



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

The Great Bharat Bandh

AUGUST 30, 1989 will go down as yet another red letter day in the history of the united movement of the working class and the toiling people of India as a most pronounced Bharat Bandh and industrial strike demanding resignation of the Congress Government at the Centre headed by Rajiv Gandhi. It was unprecedented that during the long regime of the Congress since independence, the outburst of the people against the capitalist path of development took the form of countrywide bandh and strike by all sections of the people demanding resignation of the Rajiv Government. No wonder that the open declaration of unbridled development of capitalism leading to monopolisation, going back on the professed objective of building up a self-reliant economy by destabilising the public sector under pressure from the World Bank and inviting the multinationals to ravage the Indian economy and endangering the sovereignty of the Government, should land the people and the working class into disastrous economic conditions. The economic policy pursued by the Rajiv Government led to quick acceleration in the number of closed and sick industries, galloping unemployment and spiralling prices. On the other hand, the path of privatisation naturally led to garnering of huge profits by the few monopolists and augmenting their assets. In the rural sector the peasantry and the agricultural workers had have to bear the worst brunt of the economic policy and at the same time face growing physical attacks by the police and the private army of gangsters of the landlord section. Atrocities on women, scheduled castes and all minorities went on increasing. Getting growingly isolated from the people, the Government went on compromising with the imperialist backed divisive forces of all sorts to maintain its foothold and thereby endangering the unity and integrity of the country. To crown its miserable failure in all spheres, the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India completely laid bare the scandalous corruption of the Government at its top. And still the Government refused to step down, leading to the unprecedented event of enmasse resignation of the entire opposition from the Lok Sabha in protest.

It was yet unprecedented that the anti-people and anti-working class policies of the Rajiv Government led to two successive Bharat Bandhs within the short

span of 17 months demanding its resignation, the first being on 15th March, 1988.

The 30th August bandh was naturally more pronounced than the 15th March bandh. Government became panicky with the prospect of the bandh. Its official media, the TV and the Radio went in a state of delirium days before the bandh exhorting the people not to join the bandh and propagating all its fraud on the people like the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, reservations for women, scheduled castes and so on. It threatened its own employees and ordered them to stay inside the office from one day before the bandh, including the women employees, causing not only embarrassment, but also harassment to them. But it could succeed in jailing only a handful of them inside the office. The Confederation of the Central Government employees condemned the Government's action.

Com. BTR's address to Tamilnadu State Conference on page 21.

The Government went berserk in a mad frenzy to stop the bandh. It arrested over one lakh people including women and top leaders of the CPI(M), CITU and other opposition parties. The police in the capital, New Delhi laid bare its full brutal character to haunt down and beat down the people. The Congress(I) organised volunteer forces, moving in buses and lorries attacking the bandh supporters and striking workers and trying to force open the shops. Over fifteen CPI(M) and CITU activists were killed. In the terror stricken Tripura state more than ten CPI(M) and CITU cadres were killed. Com. Nripen Chakrabarty, the Senior PB member of the CPI(M) was injured and became unconscious. Killing took place in Kerala, W. Bengal and other places too. In Bihar, the heartland of the Hindi belt and the so-called stronghold of the Congress(I), over 40,000 were arrested including senior CC member of the CPI(M), Com. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and others.

The divisive forces like the BJP and Shiv Sena opposed the bandh in Bombay and other places. In the trade union front the BMS did not join the other Central Trade Unions to give a joint call for the industrial strike and bandh from the NCC. The INTUC joined the band of strike breakers as their leader.

But all this opposition to the bandh became a microscopic minority and were totally eclipsed by the spontaneous response of the people to the bandh call. The Government's repression only unveiled its authoritarian character further. Not only in the left and opposition ruled states as depicted by the bourgeois press, but in the Congress(I) ruled states and in the entire Hindi belt too the response to the bandh was overwhelming and the industrial strike was widespread. The railway services were totally dislocated and the transport services were disrupted. The shops, markets and educational institutions closed. All functions in the entire country came to a virtual stand still.

Following are the reports received from the States:

Delhi: Industrial strike was near total. The main markets like the Chandni Chowk, Karolbagh, Connaught Place, Daryaganj, Paharganj, etc. were totally closed. The busiest places were deserted. There was no transport except empty Government buses and the Congress(I) hired buses and trucks carrying the anti-bandh volunteer squads. The educational institutions including the three Universities were closed. Over 1000 were arrested.

Punjab: The markets, shops and educational institutions were closed all over the state. The industrial centres and roadways were paralysed by the

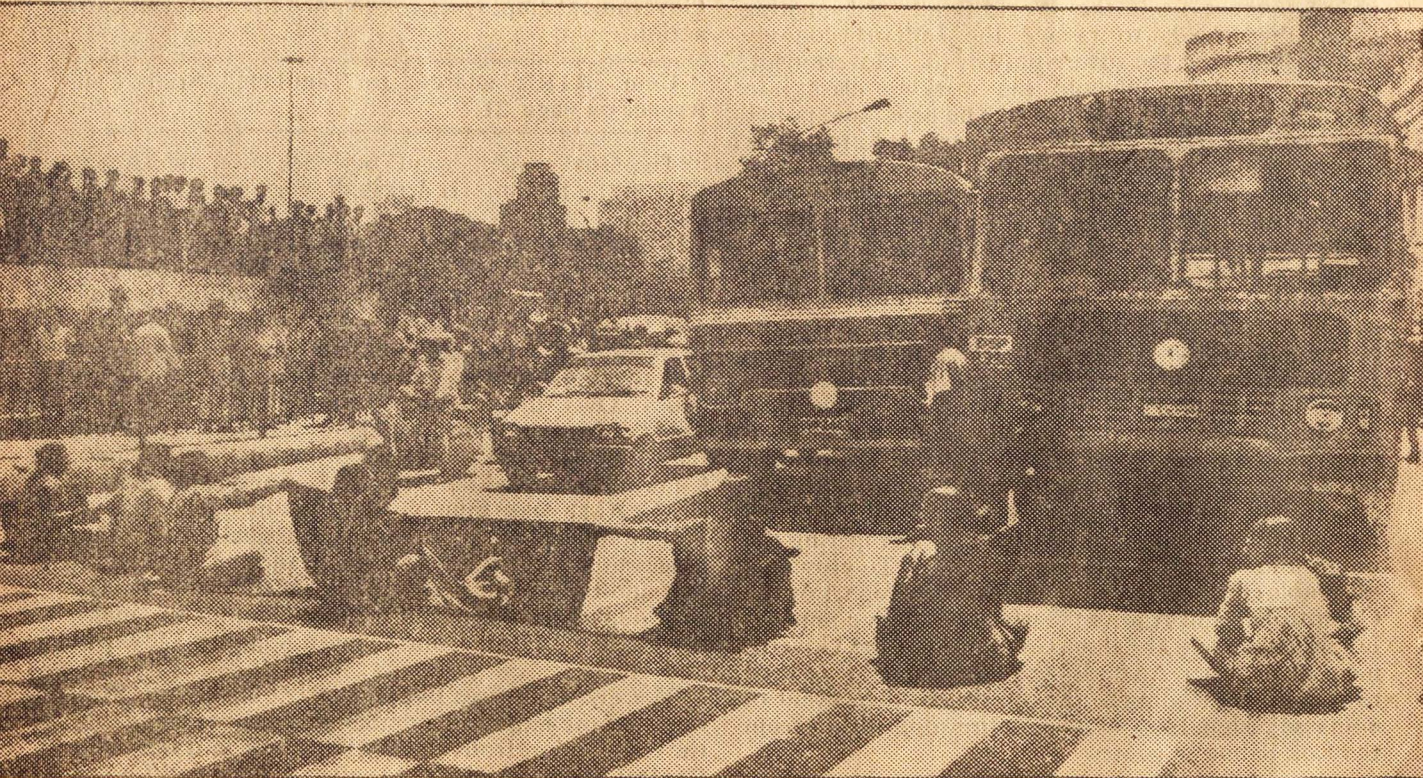
strike. Large scale arrests were made in a number of places particularly of the CPI(M) and CITU leaders.

Haryana: Industrial Centres, even small units remained stand still. Educational institutions were closed. Even peasants did not come to cities to make sale or purchase. The workers, students, youth and women took out joint torchlight processions in various places in the state. Markets remained closed and rail and road transport were disrupted. The bandh was total in the state.

Rajasthan: The bandh and industrial strike was almost total. Shops, markets and educational institutions were closed. Road and rail services were blocked at several places. Lathi charge and arrests were made in a number of places. Massive rallies were organised by the CPI(M) and its mass organisations at various places.

Himachal Pradesh: The bandh and industrial strike was by and large successful. The main thoroughfares in Simla and various other places were deserted. The CPI(M) and CITU organised rallies at several places.

Uttar Pradesh: Despite arrest of over ten thousand people and large scale violence created by the Congress(I) gangsters, the bandh was near total in the state and the industrial strike was widespread. Road



Volunteers of Janavadi Mahila Samity blocking traffic at Connaught Place, New Delhi

Transport was disrupted and train services were stopped in various places in the state. Big joint rallies were organised at Lucknow and other places.

Bihar: The bandh was total including industrial strike. In the collieries the strike was 80 per cent. All transport, road and rail services were disrupted. A record number of over 40,000 were arrested. Three activists of SFI and AISF were killed by Congress(I) hoodlums. A number of DYFI and CITU cadres were injured. All offices and markets were deserted look in the state.

Madhya Pradesh: The working people responded magnificently to the strike call given by the six Central Trade Unions despite threat given by the managements. Shops, markets, schools, colleges remain closed. There was virtually no attendance in the Government offices. SFI, DYFI and CITU took leading role in making the bandh successful in various places. Women joined in good numbers. Despite violence unleashed by the Congress(I) and injuries caused to many, big processions and rallies were organised at several places. Indiscriminate arrests were made by the police. Attempts to kill Shailendra Shaily, Badal Saroj, Usha Kaushal, etc, were foiled by the activists.

W. Bengal: The bandh was total as admitted by

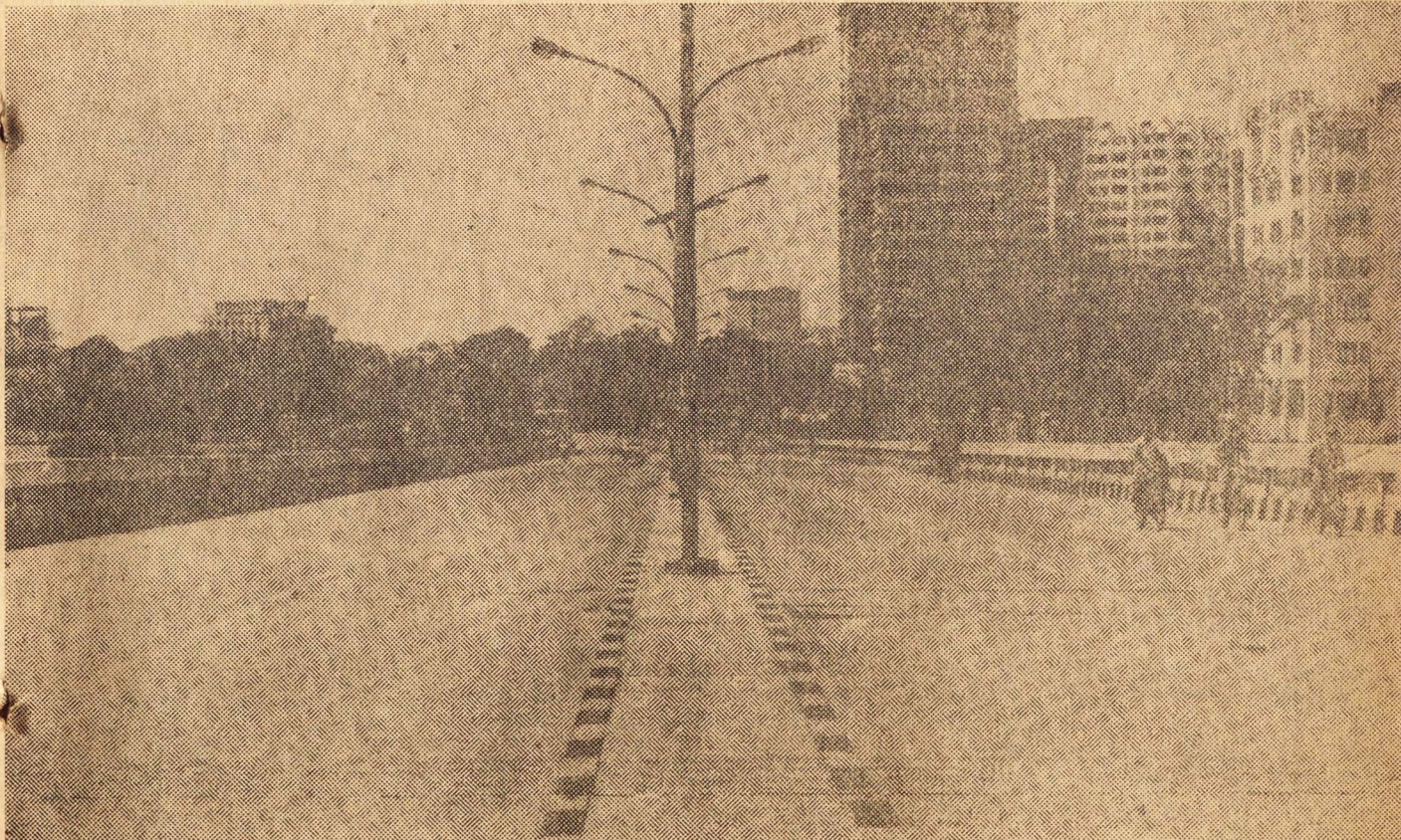
the Government also. Similarly the industrial strike was also total in all the industrial centres. The Congress(I) hoodlums killed one CITU cadre. Train, road transport and air services were stopped. Massive rallies were held in Calcutta and all other places in the State.

Orissa: The bandh was almost complete all over the state despite large scale violence created by the Congress(I) and arrest of over three thousand persons. The strikes in the industrial areas like Rourkela, mining belt and other places paralysed normal functioning. Markets were closed and rail and road transport services were dislocated.

Meghalaya: Despite the fact that the left and democratic forces are weak in this state, the bandh was by and large successful. In various industrial units, in banks and other establishments, the workers joined the strike.

Manipur: In this state also the people and workers spontaneously responded to the bandh call. Shops, workshops, cinema houses, remained closed. The Congress(I) tried to force open the shops, but failed. More than one hundred persons including activists of SFI and DYFI were arrested.

Assam: The bandh was total and the industrial



The deserted roads around Connaught Place on the Bandh day

strike was magnificent. Shops and markets and educational institutions were closed. Road and rail services were dislocated. Big rallies were organised by CPI(M) and its mass organisations.

Tripura: The bandh was total despite the semi-fascist terror in the state. Pre-planned large scale violence was unleashed against the CPI(M) and CITU cadres. More than ten cadres were brutally murdered by the Congress(I) hoodlums. Even Com. Nripen Chakrabarty, the senior PB Member of the CPI(M) was injured. A large number was arrested. Violence continued even after the bandh. Even the Congress(I) Ministers and MLAs led the planned attack on the CPI(M) and CITU activists. But despite the terror and murders the bandh and the strike totally paralysed all normal functioning in the state.

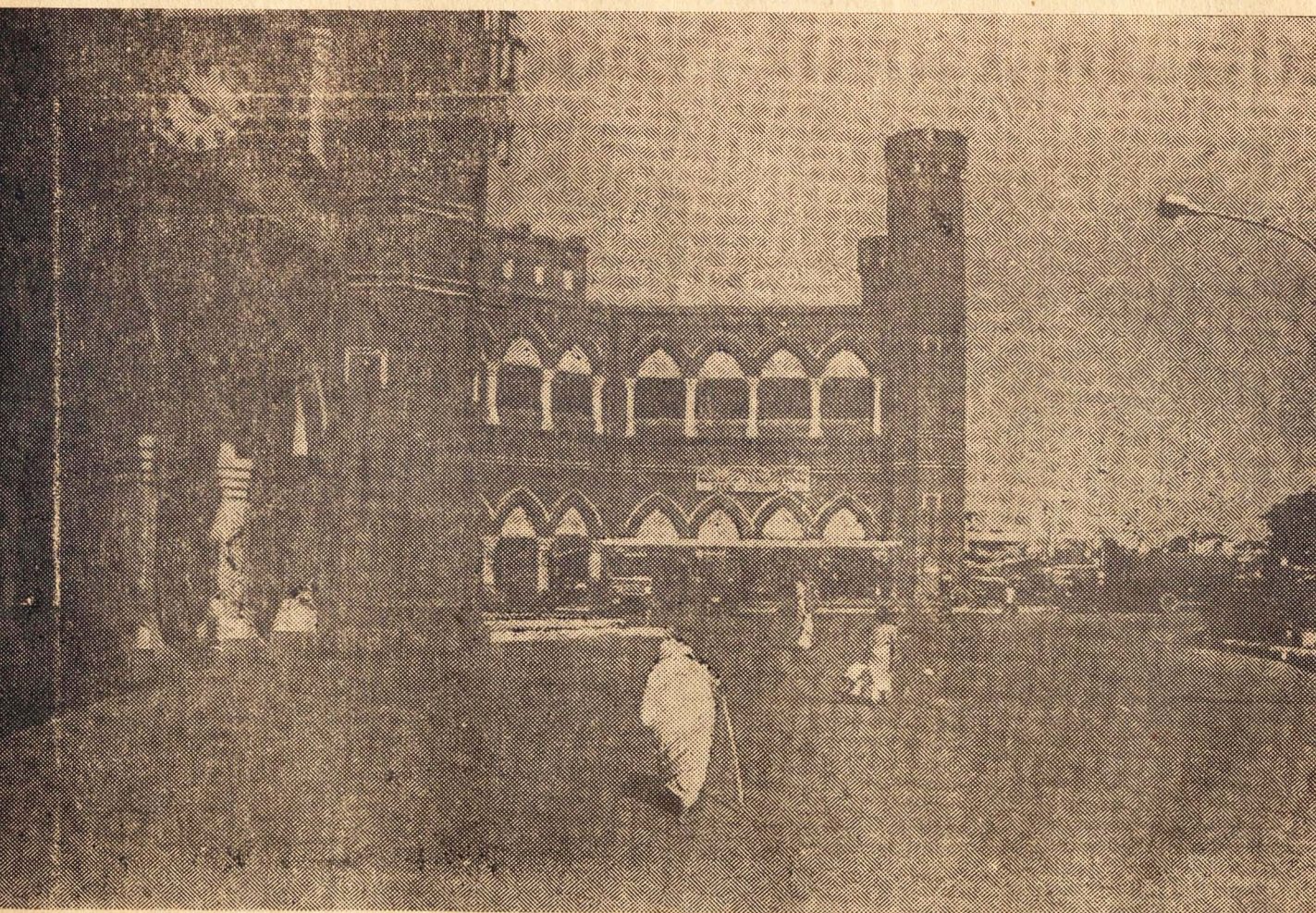
Gujarat: Despite weakness of the left forces the bandh was by and large successful in the state because of the spontaneous response by the people. Strike in several industrial units were successful because of the hard work done by the CITU cadres. The SFI was successful in keeping the students out

of the educational institutions. Shops and markets remained closed in Ahmedabad, Bhavanagar, Surat and several other places. A big torchlight procession was taken out at Surat by CPI(M), CPI and Janata Dal. The police attacked a team of Lok Kala Manch at Ahmedabad and arrested a number of them.

Maharashtra: Despite active opposition by the combine of BJP, RSS, Shiv Sena and Congress(I), the bandh was near total in the state. In Bombay the industrial strike was near total. Shops and markets were closed and the roads were deserted. Congress(I) workers clashed with the bandh activists at several places and a number of bandh supporters were arrested.

Andhra Pradesh: The bandh was total in the state. The industrial strike affected most of the industries particularly the private sector. Demonstrations and rallies were held at different places. Shops and markets were closed. Road and rail services were dislocated.

Tamilnadu: The bandh was total in Tamilnadu
(Contd. on page 19)



Delhi Jn. Station having a deserted look on the Bandh day

Dethrone the Rajiv Government from Power

THE Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Com. Ratanlal Brahman Manch, Kalyani, W. Bengal from September 4 to 6, 1989 gave a clarion call to the working class to further step up united struggles to dethrone the Congress(I) Government headed by Rajiv Gandhi and elect an alternative Government of peoples's choice at the Centre in the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

The meeting was attended by 93 members. Seven comrades representing their all India industrial federations also attended the meeting as special invitees.

As Com. B.T. Ranadive could not attend the meeting, Com. Jyoti Basu, Vice President, hoisted the red flag. After placing of wreathes at the Martyr's Memorial, the meeting started with the welcome address by Com. Amritendu Mukherjee, Chairman of the Reception Committee.

Com. Jyoti Basu presided over the meeting on the first day. Com. BTR's presidential address was read out by Com. P.K. Ganguly, Secretary CITU (*Presidential address has been published in the September issue of the Working Class*).

The meeting then adopted condolence resolutions on several leaders of the CPI(M) and CITU, Kisan leaders, on martyrs who laid down their lives at the hands of gangsters and the secessionist elements in Punjab and Tripura and on leaders of international communist movement who passed away during the period, viz. Com. Shankar Dayal Tiwari, Com. Ratanlal Brahman, Com. Khudiram Bhattacharya, Com. Paritosh Chatterjee, Com. Prithivi Singh Azad, Com. N.L. Upadhyaya, Com. Dinkar Mehta, Com. Safdar Hasmi, Com. Andri Gromyko, Com. Janos Kadar, Com. Hu Yao Bang, etc.

The meeting then confirmed the minutes of the last Working Committee meeting held at Dhanbad on 23rd September, 1988.

Com. P.K. Ganguly proposed the constitution of the Resolution Committee and Credential Committee as follows:

Resolution Committee: Com Jibon Roy (Convener), Com A K Padmanabhan, Com Chittabrata Majumdar, Com P Sanzgiri and Com V B Cherian.

Credential Committee: Com. Ranjit Basu (Convener), Com P Satyanaryana, Com. Kali Ghosh.

General Secretary's Report: Com. Samar Mukherjee placed the General Secretary's report. The report analysed the developments during the period from

the last General Council meeting held at Dhanbad in September, 1988 and reviewed the activities of the CITU in commensurate with the developments. He said that the upsurge of mass movements which had culminated in the Bharat Bandh of 15th March, 1988 continued and developed, culminating in yet another massive Bharat Bandh on 30th August, 1989 with the central demand for resignation of the Rajiv Government. The two successive Bharat Bandhs and industrial strike within a span of only seventeen months pointed to the growing isolation of the Rajiv Government from all sections of the people and further intensification of the struggle to oust the Congress Government from power. Getting growingly isolated from the people, the Congress went on compromising with imperialist backed divisive forces endangering the unity and integrity of the country.

The report recorded that Bengal gave the lead by calling Bengal Bandh on 30th August on various vital issues of the working class including closures, and lockouts. Kerala also took a decision for Kerala Bandh on the day. This laid the ground for all India movement which got a spurt following the resignation of the opposition MPs following the exposure of the Government's scandal in the CAG report on the Bofors issue and refusal of the Rajiv Government to resign. The CITU promptly supported the call and called for industrial strike on 30th August. On the initiative of the CITU, NCC meetings were called. Although the call for the industrial strike on 30th August could not be given from the NCC due to reservations on the part of the BMS, the call was given by six Central Trade Unions. The report elaborated the massive preparations taken by the unions and federations and other mass organisations for the success of the Bandh and the industrial strike.

Samar Mukherjee drew the attention of the members to the valiant struggle of the CITU and CPI(M) workers against the semi-fascist terror in Tripura. He pointed to the report of ILO on the complaint lodged by the CITU stating that a situation free from violence did not exist in Tripura. While indicting the Congress-TUJS Government, the ILO asked further informations from the Government of India on several points from the complaint of the CITU. Com. Samar Mukherjee called upon all the State Committees and unions to demonstrate protest actions against the semi-fascist regime and extend financial support to the struggling workers of Tripura.

On the question of minimum wage and other demands of the unorganised workers, he congratulated the State Committees of Delhi, UP, Haryana,

Punjab and other states for waging militant strike struggles. He called for making the forthcoming convention of the unorganised workers being organised by the NCC at Delhi on 23rd September a success, so that an all India movement could be launched culminating in a countrywide strike action.

The report self-critically analysed the activities of the State Committees on the question of unemployment and reiterated the call for mobilising the unemployed workforce in action programmes demanding the right to work and unemployment allowance.

Com. Samar Mukherjee elaborately dealt on the unabated activities of the communal and secessionist forces in various parts of the country like in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Tripura, UP etc and pointed to the serious threat posed to communal harmony in the country by the Hindu communalists like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, BJP, etc on the question Ramjanam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid, threatening to defy the court order if it went against them. He called for concerted struggle against all the imperialist backed divisive forces to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country.

On the question of the fraudulent new Consumer Price Index be congratulated the Maharashtra Committee for successfully launching a strike action and called upon all the State Committees to launch independent action programmes on the issue.

The report dealt on various other issues like the struggle of public sector workers, crisis in textile industry, working women, closures and lockouts, struggle of sugar workers, struggle for peace, kisan movement, membership drive, etc, and called for stepping up united struggles and struggle for trade union unity on the question of removal of the anti-people Rajiv Government.

Other Reports: M K Pandhe placed a detailed report on public sector, in which he dealt with the united struggle of the public sector workers compelling the Government to reach agreements in various undertakings. He briefed about their participation in the 30th August Bharat Bandh which was by and large successful in several units in several states. He dealt on the question of privatisation and called for renewed struggle against the policy of the Government on public sector.

P K Ganguly placed a detailed report on textile industry. He dealt on the deepening crisis in the industry due to the pro-monopolist thrust of the new textile policy, which seriously affected all the sectors of the industry including the NTC mills, affecting tens of thousands of workers due to closures and sickness. He stressed for the independent activities of the CITU in the industry and called for maximum mobilisation of all textile workers in the forthcoming programmes at Delhi from September 13 to 15.

Vimal Ranadive had sent a report on Working

Women, which was read out by Ramnika Gupta as Vimal Ranadive could not attend the meeting.

E. Balanandan placed the Treasurer's report which was adopted unanimously. A separate report on membership was placed by Ranjit Basu focusing the attention of the State Committees to the necessity of a continuous drive for membership as a task laid down by the Dhanbad General Council and for submission of Annual Returns regularly.

On 5th and 6th Com. Manoranjan Roy, Vice President, presided over the meeting.

Discussion on the Reports: All the above reports were discussed elaborately by the members. Those who participated in the discussions from the State Committees were E. Padmanabhan, V B Cherian (Kerala); Chittabrata Majumdar, Ananda Pathak, Santi Ghatak, Sunil Basu Roy (W. Bengal); Mangatram Pasla (Punjab); Amal Ghosh Dastidar (Assam); A K Padmanabhan, K Vaithinathan (Tamil Nadu); S K Bakshi (Bihar); S Kumar (M.P.); Harsahay Singh (UP); V J K Nair (Karnataka); S N Solanki (Haryana); Bimal Singha (Tripura); P Sanzgiri (Maharashtra); Hethram Beniwal (Rajasthan); P Satyanarayan (AP); and S B Bharadwaj (Delhi).

The representatives of the national industrial federations who took part in the discussions were Sujit Das (Road Transport), Debanjan Chakrabarty (Construction), S Debroy (Fertilisers), Mrinal Banerjee (Steel), K O Habid (Electricity), and V Srihari (Sugar).

All the members and the representatives of the federations elaborated their experience and the participation of workers in the Bharat Bandh. They told about their experience in the struggle for trade union unity on the question of industrial strike on the day, particularly in the public sector. (Despite opposition from the INTUC, BMS and vacillations by some other trade unions, particularly the AITUC in a number of states, the strike was by and large successful in most of the States, while total in some states.) Despite obstructions created by the top leadership of some trade unions, the mood of the overwhelming number of workers were for removal of the Rajiv Government from the Centre. The CITU workers were arrested in thousands in all the states. The barbarous repression let loose by the Congress Governments and their gangsters could not deter the workers from joining the strike. The speakers narrated their experience of struggles on several other issues also.

Resolutions: At the outset, a resolution on Bharat Bandh was adopted unanimously, moved by M K Pandhe and supported by K N Ravindranath. Suryanarayan Rao and Niren Ghosh also spoke on the resolution. The resolution congratulated the working class for their successful participation in the Bharat Bandh and called upon them to carry forward the struggle to dethrone the Rajiv Government from power.

The resolution on Struggle for Peace was moved by E. Balanandan and supported by P K Ganguly. V B Cherian moved the resolution on the New Consumer Price Index calling for struggle. It was supported by K L Bajaj. The resolution on Jute Industry elaborating the crisis and the problem faced by the workers was moved by Kshiti Burman and supported by Shiva Prasad Bhattacharya. The resolution on Support of the Left Front Governments was moved by M M Lawrence and supported by Niren Ghosh. A resolution on Sino-Soviet Summit was moved by R. Umanath and supported by Robin Mukherjee. Samar Mukherjee moved the resolution on Support to the CPC Leadership in thwarting the counter-revolutionary rebellion in China. It was supported by Suryanaryan Rao. P Sanzgiri moved a resolution on the deteriorating economic situation, which was supported by Kanai Banerjee. A resolution greeting the international conference of working women being held at Sofia in September was moved by Jibon Roy and supported by Ramanika Gupta. A K Pamanabhan moved the resolution on Unemployment supported by Sunil Basu Roy.

A resolution on the birth centenary of Com. Muzaffar Ahmed was moved from the Chair by Com. Manoranjan Roy.

Expulsion of Yogeshwar Gope : A resolution was moved by P K Ganguly and seconded by Ranjit Basu expelling Yogeshwar Gope from the Working Committee and primary membership of the CITU for his strike breaking and anti-CITU activities during the historic strike of the Bihar NGEs in September, 1988. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

On Tripura: Moved by Bimal Singha and seconded by Jibon Roy, a resolution was unanimously adopted calling for observing a day in solidarity of the fighting Tripura comrades and for contribution in Tripura struggle fund. Members responded spontaneously. The contributions totalled to over Rs 60 thousand (*The details have been given separately*).

Another resolution was moved by Ranjit Basu and seconded by Jibon Roy transferring some amounts lying in the Central CITU accounts to the Tripura fund. This resolution was also adopted unanimously.

Report by Resolution Committee: Jibon Roy reported about the resolutions adopted by the meeting and a number of other resolutions which could not be placed due to paucity of time. The meeting unanimously authorised the Secretariat to go through the resolutions and adopt them, which would be deemed to have been adopted by the Working Committee.

Report by Credential Committee: Ranjit Basu placed the report of the Credential Committee. The meeting granted affiliation to 185 new unions with a membership of 30, 653. Affiliations to another 25 unions with a membership of 5,298 would be granted after they fulfil all the requirements.

Report on Moscow Visit: M K Pandhe reported on the recent visit to Moscow by a 30 member team of the CITU which was led by him in mass meeting of Indian and Soviet Trade Unions which was participated by 30 members each from other Central Trade Unions.

R Umanath reported about his lecture tour of Soviet Union, where on invitation from AUCCTU he gave lectures to Soviet trade union cadres in four places on the current trade union movement in India.

Reply by Com. Samar Mukherjee: Replying to the deliberations, Com. Samar Mukherjee at the outset thanked the State Committee, the Local Committee and the volunteers for devoted work for the success of the meeting.

He congratulated the State Committees, the federations, unions and the workers for their assiduous work for the success of the Bharat Bandh. He said that the success of the Bharat Bandh had created a new situation and prospect for the defeat of Rajiv Government in the forthcoming elections. The task laid down in the last General Council meeting in this respect was quite successfully carried forward by the CITU making all efforts for trade union unity and increasing cooperation with the left and secular opposition parties. This task has to be further carried forward by CITU by stepping up its independent activities all the more not only for the period till elections, but beyond it, so that the path for the left, democratic and secular alternative could be paved through continuous struggles, as the objective of the CITU was not only to oust the reactionary Congress regime but also to isolate the divisive forces. He laid special stress on building up CITU's independent activities on the question of unemployment, unorganised labour, working women, minorities in trade unions, etc. He called for consolidating the NCC and its further expansion and intervention on issues vital to the working class and the people. He emphasised on the question of a continuous drive for membership so that it commensurates with the growing influence of the CITU in all the states. Alongwith this, the upgradation of cadres and democratic functioning of the unions have to be taken care of. All the issues affecting the working class and the people like unemployment, closures, industrial sickness, price rise and attack on the trade union and democratic rights were the results of the Government's pro-monopolist, pro-feudal and pro-multinational policies and required to be campaigned before the working class for waging united and militant struggles.

The CITU has to intervene in all such issues for an alternative change in the economic policies and check to the growing authoritarianism. The question of nationalisation with workers' participation in the management, the question of safeguarding the public sector from privatisation, the question of safeguarding national unity against the imperialist backed divisive forces, the issue of Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, Panchayati Raj and Nagarpalika Bills must be taken

to the grass root levels of the workers, so that there could be mass upsurge against the Government's policies. Simultaneously, the CITU must carry forward a continuous ideological campaign among the workers for the development of socialist consciousness which only could pave the way for an alternative. Simultaneously, a working alliance has to be built up with the peasantry and other allies. He called for review of the CITU's activities in the above line which would be taken up in the next meeting.

Subhas Bose thanked the members on behalf of the Reception Committee. Com. Manoranjan Roy concluded the meeting with a clarion call to forge ahead with a determined struggle to dethrone the Rajiv Government from power.

Mass Rally: A massive rally of thousands of workers and people from the adjoining areas was held in the afternoon of 6th September. The rally was presided by Com. Manoranjan Roy. Com. Samar Mukherjee briefed the decisions of the Working Committee meeting. The main speaker was Com. Jyoti Basu. He analysed the failure of the corrupt Rajiv Government in all spheres of its activities and called for its outright defeat in the forthcoming elections.

Contributions Announced for the Tripura Fund

West Bengal State Committee	Rs 15,000
Kerala „	Rs 10,000
Maharashtra „	Rs 5,000
Assam „	Rs 2,000
Tamilnadu „	Rs 2,000
Bihar „	Rs 2,000
UP „	Rs 1,000
Punjab „	Rs 1,000
Haryana „	Rs 1,000
Delhi „	Rs 1,000
Rajasthan „	Rs 1,000
MP „	Rs 1,000
Singarene Collieries	Rs 1,000
Texmaco Workers' Union	Rs 2,000
Hind Motors Workers' Union	Rs 4,000
Steel Workers' Federation of India	Rs 5,000
Hindustan Steel Employees Union	Rs 2,000
Jessop Workers's Union	Rs 1,000
Construction Workers' Federation of India	Rs 1,000
SEB Workers' Union	Rs 1,000
Nadia Committee of CITU	Rs 500
BCMU (Hukumchand)	Rs 500
BCMU (Naihati)	Rs 500

Resolution on Bharat Bandh

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU held at Kalyani from 4-6 September 1989 warmly congratulates the working class and the people of India for making the Bharat Bandh on 30th August a grand success. This unprecedented countrywide action organised at the call of opposition political parties and Central Trade Unions and other mass organisations has convincingly expressed the strong feelings of overwhelming majority of the people of India in support of the demand of resignation of Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India for anti-people, anti-working class policies of his Government and his shameless involvement in corruption.

Despite virulent propaganda by the Radio, T.V. and official media, the toiling people in all corners of India observed Bandh successfully. Shops, schools and colleges, industrial undertakings were by and large closed down making the life in the country standstill. The stoppage of railway and road traffic all over the country was an added feature of the Bandh. The Central Government's vile attempt to malign this action by calling it opposition state sponsored Bandh proved to be utterly false since the action in Congress(I) led states was also widespread and pronounced. Despite the Central Government's order to its employees to stay in office to foil the Bandh, by and large the employees joined the strike and foiled the Govt. of India's attempts. This meeting denounces the strike breaking order and other repressive steps by the Central Government.

This meeting condemns the Congress(I) Governments for arresting tens of thousands of people on the eve and on the day of Bandh. This repressive action however failed to cow down the people. The meeting strongly condemns the killing of several activists in Tripura, West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala and other states at the hands of notorious gangsters and Congress(I) police. The CITU condemns the reign of terror let loose by the Tripura Government which resulted in injuries to Com. Nirpen Chakraborty, Member P.B. of the CPI(M) and former Chief Minister of Tripura and others.

The CITU pays homage to all the martyrs who laid down their lives to make Bandh call successful.

The CITU appeals to the working class and people of India to relentlessly carry forward the struggle by various forms of movements and actions against the corrupt Rajiv Gandhi Government till it is thrown out of power from the Government of India.

Editorial Board

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Manoranjan Roy, Niren Ghosh,

M. M. Lawrence, Vimal Ranadive, Ranjit Basu

Unorganised Workers to Prepare for Countrywide Strike Action

THE All India Convention of Unorganised Workers convened by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions at V.P. House Lawns, New Delhi on September 23, 1989 unanimously adopted a Declaration to organise one day's countrywide strike action, the date of which will be announced by the NCC later.

The other action programmes decided besides the strike action were to observe 17th October as the All India Unorganised Workers' Day by holding rallies, demonstrations, wearing of badges etc; to organise dharnas before District Collectorates and demonstrations in State Capitals; to hold Statewise and regionwise conventions by 15th November; and to organise a massive march to Parliament during the Budget Session in 1990.

The Declaration pointed to the deplorable condition of the various sections of unorganised labour, who constituted over 85 per cent of the labour force. The action programmes were taken in pursuance of a 15-point demands which included at the outset, fixation of Rs 1250 as the National Minimum Wage on 800 Index (1960 series), pending payment of need based wage based on the decisions of the 15th Indian Labour Conference and payment of D.A. at the rate of Rs 2 per point rise.

Over three thousand delegates representing the constituents of the NCC from all the States from J & K to Kerala and from Maharashtra to Tripura attended the Convention.

The proceedings of the convention were conducted by a presidium consisting of Chaturanan Mishra (AITUC), Ramdeo Prasad (BMS), M K Pandhe (CITU), Prabhu Narian Singh (HMS), Sushil Bhat-tacharya (UTUC), Gyan Singh (UTUC-LS) and A K Bose (TUCC).

The Central leaders who spoke on the Declaration were K.L. Mahendra (AITUC), R K Bhakt (BMS), P K Ganguly (CITU), Veereshwar Tiagi (HMS), Bhagwan Singh (UTUC), Pritish Chanda (UTUC-LS) and P.D. Paliwal (TUCC).

Thirteen delegates representing the various constituents from the various unorganised sectors participated in the discussions. The delegates narrated their deplorable conditions of service and working conditions. There was no fixed minimum wages, even notified minimum wages were not paid, they had no protection of any labour laws, no benefit of social security measures, women workers were discriminated and they had to face brutal police repression and goonda attacks whenever they tried to organise and agitate.

All the delegates vowed for militant united actions and expressed their anger against the Congress Government which they held responsible for their deplorable conditions. Many of them called for ousting the Rajiv Government and opined for strike action before the elections.

The Convention adopted another resolution condemning the murder of Safdar Hasmi by the Congress(I) gangsters while his team the Jana Natya Manch was performing a street drama on Minimum Wage at Sahibabad on 1st January, 1989.

The Convention also adopted a resolution demanding the scrapping of the retrograde bill on construction workers introduced by the Government against which the Committee on Petitions had also submitted its report and demanded a comprehensive central legislation for the construction workers in consultation with the Central Trade Unions.

M K Pandhe (CITU) summed up the deliberations on behalf of the presidium.

Declaration

The All India Convention of Unorganised Workers convened by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions in New Delhi on 23rd September 1989 expresses its grave concern at the deteriorating conditions of the 15 crore unorganised workers in India, who constitute 85 per cent of the total working class in India. During the last 42 years since independence this section has not received any benefit of welfare labour legislations whatsoever. With the rise in prices of essential commodities these workers experienced continuous erosion in the standard of living and most of them live much below the poverty line, despite tall talk of "GARIBI HATAO" since 1973.

The wages fixed under the Minimum Wages Act are paltry and insufficient to provide two square meals a day for a family. The schedule under the Minimum Wages Act excludes a large section of employees while several new sections of employment have not been included in it. In spite of repeated proclamation by the official spokesmen that the minimum wages fixed under the Act should not be below the property line, they remained mere pious declarations. Due to the failure of the Central Government to provide an effective implementation machinery in some states, even the wage fixed under the Minimum Wages Act are not being paid to the workers. The punishment to the violators of the act is so symbolic that they prefer to violate the Act and pay the penalty rather than to implement the Act. In absence of specific norms for fixation of minimum wages under the Act, the wage fixed by the Statutory Wage Fixation Machinery are extremely low and they are not revised periodically.

The benefits of various labour laws are not being passed on to this sector because of the limit of employment fixed by the various statutes for its implementation. The unscrupulous employers would keep the employment marginally below the prescribed limit in order to violate the implementation of the law. As a result, these workers do not get any benefit of Provident Fund, Gratuity, ESI, Leave Facility, Limitation of Hours of Work, and Retire-

ment Benefits. They are deprived of even retrenchment compensation and they can be thrown out of job at any moment at the sweet will of the employer.

The women workers are the most exploited section of the unorganised workers. They are paid lower wages than men and first to be retrenched by the employers. Discrimination against women workers continues unabated and they are deprived of maternity benefit. India has acquired a dubious distinction of employing largest number of child labour most of whom are in the unorganised sector.

The I.L.O. Convention concerning fixation of National Minimum Wage has not yet been ratified by the Government of India with the result that the employers are in a position to pay extremely low rate of wages to these employees. The failure of the Government of India to fix a national minimum wage to workers not covered by schedule of employment is primarily responsible for their present plight.

The emergence of contract labour system provides a fertile ground for continuation of the unjust working conditions for the unorganised workers. Despite passing of the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act these workers failed to get any material protection and even in permanent and perennial nature of jobs the system continues to operate non-challantly. What is surprising is that even in public sector the number of contractors are increasing while more and more jobs are passed on to contract workers. The unorganised sector is thus allowed to expand rapidly even within the organised sector in India mainly with the purpose to exploit the unorganised workers as a source of cheap labour. When the jobs are prohibited for contract labour the workers working on them are thrown out of jobs and outsiders are recruited for the job while the provision of exemption of undertaking from the provision of the Act are largely misused.

A large number of workers are working as casual, daily rated, NMR, PRWs, contingency, temporary and other categories even in the organised sectors. In Central Government services several lakhs of employees are working as extra-departmental employees for decades without any chance of becoming regular. The legal provision of making the workers regular after completion of 240 days of service is being systematically violated by imposing the break of service after every 3 months which is perpetuating as a system in the undertakings.

The agriculture sector where the large number of workers are migrant labours have to remain in a pitiable condition always searching for suitable jobs to keep themselves and their families alive. Overwhelming majority of these workers do not get gainful employment for the whole year with the result that they have to remain virtually destitutes during the period of unemployment. A farcical employment programme like—JAWAHAR ROJGAR YOJNA” is incapable of giving any material relief to these workers while the promise of creation of millions of jobs over the years have by and large remained on paper.

This convention appeals to all the unorganised workers to launch countrywide powerful struggles to

achieve the following demands:

Demands

1. Fixation of Rs. 1250/- as a National Minimum Wage on 800 index, pending payment of need based minimum wages based on 15th Indian Labour Conference.

2. Linking of minimum wage with price index and payment of D.A. of full neutralisation at Rs. 2/- per point rise in index (Base year 1960).

3. Provision of Provident Fund, ESI, Gratuity Benefits and other statutory benefits to the unorganised workers irrespective of size of employment.

4. Amendment to the Minimum Wages Act providing norms for fixation of wages, obligatory payment of dearness allowance, delimitation of powers of the Govt. to exempt units from the purview of the Act, periodic revision of wages and compulsory punishment and imprisonment to employers for violating the Act.

5. Provision of eight hours a day, weekly off and holidays with wages for all the unorganised workers and payment of double overtime for extra work.

6. Government sponsored housing schemes for all the unorganised workers.

7. Special protection to woman workers and child labour in the matter of job and working conditions. Payment of equal wages to all women workers and maternity benefits.

8. Legal provision against arbitrary dismissal and termination of services of the unorganised workers ensuring job security for them.

9. Abolition of contract labour system and regularisation of all the contract labour in a time bound programme without reference through employment exchange, pending which payment of wages to contract workers at par with regular workers. Courts should be given judicial powers to decide wages for similar nature of job.

10. A net-work of Government run creches to look after the children of women workers.

11. All casual, NMR, daily rated, workcharged and temporary workers to be made permanent after 150 days of work including breaks imposed by employer in permanent and perennial nature of jobs.

12. Government to start effective employment oriented schemes providing regular jobs for all workers and payment of unemployment allowance.

13. Trade Union and democratic rights to all unorganised workers including right to get recognition of the union through secret ballot.

14. A comprehensive scheme of raising welfare cess from the employer for these workers and substantial Central Government contribution to this welfare fund.

15. Constitution of District level Tripartite Committees to monitor the working of the Minimum Wages Act and holding of regular meetings of Advisory Boards at Central and State levels.

The Convention appeals to all the unorganised workers and their unions to implement the following phased programme of action to achieve the above demands:

(Contd. on page 18)

Massive Rally by Women

Vimal Ranadive

MORE than twenty thousand women participated in a rally held on September 8, at Boat Club, Delhi, at the call of the All India Democratic Women's Association and the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women.

The most downtrodden agricultural worker women, Anganwadi workers, those working in small-scale industrial units and those in the service sector came together to take out a magnificent procession from Rajghat to the Boat Club. This included a big 3,500 strong contingent from Maharashtra, apart from 450 women from Anganwadis, 1000 from Punjab, 1000 from West Bengal, 3000 from Kerala, 100 from Assam and 35 from Tripura. Almost all states surpassed the quotas allotted to them.

While on their way to Delhi, the women of Bihar had to face harassment, imprisonment and fines at Kanpur and some other places and were lathicharged by the police. It was their grim determination that compelled the authorities to let them proceed to Delhi. Yet a large number of them were forced to remain behind in custody.

Unemployment, one of the most burning issues of today, critically affects women, and the rally raised this problem as a major item. Modernisation and mechanisation are throwing lakhs of women out of jobs. The other important problem is the continuously escalating prices of which the womenfolk have to bear the brunt directly. The two-month long campaign preceding the Delhi rally had raised these problems in a concerted manner, together with the questions of land reforms, minimum wages, and implementation of relevant legislation.

The colourful procession, with flag, festoons, placards and banners started at 10 in the morning and soon the traffic was jammed at several places. "We want jobs, no promises", and "We demand resignation of the Rajiv Government which has not fulfilled a single demand", were the main slogans.

Braving terrible heat, the procession traversed a distance of about eight kms taking two hours to cover the route, and reached the Boat Club at 12 noon. The meeting, presided over by Ahilya Rangnekar, began with revolutionary songs presented by Parcham.

The Burning Problems: Moving the main resolution, Susheela Gopalan, AIDWA General Secretary, explained the declining percentage of women in employment, and also highlighted their increasingly worsening plight due to non-implementation of land reforms except in West Bengal and Kerala and the further deteriorating economic situation in the country.

Holding the Rajiv Government responsible for the growth of fundamentalism which is a deadly enemy of women's well being and for bringing the country to the brink of disintegration, Ahilya Rangnekar demanded that the Government must resign in the national interest. She called upon the women to come forward to uphold and strengthen communal

harmony.

Plight of Anganwadi Workers: Narrating the inhuman conditions in which the women workers and helpers of the Anganwadis are living and working, even when they are training the future generations, AICCW Secretary Vimal Ranadive recalled how arrogantly the Prime Minister had rejected the demands put forward by a deputation of these workers. She also demanded employment for every person as a fundamental right, which will give to women economic independence and thereby the courage to fight their social oppression as well.

AIDWA Joint Secretary Brinda Karat explained the pace of the campaign against unemployment going on in every state and the growing response to it.

Others who spoke at the rally included Laxmi Sehgal from UP, Rajinder Kaur from Punjab and Shyamali Gupta from West Bengal. After unanimously adopting the resolution the rally came to a successful conclusion amidst slogans of "Employment is our fundamental right", and "Rajiv hatao, Desh Bahchao".

Resolution of Women's Rally

This mass rally of women from all over the country organised by the All India Democratic Women's Association at the Boat Club, New Delhi, on September 8, wishes to record its appreciation of the massive response of the people to the opposition parties' call for Bharat Bandh on the August 30 demanding among other things the resignation of the Rajiv Gandhi Government.

The corruption scandals, the failure to tackle the problem of national unity and resist the divisive forces, attacks on the democratic rights of the people, the economic policies of opening the country to foreign capital and privatisation, all have created a dangerous situation for the freedom, independence and unity of the country. It has imposed unbearable misery on the common people, peasants, agricultural workers, industrial workers with mass unemployment and poverty.

Women have been the worst sufferers under the four and a half years of Rajiv's rule. Atrocities on women in general, and harijan and scheduled caste women in particular have multiplied, with offenders, including the police, escaping all punishment. Besides, women are deprived of employment, equal wages, property rights and equality before the laws.

This meeting is of the firm opinion that unless a Government directly representing the will of the common people is established, neither the unity of the country can be maintained, nor problems solved and women's rights fully restored and implemented. This meeting therefore calls for the resignation of the Rajiv Government and immediate elections to enable the people to have a Government of their choice.

Textile Workers on Path of Struggle

P. K. Ganguly

THE CITU organised the Mass Rally of the Textile Workers at Delhi on 14 of September 1989. The rally was participated by about 5000 workers of the Textile Industry belonging to the CITU unions in the organised mill sector including the NTC mills, Power loom sector and the Handloom sector. They came from almost all the states, namely, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Delhi, Haryana and Punjab.

The workers assembled at the Boat Club and marched to the Prime Minister's place with banners festoons and flags, shouting slogans demanding scrapping of the 1985 Textile Policy and nationalisation of the entire textile industry and its management with workers' participation at all levels in decision making. The procession was stopped by the police near the Gole Methi Chowk where the rally was held. A prior appointment was sought by Com Samar Mukherji, M.P., General Secretary of CITU, from Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi for submission of a Memorandum to him by a delegation of the CITU. But despite repeated attempts the Prime Minister did not allow interview. He authorised the Union Textile Minister Sri Ram Nivas Mirdha to meet the delegation and accept the Memorandum. However, the CITU wanted to meet the Prime Minister himself and talk to him about the deepening crisis in the textile industry which aggravated after the New Textile policy of 1985. The delegation wanted to place before him the problems and demands of the textile workers representing all its sectors. Worst problems faced by them were the growing closures, sickness and joblessness. The powerloom workers were highly exploited with paltry wages and without any security of labour laws. The Handloom weavers were been pauperised.

On December 7, 1988 about 1.5 lakhs signatures were submitted to the Lok Sabha Speaker Sri Balaram Jhakar for the Committee on Petition. But nothing had transpired after that. Therefore, the CITU had decided to talk to the Prime Minister directly. But it became obvious that the Prime Minister was insensitive to the problems and demands of Textile workers and therefore he refused to meet the Delegation. However, the Delegation led by Com Samar Mukherji submitted the Memorandum of Demands to the Private Secretary of the Prime Minister and later met the Textile Minister with a copy of the memorandum.

Apart from Com Samar Mukherji, the delegation included M.K. Pandhe and P.K. Ganguly, Secretaries of CITU, Jamini Saha (West Bengal), V.J.K. Nair (Karnataka), J. Venkayya (Andhra Pradesh), Karmegan (Tamil Nadu), Subhasini (U.P.), Malabade (Maharashtra). The CITU delegations on several

earlier occasions had in fact met the Textile Minister, who had always defended the Textile Policy stoutly. Naturally this time also there was no fruitful outcome of the meeting. He refused to take cognizance of the growing closures and joblessness in the Mill sector. He refused to take cognizance of the fact that the Powerloom workers were deprived of minimum wages and deprived of all labour laws and social security measures. He refused to accept the fact that under blessings from the Government's policy the organised mill owners like the Reliance, Orkay, Bombay Dyeing and other mill barons deliberately closed down their weaving sections and switched over to the Power Looms for the manufacture of 50 per cent of the entire cloth produced and 98 per cent of entire synthetic cloth produced in the country by exploiting cheap labour in the Power looms. He refused to take cognizance of the fact that the handloom weavers were pauperised by the Government's pro-monopoly Textile policy. The Janata Cloth earmarked for production in the Handlooms did not offer them one square meal a day. Even 22 items reserved for production for handlooms were being diverted to other sectors. The Government failed to implement Hank Yarn Policy resulting in continuous shortage of yarns for handloom sector. Mirdha refused to accept the fact that the Public Sector NTC mills were a glaring example of the Government's policy of destabilisation of the public sector. Lion's share of the modernisation fund was being given to the Private sector, while the NTC mills went sick due to lack of modernisation fund.

Mirdha refused to accept the demand for scrapping the Textile policy. He merely informed that a Committee headed by Abid Hussain had been formed to review the functioning of the Textile policy. He rejected the idea of inclusion of the Central Trade Union representatives in the Committee on the ground that the Committee consisted of 'experts'. On the question of even consultation with the Central Trade Unions, he remarked that it would be of no avail as all the Central Trade Unions would demand Nationalisation of Textile Industry which is against the Government's policy.

The blunt remarks of the Textile Minister only laid bare the Governments' policy of monopolisation and ruination of the Textile industry and exposing its over 15 million workers to the racketeering of the private monopolists.

The delegation returned to Gole Methi Chowk and reported about the result of the interview with the Textile Minister. The thousands of workers who were rallying at the place for several hours shouted slogans denouncing the Prime Minister for refusing to meet the delegation led by Com. Samar Mukherji. They denounced the Textile Minister for refusing to accept the demands of the workers. They decided to

intensify the struggle to save the Textile industry, which is the largest industry in the country, from the monopoly-subservient policy of the Government of India. They decided for strike actions to press forth their demands. The rally was addressed among others by M.K. Pandhe, P.K. Ganguly (CITU centre), V.J.K. Nair (Karnataka), Karmegan (Tamil Nadu), Venkayya (Andhra Pradesh), Sailendra Shailey (Madhya Pradesh), Chauhan (Rajasthan), Balwant Singh (Punjab), Jamini Saha (West Bengal), Subhasini, Md. Safi (UP), Haribal Debnath (Tripura), Malabade (Maharashtra), Satis Parmar (Gujrat), S.B. Bhardwaj (Delhi) etc.

Rally of NTC Workers

On 15th September another rally of NTC workers was held. The workers assembled at Jantar Mantar and marched to the Textile Ministry office at Udyog Bhavan. A delegation led by M.K. Pandhe met the Deputy Minister of Textile, Smt. Soroj Khaparde and submitted a Memorandum to her on the demands of the NTC workers.

All India Convention of Handloom Workers

The above rally was the culmination of the first phase of the movement of the Textile workers decided by the CITU in the All India meeting held at Delhi on 3rd and 4th of April 1989. The CITU decided to organise the Textile workers sector wise, held separate conventions and culminate the programme in the all India rally before the Prime Ministers' place by all Textile workers representing all the sectors. Accordingly as already reported earlier, a convention of NTC workers was held at Delhi on 19th June last followed by a demonstration before the NTC headquarters on 20th June. A powerlooms' workers convention was held at Sholapur, Maharashtra on 11 and 12 of August.

The All India Convention of Handloom workers was held at Mavalankar Hall New Delhi on 13 September, i.e. one day before the rally.

The Convention was attended by over one thousand delegates from the various handloom centres of the country, namely, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Tripura, Haryana, Delhi, Maharashtra etc. The Convention was presided over by Jamini Saha (West Bengal), J. Venkayya (Andhra Pradesh), V. Karmegan (Tamil Nadu), Nityanand Swami (Karnataka), Haribal Debnath (Tripura) and Malabade (Maharashtra). The Convention was inaugurated by Com. Samar Mukherji. In his inaugural address Com. Samar Mukherji pointed to the Textile policy as a part of the New Economic Policy of the government. He said that under pressure from the World Bank the Government's policy was monopolisation and modernisation, destabilisation of the public sector and throwing the workers exposed to the ruthless exploitation by the private monopolists. The result was seen in the textile industry, in which closures and sickness had become the feature of the industry. While the

workers demanded nationalisation with workers' participation in the management the Government went ahead with denotifying the units already taken over. While large number of workers were being thrown in the ranks of jobless daily, those still in jobs were under constant threat of loosing it because of growing sickness of the mills. Before the new textile policy in 1985, 70 mills were closed. After the New Policy, by January 1989 142 mills had closed down rendering about 2 lakh workers jobless. The Badli and Casual workers were worst effected. The modernisation policy had helped only a few mill magnets enabling them to garner huge profits spelling disaster for the smaller units as well as Handloom and Powerloom sectors. The NTC mills suffered due to the Government's policy of destabilisation of public sector. Modernisation had helped neither in increased production by the mill sector nor in increased exports. On the contrary it had created redundancies and increased the prices of the cloths, hitting hard the common people, who were already hard pressed due to lack of purchasing power, leading to glut of cloth in the market. He said that Nationalisation of Textile Industry was the only solution and called upon the workers to step up their struggle and mobilise other trade unions with this objective.

The report of the convention was placed by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary CITU. He briefed about the deepening crisis in the industry which was further accentuated due to the New Textile Policy of 1985. He said, the New Textile Policy was a sharp departure from the earlier policies in the respect that it was an open declaration for unbridled development of capitalism showering all favours to the few mill magnets in the name of restructuring the industry and eliminating all structural rigidities.

The Handloom sector was worst effected. This was evident from even the observations made by the Lok Sabha Committee of Petitions in 1988 on a representation made by the Tamilnadu Handloom Workers' Federation (CITU). Although the Government of India refused to admit that the Textile policy was failure, the Secretary, Ministry of Textiles admitted before this Committee of Petitions that the Handloom sector was in crisis.

The weavers did not get minimum wage. The per capita earning of a weaver was much below the daily wage prescribed for agricultural labourers even, which was a meagre Rs 11. The prices of cotton and yarn had doubled, even trebled during the last 3-4 years along with other inputs, but there was no corresponding increase in Handloom products, with the result that the Handloom weavers continued to suffer.

Moreover, the weavers did not get the required 50 per cent quota of yarn from the Textile mills according to the Governments' scheme of Hank Yarn Obligation. The cooperatives in the handloom sectors either did not function or were managed by

corrupt people and elections were not held regularly.

In terms of the Textile Policy, 22 items were reserved for exclusive production in Handloom sector under the Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985. But in contavention of this, most of these articles were diverted to other sectors, thus adversely affecting the Handloom weavers and denying continuous employment to them. The Government's policy of earmarking the Janata Cloth of 40 counts and below for the production in the Handloom sector had instead of giving employment to the weavers, had extended poverty to this sector. The Handloom weavers did not even get one square meal a day for the family. Thus the Handloom sector which was basically rural oriented and had great potential for direct and indirect employment for the rural poor, was under ruination due to the New Textile Policy.

Fourteen comrades from Karnataka, West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tripura, and Delhi participated in the discussion. Among those who participated included Nityananda Swami (Karnataka), V. Karmegan (Tamil Nadu) T. Yadav (Harvana), Malin Ghose, Subhendu Choudhury, Gopal Biswas (West Bengal), Haribal Debnath (Tripura), Malabade (Maharashtra) J. Venkayya (A.P.), Bhagawan Sahay (Delhi) etc.

The resolution of the convention was moved by V.J.K. Nair (Karnataka) and supported by Jamini Saha (W.B.) M.K. Pandhe summed up the deliberations.

(The resolution with the demands and action programme is being published hereunder.)

Apart from the demands of the Handloom weavers the Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister and the Textile Minister listed the following demands: 1. Scrapping of the existing Textile Policy and formulation of a new policy with full participation of the Central Trade Unions. 2. Immediate ban on all closures, partial closures, retrenchment, lay off etc., lift ban on recruitment. 3. No denotification of taken over mills, mills already taken over should be nationalised. 4. Take over of all closed, locked out and sick units, pending complete nationalisation of textile industry. 5. Genuine participation of workers through secret ballot in decision making. 6. Ensure full capacity utilisation; no unilateral and arbitrary increase in work load on workers. 7. Wage revision of all workers and employees at regular intervals and full neutralisation of rise in prices at all levels of wages. 8. Regularisation of all temporary, casual, badli and contract workers and revision of their wages and guarantee of social security measures at par with permanent workers. 9. Abolition of contract system. 10. Immediate and adequate relief and compensation and regular monthly unemployment relief to all workers rendered unemployed due to closures. 11. Substantial increase in the prevailing low wages and fixation of statutory minimum wage for the power-

loom workers. Extension of all labour laws, social security measures and statutory benefits to them.

In addition to the above, the Memorandum also contained the following specific demands for the NTC workers: 1. No amalgamation of NTC units which would lead to a closure of several mills. 2. Uniform wage structure and wages, DA and other benefits and working conditions at par with other Central Public Sector Undertakings. 3. Corruption and mismanagement to be rooted out. 4. Adequate supply of raw materials. 5. Viability and modernisation without loss of employment in consultation with the trade unions and proper maintenance of machineries and equipments. 6. Protection of job of women workers. 7. Recognition of unions by Secret Ballot.

Back Ground of CITU's Independent Activities

Since the announcement of the new textile policy, the CITU has been making efforts to build up a countrywide united movement by the trade unions. In September, 1985 a joint convention was held at Delhi with CITU, AITUC, HMS, and UTUC. But the movement could not be carried forward satisfactorily. The CITU however continued its efforts and tried to bring in the INTUC and NLO also, who although initially supported the policy but later opposed it, in the joint movement. These two organisations however ultimately backed out. Another joint convention however could be organised with the CITU, AITUC, HMS and UTUC at Kanpur in October, 1988. After that about 1.5 lakh signatures were submitted to the Lok Sabha Speaker in December, 1988 with ever 88,000 thousands of signatures by the CITU workers in the Petition. Participation of others was of a token nature only.

The Kanpur Convention however injected a spirit of militancy and determination among the workers that led to several other militant struggles by textile workers in different states. The most notable struggle was the 5 day rail roko agitation at Kanpur in February, 1989 which compelled the UP Government to scrap the K K Pandey award that imposed heavy work load on the workers. The CITU took a leading role in the movement. After this the CITU had formed a 500 strong union at Kanpur. The struggle of the handloom workers of Andhra Pradesh mobilising 10-15 thousand workers was another notable event. Similar struggles were being waged in Tamilnadu. In Kerala there was mass picketing on 24th March. In Punjab the CITU organised strike on 1st March at Ludhiana. On 16th December there was a strike on minimum wage which was joined by AITUC also. In MP the CITU led a big struggle at Gwalior against a retrograde agreement by INTUC. In Rajasthan several strike actions took place in the NTC mills. The managements victimised most of the CITU cadres. Similar strike programmes have been taken in Haryana and West Bengal. In Maharashtra, Orissa and Gujarat also there were concerted moves by the CITU textile workers.

To give a boost in the movement, the CITU therefore decided to launch its independent activities in the textile industry. An all India meeting of the leaders of the CITU unions was convened at Delhi on April 3-4, 1989. The meeting decided to build up a systematic movement in all the sectors of the industry including in the NTC mills. So long the CITU unions and the State Committees were engaged in local level or state level movements only. In order to give shape to an organised countrywide movement, the meeting suggested for the formation of a federation of the CITU unions in the textile industry as a whole. It also suggested to form a coordination committee in the NTC.

With the completion of this phase of programme the CITU will decide further action programmes so that continuity of the movement is maintained and gradually intensified. Simultaneously CITU has to mobilise all the workers of the Textile Industry in all its sectors and seek cooperation of all other trade unions so that trade union unity is built up in the Textile Industry and united movement is waged with immediate demands of the textile workers with the central demand for nationalisation of the industry and its management with workers' participation.

Resolution Adopted in the Handloom Workers' Convention

All India Convention of Handloom workers and weavers held at Delhi on September 13, 1989 expresses serious concern at the deteriorating conditions of the handloom workers in the country. The situation has further aggravated after the new textile policy which has benefited only a few private mill magnets had pauperised the handloom workers.

The weavers do not get minimum wage. The per capita earning of a weaver is much below the minimum daily wage prescribed for an agricultural labourer even, which is a meagre Rs 11/-. The prices of cotton and yarn had doubled, even trebled during the last 2-3 years, alongwith the other inputs, but there was no corresponding increase in the handloom products with the result that the handloom weavers continued to suffer.

Moreover, the weavers do not get the allotted 50 per cent quota of the yarn from the textile mills even according to the Government's faulty scheme of hank yarn obligation. Further more, quite a substantial quantity of yarns are exported, putting the handloom sector into further distress. Apart from this, the Cooperatives in the handloom sector either do not function or are managed by corrupt people and elections are also not held regularly. Thus the handloom sector which is basically rural oriented and has great potential for direct and indirect employment for the rural poor, was under ruination due to the textile policy of the Government. Report of 46 starvation deaths and suicide by weavers was received from Andhra Pradesh alone.

In terms of the textile policy, 22 items were reserved for exclusive production in the handloom sector under the Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985. But in contravention of this, most these articles are produced in the other sectors, thus adversely affecting the handloom sector and denying continuous employment to the weavers.

The Convention therefore demands the following for immediate implementation by the Government:

1. Fixation of minimum wage of Rs 1050/- at 800 points plus DA at the rate of Rs 1.65,
2. Plug the loopholes in the handloom reservation orders to prevent its violation and its strict implementation for manufacturing the 22 reserved articles in the handloom sector.
3. Modification of the Hank Yarn Obligation Scheme of the Government of India ensuring the supply of at least 50 per cent of saleable yarn with counts of 40 and above to the handloom units by the textile mills.
4. Supply of yarn and other inputs like dyes, chemicals, etc to the weavers at subsidised cost and no export of cotton and yarn without meeting the internal requirement. Similarly for the silk handloom units the supply of Kora and raw silk should be ensured at subsidised rates.
5. The handloom cooperatives to be strengthened, putting an end to all corruption and malpractices in the cooperative societies and punishment to the culprits and regular elections are to be held.
6. Purchase of all handloom products by Government agencies at remunerative prices and direct sale through net work of shops all over the country eliminating all middlemen. Government should purchase handloom cloth for their requirements.
7. For continuous employment and sale of the accumulated stocks, a special rebate for 60 days should be given and the benefits should be passed on to the weavers.
8. Provisions for interest free loan, housing and old age pension should be made for weavers.
9. Weavers should be given P.F. medical and educational facilities, maternity, benefits and other statutory benefits and social security measures.
10. Unemployment allowance when the weavers and workers are not in gainful employment.
11. Implementation of the recommendations of the Seventh Committee on Petitions of the Eight Lok Sabha.
12. Pre-eminent role of cotton as the main raw material of the textile industry and ensuring remunerative prices to the cotton growers.

13. Nationalisation of the Textile Industry with workers' participation in management.

In pursuance of the above demands the convention decides to implement the following action programmes:

1. Observe one all India handloom workers' day on 3rd November, 1989.

2. Hold statewise and local conventions to be completed by December, 1989.

3. Prepare for one day's countrywide strike, the date of which to be fixed later.

4. Participate in all other programmes of all textile workers as decided by the CITU.

The convention decides to form an all India Co-ordination Committee of handloom workers.

The Convention appeals to all handloom workers irrespective of affiliations to build a powerful movement and all over the country so that the Govt. of India is forced to accept the demands.

(Contd. from page 10)

1. Observation of All India Unorganised Workers' Day on 17th Oct. all over the country by holding rallies, demonstrations, wearing badges etc. to popularise these demands.

2. To organise dharnas of unorganised workers before District Collectorates and demonstrations in State capitals to press these demands.

3. To hold statewise, regionwise conventions through out the country by 15th November to popularise the demands and action programme chalked out by this convention.

4. To organise a massive march of unorganised workers before Parliament during the budget session in 1990 demanding comprehensive Central legislation providing better living and working condition of the unorganised workers.

5. To organise all India one day strike of the unorganised workers to press all these demands, the date of which to be announced later by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions.

The Convention appeals to all the unorganised workers in India to build a powerful unity at all levels irrespective of affiliations so that countrywide movement can be launched to implement the phased programme of action.

The Convention earnestly calls upon all the organised workers to rally behind the unorganised workers and extend solidarity actions and material assistance to them so that they can achieve these demands through united struggles.

New Series of Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers

(Base 1982 = 100)

Centre	June 1989	July 1989	Linking factor									
				Hubli-Dharwar	181	180	—	Calcutta	175	177	4.74	
				Mercara	165	166	—	Darjeeling	160	161	4.55	
				Alwaye	167	167	5.19	Durgapur	171	172	—	
				Mundakayam	174	172	4.67	Haldia	175	178	—	
				Quilon	178	181	—	Howrah	179	179	4.12	
				Trivandrum	184	184	—	Jalpaiguri	163	167	4.16	
ALL-INDIA	170	172	4.93	Balaghat	173	178	5.24	Raniganj	159	161	4.40	
Gudur	164	165	4.33	Bhilari	160	161	3.49	Chandigarh	160	165	—	
Guntur	165	164	5.60	Bhopal	169	175	5.46	Delhi	179	180	4.97	
Hyderabad	166	166	5.23	Indore	174	177	5.18	Pondicherry	176	176	—	
Visakhapatnam	179	181	—	Jabalpur	185	189	6.41	Additional Series of Labour Bureau				
Warrangal	164	163	—	Bombay	176	176	5.12	Kothagudem	188	190	3.25	
Doom-Dooma-				Nagpur	175	176	4.99	Himachal Pradesh	161	163	3.75	
Tinsukia	160	163	4.05	Nasik	178	180	—	Bhilwara	170	171	3.20	
Gauhati	178	183	—	Poona	174	175	—	Chindwara	182	183	2.59	
Labac-Silchar	162	162	3.96	Sholapur	175	178	5.03	Tripura	184	184	4.37	
Mariani-Jorhat	168	171	3.95	Barbil	159	163	5.00	Goa	182	183	3.40	
Rangapara-Tezpur	165	167	4.29	Rourkela	153	156	3.59	Other Series of Labour Bureau				
Jamshedpur	163	166	4.68	Amritsar	162	165	5.19	Centre	Base	June	July	
Jharia	160	164	4.63	Ludhiana	159	161	—	Digboi	1960	1989	1989	
Kodarma	156	161	5.43	Ajmer	171	171	5.01	Ammathi	1960	827	863	
Monghyr-Jamalpur	164	168	5.29	Jaipur	168	172	5.17	Chikmagalur	1960	855	854	
Noamundi	166	167	4.58	Coimbatore	167	168	5.35	Kolar-Gold-	1960	838	847	
Ranchi-Hatia	166	174	—	Coonoor	180	179	4.80	Field	1960	859	854	
Ahmedabad	167	169	4.78	Madras	168	170	5.05	Alleppey	1960	931	918	
Baroda	171	174	—	Madurai	172	173	5.27	Gwalior	1960	863	881	
Bhavnagar	166	172	4.99	Salem	165	166	—	Sambalpur	1960	887	933	
Rajkot	167	171	—	Tiruchirapally	177	179	—	Berhampur	1949	1072	1089	
Surat	177	182	—	Agra	167	167	—	Cuttack	1949	1013	0126	
Faridabad	160	163	—	Ghaziabad	172	172	—					
Yamananagar	161	163	5.53	Kanpur	172	177	4.69					
Srinagar	168	167	5.47	Saharanpur	163	165	5.06					
Bangalore	164	165	5.66	Varanasi	181	181	5.12					
Belgaum	175	177	—	Asansol	166	168	4.77					

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.

(Contd. from page 4)

also and the industrial strike was almost hundred per cent successful in all the industrial units including in the public sector undertakings. Road and rail services were totally dislocated. Shops, markets and educational institutions were closed. Over 5000 CPI(M), CPI, and DMK workers were arrested for squatting on the railway lines.

Karnataka: The bandh was successful in most parts of the state despite repression by the police and obstruction by the Congress(I) volunteers. The strike affected the private sector particularly. Road and rail services were disrupted at several places.

Kerala: Here also the Government itself admitted that the bandh was total. Shops, markets, educational institutions, transport, railway service, all were totally affected. Workers' response to the strike call was total including in the public sector units and in the traditional sectors like coir, cashew, handloom, etc. The Trivandrum Secretariat wore a deserted look. The communal and casteist forces like the Muslim League, RSS joined hands with the Congress(I) to kill three cadres of the CPI(M), CITU and others. Massive demonstrations and rallies were held at different places.

Thus ended the second successive Bharat Bandh demanding resignation of the Rajiv Government. However, the task lies ahead. The CITU must carry forward its initiative to unite the trade unions at all

levels with increasing co-operation with the left, democratic and secular forces in the coming months to dethrone the Rajiv Government in the forthcoming elections and isolate the divisive forces.

CITU Congratulates Workers

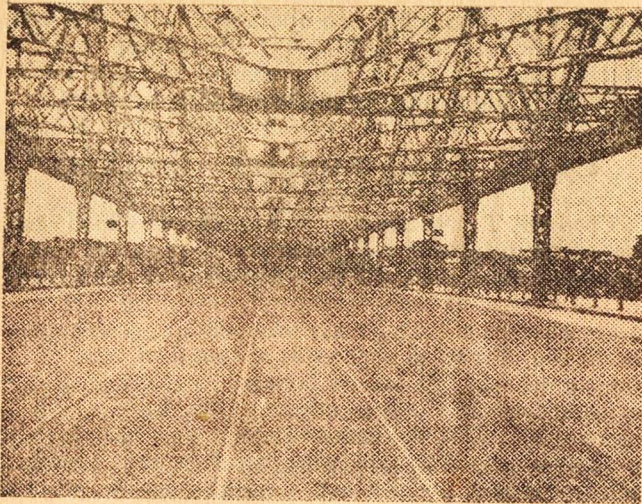
Com. B. T. Ranadive, President of CITU has issued the following statement:

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions warmly congratulates the working class for their successful strike in all the industrial centres in the country and joining the Bharat Bandh on 30th August with the central demand for resignation of the Rajiv Government. The CITU congratulates the people, the peasantry and the agricultural workers for responding to the call for Bharat Bandh magnificently to make it an unprecedented success.

As per reports, the bandh and the industrial strike was complete in all places totally paralysing normal functioning in the entire country. The State Government employees and even the Central Government employees in several States joined this massive action despite threats. Reports from West Bengal, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bombay, Delhi, Bihar, Punjab and other places state about complete strike in the industrial centres. Shops and establishments



An woman activist of JMS being dragged by the hair by the Police of Delhi



Howrah Bridge, one of the busiest in the world, on the Bandh day

remained closed, road transport was disrupted and train services were dislocated.

The CITU condemns the Government for unleashing a savage repression on the people and workers. It is estimated that at least one lakh people were arrested, 40,000 from Bihar only. Report has been received that one CPI (M) worker was killed in Tripura by the Congress (I) hoodlums. Even Com.

State Govt. Employees to Strike on November 22

OVER sixty lakhs State Government employees in the country will go on one day's strike on November 22. The decision for the strike was taken by the All India State Government Employees' Federation in the meeting of its National Council held at Agra on September 16-18.

The demands included declaration of national wage policy by the Central Government; wage parity of the State Government employees with those of the Central Government employees and Central Public Sector employees based on need based national wage and for this the Central Government has to take the responsibility of devolution of funds as per the recommendations of the Ninth Finance Commission.

In a statement issued by the federation on September 19, K N Keshav Murthi, its President and Sukomal Sen, M.P. the General Secretary said that countrywide campaign would be launched for the success of the strike by holding rallies, dharnas, etc in all the states. Statewise conventions would be called.

The National Council meeting of the federation was attended by 600 delegates from different states. Sukomal Sen placed the General Secretary's report, which was discussed by 42 delegates. The Council decided to hold the Seventh National Conference of State employees at Coimbatore from may 12-15, 1990. The Council meeting concluded with a massive rally

Nripen Chakrabarty was arrested. At Delhi the police lathi charged at several places.

The CITU calls upon the working class to consolidate the unity achieved through this mass action and carry forward the struggle in cooperation with the left, democratic and secular forces to defeat the Congress (I) in the forthcoming elections.

Central TUs Congratulate Workers

We Congratulate the working class of the country for successfully observing strike on 30th August and joining the Bharat Bandh. Reports received so far from a number of States indicate that despite threat and subversive activities of the managements the strike was successful in the industrial centres and other establishments.

The bandh was almost total in the States. Road and rail services were dislocated at various places and shops and establishments were closed.

We condemn the Government for unleashing brutal repression and arresting thousands of people. We appeal to the working class and the trade unions to further carry forward the struggle unitedly for a change of the Government which only can meet their demands.

P K Ganguly (CITU) D D Shastri (TUCC)
Homi Daji (AITUC) Abani Roy (UTUC)
Veereshwar Tiagi (HMS) J.N. Mandal (UTUC-LS)

on September 18.

Successful Strike by Defence Employees

OVER five lakh Civilian Defence employees of the country went on one day's successful strike on September 19. The call for the strike was given by the All India Defence Federation from a massive rally held at Delhi on August 8. The strike call was given in pursuance of their long pending 24-point demands which included halt to privatisation of defence productions, withdrawal of ban on recruitment, filling up of all vacancies, stop victimisation, etc.

Despite threat and attempt to sabotage the strike by the Government, the strike was near total in the country. In West Bengal the strike was complete in all the factories and depots.

The All India Defence Employees Federation has congratulated the employees for their successful strike and called upon them for further intensification of struggle.

The Co-ordination Committee of Central Government Employees also congratulated the defence employees for the successful strike. The Co-ordination Committee organised solidarity demonstrations in all the Central Government establishments in W. Bengal on the day in support of the striking defence employees and sent telegrammes to the P.M. and Defence Minister demanding negotiated settlement with the defence employees federation.

Address to the Tamilnadu State Conference of CITU

B.T. Ranadive, President, CITU

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Comrades,

LET me convey to you greetings on behalf of the CITU for your consistent work in advancing the cause of the CITU and the working class. I know, the CITU knows that our working class is passing through an unprecedented period of distress marked by closures, lock-outs, industrial sickness and unemployment followed by attacks on wages. It should be a matter of pride for us that in the midst of this constant war against us we are in a position to keep our organisational strength and our mass following. In such conditions if the leadership is not skillful and the workers are not endowed with sufficient consciousness there is every danger of disintegration of the organisation and a serious set back to our movement. It takes a long time to rebuild a shattered organisation and overcome the despair and defeatism of the working class. I am glad that we have been spared of this fate, thanks to our consciousness.

Comrades, shall I tell you a secret. It seems that India is progressing very well. There is nothing to worry about. The economy is growing at a rapid speed. The latest report of the Reserve Bank of India assures us that the national economy backed by a bountiful monsoon made a substantial recovery in macro-economic performance during 1989 with a growth rate of 10 per cent in real Gross Domestic Production (GDP). Over and above, average growth of the first four years of the Seventh Plan works out around 8.5 per cent against the planned target of 8 per cent. The agricultural production aided by excellent monsoon last year is expected to show a record increase of 23 per cent during the year under review in sharp contrast to the decline of 2.1 per cent in 1987-88.

All this is good. But what has it offered to us? Increased unemployment, high prices, increased lock-outs and sickness in industry. This is the real face of capitalism. Along with production, the mass misery increase. The more you produce the less you seem to get. The capitalist class and their government are strictly following the teachings of Geeta. You know what the Geeta says. It says you have only the duty to work but not to expect any benefit or reward out of it. The capitalist says all benefit will be appropriated by them. There is no escape from increased misery under the capitalist path and the sooner this society is ended the better for the working class and the people of India.

Comrades, I offer my warm sympathies for the workers in textile industry who have been the worst sufferers of sickness and crisis. The total number of workers involved in the production of cotton textile goods exceed a crore. But this mass of workers have

been thrown into indescribable misery by the Rajiv Government. The new cotton textile policy has turned out to be a hoax increasing further sufferings of the workers. The NTC mills more than 100 are also run inefficiently and are turning sick. The government seems to have no other policy expect of denotifying them and throwing the workers to the roads. Its policy towards powerlooms has ruined the workers who have been getting starvation wage all along. As far as handloom workers are concerned the official policy notwithstanding tall talks is one of the continuous and forced starvation. Lakhs of handloom workers continue to ply their looms just because otherwise outright starvation awaits them. The CITU has held several conventions to voice the demands of this section.

Comrades, the worst affected section of the textile industry is of course the handloom section. The CITU last week held a convention of handloom workers in Delhi and passed resolution enumerating the grievances of the workers and their demands. The resolution said that the workers do not get minimum wages. The percapita wage of a weaver is much below the minimum daily wage prescribed for a agricultural worker, i.e. Rs 11.00. The price of cotton yarn have doubled and even tribled during the last two to three years. Moreover the handlooms are denied the full quota of yarn from the mills. Only 37 per cent is made available forcing down production targets. The resolution therefore demanded among things: (1) Statutory minimum wage to be guaranteed by the State and linking them with price-index; (2) Strict implementation of handloom reserve orders for moving the 22 reserved articles under the handloom sector; (3) Strict implementation of the Hank yarn supply scheme assuring supply of sufficient yarn to handloom units by textile mills.

Comrades, I am glad that the Tamilnadu CITU Committee has taken up the question of organising the workers in unorganised industries for minimum wage and other demands. This is the most numerous section of the working class and the trade union movement will be representing only a part if this major mass is not included. It is this section which bears the most atrocious burden of capitalism, its ups and downs because it is defenceless having no protection of law or no social security even for wages. The trade union movement will increase its strength immensely if it mobilises this section and brings it into action.

Comrades, you are aware of the deteriorating employment situation with three crores already registered as unemployed. How is the Rajiv Government tackling this situation? By ordering more unemployment. This is the story from our railway

comrades. At a seminar in Chittaranjan under the auspices of the Railway Supervisory Staff it was observed that employment potential in railway was only 0.9 per cent during the last financial year. Taking natural wastage into consideration and the number of employed workers, recruitment should have been more than 1 lakh. The Indian Railways according to the Seminar are preparing to reduce the work force from 17 lakhs at present to only 6 lakhs by the turn of the century. Immediately i. e. by 1989-92 the administration proposes to run the Railways with 9 lakh workers to meet the conditions of the World Bank.

The World Bank it seems is taking virtual charge of all sections of railway industry. Under its intervention the Chittaranjan workshop which produces Electric Loco Engines is getting idle. Items which were being produced at the workshop are being imported from abroad at much higher prices. Locomotives which are produced at the cost of Rs 1.66 crores each are being imported at Rs 6 to 10 crores per locomotive. When the indigenous cost of the Loco Bogies is Rs 2.5 lakhs and tractor machine of Rs 5 lakhs they are imported from abroad at the cost of Rs 20 lakhs and Rs 23 lakhs respectively.

Comrades, on behalf of all of you I convey my warm greetings to our fighting Tripura comrades who are braving the semi-fascist terror with exemplary courage and heroism. I also send our warm greetings to our fighting comrades in Punjab who with defiant courage are fighting for national unity braving the murderous challenge of the Khalistanis. Only two days back two of our comrades, two brothers fell victims to the assassins' attacks. The sacrifice of these comrades fighting for national unity will not remain in vain. The entire country will remember these martyrs and will be inspired on to eliminate the secessionist challenge in Punjab.

Comrades, the great success of the 30th August Bandh was an expression of national discontent and anger against policies of the Rajiv Government with its corruption scandal, its contempt for democracy, its authoritarian functioning, its incompetence to defend national unity against secessionists and communal forces and its anti-national, anti-people economic policies which heap misery and destitution to the people and in the bargain endanger the independence and self-reliance of our economy. No wonder encouraged by our economic helplessness the U.S. imperialists are demanding the right to overrun our economy calling for opening of their invasion in all spheres of our economic activity under the threat of action against USA's Super 301 laws.

I congratulate our working class, all our CITU unions for their grand success in registering their participation and protest through a gigantic nationwide strike action. It is no doubt a matter of regret that all sections of workers and employees did not join the strike. The AIBEA, organisation of Bank employees did the biggest disservice to the

common cause by refusing to go on strike. The Central Government employees in many states were intimidated into taking a shelter in the office on the night previous to the Bandh day. Some well-paid public sector workers also did not participate. But yet vast sections all over the country participated putting the stamp of the working class on the national protest. This was perhaps the biggest political action of the working class in recent times showing growing awareness in discharging its political responsibility to the country, the people, the democratic movement and the struggle for socialism. There is no doubt that if the working class continues to sharpen its consciousness in this way, the struggle of Indian people will undergo a swift and qualitative change.

It is quite clear that the Bandh whose main manifestation was to be in the cities and towns could have remained ineffective without the direct participation of the working class. The call was given by several opposition parties and it was endorsed by the leading trade union centres, CITU, HMS, AITUC, UTUC, and other constituents of the National Campaign Committee. You will note however that the BMS, one of the constituents of the NCC and dominated by the RSS refused to sign the joint call for resignation of the Rajiv Gandhi Government. It is the same RSS that organises clashes and conspiracies against the LDF government in Kerala, to render service to the Rajiv Government. The INTUC of course took a forthright stand to dissociate itself from the Bandh. All this shows that much broader and wider unity is still required to bring the entire weight of the working class into action without which a new correlation of political forces more favourable to the democratic movement cannot be brought about.

Comrades, the 30th August Bandh expressed the demand of the people to remove the Rajiv Government from power in the coming elections. The battle has to be carried forward in the coming months. The statement of Left Parties calling for the Bandh and the demands put forward by them constitute a correct basis to carry forward the struggle against the Rajiv Government, and safeguard the interest of the people and Indian democracy and unity. While urging the pressing demands of the masses including land reforms and calling for Rajiv's resignation, the statement calls for the isolation of communal and divisive forces so that unity of the country is protected and its independence is strengthened. Many opposition parties do not realise that you cannot advance the cause of Indian unity and democracy by opportunistically aligning with the reactionary organisations like the RSS, the BJP the Muslim League and others. But the working class movement with its slogan of "Workers of the World Unite", which unites all on the basis of class interest irrespective of caste, religion and creed cannot forget its duty to fight these forces when they are dividing the country on the Babri Masjid/Ramjanmabhoomi issue or raising the secessionist slogan of Khalistan which suits the interests of US imperialism to divide the

country. The working class and the trade union movement must throw their weight decisively in favour of the demands raised by the left parties.

Comrades, some people concentrate only on the corruption scandal of Rajiv Gandhi. These are serious enough no doubt especially when they are connected with defence security. But the incompetence and failure to keep the country together, the utter failure in Punjab to deal with the secessionist challenge, the failure in U.P. to take decisive steps to defuse the Babri Masjid/Ramjanmabhoomi issue and the refusal of the ruling party to throw its mass weight against this challenge constitute the greatest crime against the country. The working class must be siezed of this fact and carry its forces accordingly to meet the danger and defeat the divisive forces.

In this great battle between the forces of authoritarianism and the forces of Indian democracy in the coming elections, battle between Congress(I) and the secular opposition and left parties, the left front governments of Kerala and West Bengal play an important and crucial role. They have shown how to defend democracy, national unity and common man's interests. Despite heavy limitations of the bourgeois-landlord Constitution, they have distinguished themselves by their refusal to use anti-people laws enacted by the Congress(I) Governments and have protected the democratic rights of the people. They have lent their weight to the defence of the legitimate and urgent demands of the working class, peasantry and the working people as a whole. They have thrown the weight of the administration to defend national unity and fight anti-national forces. Because they constitute the advanced outposts of the democratic struggle, the Congress(I) and the Central Government concentrate all their fire and slanders against them. The Rajiv Government discriminates against them and of late has refused the food quota to these states to create economic difficulties and incite the people against them. In Kerala the Rajiv Government arbitrarily reduced the food quota allotted to the State forcing high prices on people and disturbing the public distribution system. When a complaint was lodged against this arbitrary reduction Rajiv had the effrontery to say that Kerala should not come with a "begging bowl" to the Centre. This was nothing but a repudiation of the national responsibility of the Centre to ensure proper distribution of country's food resources among all the states.

Comrades, you know that the Rajiv Government is also attacking all non-Congress(I) Governments and is creating difficulties for opposition ministries. The Tamil Nadu Government of DMK is also facing this trouble because of arbitrary reduction of food quota by the Centre. Food has become a political weapon for the Congress(I) in the fight against the opposition Governments. I am sure these efforts of the Rajiv Government to weaken the Tamil Nadu Ministry will be effectively resisted by all with the demonstration of the same unity that was seen during the elections and the Bandh. The CITU and its working class of course shall be in the forefront to frustrate the attacks of the Centre.

Of late both in West Bengal and Kerala, Cong-

ress(I) campaign against the two governments have reached a new crescendo. Slanderous charges on GPI(M) indulging in violence, murder, loot are made and a demand is raised for the dismissal of the two Governments. Clashes have been organised resulting in violence and the cry is raised that the law and order has broken down. In these clashes large number of CPI(M) cadres were killed. During the Bandh four CPI(M) cadres were killed in clashes with the Congress(I) and Muslim League in Kerala and in the recent month nearly 11 CPI(M) cadres have lost their lives. But the Congress(I) and its allies continue to charge CPI(M) with violence. All this is a preparation for the coming elections. The entire working class must be ready to combat this offensive, frustrate the Congress(I) game to incite public opinion against the Ministry. It must also warn against any adventurous step on the part of the Central Government.

Comrades, the coming months will be months of continuous struggle and unity for the democratic forces to fight the elections and oust the Rajiv Government. Our unions and working class must play their part in this great struggle to save democracy, national unity and integrity.

Comrades, let me finally refer to the recent developments in the international situation. In the final analysis our struggle for emancipation and socialism depends on how strong the world movement is and how we have succeeded in cornering world imperialism. Recent developments connected with China show that imperialism is very active in helping counter-revolutionary forces to defeat socialism whenever opportunity presents itself. The so-called student struggle in China was nothing but an attempt to organise counter-revolution and change the socialist system and restore capitalism. The imperialist support to it shows that notwithstanding all talks of moderation of contradictions between imperialism and socialism, imperialism will never miss an opportunity to undermine the socialist system. Secondly, another important event was Comrade Gorbachev's visit to China announcing the first step of normalisation of relationship between the two great socialist countries which stood apart in estrangement and ill feeling for the last 30 years. The CITU ardently hopes that this initial normalisation within the framework of peaceful co-existence and non-interference will soon flower into earlier fraternal relations based on proletarian internationalism which secured mighty victories for socialism taking away one third of the world to socialist camp.

Comrades, let me now direct your attention, the attention of our entire working class to the question of our survival, our emancipation from exploitation and our emergence as a leading force in governmental society. Our election fight against Rajiv Gandhi, our efforts to replace the Rajiv Government are all important to register our advance one step further. But the aim of our movement is not just to experiment with one or the other political party of vested interests, to experiment to see who administers the capitalist society better or worse. Our aim is to abolish the entire political, economic and social set up of present day India with its exploitation,

closing of mills, its crisis, with its unemployment and poverty, with its caste distinctions, communal murders, Harijan and women atrocities and rape, and replace it by a new society. This we can easily achieve if we are able to achieve political power through a State of People's Democracy leading to socialism. Socialism is our watchword. Socialism is our banner, our aim and objective. Without it the working class will continue to remain a low paid or better paid slave existing on the fallen crumbs from the tables of the capitalists. And socialism means power in the hands of the working class and the people. Socialism means end of privatisation, abolition of all private property in the means of production. Socialism is ushered in by a party based on Marxism-Leninism. In this great battle you have to fight and replace the entire social system not just replace one capitalist party by another, keeping the existing system intact.

In recent times, because of our urgent problems of the day we are tending to forget this great objective of the working class given to it by Karl Marx and Engels.

But today, comrades, all over the world including our country there is strong denunciation of socialism, orchestrated propaganda that socialism has failed, that capitalism is more democratic and workers must continue to accept their slave status under the capitalist master. The excuse for this propaganda is the intemperate anti-Marx 'self criticism' coming from certain socialist countries for some of their past mistakes, ignoring the mighty achievements of socialism during the last seventy years, the great liberation struggle against Nazi invasion, the building of socialism ending exploitation of man by man in the Soviet Union, abolition of unemployment, guarantee of right to work for all, all these and the socialised means of production. Comrades, this last one is the acid test of equality and democracy. Can there be any real democracy if the means of production which produce the life of society and its existence continue to remain in the hands of a few, if the rest of society is dependent for their livelihood. You see the example of our country where inspite of the Public Sector, means of production are in the hands of the capitalists and we are continuing to be full of misery and unemployment. Without the means of production in the hands of the people no real equality is possible. Equality in this regard, i.e. socialised ownership changes the basis and puts an end to all exploitation.

Comrades, it is hypocritical and misleading to talk about failure of socialism by closing your eyes to the monumental achievements of socialism and the superiority of the socialist system over capitalism. What does the experience of the USSR inspite of the difficulties of the present and certain mistakes of the past show? A backward country ridden by feudal land relations, absolute monarchy and capitalist exploitation was transformed into a socialist industrial country abolishing exploitation of man by man and placing all powers in the hands of the working class and the people. Economic policy and social ownership turned it into one of the major powers capable of defeating its enemies. From its first day

it declared the right to work as a fundamental right and abolished unemployment. We should remember that only the socialist constitution guarantees this basic right to the working class. No bourgeois Constitution neither the American nor the British embody such a right and they carry tens of lakhs of unemployed without any relief.

And Comrades, the superiority of the socialist system is again proved when the vaunted might of imperialist Britain and France collapsed before Hitler and it was left to the Soviet Union single handed to fight the Nazis for months to save the world and humanity from being over run by Hitler.

Such is the proud inheritance of socialism and the working class movement. I think comrades that many who worked hard to defend and promote socialism are beginning to get weary, some of them demoralised by the difficulties facing them. Others have to carry forward the banner of proletarian internationalism and socialism.

Meeting of DA Committee

A meeting of the Tripartite Committee on D.A. for Public Sector undertakings was held in New Delhi on 25th September 1989. Bindeswari Dubey Union Labour Minister Presided over the meeting.

After preliminary speech of the Union Labour Minister, M.K. Pandhe, Secretary CITU asked the Union Labour Minister whether there was any new proposal from the Government to which the Labour Minister replied that there was no such proposal. The Government wanted the Trade Union representatives to give united proposal.

The Labour representatives then met separately and discussed the proposal and stressed the need for full centralisation on the basis of the proposals finalised by the Bangalore workshop organised by the CPSTU. Some representatives wanted flat rate of D.A. for all the workers. The CITU clarified that in the Charter of Demands the TUs demanded full neutralisation at all levels. Hence there is a need to press for full neutralisation for all the workers. Since no consensus could emerge in the meeting it was decided to meet and decide the approach in greater detail.

The meeting therefore could not result in any conclusion. The next meeting of the D.A. Committee would be held on 23rd and 24th October at New Delhi. T.U. representatives will meet on 23rd to discuss their stand in detail.

Meanwhile it was learnt that the Cabinet Secretary, Govt. of India has told a delegation of the National Confederation of Officers Association on the same day that the Government would not give the Public Sector officers the Central rate of D.A.

The Government of India is also planning to tamper with the Mishra Commission Report and deprive the employees of 67 undertakings proper wage and D.A. revision.

The CITU unions should strengthen the struggle for full neutralisation and demand early settlement of the D.A. question of the public Sector employees.