



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## “For a Broad Front of Resistance Against Authoritarianism !”

—B.T. RANADIVE

*We are publishing below the extracts of the Address of B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU, to the meeting of the General Council of the CITU held at Cannanore from 11-14 September.*

**H**FTER paying homage to the Comrades who passed away since Fourth Conference of the CITU, the CITU President, B.T. Ranadive, warned the General Council of the danger to peace and the danger of war which has increased in recent months and is causing concern to all fighters for peace and democracy and to all sections of the working class. Referring to the false scare about the Soviet danger to the security of the U.S.A. on the plea of which the American imperialists are piling up armament creating a war atmosphere, B.T.R. said, “the real aim is to put the USA in a strategic position to dominate the world and be ready with new genocidal armaments to threaten the socialist world.”

### Danger to Peace

The CITU President B.T. Ranadive called upon : “The working class of India led by the CITU must raise its voice of protest against these imperialist designs to break world peace, threaten the socialist countries and carry on aggression against the countries of the third world.” Holding high the banner of internationalism, he said, we should rouse the workers about this danger to peace and threat to the socialist world.

### New Plan Frame

While referring to the revelation of the new plan frame that the Congress (I) administrators have learnt nothing from the disaster that their past policies had imposed on the country, that they are not prepared to change a single of their past planning and are determined to juggle with display of sums of money without ensuring quick development or relaxation in the impoverishment of the masses, B. T. Ranadive said : “The frame has no proposals to eliminate the monopolists and the

power of big money. There is lip homage to the idea of the public sector as the commanding height of the economy”.

While this Government talks about the priority of the Directive Principles over Fundamental Rights, BTR questioned that what prevented the Government from demolishing the monopolies to implement the directive principle of preventing concentration of wealth.

Referring to the private sector, B.T. Ranadive said : “There is nothing to indicate that the private sector will be brought under control or play an increasingly diminishing role..... The planners have absolutely nothing to say against the multinationals and their penetration, their defiance of the law of the land in the drug industry, and their assaults on labour. This also is in line with Congress (I) manifesto where the danger of multinational is hardly referred to.”

### Land Relations

Without a basic change in land relations, without breaking the land concentration and distribution of land gratis to the poor people and agriculture workers, the economic basis for rapid industrial advance cannot be laid. While the authors of the plan frame elsewhere talk about the lack of political will, the ruling party exposes itself as totally lacking in it. Pointing out this, BTR said, “the progressive land legislation recently passed by Kerala Government has not received Presidential assent. And over last three decades every legislation on ceiling has been reduced to a farce—the political will lacking because the ruling party was dominated in the rural areas by the landlords and land monopolies.” This has resulted in concentration of land.

He then referred to a note of the Chief Minister Jyoti Basu according to which in the thirty odd years of independence, not even 40 lakhs out of a total available area of 40 crore acres could be vested with the Government for purposes of distribution.

## **New Burdens**

The measures suggested by the plan frame for the unattainable goal of five per cent annual growth rate in national income are bound to increase the burdens on the people and lead to a deterioration in their condition. The plan frame envisages additional resource mobilisation of Rs. 19,000 crores and additional taxation of about Rs. 7,500 crores during the entire period of six plan, which is bound to fall on the common man through indirect taxation, excise, sales tax etc. on necessities of life. According to Jha Committee indirect taxation in the total tax resources of the country was 80 per cent which is being accelerated under the sixth plan.

In order to ease the burden on the treasury and release crores for investment, the plan proposes the abolition of subsidies on fertilisers, food, exports and other items. B.T. Ranadive said that the scheme was being introduced under the pressure of the World Bank. In its recent report on India the Bank called for an end to the subsidies and the Finance Minister has readily responded. By reducing the subsidy on fertilisers lakhs of middle peasants who are already victims of inflation and suffer from unequal exchange, have been penalised. He said, the abolition of food subsidies will lead to all round rise in food prices, rise in the cost of living for the workers and city dwellers. He remarked that this was how planners seek to combat inflation.

Abolition of export subsidies demanded by the World Bank is also being considered by the Indian Public opinion from a different angle, that is, in so far as they placed big profits in the hands of a few capitalists. American imperialists have raised it as a matter of political discrimination and USA Government has recently desired to lay heavy duties on Indian goods worth Rs. 40 crores objecting to the subsidies. Another important development that should be noted is in connection with foreign aid. BTR told the General Council that pressures are working to make the Indian people pay through their nose for new borrowings. The framers are preparing for costly borrowings on commercial terms at high rates of interests. He further warned that the commercial borrowings and OPEC loans are going to put heavy burdens of foreign debts on the people.

## **No Price Reduction**

The CITU President said, there is absolutely no prospect and no promise to bring prices down from the present giddy heights. All that is offered is maintaining them at present level. But it is certain that the prices will continue to rise, he said. Even the assurance to the farmers of remunerative prices of their produce will not be kept.

## **Working Class and the Plan**

The planners' outlook towards the labour, whose involvement in any plan effort is very vital for its success, is demonstrated in just few lines like Congress(I) manifesto and the planners who are prepared to give new concessions to the monopolists are unable even to pretend a liberal attitude towards working class. Pointing it out BTR remarked: "They declare that the working class has no grievances, no just demands and nothing need to be done to satisfy them. In the plan frame-work they talk of satisfying every section except the working class." While the planners are concerned about the top levels of management providing for them 'higher scales of pay for which they became eligible without having to shift them to other departments', the planners feel that the workers need no such consideration or incentive. Ranadive said that the supermost in the mind of planners is how to prevent working class struggles for decent standard of living. And they prohibit such strikers in one legislation or other.

Referring to the workers' participation in management, Ranadive said, there is no genuine desire to secure it in running the industry efficiently. The planners seek it only for 'augmenting productivity', that is for increasing the workload and for more intensified exploitation of the workers. The CITU President said "The trade union movement and especially our CITU has been demanding workers' participation on equal terms so that our nation's industry can run efficiently, free from corruption, mismanagement jobbery and bribery. But the planners do not mean this type of cooperation. The plan frame is distinctively anti-working class and the trade union movement must gird up its loins to meet the attacks that will emerge from this outlook",

## **The Unemployment**

The perilous condition of our economy is manifested in the mounting figure of the registered unemployed. The unemployment has more than trebled in the last ten years. In 1970 there were 40.7 lakhs unemployed according to employment ex-

change figures which rose to 126.2 lakhs in 1978, and to 144.4 lakhs at the end of January 1980. By 1979 among the unemployed were nearly 40 lakhs matriculates, 19 lakhs under-graduates and 14 lakhs graduates and post-graduates.

The trade union movement has repeatedly demanded acceptance of right to work as a fundamental right and pending it all round unemployment relief to both urban and rural unemployed. But the Congress(I) Government has till now refused to do either and in recent past there have been attempts to use the unemployed against the employed. Last year the bank employees in Ahmedabad who were demonstrating for their just demands were attacked and assaulted by hired mercenaries claiming to be unemployed. It should be remembered that Morarji Desai when he was Prime Minister ridiculed the demand of unemployment benefit as begging for charity. B.T. Ranadive observed, "The trade union movement can neglect this problem only at its own peril. The time has come for our organisations to consult with other central organisations to raise our united voice on behalf of the unemployed and through nationwide convention of the unemployed, demand a common system of unemployment benefit throughout the country."

He further appreciated the governments of West Bengal and Kerala who have introduced the schemes for unemployment relief. In both these States, besides, there is provision for payment of pensions to old age widows. Significant pressure is being exercised by these measures on some of the State Governments who have recently hastened to introduce some kind of unemployment relief. The CITU President said that this was of tremendous help to trade union movement in its fight for the unemployed. He called upon, "All our strength now should be mobilised to enforce a nation-wide scheme for unemployment benefit."

### **Industrial Relations Bill**

Referring to the proposal of the Central Government to recast the Industrial Relations Bill, B.T. Ranadive said, "Those who are sincere about lessening industrial tension and avoiding unnecessary loss of working days, must give up the traditional outlook of looking at the problems, an outlook which considers the workers as an intruder in industry and his demands for human existence as curse of the situation. With this outlook only repression on the workers must result." He remarked, "Our rulers by the way do not seem to realise that democracy is not only required for running the government but also for running the industry."

The CITU President said, "There are four conditions essential for reducing industrial tensions and loss of working days. First is that there should be satisfactory wage settlements and settlement norms of production between them. Second, the unions carrying on negotiations must have genuine backing of the mass of the workers. This means that recognition should be decided by secret ballot of all workers. Third, all agreements entered into should be endorsed by the mass of workers. Fourth, there should be genuine participation of workers in industry on terms of equality. The responsibility thrust by participation if it is genuine will eliminate many causes of friction and reduce to the maximum stoppage of loss of working days."

But, the main aim of all industrial relations bills till now has been to legally restrict the fight of the working class for living conditions without providing any guarantee for progress, he said. New amendments are being proposed, it seems, to extend the scope of the Bill to new sections. But the amendment again want to have a separate law for hospitals, educational and research institutions. This is exactly what the Janata Government attempted to do and prescribed stringent law for these sections, banning all strikes. The present amendment seems to have perhaps the same objective in view. Pointing out this, B.T. Ranadive said, "There should be one law for all sections and it should be free from penalising the workers for fighting for their demands or putting fetter on their collective mass action."

The CITU President referred to the proposal of introducing a provision for referring inter-union disputes either by the union or by the Government, to a labour court whose orders are to be binding on the unions and their members. This is a provision to bolster pliant unions and attack fighting ones in the name of settling inter-union rivalries. Such a legislation will be harmful to industrial peace.

To limit industrial conflict, BTR said, "The arbitrary powers of the employers to hire and fire the workers must be abolished." Arbitrary powers lead to the victimisation of the workers. BTR gave the figures of the struggles and the mandays lost in fight against victimisation.

### **Labour Ministers' Conference**

Referring to the conference of the Labour Ministers held in Delhi in July which decided on steps like intervention in trade union affairs, the CITU President informed the General Council that the conference decided on raising the minimum membership necessary for the registration of trade

unions. The office of the Registrar of Trade Unions is functioning as police censor in many states. The above amendment will only strengthen this process of manipulating registration in the interest of the ruling party, he observed. He further said that they were coupling participation in management with participation in equity. The CITU has never agreed to workers' participation in equity, he clarified.

The CITU President welcomed the consensus on selecting the workers' representatives through secret ballot and to incorporate provisions in the Act to cover unions of rural and agricultural workers. He further said, "We must oppose the decision to reduce the existing limit of outsiders in the executive of registered trade unions. Working class trade union officials are victimised and are considered outsiders. The provision is a device to terrorise the workers and deprive them of their trusted leadership."

Mentioning the failure of many employers to contribute to the ESI and EPF, BTR said that except the suggestion of setting up of special recovery cell, they dare not suggest drastic punishment, including jail sentences for the capitalist defaulters. Ranadive remarked that when among defaulters are the State and Central Government undertakings what can a conference of labour ministers do against it. Referring to the recommendation for vocational training to women, he said, it is to be seen whether any steps are taken to implement the decision.

### **Left Front Governments**

Condemning the entire armoury against the working class in the Congress (I) ruled States, B.T. Ranadive said that the West Bengal and Kerala ministries have alternative policies to offer. In place of restricting the rights of the workers, repressing them, they strain every nerve to protect them and expand them. They do it because they are committed to protect the exploited against the exploiters. The Left Front Government of West Bengal has protected the right to strike, right to organise and help the process of collective bargaining and has also given various facilities to State Government employees helping all sections of the people, and the working class.

Appreciating the role of the Left Front Government the CITU President said, "They are giving a new democratic orientation to an administration which has hitherto known only functioning in the opposite anti-people direction. The three governments, therefore, stand as advanced outposts of democracy, in the midst of surging wave of authori-

tarianism. It is the duty of India's working class, our entire CITU to defend these outposts and frustrate all attempts to undermine and topple them. We send our warm greetings to our esteemed Vice-President, Comrade Jyoti Basu, our friends Comrades Nayanar and Nripen Chakraborty and assure them that we are behind them with all our strength and we will not rest till the conspirators are defeated."

Pointing out the initial work done by the Working Women Coordination Committee under CITU's leadership, Ranadive said, the protection of rights of the women, their participation in the TU movement, promotion of women to leading posts in the trade unions, these are all matters of common concerns of our movement and they should be dealt with expeditiously. Special steps should be taken to discharge this responsibility.

The CITU President referred to the attacks on CITU activists and leaders in Assam and on the State CITU office. He said, we are proud that our comrades have refused to lower down the banner of the working class, the banner of unity, despite murders of our several comrades, and they are fighting courageously in defence of the unity of the working class and of the country. He paid tributes to them and honoured the memory of the martyrs.

Referring to the relief collected by our unions for the suffering people of Tripura, Ranadive said, Tripura was the victim of anti-national agencies who found that disruption started in the North-Eastern Region could not succeed in Tripura. The democratic movement to keep the tribals and Bangalees united was led by the CPI (M) and was able to defeat the Congress(I) both in the recent Parliamentary election and the Assembly elections. Pointing out that against the unity of people of Tripura the conspirators resorted to hiring hands to attack and assassinate common people, B.T. Ranadive said, "The Amra Bangali on the one side and certain left extremist elements from the tribal side played the same role and helped the forces who are seeking to divide the country. Taking advantage of this situation, certain elements in Congress (I) in Tripura demanded dismissal of Tripura Government and establishment of President's rule. But these efforts have been frustrated. The left front Government has succeeded in retaining the confidence of mass of people and in showing to the world that a policy based on doing justice to the common man is the only instrument for correctly fighting all reactionary agencies." He called upon, "We must collect more and more relief for aiding those in the relief camps

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# General Council Meeting at Cannanore — a Review

**S**EPTEMBER 10: Jayanti Janata Express is running fast towards Cannanore. Only one hour is left. We are seeing a number of CITU's Red Flags hoisted on roof tops by several residents of the District. With the destination coming closer the decoration is also increasing. Train stops at Cannanore. Heavily decorated station reverberates with the slogans of CITU Zindabad, CITU Lal Salaam, Inquilad Zindabad. The volunteers led by Reception Committee Chairman, C. Kannan, are busy in welcoming the General Council Members.

The General Council Meeting is to take place in A. K. G. Memorial Hall located in the premises of the Cannanore District Committee of the CPI (M). The Central Office of the CITU starts functioning. The volunteers are busy in doing various types of jobs. The preparations are in full swing. Informations are being received about the arrival of General Council Members from all corners of the country.

September: General Council Members are coming to Central Office. They are inquiring for many things. Industry-wise meetings have begun. Programmes are being chalked out for countrywide struggles on the basis of industry.

The Working Committee of the CITU meets at 3. P.M. It adopts resolution on condolence and martyrs. It is chalking out the programme for the General Council meeting.

At 4. P. M., the Hall is packed to capacity. The General Council Members and others are present. The members are heading towards forming a line of action

and struggle on the pressing issues of the working class and the common people.

The General Secretary of the CITU, P. Ramamurti, comes to mike. He says, our President Comrade B. T. Ranadive is ill. Doctors have advised him to take complete bed rest, not to come here. Therefore, he proposed Md. Ismail to preside.

Md. Ismail, Vice-President, CITU, calls the meeting to order. The comrades have now come out. Md. Ismail hoists the CITU flag amidst cheers and slogans. Comrades take their seats in the Hall. C. Kannan, Vice-President of CITU, and the Chairman of the Reception Committee greets the meeting. While welcoming the members, he is reviewing the trade union movement and the repression faced by the workers and people of Cannanore District of Kerala.

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, moves the resolution on Martyrs, Ton Duc Thang, Josip Broz Tito, Suhrid Mullick Chowdhury, Dinen Bhattacharya, Tarun Sengupta, B. K. Paliwal, K. Padmanabhan, T. Balan and on Condolence. All present stand up and pay homage.

A. Balasubrahmanyam reads the Address of B. T. Ranadive, President, CITU, who could not come due to his illness. (The extracts of BTR's Address have been published on Page 1—4).

## On Kerala

P. Ramamurti moves a resolution on Kerala which greets the 'left democratic front Government of Kerala for the measures implemented for amelioration of various sections of the people who were subjected

to the exploitation of the wrong pro-landlord pro-monopolists economic policies of the Central Government.' The resolution calls upon the working class and the trade unions to 'rally behind the Government and foil all attempts to topple these Governments.' Requesting the members to adopt the resolution, Ramamurti says, this Congress Government in its 30 years of existence dared not think about the labourers who produce the raw material for industries. The economy is sustained by them. While the multinationals are demanding more and more profit, the workers are denied even the trade union rights. Considering the problems of the people of the country, what the three Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala have given to the people is very satisfactory. Niren Ghosh seconds the resolution. He says, what the working class has achieved in Kerala. West Bengal and Tripura will be the central point to rally the working class of the entire country. General Council adopts it unanimously.

## On Tripura

Samar Mukherjee, who recently visited Tripura along with E. Balanandan, moves the resolution on Tripura. It condemns the 'dastardly carnage committed in Tripura which has taken a toll of 522 lives and has uprooted 1.96 lakh people from their hearth and home' and which was organised by the anti-national activists to create a situation to topple the Left Front Government. Immediately after the incident, Samar says, there was hue and cry by the reactionary elements and demand was raised to dismiss the Tripura Government. But the Tripura Government successfully

exposed the conspiracies of the Tripura Upajati Juba Samity, the Amra Bengali and the reactionaries. The Government commands the confidence of both Bengalis and Tripuris. Large sections of Bengalis and Tripuris are together is amply demonstrated by the joint processions and demonstrations. Now Tripura is marching ahead and requires your help. E. Balanandan seconds the resolution and tells that in recent carnage the heads of children of 2 to 5 years of age were cut. The conspirators are serving the vested interests in the name of respective sections. With all glory to Tripura people and Government and in the national integrity, N. Prasad Rao appeals to accept the resolution which congratulates the comrades in Tripura for the 'strenuous efforts they had to make in order to keep the class unity of the working people and democratic masses in face of determined bid to rouse chauvinistic passions amongst the people.' The resolution called upon the Union Government to 'render all possible help to the Government of Tripura to overcome the difficulties of the people created by this carnage and also calls upon the affiliated unions to continue their help.'

### On West Bengal

P. K. Kurane moves the resolution of West Bengal. Highlighting the achievements of the working class, peasants and the common people under the left front Government of West Bengal, the resolution exposes the conspiracies by the vested interests to topple the Government. The resolution urges upon the working class to 'remain ever vigilant against all conspiracies and develop broadest possible front against the drive towards

authoritarianism and one party rule and continue to defend the left front Governments of whom West Bengal stands at foremost line so as to defend democracy, right to organise and fight for betterment of living standards of the people.' Manoranjan Roy while supporting the resolution reviews the measures taken by the West Bengal Government in the interest of the toiling and common people. He exposes the conspiracies of the Congress(I) elements to create a situation for toppling the Government. The General Council adopts it unanimously.

### Reports

After Tea Session. The meeting is being attended by 200 members of the General Council. M.K. Pandhe proposes on behalf of the Working Committee a Resolution Committee with Nrisingha Chakrabarty as Convenor and N. Prasad Rao, Niren Ghosh, Biren Roy, P.K. Kurane and K.N. Ravindranath as members. He proposes the Credential Committee also with Nallasivan as Convenor and Santi Ghatak, S. Suryanarayan Rao, Kali Ghosh, Bisweswar Ganguly and Nambirajan as members. These Committees are elected unanimously. The meeting adopts the programme of the General Council as suggested by the Working Committee.

The General Secretary of the CITU, P. Ramamurti, presents his General Report. He reviews the important developments in the country since Madras Conference of the CITU. (The extracts of his report are being published in this issue elsewhere).

September 12: Susheela Gopalan is in Chair. The Secretary of the CITU, M.K. Pandhe, presents the report on organisation and activities. (The extracts

of his report are being published elsewhere in this issue).

### Debate

Now the discussion on the General Secretary's and Secretary's reports starts. The Vice-Presidents, Manoranjan Roy, K. Ramani, C. Kannan are presiding over the sessions alternately. Amal Ghosh Dastidar (Assam), C. N. Ravindranath (Kerala), Biren Roy (West Bengal), Manoranjan Roy (West Bengal), E.J.K. Nair (Karnataka), Harsahaya Singh (U.P.), Shradhanand Solanki (Haryana). J.S. Loyalpuri (Punjab). N. Padmalochan (Kerala), Niren Ghosh (West Bengal), Chandi Prasad (Bihar), P.K. Kurane (Maharashtra), Parsa Satyanarayana (Andhra Pradesh), Jai Gopal (West Bengal), Hari Krishna Saha (Gujarat), T.N. Singh (Bihar), Parimal Mitra (West Bengal), Shivaji Patnaik (Orissa), Ramapada Mukherjee (West Bengal), S.S. Bhattacharya (Madhya Pradesh), Chittobrata Mazumdar (West Bengal), N. Nallsivan (Tamilnadu), Suryanarayana Rao (Karnataka), Moti Lal Sharma (Madhya Pradesh), Santi Ghatak (West Bengal) and Balan Das (Andhra Pradesh) participate in the debate on the first day. September 13: The debate continues. C.B.C. Warrior (Kerala), A. Dakshi (West Bengal), Sushil Bhattacharya (Delhi), P.P. Sanzgiri (Maharashtra), P. Gangamma (West Bengal), K.K. Roy Ganguli (West Bengal), Krishna Kant Varma (Rajasthan) and Suraj Bhan Bhardwaj (Delhi) participate in the discussion. On both the days in all 34 members participated in the debate. They have given their opinion on the reports and have raised several issues. They have also reviewed the struggles carried out in their States. They have made several suggestions and explained their limitations.

A number of members have requested for organising trade union schools in their States. On participative management they said, it is for increasing workload and suppressing working class struggles. Some felt that more emphasis should be given to organising unorganised labour. A member suggested to take up the cause of small scale industries also on whom monopoly is trying to shift the burden in addition to the working class. Members suggested for organising all India strikes on the basis of industry or otherwise on pressing issues of the working class, peasantry, and the common people like price rise, unemployment, authoritarianism, etc. A number of comrades have suggested for organising industry-wise convention. From States where trade union movement is weak or is building up, the members demanded more help from the CITU Centre. The members exposed the secessionist movement in Assam and anti-people activities of the vested interests in the left front ruled States of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala. The members suggested to organising campaigns to popularise the achievements of the left front Governments, and mobilising the working class, peasantry and the common people, throughout the country in their defence.

### Reply

The General Secretary, P. Ramamurti, replies to the debate. He clarifies various points. He says, foremost task of the trade union movement is to fight against the authoritarian forces. In the joint struggle, he reaffirms, the gainer would be the working class and not the bourgeoisie. On the role of the left front Governments, Ramamurti says, we want to present them

as the model Governments. Referring to the participative management, he points out, we are for it if it is the participation at all levels, that is, including in sales, purchase, deciding the technology etc. He calls for collecting funds to help organise the agricultural workers. The movement of the public sector employees was postponed temporarily because of prevailing political situation and now when the attacks on the working class are increasing we have to carry forward their struggle also. He explains the education programme of the CITU. After explaining various other points, he says, we shall try for the wider participation in the all party programme being finalised in Delhi in the end of the month which should include trade unions, women organisations, students, youth etc. If this does not materialise, the CITU Secretariat will give a separate call for struggle against the price rise, unemployment, atrocities etc., and we have to carry out campaigns consistently.

### On Working Women

Susheela Gopalan, Vice-President, is on the mike. She is explaining the plight of the working women in the country. She quotes a survey which says that even in public sector undertakings the percentage of working women has come down from 11.3 to 9.1. and adds that due to economic crisis the women are forced to go in for odd hours jobs also. She warns that the Protective Legislation is going to pose several problems. She puts up the proposal of organising a Convention of Working Women jointly in November. She moves a resolution on working women's demands which says, 'The working women today are coming out more and more boldly to assert

their rights.' The resolution calls upon, 'The working class must champion their cause, build up movement in support of their legitimate demands and against the sexual depredations that are being committed against them. This is a task which they can ignore only at their own peril.' Shibani Sengupta supporting the resolution says, the women are treated as cheap labour in unorganised sector, and calls upon to take up the cause of working women seriously. (P. Ramamurti, Balaji Das, B.P. Kashyap and E.J.K. Nair (Maharashtra) speak on the resolution.

Samar Mukherjee places the statement of accounts for the year 1979.

### On Railwaymen

Nrisingha Chakrabarty is moving a resolution on greeting to the Loco Running Staff and it pledges full support in their just struggle. He simultaneously moves another resolution on solidarity with railway workers' struggle which notes with grave concern the attitude of the Ministry of Railways towards the demands which were raised in the historic struggle on May, 1974 that still remain unfulfilled. It extends full support to the struggle of railway workers for winning their just demands. M.M. Lawrence seconds the resolution.

### On Assam

Samar Mukherjee moves the resolution on Assam. He explains the prevailing situation. The resolution draws the pointed attention of the working class of the country that 'the happenings in this region is inseparably linked with the growing war offensive by the US imperialism and their policy of "Asians fight-

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“THE sands of time are running fast. The working class must become the leader of the entire nation in the struggle against imperialism, for peace, freedom, democracy and socialism,” thus called upon P. Ramamurti, General Secretary CITU, presenting the General Report to the General Council meeting held at Cannanore from September 11 to 14.

Reviewing the most important developments in the country since the last Conference of the CITU in Madras, after return to power of the Congress(I) Ramamurti said, ‘the trend of authoritarianism and attack on democratic rights and trade union rights have already started.’ Referring to the statements of some Congress (I) ministers about the Left Front Governments, he said, the call for the abolition of the Parliamentary System and the institution of Presidential form of Government is being revived by many Congress(I) leaders.

**Directive Principles :** Referring to the Supreme Court Judgement in the Kesavananda Bharti case which struck down Article 35 (B) and (C) of the Constitution which was the notorious 42nd Amendment made in the Constitution during emergency and which in the name of supremacy of the Directive Principles of the Constitution, nullified the Fundamental Rights like rights to expression, to form associations, equality before law, Ramamurti said, the Court decreed that the basic features of the Constitution can not be changed by the Parliament. He observed that if the Government was serious of enforcing these directive principles of State Policy such as the right to work and to receive employment benefits, right to living wage, it could

amend the Constitution by including them in the Fundamental Rights.

**Anti Working Class :** Pointing out that the police force in the Congress(I) ruled States are running amuck, the General Secretary cited a number of cases of police atrocities and rape and molestation of women particularly the women workers. He criticised the reign of terror let loose by the managements in connivance with the police on

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—P. RAMAMURTI

the working class. Apart from it, he said, “The Congress (I) Government both at the Centre and in the States have already given clear indication of their anti-working class Policy.”

**B. P. E. :** Condemning the role of the Bureau of Public Undertakings, P. Ramamurti remarked, “It does nothing in regard to the financial frauds, corruption and lavish and unnecessary expenditure of public money in the Public Sector Undertakings.....But it acts as a body to police wages, salaries and emoluments of workers and employees in the public sector.” He further said, due to the “blanket circular to the management of all units banning them from coming to any agreements with the trade unions which might entail any financial expenditure...managements cannot supply even chappals and working clothes where they are absolutely necessary for the safety of the workers.” He cited the cases of holding up of implementation

of agreements by the BPE such as in Hotel Corporation of India and Bharat Heavy Plates.

**Contract Workers :** Pointing out that the Contract Workers’ Act was not a dead letter, Ramamurti observed “The Public Sector under the guidance of the Government of India are the worst offenders.” He said that in many public sector undertakings the permanent work is given to contractors and the workers are worst exploited.

“The Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation stated in Parliament that he cannot abolish the system because this is cheaper.” Reviewing the strike struggles of the workers of Instrumentation of India, Ltd. where 90% of the workers are contract workers for five months and the struggles of the Junior Doctors of Hospitals in Delhi, the General Secretary of CITU informed the General Council that the Union Labour Minister had put up a proposal that the jobs of permanent nature should be regularised and absorbed. But the Cabinet turned it down, he said.

**Bonus :**—Referring to Bonus Act, Ramamurti said that all the proposals of the Labour Minister regarding the raising of the ceiling, inclusion of all the services in accordance with the Supreme Court Judgement, were rejected by the Cabinet when the Bonus Ordinance was promulgated. The Cabinet only accepted the proposal that 8.33% compulsory minimum bonus should

be made a permanent feature of the Bonus Act, Ramamurti observed that the Congress (I) Government dared not interfere with this proposal because it knew that it would face a country-wide strike of working class in all industries.

**Ordinances :** The CITU General Secretary pointed out that it is understood that the Union Labour Minister was in favour of incorporating the recognition of unions by the

secret ballot as an amendment to the Industrial Dispute Act. But, “the Government in order to bolster up the INTUC, is opposed to this democratic system.” Referring to these, Ramamurti observed, “Government’s anti-labour and anti-democratic attitude is further illustrated by the series of Ordinances they have promulgated in the recent months.” Referring to the Ordinances promulgated in the States of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa and to those by the Centre, Ramamurti remarked “These measures have been enacted with a view to meet and suppress the rising struggles of the working people.”

**Reliance :** Referring to the rising prices of the essential commodities and their non-availability, the CITU General Secretary said, “Indian economy is in very deep crisis, which is entirely due to the basic policies pursued by the Congress Government and then by the subsequent

Janata Government during the short period of its existence since independence.” Pointing out the huge deficit financing to the tune of Rs. 1400/- crores which will be actually doubled at the end of the financial year, he further said, “Reliance on the World Bank and I. M. F. has increased. The budget also envisages, for the first time since independence, borrowing from commercial banks in the West European countries, for the meagre investments in the public sector. “Therefore, he observed, the Government have to make concessions to the monopoly houses and the multinationals. The Industrial Policy Statement of the Government placed in the Parliament subsequently fully confirms to this.

**Policy Statement :—**Commenting on this Policy Statement, P. Ramamurti said this is full of platitudes that the Government will encourage disposal of industries in the backward areas, avoid monopolists tendencies and concentration of economic power, ensure that the benefits of the industrialisation go to the common people etc. He said when it comes to the brass tacks, the Statements postulates the licencing of the increased capacities to good many big industries and consumers good industries. He remarked when the expansion of capacity by these big industrial units concentration in some big centres, what chance is there for the small-scale industries to survive. This is a device for the growth of monopolists. The Statement proposes to consider 100% export oriented units which certainly can be undertaken by the multinational companies who want to exploit the cheap labour in India. Ramamurti further said this Policy Statement was just present-

ted to Parliament and no opportunity was given to even discuss it. But the Government has already started implementing it. With these policies the economy will sink deeper into the mire of crisis. Peasants will not be given a remunerative prices for their produces. Government’s hope of hiding at the economy by increasing imports and liberalising imports have already met with difficulties. All this would lead to retrenchment and unemployment would increase.

**Participative Management :** P. Ramamurti referred to the Prime Minister’s meeting with the representatives of the central trade unions held in July to discuss the ‘economic action’. On the question of the participation in the management the CITU General Secretary said we are for the participative management provided it is at all levels from the top management to the shop level. Otherwise, this is nothing but a deception and a device to intensify exploitation of labour. This is what they do not want because the corruption will be exposed to the public. He gave certain cases when our comrades exposed certain cases of corruption but nothing has been done by the authorities. He further said, the slogan of workers participation is only a cover to increase the burdens on the working class. We should be aware of it and firmly adhere to the principled stand of the CITU.”

**Leading Role :** Referring to the Palekar Award, Ramamurti said the CITU lends its full support to the working journalists and employees in the struggle they are preparing for. Presaging bitter and protracted struggles of the workers, Ramamurti said,

[On Page Fifteen]

**T**HE annual Convention of All India Railwaymen Federation held at Bikaner from August 28 to 31 finalised a 10-point charter of demands like parity in wages, not more than 8 hours duty, 8.33% statutory bonus to railwaymen etc, including a demand for Rs. 150/- interim relief pending grant of parity in wages and decided to observe September 19 as the Martyrs Day and November 28 as the Demands Day all over the country. The Convention elected Umraomal Purohit as the President and re-elected J.P. Chaubey as the General Secretary.

In a meeting of several category-wise associations like AILRSA, and the constituents of AIC & WSC, AITWA, AISC & TSA and the Convenors of UCR of NF Rly and ZCCR of SE Rly held at New Delhi on September 20, a 16-point charter of demands like parity in wages, statutory bonus, decasualisation,

full trade union rights and determination of representative character of unions for negotiation etc. has been finalised. It was decided that a campaign week will be observed during 21 to 27 November and on December 8, the said charter of demands will be submitted to the railway authorities through the Divisional Railway Managers through mass deputations.

## Maharashtra Bandh on Oct. 15

**I**N protest against the price rise, atrocities, on the weaker sections of society and deteriorating law and order situation in the State, several political parties and trade unions including CITU has given a call to observe Satyagraha on October 2 by courting arrests and defying orders and observe State Bandh on October 15.

**I**N response to a call by All Parties Action Council the people of the State participated in a massive unprecedented rally at Vijaywada on September 16 and organised total bandh on September 24 when entire activity in the State was at a standstill. The demands include writing off all outstanding arrears of the labourers and other poorer sections, remunerative prices of the agricultural products, price control and supply of essential commodities at fair prices. The Council has decided to mobilise people for and action like no tax campaign and dehoarding essential commodities for supplying them at fair prices from November 10.

## Newspaper Employees to Strike on Sept. 30

**S**OON after the failure of the two days of informal talks that the Government had called with the employers and employees, S. Y. Kolhatkar, Chairman of the National Confederation of News-Agency Employees' Organisations announced in a press conference in New Delhi on September 20 that the newspaper employees throughout the country will observe a one day token strike on September 30 in support of their demand that the Government modify the Palekar Tribunal's final recommendations so that justice may be done to the employees of news papers and agencies who have waited for thirteen long years for a proper wage revision.

## Greetings to the Peoples' Republic of China

**T**HE Centre of Indian Trade Unions and The Working Class warmly greet the working class and the people of China on the occasion of thirtyfirst anniversary of the Chinese Revolution.

The CITU congratulates the working class and the people of China for the remarkable achievement in Socialist construction, in economic planning, industry, agriculture, science, education and in technology after the Revolution transforming an economically backward country where feudal, semi-feudal, pre-capitalist relations of production were predominant into a Socialist State.

The CITU conveys its warm greetings to All China Federation of Labour and heartily wish all success in its activities in the difficult struggle to transform an economically backward China into a modern, industrialised, advanced Socialist China and hopes that the relations between India and China would continue to improve in all spheres of life.

# “In Defence of the Working Class Interests”

—M. K. PANDHE

**T**HE Secretary of the CITU, M.K. Pandhe, presented the report on activities and organisation to the meeting of the General Council held at Cannanore from September 11 to 14. Presenting his report Pandhe said that during this period many united struggles were conducted by the working class in face of growing attacks from the capitalists and the CITU was called upon to play an important role in these struggles. The tasks laid down by the Madras Conference were multifarious in character and the CITU Centre, State Committees, the industry-wise organisations and the affiliated unions had to exert themselves to a considerable extent to implement these tasks.

While giving the reasons of delay in calling the meeting of the General Council, the CITU Secretary highlighted the decisions of the Working Committee held in March in New Delhi and the response to the call given by it to observe April 21 as the Demands Day. He said some unions have written to the CITU Centre suggesting that regular calls of this type should be given by the CITU Centre on problems urgently affecting the working class and the people of the country.

Regarding industry-wise activities, M.K. Pandhe said that though it has not been possible for the CITU Centre to pay adequate attention to the demands raised by various comrades in industry-wise meetings, due to the limitation of resources and the availability of leading personnel to guide the activities, attempts were made by the CITU Centre to do whatever work was possible within available re-

sources. He then reviewed the industry-wise activities carried out since Madras Conference.

**Steel :** While giving the details of the movement in the steel industry Pandhe referred to the agreement arrived at between the workers and the management and said that immediately after the signing of the agreement the management issued a secret circular to all the plants directing them to pay only Rs. 375/- for a period of one year. But, as a result of the determined efforts of all the central trade unions the management had to ultimately withdraw the circular and pay all the arrears of wages to the new entrants so that they could get wages as per the agreement since the date of their appointment.

The question of 75,000 contract workers employed in the steel industry has also been taken up and it has also been decided to prepare a detailed memorandum highlighting the demands of the contract workers in steel industry on an all India basis so that a joint movement can be launched in support of their demands. He further said that on a call by the CITU Centre the steel comrades collected Rs. 1,78,000 towards CITU Fighting Fund.

**Coal :** As in steel industry, the CITU has made a considerable progress in its organised strength and activities in the coal industry. Referring to the struggle carried out in the coal industry and the agreement arrived at between the management and the workers, the CITU Secretary said while on one hand the management was threatening the workers that the strike would be illegal and army would be

used if the workers paralysed the economy, the Government started to move and ultimately they had to agree to grant Rs.512 as the minimum wage providing for a rise of Rs. 73.90 to each worker. He also informed the General Council that the CITU unions in coal industry has collected Rs. 22,751 towards CITU Fighting Fund.

**Jute :** Reviewing the struggle of the jute workers, Pandhe said the CITU activities are gradually developing in this industry outside West Bengal and the formation of an all India Federation would give fillip to our activities in weaker States. Pointing out the activities of the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union, he said at present it is leading the movement of higher bonus for jute workers and the struggle is gaining momentum.

**BHEL :** Referring to the settlement arrived at early this year, Pandhe said the question of anomalies in wages has not yet been cleared and a sub-committee formed for the purpose is looking into the problem. Pointing out various struggles, he said Com. Bhundiwal lost his life during the struggle of workers in Jhansi. Some comrades have also been involved in criminal cases. The CITU also opposed the vindictive attitude of the management and supported the demands of the officers victimised for opposing deal with Siemens.

**HSCL :** The CITU has largest following in this industry. Several thousand regular workers have been declared surplus and are faced with the threat of retrenchment any moment. The problems of contract workers who have no job security have been taken up by the CITU union and there was a longdrawn struggle to protect the job of con-

tract workers in Bhilai. M.K. Pandhe referred to the bipartite wage negotiation committee and said the CITU has called upon the union to take steps to launch immediate campaign on various issues.

**Cement :** Referring to the terms of service conditions of cement workers, Pandhe said that many cement unions have requested the CITU for taking initiative in building cooperation of the cement unions.

**Bidi :** Pointing out the problems of the Bidi workers, the CITU Secretary said the Government of India has decided to constitute the Advisory Committee of the Bidi Workers Welfare Scheme and CITU has been asked to supply them the claims of membership of the CITU in this industry.

**Ports, Docks, & Seamen :** There has been considerable activity in this front. The CITU Secretary reviewed the trade union movement in this industry led by the Water Transport Workers Federation of India and the Forward Seamen's Union of India, and referred to their international fraternal relations. The Federation's Working Committee has decided to take steps to organise trade union classes for the maritime workers.

**Plantations :** Describing the movement of plantation workers, M.K. Pandhe reported that the Government of India has not yet brought before Parliament Plantation Labour (Amendment) Bill despite repeated assurances by different Union Labour Ministers.

**Railways :** Since the Madras Conference of the CITU, there have been several developments in the railways and the CITU has been able to help the railway

workers. Referring to various struggles in railways, the CITU Secretary said there is an effort to form a coordination committee of all unrecognised unions and categorywise associations in order to popularise the demands and unify the railway workers. The CITU's work among contract workers in railways is also growing.

**Working Women :** Describing the activities of the CITU among working women, M.K. Pandhe said that it is necessary that the CITU State Committees take active interest in the work of the State Coordination Committees of Working Women and ensure that they function properly. Steps should be taken to give more responsibilities to women comrades in the unions as well in the State Committees.

**Price Index :** Referring to the rejection of the Rath Committee recommendations, the CITU Secretary called upon the CITU unions to take initiative in bringing together the central trade unions so that a common movement is built up against the arbitrary decision of the Government and for fully rectifying the price index.

**International Relations :** The fraternal relations of the CITU with trade unions of other countries continued to be strengthened after the Fourth Conference and our international contacts have become wider and deeper, Pandhe said. He listed various delegations that we exchanged.

**CITU & ILO :** The CITU participated in the 65th Session of the ILO in Geneva in June 1979. The CITU Secretary referred to dispute in 1980 delegation. He said the CITU has been invited to participate in ILO workshops for maritime labour. The CITU

has also complained to ILO regarding the suspension of trade union rights etc.

**Official Committees :** The CITU Secretary listed 20 committees on which CITU has not been given any representation and 18 committees where it has its representatives.

**Education Department :** M.K. Pandhe said that it may be possible to get some grant for properly organising the Educational Department of the CITU for which we will need qualified comrades who can be functioning from the CITU Centre so that this work is better organised and the local level classes are given more assistance.

**CITU Journals :** The CITU Secretary discussed the need and the suggestion received from the readers to improve the journals and increasing the number of pages. He explained various difficulties being faced by the CITU Centre in this regard. He also referred to the CITU journals published in various languages.

He also presented a list of the books which have been published by the CITU Centre since Madras Conference.

Describing the functioning of the CITU Centre and increased workload and larger number of people coming for help, Pandhe said it is necessary to strengthen the Centre with more comrades to carry on the work effectively.

Concluding his report, the CITU Secretary, M.K. Pandhe said the CITU will once again have to make strenuous efforts to bring together all the central trade unions who are willing to fight unitedly in defence of working class' interests.

# General Council

[ From Page Seven ]

ing Asians", which has brought the cold war to the doors of India. The working class must realise the urgent need for a massive campaign to mobilise democratic opinion in the country against this evil imperialist design which is being supported by a section of political forces from their narrow partisan ends and for national integration and above all for peace and freedom of our country. It calls upon the the working class to be in readiness for any sacrifice that may be called for to defeat the imperialist game of dismembering the country and disrupt the national integrity and freedom of the country. N. Prasad Rao supports it.

## On Price Rise

P. Sundarayya moves a resolution on rising prices. It calls for continuous campaign for an effective public procurement and distribution system for all essential commodities, giving the peasantry support price for their produce and exemplary punishment to all black-marketeers and hoarders. The resolution appeals to all trade union centres and the organisations of the peasantry to come together for a broad based united struggle on the above demands to curb price rise, ensure supply of daily necessities and fair price of agricultural produce. Sundarayya appeals to the working class to take the problems of the peasants and help them. A continuous joint struggle has to be waged. Md. Ismail seconds it.

P. R. Krishnan moves the resolution on drive against computerisation which appeals to all trade unions centres to come

together in building up a united movement against automation, for increased job potentialities and thus fight against unemployment in the country. N. Nanjundappa seconds it.

In the meantime a number of resolutions have been moved, on peace and war mongers, on the employees of the Border Road Organisation, on Amendment to Bonus Act, on the problems of the Central Government employees, on the problems of jute workers, and on communal riots. The Resolution Committee is being empowered to finalise a number of other resolutions.

P. Ramamurti proposes names of three comrades for co-option to the General Council. They are Mythili Sivaraman (Tamil Nadu), Vijender Sharma (CITU Centre) and T. N. Nambirajan (CITU Centre). They are coopted unanimously. Seats were left vacant at the time of Madras Conference.

P. Ramamurti brings before the General Council for discussion the question of reservation in promotions. Eleven members including P. Sundarayya, Jiben Roy (West Bengal), Santi Ghatak, N. Prasad Rao, K. M. Hari Bhatt (Tamilnadu) Tarit Topdar (West Bengal) Viswanath Menon (Kerala) A Dakshi (West Bengal) K. K. Roy Ganguli, Abdul Hassan (West Bengal) and S. S. Bhattacharya participate in the debate. Ramamurti invites suggestions and instances to CITU Centre within a month for a thorough study so that the decision is taken.

A. Nallasivan presented the Credential Committee's report which considered the applications of 181 unions with a membership of over 28,000

September 14: The General Council members return from a visit to A.K. Gopalan Memorial situated 18 kilometres from Cannanore. The members paid homage to the memory of the late leader. A 3000 strong rally organised there was addressed by Samar Mukherjee and presided over by C. Kannan. Entire route was decorated with red flags.

## Champion of People's Cause

P. Ramamurti delivers sum-up speech. The banner of unity and united struggle that was raised at the Foundation Conference of the CITU has paid the dividends, he says. The CITU has taken the lead in all the struggles. We have discussed the problems of the working class and the country in this meeting. We cannot advance only on economic demands. It cannot change the character of the society. He continues to say, ideological, political and class struggles have to be waged for the capture of power by the working class. We have to fight for the unity of the working class and that alone will be a fight against new neo-colonialism. If the people, he says, do not meet the challenges that are before them, more problems, unemployment will come. The working class and the CITU has to be the champion of the peoples' cause and it has to raise the banner of peace, democracy and socialism higher and higher. Meeting ends after thanks etc.

This should be mentioned that on September 10 and 15, and in lunch hours during the sessions a number of industry-wise meetings have taken place to coordinate their activities.

[On Page Fourteen]

**NO MOVE FOR THIRD RAILWAY FEDERATION**

**P.** Ramamurti M. P. General Secretary of Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement on August 31.

Our attention has been drawn to the report in a section of the Press that the CITU is organising a third Federation of railway workers. The CITU would like to emphatically deny this report. The CITU is of the opinion that the railway trade union movement is already divided and four Federations and one confederation of railway workers are already in existence apart from various category-wise unions and associations and local industrial unions. The CITU has always been championing the cause of unity among railway workers as it did in 1974.

The fact is that in order to reduce this division recently some of the category wise associations and unions are making efforts to form a Co-ordination Committee for a concerted movement of the pressing problems of the railway employees. To project this as an attempt of the CITU

to form another Federation is motivated at disrupting the growing urge for unity among the railway workers and creating a scare amongst the backward section of workers.

The CITU hopes that the railway workers will not be misled by such a propaganda and carry forward their struggle for unity of all railwaymen on their common demands.

**General Council . . .**

[From Page Thirteen]

They are the unions in road transport, ports and docks, plantations, coal, engineering, electricity etc. A meeting of the General Council Members from Hindi region was held on September 14 to discuss the CITU publications in Hindi including Hindi journal. The Reception Committee organised the cultural programme in the nights of 11,12 and 13 September, which highlighted the culture of Kerala. A film

'Lenin in October' was also screened.

At 4.P.M. from Military Ground a big procession starts led by CITU leaders and General Council members. The procession is being greeted enroute by thousands of people. Various unions and associations have erected welcome arches. Entire route is red. Fire crackers are being played. Amongst the spectators we hear the slogans greeting the procession. They are factory and agricultural workers, insurance, railway, bank, post and telegraph employees, they are students, youth, school and college teachers. We hear Red Salute, Comrade, Red Salute ; and many slogans. A large number of women march with procession and attend the rally. The procession reaches Stadium Ground. A 50,000 strong rally is being presided over by Susheela Gopalan. The decisions of the General Council meeting are being explained amidst cheers. C. Kannan, Susheela Gopalan, P. Ramamurti, Samar Mukherjee, P. Sundarayya, M.K. Pandhe and E. Balanandan address the meeting.

**B.T.R.**

[ From Page Four ]

and at the same time we must gather more and more political support for the Tripura Government. That is our minimum duty as a working class."

Pointing out that the full weight of the Trade Union Movement which should have been exercised in the struggle against high prices and other sufferings of the people has not been exercised, the CITU President called upon to "redouble our efforts to bring all Central Trade Union organisations, federations and others on a common platform for action on immediate issues." The organised strength if properly exercised can definitely influence official policies concerning the interests of the people and

concerning our national interest, he observed. It is all the more necessary for our united trade union movement to champion the cause both of the peasants and agricultural workers who because of their weak organisation are the most exploited sections of the Indian people.

Concluding his address, the CITU President B.T. Ranadive said, "The T.U. Movement can become the main pillar of the left and democratic forces in this country who are determined to give battle against the forces of authoritarianism. If we unite ourselves, the forces of left and democratic unity will be immensely strengthened.... Fighting movement must march ahead to help the forces of left democratic unity to evolve a broad front of resistance against authoritarianism."

## Ramamurti...

[From Centre Pages]

"The trade union movement must take the initiative in mobilising the entire working class and make them take the leading role in this great task. The successful prevention of the drive towards authoritarianism and attacks on democracy primarily depends on this."

**Support :** He referred to the strike struggles in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar etc. Ramamurti said the struggle against the growing attacks on women is a part of the struggle for democracy, against the police forces running amuck and trampling upon the right of our sisters and mothers to live with honour. Referring to the atrocities on Harijans, Ramamurti observed that the active support by the working class will not only give them courage but will help in their organisation and in bringing about the unity of the working class and the agricultural labourers. Similarly the trade union movement should mobilise the working class in support of peasants' struggle for a fair and remunerative prices and wiping out heavy debt burdens which have been imposed upon them by the entire policies of the Government.

**Price Rise:** In the struggle against price rise, P. Ramamurti called upon that the following slogans must rend the air : State takeover of the wholesale trade in essential articles, an effective public distribution system supervised by the peoples' committees, fair and remunerative price for the peasants for the agricultural price and subsidising the essential articles and their sale without raising the issue price. He further observed that without these measures, all talk of bringing down prices and holding the price line be sheer self deception and deceptidg the people.

**Communal Riots :** Referring to the communal riots in the country, P. Ramamurti said that it is the task of the trade union movement to throw all its weights and in combination with all secular, democratic forces, fight obscurantist forces which fan religious fanaticism and communal frenzy.

**North-East :** The movement in Assam and the north-east is being diverted against all minorities, Bengalis, Biharis and others, both Hindus and Muslims, all Indian nationals on the bogey of 'foreigners'. Pointing out this Ramamurti said that at one time Indira Gandhi herself had raised the slogan of the 'Sons of the Soil' which is still being used by some of her Chief Ministers. He called upon, "The challenge of the separatist forces, the conspiracies of the imperialists to dismember the country, has to be taken up with great urgency and seriousness by the trade union movement." The working class and the organised trade union movement must be the champion of the India's independence, unity and integrity and it must hold high this banner and mobilise the entire people around it.

The struggle for peace and against the war mongers has assumed immense importance today. This struggle is inextricately linked up with the struggle to preserve and consolidate our freedom and independence and frustrate the machination of imperialism to impose neo-colonialism on our country. The General Secretary of the CITU, P. Ramamurti, said, "The extent to which we are able to mobilise the working class is the measure of our proletarian internationalism."

## CITU Condemns National Security Ordinance

**D**R. M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU, has issued the following statement on September 23.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns the National Security Ordinance promulgated by the President providing for detention of a person for a period of 12 months. This draconian measure is nothing but MISA in a new garb and its clear purpose is to suppress the trade union and democratic movement in the country though it talks of curbing communalism, separatism, etc.

This Ordinance, coming in the wake of similar ordinances issued by the Governments of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Orissa, seeks to give arbitrary powers to the administration to detain persons vindictively and suppress every anti-Government activity. It will also be recklessly used during working class agitations and strikes to suit the interest of the employers.

The provision of Advisory Boards is a mere eye wash and will not basically alter the situation. People know very well how the provision of review during MISA was misused by the Government in the past.

The provision of right of appeal to the court challenging the detention will also not help the victims much since the dilatory legal procedure will serve the purpose of detention during the crucial period of agitation or strike.

The CITU appeals to the trade unions of all affiliations to rally their strength and fight unitedly against the draconian Ordinance so that the Central Government is forced to withdraw the authoritarian measure.

## CITU Condemns Government's Rejection on Rath Committee Report

**D**R. M.K. Pandhe, Secretary C.I.T.U. has addressed the following letter to Shri T. Anjiah, Labour Minister, Government of India on September 1, criticising the decision of the Government on the Rath Committee's Recommendations :

We are surprised to learn that the Government of India has rejected the unanimous recommendations of the Consumer Price Index Numbers Review Committee, which is known as Rath Committee. Though the report of the Committee was submitted to the Government in first quarter of 1978 the Government has taken inordinately longer time to take decision in the matter.

As you are aware, the C.I.T.U. representative on this Committee had written a Note of Dissent to the Report of the Committee on the ground that the majority recommendations do not fully correct the Index. We still hold that view. However, the decision on the Govt. Completely nullifies whatever corrections have been made by the Committee. This decision has been taken only to favour the employers of the public and private sector who have been always clamouring that the correction of the 1960 series of the Consumer Price Index Numbers would create intolerable burden on the economy. The employing ministries in the Central Govt., particularly the Finance Ministry, have been continuously putting obstacles in making any correction in the 1960 series. The decision of the Govt. therefore, only highlights

how much pressure the big business houses are exerting on the Government.

We understand that the Labour Bureau has already started the 1980 Base Year Family Budget Studies without rectifying the 1960 series. Unless the 1960 series is fully corrected and the workers are paid dearness allowance on the basis of that corrected series, the family budget studies will also reflect a distorted pattern of consumption of workers' families.

What is more surprising is, without holding a meeting of the Central Trade Unions and arriving at a consensus on the entire approach, the Govt. has decided to go ahead by calling unit level meetings of the trade unions to discuss the collection of data for the family budget studies. This procedure is highly irregular and will only erode workers' confidence on the index compiling machinery.

The Rath Committee recommended constitution of Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Price Index Number which will include the representatives of the trade unions. However, such a Committee has not yet been formed.

The C.I.T.U. strongly records its protest at the arbitrary decision of the Government of India on the Rath Committee's recommendations and the steps taken by the Labour Bureau to go ahead with the family budget studies for the year 1980.

The C.I.T.U. demands that a meeting of the Central Trade

Unions should be convened as early as possible to discuss the entire question so that the Index is properly corrected. Otherwise in these days of high prices, if the workers faith in price collection machinery is eroded, it may lead to serious industrial relations problems.

I hope you will appreciate the gravity of the situation and call a meeting of the Central Trade Unions without any further delay.

### National Convention against Price Rise, Communalism

**T**HE two day National Convention will be organised by the Coordination Committee of six parties CPI(M), CPI, Congress(U), Forward Block, and RSP in New Delhi on September 27 and 28 against spiralling prices, sinister communal and authoritarian ideologies and concerted attacks on people's democratic rights.

### CITU NOMINATION

**T**HE CITU has nominated Com. K. Padmanabhan (Kerala) as its representative on the Rubber Board. This is for the first time the government has agreed to give a nomination to the CITU on this Board.

### Subscribers !

For the continuity of the Journal we request our subscribers to renew their subscription in advance.

—Manager

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