uphold it, the leaders also called upon the working class and other toiling people to participate in the political battle—the general elections to the Lok Sabha and state legislative and work for the victory of National Front-Left Front combine.

Bihar

The Co-ordination Committee of unions and associations took out a procession from Reserve Bank and converged at the Mauryalok street corner. Another procession started from the MLA Club and converged at the same place. Thousands of workers from Central and State Government, Bank LIC, Railway, Electricity Board, Pharmaceuticals, Peerless, Rickshaw, Tempo drivers and others joined the rally. The rally was addressed among others by A K Gopalan, Sachidananda Sinha, J S Majumdar, Chakradhar Prasad Singh and others. The day was also observed in other places and industrial cities like Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Giridih, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur, Gaya, etc.

UP

UP observed the day throughout the state. At Saharanpur a big meeting was addressed by Gulab Singh, Tilak Raj Bhatia and others. At Rishikesh, the IDPL Kamgar Union organised a big rally, which was addressed by S L Raturi, the General Secretary. At Jhansi a mass meeting was addressed by V K Gupta, Pal Singh, Abdul Mazid and Brijendra Singh. At Kanpur, a big public meeting was addressed by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, the P B Member of CPI(M) and President of AIKS.

MP

The CITU and AITUC organised a big joint rally at Rajbara Janata Chowk, which was addressed by Naryan Bharati, Kalyan Jain, Balati Tokekar, Vasant Siniri, etc. At Guna, the NFL, CITU union took out a big procession which was brutally lathi-charged by the CISF at the Township Gate. 33 workers were injured in the lathi charge. The Koila

Shramik Sangh organised a rally at Sahdol.

Karnataka

A joint rally was organised by CITU, AITUC, MICO union, LIC, Banks etc at Bangalore, which was participated by over 5000 workers. The rally was addressed by S Suryanaryan Rao, K S Subramanya, R Srinivas, H Mahadevan and Surendranath At Udippi the CITU organised a big public meeting which was addressed among others by P Vishwanath Rai. The May Day was observed by the ACC-Babcock Workers Union at Sahabad by holding a big rally, which was addressed by Dattatreya Zipre and G Shantakumar.

Meghalaya

The May Day Committee, Meghalaya organised a big rally at Shillong, which was addressed among others by N K Chakrabarty, General Secretary of the MDC, Shillong.

Orissa

The Jharsuguda Associations of Trade Unions and Co-ordination Committee organised a convention on Communal Harmony and Peace. The convention was attended by over 300 workers from Banks, LIC, Railway, Telecom, Electricity Board, Forest Co-operation, Pottery, Trxtiles. Government employees and others. The convention was presided over by J K Singh and inaugurated by Raghunath Das. Other speakers were Rabi Pani, Pradip Das, Niranjana Das, K Surya, etc. In the evening a colourful procession was taken out and a public meeting was held at Sarabahal. This was followed by a street drama.

May Day Celebrations Abroad

Moscow : Hundreds of thousands of workers celebrated May Day at Red Square, Moscow, which was observed by the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov. The celebration was organised by the Soviet Trade Unions. Trade Union leaders strongly criticised the current policies of the CPSU leadership which according to them led to declining living standards and rising unemployment.

Another demonstration was taken out (for the second successive year) with portraits of Stalin in front of Lenin Mausoleum, shouting slogans, "No to Privatisation", "Counter Revolution will not Pass", etc.

China : May Day was observed at Tiananmen Square. China's national flag was hoisted. Leaders of the CPC were present in the ceremony.

Cuba : May Day was observed with the full revolutionary traditions at Havana, which was addressed by Fidel Castro.

DPRK : May Day was observed in a massive way at Pyongyang and other place in DPRK by holding mass rallies. Streets, villages, factories and enterprises were festively bedecked with red flags and slogan boards. Leaders of the Workers Party of Korea addressed the rallies.