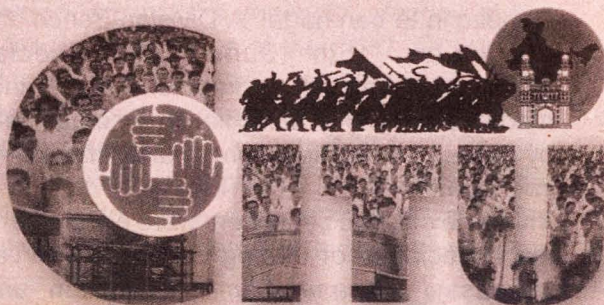




# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CIWU

**ON TO  
TENTH CONFERENCE  
THRO'  
CAMPAIGNS AND STRUGGLES**



10th All India Conference 2000-Hyderabad



# KERALA HIGH COURT ASSAULT ON DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS, ONCE AGAIN

The Kerala High Court is known for its righteous determination to uphold freedom of the individual, safeguarded by the Constitution. The same Court had earlier declared 'bandh' as unconstitutional, which was, unfortunately upheld by the Supreme Court as well.

Now, the Kerala High Court has once again stepped in to ban hartal. A Division Bench of that Court on 15th June 2000 declared 'unconstitutional' the enforcement of a hartal call made by a party or association or organisations by 'force, intimidation—physical or mental—and coercion.'

This time also the petitioners were none else than the association of trading community—*Vyapari Vyavasayi Ekopana Samiti*, Ottapalam, unit. A Kochi based Institute of Social Welfare—an NGO—and antoehr were also among those who petitioned the Court to declare hartal also as unconstitutional, as the effect of hartal was the same as that of bandh.

The High Court also directed the Election Commission to entertain complains, if made, under the Representation of the People Act, in this regard against any of the registered political parties or associations. Rejecting the contention of the Election Commission that it had no power to deregister a political party, the Court directed the Commission to decide on de-registration after a fair hearing.

The Court lamented over 'forcibly compelling' an individual or a group of individuals to participate in a general strike or to join a hartal. It ruled that those who called for a hartal could not take shelter behind the plea that hartal was only a legitimate

weapon of protest.

No one holds a brief for those who indulge in wanton vandalism, destruction of public and private property etc. Very often, it is some anti-social elements—and not the organisers of strike or hartal—who indulge in such acts. But, we have a plethora of legislations which can take care of such elements and eventualities.

But, the Kerala High Court assumed that calling for a strike or hartal by itself would cause damage to public properties. Hence it described 'causing loss of production'—which is bound to happen during any strike—with destruction of property. Terming this as holding society to ransom, the Court ruled that staging hartal could not be considered a constitutional act.

Strangely, the judges also opined that the political parties could not claim any such right and that too in a developing country like India! Human Rights—including the right to protest—are universal. One does not comprehend how the learned Judges of Kerala have devised a differential standard for developing countries, in the matter of exercising democratic rights.

The Kerala High Court judgement is an unwarranted trespass into the democratic rights of the people to stage peaceful protest. The Judges ought to have weighed the collective rights of a whole section of the society to record their protest as more important than that of an individual's right.

**The trade union and democratic movement of the country will not accept such authoritarian bid to curb their hard-won democratic right—be it from judicial quarters or from executive fiat.**

## CITU FLAYS CABINET DECISION ON DISINVESTMENT

The Cabinet Committee on Disinvestment meeting on 23.6.2000, cleared as many as 20 important PSUs for sale of majority stake to strategic buyers and approved in principal sale of ten more PSUs. All these would be completed before the end of this financial year. The PSUs targeted for sell out include profit making, strategic sector companies with huge assets. This is an anti-national move by the Vajpayee Govt. which is determined to serve the interest of the imperialist lobby.

The CITU, while condemning the decision, called upon the trade unions to unite and resist this dangerous and desperate game plan of the Govt.

**THE  
WORKING  
CLASS**

**CITU MONTHLY**

**JULY 2000**

**ALL IN THE GAME**



*Courtesy: The Hindu*

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**EXTERNAL VIGILANCE, EVER NEEDED!**

June 25 this year marks the completion of 25 years of the darkest ever chapter in the governance of free India—imposition of emergency by the Indira Gandhi regime.

It was our founder President late Com.B T Ranadive, who with prophetic vision, warned on 25th May 1975 (hardly a month ahead of imposition of emergency), against the impending danger. In his concluding address to the 3rd conference of the CITU, he said:

“As part of the attempt to impose additional burdens and solve the recession at the expense of the people, democracy is being attacked, that democracy we have to save, and we have to fight for.....We will be entering a new period in which championing the cause of trade union unity and championing the cause of the working class will be directly linked with championing the cause of Indian democracy, and ousting the Congress Government.”

Let us recall the suppression of trade union and democratic rights, horrors inflicted on the people, terror let loose against the trade unions, the ghastly murders and savage imprisonment and what not, that marked the 19 months of authoritarian emergency rule.

But the 1977 elections to the Lok Sabha, witnessed a crushing defeat of the forces of authoritarianism and restoration of democratic rights. Immediately after that, later, Com.BTR cautioned us at the CITU General Council meeting at Calcutta on 18th August 1977. He said: “The working class and the trade union movement have to understand that the attempt to establish dictatorship was not an accidental phenomenon. International experience teaches us that the trend towards dictatorship is inevitable under bourgeois democracy and that on every occasion, when the economic situation gets beyond control, the capitalist ruling class—the monopolists— attempts to resort to open dictatorship....Democracy is not safe unless the grip of foreign monopoly capital over Indian economy is removed.”

Ironically, the BJP, leading the NDA coalition Govt at the Centres is observing this anniversary of emergency as if they are the champions of democracy.

On the other hand, in the none too distant past, spokesman of the Congress(I), now led by Sonia Gandhi, had gone on record defending and glorifying the emergency.

Today the state of Indian economy, invaded by the transnational capital, the authoritarian trends witnessed—right from the move to tinker with the constitution to the cultural terrorism unleashed—underscores the need not to be complacent. Emergency like situation can revisit us anytime.

**The working people and the trade union movement must be vigilant. Eternal vigilance is the price for democracy—so dear to our class!**

(M K Pandhe, participated in the 88th International Labour Conference at Geneva, as a member of the Indian delegation. Here is a report on the conference - Editor)

## ILO IN THE SHADOW OF GLOBALISATION

The 88th Session of the International Labour Conference was held in Geneva from 30th May to 15th June 2000. Apart from the regular items, the following were placed by the Governing Body of the ILO!

- Revision of Maternity Protection Convention and Recommendation.
- Human Resources training and development, vocational guidance and training.
- Safety and health in agriculture
- Withdrawal of some Conventions which have become obsolete

The ILO also considered Global Report, under the follow to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles of right to work and it further reviewed the report of the Expert Committee on the application of Conventions and recommendations.

**Flamarique**, Labour Minister, Argentina presided over the conference.

Indian workers' delegation consisted of Keshubhai Thakkar(BMS) as delegate, and M K Pandhe (CITU), K L Mahendra (AITUC), Mukund Gore (BMS), S. S Chawhan (INTUC), V Tiagi (HMS) and P S Saha (UTUC-LS) as observers.

### "YOUR VOICE AT WORK"

The Director General of the ILO, **Juan M Somaivia** in his report "Your Voice at Work", praised dynamism of globalisation and

pointed out the advantage of it. He began by stating: "The opening of world markets, technological and structural change and dismantling of a system of opposing political and economic blocks are having a dramatic impact on the world at work". He further noted: "Globalisation has captured the attention of Governments, multilateral institutions and policy makers everywhere." "Symbolised by the fall of Berlin Wall, the Director General observed "globalisation is the wave of democratic political reform and the eclipse of non and anti-market systems of economic organisation associated with state planned economies. Most countries have opened up to a significant degree to international competition".

**Somaivia**, while appreciating the role of multinationals in leading the process of globalisation, noted: "Lowering economic barriers between nations opens up enormous new possibilities for multinational companies and the growing number of national business linked up with them. Parent firms and foreign affiliates of multinational enterprises (MNEs) now account for 25 per cent of the global output. Foreign direct investment by multinationals has gained increasing significance as a means to deliver goods and

services directly to foreign markets. The value of foreign affiliate sales (of goods and services) in domestic and international markets amounted to US \$11 trillion in 1998 compared to US \$ 7 trillion of world exports for the same period. Whilst the main impact on employment is on national/ local companies that are subcontractors or otherwise linked to MNEs, total direct employment of foreign employees has been increasing. Multinationals lead the way in disseminating new techniques of management and new technologies for production. In many sectors they are the driving force of a global chain of production, linking companies in the developing world to consumers in industrialised countries."

### PLEASEING IMF/WB/WTO

Though the report of the Director General has admitted the social costs of globalisation he does not agree that the benefits enjoyed by MNEs by globalisation was the direct result of the impoverishment of the people all over the world. The Director General has gone out of his way to please the World Bank IMF and the WTO by advocating cooperation of the ILO with these multilateral institutions. He further enters political arena and makes unwarranted criticism of socialist countries and denies freedom to

the people to decide the social system of their choice. For instance, his reports observes: "Yet some state monopoly situations remain. They are generally in countries where political power is also wielded by a single party and where there is a recognised or organic link between those exercising political power and the prescribed actors in the world of work (China, Cuba, Iraq, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Vietnam). In such circumstances, trade unions and employers organisations are subordinated to the organs of political power. The right to form and join organisation freely is not compatible with single party rule."

There was no need for the Director General to malign trade union movement in socialist countries. However, 75 per cent of the ILO funding comes from advanced capitalist countries and such statements only reflect the views of the donors, despite the ILO's criticism about the "donor driven agenda".

#### **WORKERS' CONCERNS**

Speaking on behalf of the Indian workers delegation on the Director General's Global Report in the Plenary Session, M K Pandhe, General Secretary CITU observed, "The Global Report points out that the benefits of globalisation, as it is currently unfolding, are not reaching enough people. We would like to ask "How many people have been benefited?" The answer to this question has not been given in the Report. He continued: "According to our experience in India, the benefits

of globalisation have been appropriated by the multinational companies and their collaborators, while the cost of globalisation has fallen on the common people....Through the pressure of the World Bank, IMF and WTO, trade union rights are under attack. In our country foreign Ambassadors are openly stating that Indian Labour laws do not attract foreign capital. This is putting pressure on the Govt of India to change the existing labour laws, which were brought about by trade union struggle over a period of time." Pandhe emphasised: "Growing inequality in the country is another threat to the application of labour standards in the country.

Growing unemployment is dogging Indian economy and a large part of our workforce is unemployed. Before we talk about voice at the workplace workers must have jobs. Without jobs, what voice can workers have in economic life of the country? Globalisation is responsible for alarming job losses in the developing countries.

"Another important issue is the pitiable conditions of employment of women workers in India, since woman are still used as cheap source of labour. Equal Remuneration Act is not properly implemented in many parts of the country.

"Export processing zones pose another threat. Spokespersons of the Government openly state that labour laws would not be applicable to them. Workers have no voice behind the barbed wires of these zones. They can be dismissed at the sweet will

of the employers. Though the report mentions this problem, curiously it had not been given due importance, since MNCs are coming in a big way in these zones!"

Pandhe emphasised the need for the national trade union centres to unitedly put pressure on the Government to implement core labour standards, which alone is a sure way of improving workers voice at work places.

#### **MATERNITY PROTECTION**

The preliminary discussion on this subject was held last year and a draft of the convention and recommendation was prepared. Employers tried to oppose the convention but due to support given by several Governments, employers could not succeed in their game! The new draft visualises enhancement of maternity benefit period from 12 weeks to 14 weeks and accordingly the old convention will be revised. However, the US Government did not ratify even the earlier convention and during the discussion, the US spokesperson indicated that they may not ratify the revised convention also. The Government of India has not ratified the unrevised convention, since it expressed its inability to implement the provisions of this convention for the agricultural workers as well as workers in the unorganised sector.

#### **IN AGRICULTURE....**

This year, there was a preliminary consideration of the convention, which may take concrete shape next year. Studies conducted by the ILO all

over the world have shown that the high rates of fatal accidents in both developing as well as industrialised countries are taking place in the agriculture sector. This is compounded by the whole range of diseases and injuries related to agricultural tasks which, despite their frequency, are not always diagnosed or notified. In most countries, only some categories of agricultural workers are covered by national legislations. A large number of agricultural workers, who together represent almost half the world's economically active population, are thus deprived of any form of social protection.

During the discussions, the workers representatives highlighted the shocking conditions prevailing in their respective countries. Particular emphasis was given on the use of several chemicals, pesticides in agriculture which seriously affect the health of the agricultural workers.

In the light of the discussion during the conference, a draft of the convention will be prepared for consideration next year. Hence the debate during 2001 will be of crucial importance.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

A general discussion was organised this year by the ILO on human resource training and development with special emphasis on vocational guidance and training. L Mishra, Labour Secretary, India, chaired, the session.

The meeting considered the Report, "Training for employment, productivity and social inclusion, prepared by the

ILO after collecting information from all the countries. It discussed the changes in the pattern of education after commencement of globalisation and introduction of new technology in the industries of different countries.

The meeting also noted the growing job losses in the countries and limitation imposed on training for fresh jobs.

K J Thakkar of BMS and workers delegate from India, while speaking in a plenary session attacked the policies of globalisation and structural adjustment. He noted how the exim policies in India have hit hard the traditional industries in India, adding to the gravity of the situation. He criticised the role of the World Bank, IMF and WTO, whose policy dictates are ruining the national economy in India.

Sukomal Sen, General Secretary, Trade Union International of Public Employees, pointed out how the policies of globalisation are attacking the TU rights of the public employees. He criticised the policies of downsizing manpower in public services.

#### **FORCED LABOUR IN INDIA**

The Expert Committee appointed by the ILO made some observation about the non-implementation of the ILO convention on forced labour. Though the Convention was ratified by India in the year 1954 the implementation has not been full. The spokesperson of the Government explained the steps taken by the Government on the issue. However, M K Pandhe, who was titular member of the

committee on Application of Labour Standards, criticised the policies of the BJP Government on the question of bonded labour and child labour. He noted that these issues are related to the question of growing poverty in India and Government is failing to take any step to reduce poverty in the country. With globalisation, poverty is increasing at a faster rate and any talk of eliminating child labour is meaningless.

The Committee asked the Government of India to take urgent steps to tackle the problem and give full report to the ILO for consideration next year.

#### **MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS**

ILO's growing cooperation with multilateral institutions is a matter of serious concern for the developing countries. Periodic statement of sympathy for the working class of the developing countries cannot get any meaning, unless the ILO holds multilateral institutions responsible for the plight of the working class and the people of the developing countries. Indian workers delegation has to play an important role in this task, so that developing countries become more assertive and ILO is completely relieved from the concept of "Donor driven agenda."

The atmosphere among the workers' delegation in developing countries is favourable for this approach. This opportunity should be utilised to make the silent majority to increase their voice in the ILO.

*(W R Varada Rajan, secretary, CITU contributed this piece to the 'Tuesday Debate' column of 'The Economic Times' on 20th June 2000-Editor)*

## SHOULD MINISTERS DOLE OUT FREEBIES

Firstly, going by what the Minister for Communications, Ram Vilas Paswan and the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Brijesh Mishra have said, the provision of telephones to the employees of the DOT is neither a dole nor a freebie. It is a part of a deal struck by the DOT in exchange of a 3-days cut in productivity bonus and a consent (?) for corporatisation.

This issue had its origin during Sushma Swaraj's tenure in the Communications Ministry. Then, she announced concessional telephone connections to the retired employees of the DOT. The question naturally arose, if retirees could receive such a concession, why not the serving employees? Extension of rent-free telephone facility by the MTNL to its employees added strength to the demand of the DOT employees.

Railways are providing free passes, Airlines are extending free flights - the list could go on - to serving and retired employees, not now but for decades long. Why then the DOT employees cannot be favoured with a similar privilege?

The hue and cry raised over this issue has no justification. The Finance Ministry, by crossing swords with the Communications Ministry in this matter, added a new dimension, leading to it being blown out of proportions.

Employees are justified in demanding certain concessions in respect of the goods and services of the organisations they serve, be it in public sector or private sector. If senior executives 'deserve' all kinds of perks, including meeting the membership fees of elite clubs, besides their hefty pay packets, what is undeserving on the part of the lower rung employees in expecting certain mundane concessions?

Public memory, unfortunately in this context the memory of the media as well, is too short. In the run up to the elections to the Lok Sabha in 1999, the self-same Prime Minister, Vajpayee, eased out

his colleague, Jag Mohan, out of this Communications Ministry itself and took over the portfolio himself. He embarked on a wide ranging policy changes, switching over from the license fee system to revenue sharing scheme to oblige the cellular phone operators and stuck to it despite drawing flak from the President, Election Commission and the Delhi High Court. The amount involved was then reported to be of the order of Rs. 50000 crore. This 'doling out' is permissible, because the beneficiaries were of a different class. Only when it comes to the cursed employees, it is almost treason!

In the liberalisation regime, the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and the Commerce Minister announcing one concession after another to Foreign Financial Investors, MNCs, Indian corporates and employers' class are not 'doles'. They are termed 'reforms', to be welcomed with glee. Only the little concessions or subsidies extended to the workers and deprived citizens 'deserve' outright condemnation. This is the logic of liberalisation!

Yes, such concessions provide encouragement to the employees. It could also improve their morale and work culture. But, it will not make privatisation easier, as it is believed. Already three of the unions had asked the DOT to take back the 'package', if consent to corporatisation was a part of it. The Communications Minister could do well by taking back the package and drop corporatisation - a prelude to privatisation. That, in my opinion, will serve the long term interests of the employees, department and the country.

Lastly, a word on intervention by the PM. The PMO under Vajpayee, in his present innings, has regained its all powerful status, reminiscent of the Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi regimes. Hence, no Minister can have cause to complain and anything has to be countenanced!

# LESSONS OF MAY 11 STRIKE

E. BALANANDAN

The May 11 nationwide general strike in response to the call of the National Platform of Mass Organisations was a great success, unprecedented in scope and sweep. This was not only due to the ability of the organisers of the strike also, but due to the bitter experience of the people reeling under the implementation of the World Bank-dictated economic reforms. This found a spontaneous response among them.

## OTHER UNIONS ALSO PARTICIPATED

The response for the strike in the organised public sector was significant in that workers belonging to INTUC and BMS also joined in many industries. Even workers in several sick PSUs joined the strike. The workers in the organised private sector too were not lagging behind and joined the strike enthusiastically in many parts of the country in many industries. The unorganised sector workers throughout the country positively responded to the strike and joined it in millions.

Another significant development was that the owners of small-scale and tiny sector industries closed down their establishments for the day in protest against the Government policy of dereservation, withdrawal of quantitative import restrictions and permitting foreign and Indian monopolies to enter their sectors. In short, the sweep and scope of the strike was better than the earlier countrywide strikes against the ongoing reforms.

Unmindful of these massive protests against its policies, the Vajpayee government is speeding up the policy of privatisation. It has declared its intention to privatise 40 more industries and even transfer the management to joint sector arrangements with Indian and foreign capital. The list is daily on the increase - ports, coal mines, the whole of the oil industry, electricity, NTPC, National Power Grid Corporation, telecom, fertilisers, Indian Airlines, Air India, and so on. The frantic wholesale privatisation process has not fetched even the minimum prices for the valuable

assets sought to be transferred to private hands. The industries which are to be privatised, including the energy sector, are the backbone of India's industrial development. The energy sector, oil, coal and power, if transferred to private hands and allowed to be controlled by the foreign multinationals, will deliver control of the economy to foreign domination.

The Government continues to give concession after concession to monopoly capital by reducing taxation to the lowest level and double tax concession to Mauritius-based foreign companies and venture capital. The latest is FERA being changed into FEMA, which has been introduced in the interests of the big capitalists of the country. Besides, through the privatisation process, billions of rupees worth of public assets are being transferred to them.

The Government is in a hurry because its masters - World Bank and IMF - are more anxious and worried about the resentment developing in the country and its political fallout among the political parties. Many of them may rally against the policies of the Government. So, before the burst, they want the Government to do everything without loss of time.

## WORKERS, SPECIFIC TARGET OF ATTACK

The working class is the specific target of attack since they know that being the immediate victims of these policies, they can put up the most organised resistance to these policies. They will be forced to resist it mustering all their strength. Therefore, for the "smooth" implementation of the policy of neo-colonisation of India, they want the developing labour resistance to be thwarted, for which the labour relations should be made flexible which is the watchword of world capitalism today. Through these, they want the right to hire and fire to be made the absolute prerogative of the employers. To facilitate this, the present legal framework is to be smashed, the right to organise - which is a fundamental right of the working class

is also sought to be done away with. For facilitating this, the new labour commission is organised with only pliable gentlemen. The mechanism of VRS, closures and lockout and everything in this direction are promoted with vigour.

The signal of the May 11 strike unnerved the Government and its masters. Therefore, they are acting with speed, unheeding to the public sentiment, since they know that if time and space is given they will lose the game. The attempts to privatise public sector industries are not only attracting public opposition but also opposition from top management personnel who can comprehend, the outcome of it for them and the people. Not only that, all the workers and officers are coming together, forgetting all their political organisational differences which, in turn, reinforces the political parties - ruling and opposition - behind them in opposing the proposal of privatisation.

The recent example of Fertilisers and Chemicals Ltd, Kerala is worth noting. All the trade unions and the political parties - ruling and opposition - came to oppose the privatisation proposal. And this is going to develop as a big movement in the State.

The latest is the example of Andhra Pradesh. N Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of the State, who was piously following the World Bank package, implemented the power sector reforms in the State. Now he is in a fix. The power rates in the State have been raised sky high. Some of the household consumers have to pay Rs. 6.15 per unit. The industries and agricultural sector should also pay through their nose for the power they consume. The FICCI too has come out with a statement that the power cost in Andhra Pradesh is the highest in India for industries, and said that it will not help development of industries in the State. The policies pursued by Naidu in the agricultural sector is now notorious, since many of the poor peasants committed suicide and now the result of the power policy is going to kill industry and agriculture. This has flared up now on to a big mass protest. Thus, as mentioned above, his Government is in a fix.

## **AGRARIAN SECTOR HOTTING UP**

The agrarian sector is also feeling the pinch and slowly hotting up. The reduction of fertiliser subsidy, the increase of power rates and the opening up of import of agricultural products, besides dwindling internal demands, etc., are causing serious difficulties for the peasantry. They are slowly being drawn to oppose these policies.

The agricultural workers are the worst hit and they have already started moving. The youth, already worried seeing the sea of the unemployed, are put into serious distress and anger against the drastic dwindling opportunities.

The people in general are faced with the problem of increasing price rise, unemployment and the increasing difficulties arising from economic recession. Therefore, they are forced to join the movement against the present policy of reforms, demanding it to be reversed.

In the light of the above, the working class has to take the lead for a decisive battle, closing its ranks without loss of time. The trade unions should take stock of the situation and speedily move to close their ranks in all the industries, including small-scale and unorganised sectors. Special care should be taken in areas where weakness was found during the May 11 action especially in strategic sectors. The trade union leaders, whatever politics they have, being leaders of the workers should protect the interests of the members of their unions and the country, should come forward to join the strike. The only way is to join in a mighty decisive action to force the Government for rolling back the World Bank dictated policies. This must be done without loss of time since the Government is leaving nothing to chance and they are in a hurry.

Therefore, the lesson to be drawn by the working class as a whole is to move with top speed by closing their ranks as one man to face the challenge. The National Platform of Mass Organisations should weigh the situation properly and move as quick as possible for an all-embracing collective action together with an all-India industrial strike.

# EXTENDING FAVOURITISM TO BMS

Satyanarain Jatia, the BJP Minister for Labour, in Vajpayee's Cabinet, is flouting well established norms to extend undue patronage and favouritism to the BMS, the trade union with the saffron flag.

The Ministry of Labour had evolved a procedure for deciding allocation of seats in various delegations/committees to the Central Trade Union Organisations (CTUOs) on the basis of their verified membership as on 31.12.1989. The representative quotient, arrived at on that basis, is as under:

Sl.No.	CTUO	Verified Members	Rep. quotient
1.	<b>BMS</b>	31,16,564	.26
2.	<b>INTUC</b>	26,92,388	.23
3.	<b>CITU</b>	17,75,220	.15
4.	<b>HMS</b>	14,80,963	.12
5.	<b>AITUC</b>	9,38,486	.08
6.	<b>UTUC(LS)</b>	8,43,256	.07
7.	<b>UTUC</b>	5,84,523	.05
8.	<b>NFITU</b>	5,29,782	.04
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,19,61,182</b>	<b>1.00</b>

The CITU had taken up the question of the present status of representation of the CTUOs in all the committees constituted by the Labour Ministry, as far back as in June, 1999. It was noticed that the CITU is either under-represented or unrepresented in some of the committees, in respect of which the allocation of seats is decided by the Ministry of Labour.

As a case in point, the representation of CTUOs on the Central Board of Trustees of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation, is at present, as under:

BMS	3
INTUC	3
CITU	1
HMS	1
AITUC	1
UTUC(LS)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

If the representative quotient, on the basis of

verified membership as on 31.12.1989, is applied, the ten seats in the CBT/EPFO will work out to be as below:

BMS	3
INTUC	2
CITU	2
HMS	1
AITUC	1
UTUC(LS)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

Citing this only as an illustration, the CITU demanded a review of the position in all such committees and called for appropriate adjustments.

Barring a briefly worded acknowledgment of the CITU representation, that too by way of a communication at the level of an Under-Secretary, the Ministry of Labour has not so far taken any review/remedial steps.

By way of a Notification dated 4.1.2000, the Ministry of Labour reconstituted the Employees' State Insurance Corporation, (ESIC). It was found that the 10 seats allocated for representation from employees' organisations on the ESIC have been filled up by nominees of CTUOs as under:

BMS	4
INTUC	2
CITU	1
HMS	1
AITUC	1
UTUC(LS)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

If the representative quotient, arrived at by the Ministry of Labour on the basis of verified membership of CTUOs as on 31.12.1989, as incorporated above is applied, the ten seats in the ESIC ought to have been distributed as under:

BMS	3
INTUC	2
CITU	2
HMS	1

AITUC	1
UTUC(LS)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

Hence, it is apparent that the Ministry had not adopted any scientific basis for allocation of seats to CTUOs in this instance, as in the case of CBT/EPFO as well. The CITU, protesting against such illogical, unjustifiable and patently discretionary manner in which the ESIC had been established, demanded rescinding of the notification and issue of a revised notification, reallocating the seats among the CTUOs strictly on the basis of the representative quotient arrived at by the Ministry

of Labour itself.

The CITU also reiterated its earlier request for a review of the position in respect of all committees/bodies constituted by the Ministry Labour.

The CITU had also forwarded copies of its letters in this regard to all other CTUOs, including the BMS.

While the Government and the Labour Minister are sitting pretty over the matter, the BMS leadership also is enjoying this 'patronage' without any qualms of conscience! It may be recalled that the BMS had vociferously been protesting when the INTUC was favoured with similar undue patronage under Congress regimes at the Centre.

## THE PM AND TRADE UNIONS

Satyanarayan Jatiya, Minister of Labour, in a written reply to an unstarred question in Rajya Sabha on 4.5.2000, stated as follows:

"The Prime Minister has had around 26 formal meetings with the representatives of Central Trade Unions during the last two years on Government policies of liberalisation and globalisation. The Prime Minister also keeps meeting representatives of Central Trade Union informally. There is no record of such meetings. The salient points discussed in formal meetings with Central Trade Union delegations have been privatisation, and disinvestment, industrial sickness, labour laws, workers' education, workers participation in industry, etc."

In a letter jointly addressed to the Labour Minister, the AITUC, CITU and HMS reacted to the Minister's statement as under:

"We are totally amazed at your statement, which is farthest from truth. The reality is that during his previous and current tenure, the Prime Minister did not even once convene any formal meeting with the central trade unions. The central trade unions had no occasion to discuss the points noted in your statement with the Prime Minister formally or informally.

"It may amount to travesty of truth if the meetings of individual trade union delegations arranged at the initiative of one or the other Member of Parliament on specific issues are termed as "formal meetings with central trade unions." We had occasions when collective request of the central trade unions for meeting with the Prime Minister had been refused.

We request you to set the record straight and take initiative to clear the default on the part of the Government in holding formal meetings of the central trade unions with the Prime Minister to discuss the issues noted in your statement, supposed to have already been discussed."

The letter dt 11.5.2000 was signed by K L Mahendra (AITUC), M K Pandhe (CITU) and V Tyagi (HMS).

# MASS SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN BY CITU

(Collection of signatures to be completed by July, 2000)

TEXT OF PETITION TO PRESIDENT OF INDIA

The Hon'ble President,  
Republic of India,  
Rashtrapati Bhavan,  
NEW DELHI

Sir,

We, the undersigned citizens of India present this petition to your goodself, as head of the Sovereign State, to draw your attention to the grievous injury being caused to the country's polity, social fabric and the economy, as a result of the policies intensely pursued by the present NDA Government at the centre.

Sir, your address to the Nation on the eve of Golden Jubilee of our republic very succinctly noted that "Justice, social economic and political - remained an unrealised dream for the millions of our fellow citizens" and also you have kindly pointed to the stark absence of the "Equality of status and opportunity" and warned about the "the fury of the patient and suffering people".

As a result of the disastrous political and anti-people measures pursued by the BJP-led NDA Government

- \* The commanding height of our economy are handed over to the imperialist forces
- \* The country is being ruined from a manufacturing and trading economy to a captive market of profit-greedy Multinational Companies
- \* In utter disregard of the people's sufferings, the dictates of the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO, who only promote the economic expansion of the affluent imperialist countries, are being faithfully carried out.
- \* Economic and social inequality widened, poverty aggravated and unemployment attained menacing dimensions.
- \* The poorest section of the society and the womenfolk marginalised while the rich are getting richer
- \* A politically motivated Commission is engaged in subverting and undermining the basic tenets of the Constitution, with the ulterior motive to subvert the democratic set up itself.
- \* Another Commission - appointed totally undermining the basic courtesy of consulting the social partners - is pursuing drastic changes in Labour Laws to trample upon every hard-earned right of the workers and to facilitate the atrocious requirements of the employers class.
- \* The Government at the centre are out to destroy the harmonious social environment in the country by indulging/patronising depredatious attack on those belonging to religious minorities and the oppressed sections of the majority community as well.

We urge your benign self to note our strong opposition to and protest against the following policy measures of the Government :

- 1) World Bank-IMF-WTO dictated Economic Policies being pursued by the BJP-led NDA Government
- 2) Interference by the Imperialist forces in the political and economic policy making process undermining the sovereignty of the country.
- 3) Unrestricted, unnecessary harmful entry of MNCs in our country and huge concessions to them in the form of reduction of duties and other relief at the cost of the country's economy and interest of

the common people.

- 4) Communalisation of our polity and dividing the people on communal, caste and chauvinistic lines and saffronisation of the administration and social & educational institutions.
- 5) All forms of privatisation of public sector industries, public sector banks and public sector insurance industry.
- 6) Concessions and relief to big business houses while cutting down subsidies for the majority of the common people.
- 7) En-masse Casualisation/contracterisation of jobs.
- 8) Attack on Trade Union rights through exercises in changing Labour Laws by the so called National Commission on Labour

We appeal to you to commend our immediate demands, noted hereunder, for urgent positive action by the Government :

- 1) Self-reliant, employment oriented industrial policy
- 2) Radical Land reform to end extremely unequal land ownership in rural India.
- 3) Immediate stringent steps to unearth and recover the huge black money and recover the huge unpaid bank loans from the big business houses.
- 4) Complete reversal of the ongoing move of privatisation/disinvestment in public sector units and their protection from unequal competition from the MNCs.
- 5) Revival of the sick industrial units through financial and technological support
- 6) Regulatory protection to small scale industries, tiny sector and agricultural sector including labour intensive traditional industries.
- 7) Effective persuasion and implementation of employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes.
- 8) Roll back of rise in the prices of wheat, rice, kerosene, diesel, cooking gas and restoration of subsidy in urea fertilizer and foodgrains
- 9) Supply of essential commodities of common people's consumption at subsidised price for the economically weaker people
- 10) Protection to and up-liftment of the socially backward and oppressed sections of the people and the religious, linguistic minorities
- 11) Protection of rights of workers in industry, agriculture and service sector
- 12) Ensuring all legal rights & protective measures for the working women
- 13) Protection of small farmers against dangers of liberalised imports

### CITU CONTRIBUTION FOR ORISSA CYCLONE RELIEF

Lambodar Nayak, General Secretary, CITU Orissa, has informed that the CITU units had contributed a sum of Rs 6.40 lakh till 15.5.2000, for the CITU Orissa State Committee Fund for relief work among the cyclone affected people of the State. He has also sent an upto date statement as under:

1. CITU Centre, New Delhi	Rs	2,25,000.00
2. Tamil Nadu State Committee, CITU		1,30,370.00
3. Assam State Committee, CITU		10,000.00
4. Andhra Pradesh State Committee, CITU		35,773.00
5. Katihar Dist Committee CITU, Bihar		6,305.00
6. Bangalore North Industrial Workers Union		2,700.00
7. Mumbai Shramik Sangh, Mumbai		1,64,100.00
8. All India Peerless Employees Union		27,000.00
9. Larsen & Toubro Employees Assn., Bangalore		22,800.00
10. Maharashtra State Committee, CITU		16,595.00

# ECONOMY ON RAILS !

## FALLING TAX REVENUE

Revenue receipts in 1999-2000 were lower by Rs 3366 crore over budget estimates. This was mainly due to fall in tax revenue (- Rs 5896 crore).... The net tax revenue showed a marked decline primarily on account of shortfall in indirect taxes, viz. customs (-Rs 2569 crore) and union excise duties (-Rs 2315 crore). The shortfall in revenue receipts was mainly under customs duties due to a very low growth in dollar value of non-oil imports.....Central plan outlay (in 1999-2000) in the revised estimates falls short by Rs 7211 crore....

*(Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, May 2000)*

## SHORTFALL IN 9TH PLAN OVER 15 PER CENT

The Ninth Plan shortfall in investment is estimated to be over 15% This implies that ....the shortfall will be roughly of the order of Rs 55000 crore. This is in respect of public investment out of budgetary support. The statistics on private sector investment is not yet available...

According to the mid term review of the 9th plan to be discussed in the full Planning Commission meeting — there is an urgent need to enhance public investment in core sectors...It is pointed out that the estimated shortfall in in the Ninth Plan investments and with no provisions for the tenth plan projects at the present juncture, would result in serious infrastructural shortages specially in power, transport and communication sectors....The Commission has suggested that the Govt could generate higher resources by improving the tax-GDP ratio which has been on the decline....

The Commission has warned that if immediate investments are not made in the current year in the core sectors, the much talked about growth rate of eight per cent in the next plan would remain a pipe dream....

*(The Observer, 6-06-2000)*

## THE RUPEE IN A TAILSPIN...

Once again...the Indian rupee has hit a lifetime low of Rs 44.05 against the greenback in mid-May....

Rupee started declining from second half of 1995-96 to Rs 33.40 (against US \$), then to Rs 42 in 1998-99, and now a little below Rs 44 in 1999-2000. Over four year period of 1995-1999, the decline had been over 30% in nominal terms that works out to a high average of 7.5% average decline per annum... Expectations that India will once again go into debt crisis saw the rupee dipping to new lows...

*(The Financial Express Think-Tank, 6-06-2000)*

## THE BURDEN OF DEBT...

The Government's 2000 status report on India's external debt indicates that....thw absolute size and structure of India's foreign debt remain cause for concern and the rapid build-up of debt that took place in the first half of the 1990s is yet to be reversed. India's foreign debt stood at a little over \$ 99 billion in December 1999. In other words, each Indian owes the rest of the world \$100.... In absolute terms it remains very large...and it has shown no signs of falling off....

*(Editorial, The Hindu, 8-06-2000)*

## DOES ONLY GROWTH MATTER ?

Now the first quarter of the financial year (2000-01) will soon be over, growth projections for the Indian economy are pouring in thick and fast...If distribution parameters are taken into account, things do not look pretty rosy...even the most optimistic estimates on poverty—say 25%— means as many as 250 million people are not getting two proper meals a day, let alone other basics like clothing, shelter, drinking water, education and health care....

The survey also finds that if there is one thing the poor hate, it is inflation. The Indian political system... sadly has not learnt how to deal with the problem. The result is that instead of supply augmenting policies, it still seeks to manage

# HEADING WHERE ?

demand... This leads the poor worse off....

*(Editorial, Business Standard, 8-06-2000)*

## FATE OF SMALL SECTOR SEALED

With the Govt's move to allow a whole array of foreign goods into Indian markets, the small sector, which produces most of these items, is trying hard to come to terms with the decision.... "The fate of the small and tiny sector has been sealed with the Govt move to allow free imports of substantial number of mass-consumer items..." says Mr V S Narasimhan, the President, Federation of Associations of Small Industries in India....

*(The Hindu, 8-06-2000)*

## MORE THAN 50000 BRICK-KILNS FACING CLOSURE

More than 50000 small and medium brick kilns in the country employing about one crore skilled and unskilled labour are facing closure due to total apathy of the Govt towards the industry, says the President of All India Brick and Tiles Manufacturers' Federation, S P Bansal...

*(The Financial Express, 8-06-2000)*

## MNCs EVADE THOUSANDS OF CRORES IN TAXES

Mumbai: The multinational companies operating in India have deprived the Government of India's

Treasury of over Rs 2112 crore due to evasion of central excise duties (Rs 143.80 crore), customs duties (Rs 535.05 crore), and income tax (a whopping 1433.89 crore).

Disclosing the figures V Dhananjaya Kumar union minister of state for finance gave a detailed list of the companies and the amount they evaded. The modus operandi of these multinationals in evading duties, according to the minister, included clandestine removal of goods, under and over-invoicing, misuse of Modvat credit, misdeclaration of classification, misuse of exemption notifications and concealment of income or furnishing inaccurate particulars of income.

In case of central excise evasion, Hindustan Lever Ltd is the largest evader, having evaded a total of Rs 27.27 crore.

In case of customs duties evasions,.....the Japanese electronic giant Sony India Pvt Ltd alone accounted for Rs 457.65 crore followed by M/s SEDCD Forex International Drilling Inc with Rs 131.22 crore, M/s ABB Ltd with Rs 62 crore, Hyundai Motor with Rs 44.40 crore and Ranbaxy Lab with Rs 26.84 crore. HLL also figures in this list with evasion of customs duties to the tune of Rs 24.25 crore, followed by Nestle with Rs 12.05 crore.

Sabre Group Inc as for income tax account (Rs 126.32 crore), Lucent Technologies (Rs 125.87 crore), Nokia Network (119.82 crore) Caribjet Inc (Rs 113.84 crore)....

*(From Viswakarma Sanket, vol 8 no 6, June, 2000)*

## CLOSURE OF SIX PSU'S CONDEMNED

The Union Cabinet of the Vajpayee Govt has decided to close down 6 public sector units viz Mining & Allies Machinery Corpn Ltd (MAMC), National Bicycle Corporation of India Ltd, Tannery & Footwear Corporation Ltd (TAFCO), Weighbird Ltd, Bharat Process & Mechanical Engineers Ltd (BPMEL) and Rehabilitation Industries Corporation Ltd (RIC) and convey the same to BIFR.

The CITU condemned the decision which will have a damaging impact on industrial economy of the country, besides throwing several thousands of workers and their families on the street. It was mentioned that all the above 6 PSUs could be revived and operated profitably, if Govt agreed to spend around Rs 270-300 crores only for modernization revamping, as per proposals pending in BIFR. But the Govt decided to close down the six companies.

The CITU urged the working class and the patriotic people to oppose this anti-national move.

## GLOBALISATION ON TRIAL- HAS LOST THE CASE.....

Globalisation has not delivered the benefits in human terms which it promised. In 1969 the gap between the richest fifth and the poorest fifth of the World's population was 30:1, it was 74:1 in 1999. Three decades of Globalisation have increased the gap in the distribution of wealth by more than 135%, so that the richest fifth of the humanity now accounts for about 86% of all consumption while the poorest fifth accounts for 1 per cent.

Nowhere is the difference in wealth clearer than in world food supply. ....The number of countries suffering food deficit rose drastically from 15 in 1994 to 29 in 1997, with more than half of those countries in Africa.

Those who have gained have been the multinational companies, those who have lost have been the small producer, the small farmer.

Conference hall in Seattle last December, and perhaps more importantly inside by developing countries had the effect of...showing that globalisation agenda of the last generation must be replaced.

Globalisation has been put on trial and lost the case. There must be reforms in the way of governing multinational corporations, plus a change in international rules governing trade and commerce, which takes in to account the needs of the less developed countries...

It is time to replace the agenda of globalisation with one to promote sustainable development, and solve the problem of world hunger.

*( From ICFTU On-line, 5th May 2000 )*

## WHITHER GLOBALISATION !

At the round table of eminent economist which opened the official conference of UNCTAD X, Deepak Nayyar of Jawharlal Nehru University (

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## GROWING CONCERNS OVER

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and the waged agricultural workers....

International trade agreements make it difficult for smaller countries to protect local and national interests.... In addition, under Globalisation, many countries have found themselves increasingly hampered by debt repayments, and, in many cases, debtor nations have been induced to produce export crops for foreign exchange to pay off crushing debts, threatening local food security....

There is clearly a need for trade and investment rules that support national food sovereignty, the right to Govt supply, and agricultural models based on multi-functionality. These must replace current rules, such as those currently enshrined in Agreements and institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, that prioritise commercial over all other values, deny democratic decision making, and contain a bias against local economies....

The discontent showed both outside the WTO

present Vice Chancellor of Delhi University), said that the latest wave of globalisation.... Coincides with increasing inequalities between the people within and between the countries....Drawing from UNCTAD and other sources, he suggested that there is a causal relationship between the two ; globalisation has accentuated inequalities in the following ways:

\* Trade liberalisation has led to a growing wage disparity between skilled and unskilled workers in both industrialised and developed countries.

\* As a consequence of privatisation and deregulation, capital has gained at the expense of labour almost everywhere; profit shares have risen while wage shares have gone down.

\* Structural reforms which have cut tax rates(for the rich) and brought "flexibility" to labour markets have reinforced this trend.

\* The increased mobility of capital made possible through widespread financial liberalisation,

combined with relative immobility of labour, has changed the nature of employment relationship...

\* In addition, the goal managing inflation has been transformed into a "near obsession" by the sensitivity of financial markets. As a result, govts have been forced to adopt deflationary macro-economic policies which have squeezed both growth and employment.

\* Meanwhile, the competition between the countries for export markets and foreign investments has intensified, in what is termed a "race to bottom" leading to an unequal distribution of gains from trade and investment.....

This has affected not only the poor, but increasingly middle classes, as well. The combined phenomenal concentration of wealth for a few and growing hardship and insecurities for a majority only creates frustration and alienation, Nayar added. The reaction of the people who experience such exclusion can translate into increasing recourse to drugs, crime and violence, or to seeking refuge in ethnic identities, cultural

while describing the situation world wide...

\* Too many, far too many women and men are excluded from employment, from property, from representation, from the effective defence of their rights;

\* Unstable global financial systems generate crisis, with enormous social costs;

\* Jobs have become more precarious in offices, factories and farmlands;

\* Feelings of uncertainty are spreading, not only among the poor and dispossessed, but also among the middle classes;

\* Working hard does not guarantee a life free from poverty. The world is full of working poor-mainly in the south but also in the north.

### WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ?

*(ILO Press release, dated 1st May 2000, Rome)*

## WHITHER MARKET ECONOMY !

In the ultimate analysis, markets, however efficient

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# AGONISING GLOBALISATION

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chauvinism, or religious fundamentalism. Globalisation inevitably tends to erode social stability.

*(NGLS ROUND UP : UN Non Governmental Liaison Service, No 54, May 2000)*

## GLOBAL ECONOMY- POLICIES LACK ETHICAL BACKBONE....

Speaking in the presence of Pope John Paul II on 1st May 2000, Juan Somavia, Director General, ILO called for a re-examination of the "rules and policies that govern our global economy" in order to give it "the ethical backbone it lacks" and to ensure that it "benefits the many, not just the few." Somavia said, "...We have to redress the enormous sense of insecurity that invades the home of so many families world wide. It is a global struggle for human dignity..." He further added

they are, are not democratic institutions...since customer's vote is proportionate to his/her purchasing power. Secondly, labour is different from capital since the owner of the capital can withhold if he/she thinks that the return is not adequate while labour cannot withhold because it will then not be able to survive.... Thirdly the poor can give according to their ability but if such abilities cease to have markets, they cannot get what they need even if the need is minimal. Fourth, resource transfer to the rich is described as 'incentives' while income transfer to the poor is described as a 'subsidy'— commonly perceived to be a derogatory term. Finally, pro-poor oriented growth is thus possible when intellectual community and policy makers treat markets with suspicion that they deserve and the poor with the respect that they need.

*(Y V Reddy, Dy Governor, Reserve Bank of India, RBI Bulletin, June 2000)*

# FREEDOM TO IMPORT: ROAD TO DISASTER

TAPAN SEN

All quantitative restrictions will be removed on import to Indian soil by the generous Govt of India by April 2001. By its latest declaration on absolutely freeing import on 1429 items, 714 by April 2000, and the rest by April 2001, the Vajpayee Govt could successfully demonstrate their absolute loyalty to the Fund/Bank/ WTO regime and more to President Clinton of USA, and its generosity to the MNCs.

Indian Govt is making a plea that they have to do so as it is obligatory under WTO agreement to which India is one of the signatories. That is nothing but a devil's logic. The USA as well is a party to the WTO agreement. If they can still go on with quantitative restriction on imports to US market, what was the hurry with Indian Govt? ( Refer the speech of the Union Commerce Minister, Murasoli Maran in G-15 Meeting at Cairo published on page 20-21).

For the swadeshi brand Govt at the Centre, let the Indian manufacturers go to hell, let the Indian farmers and agro-producers face the doom, but they must prove their credential to their foreign masters. So, instead of 2003 as per WTO obligation, they decide to do it by 2001 itself!

## ALL ROUND CRISIS

But the swadeshi industries are in dire strait. The items which are slated to be given a free run for imports are mostly

manufactured/produced by the small scale industries or agricultural sector or agro-industries. Around 400 items including woven fabrics, man-made fibres, readymade cotton goods, knitted or crocheted fabrics, bedsheets and handkerchiefs, toweling materials, cotton gauge, track suits, petticoats, night dresses, jute and cotton sacks and bags, swim-wears, toilet-papers etc are related to textile sector alone. This sector is already in the midst of severe crisis, with more than 300 mills already closed and around 60000 worketrs thrown out of employment in the last one year period. The textile manufactures' associations in various parts of the country have already raised hue and cry on the impending disaster with more closures and unemployment, but that seems to fall on deaf ears of the Govt. Not only in textile sector, but also in the case of other industrial products, the recent spate of import liberalisation is destined to spell disaster. The items liberated for import also include ceiling fans, pedestal fans, household filters, kitchen knives and table knives, sewing machines, inverters, sanitary ware, brass utensils, cookers and stoves, tableware, toilet papers, tin plate containers, line telephones, pocket radio cassette, pocket and wrist watches, photo films, voltage limiters, apparatus for protecting

electric circuits etc. In the leather and rubber manufacturing sector also, in respect of all kinds of leather and rubber shoes and parts thereof, sports shoes and sandals in which the country is having enough manufacturing capability and making regular exports, import is completely freed.

Imports have also been freed in respect of second hand automobiles and racing cars and newly assembled lorries and trucks, parts of four-wheelers and two-wheelers and all related items and also for small and medium scale machineries. This is going to create serious crisis for the domestic automobile industries and already crisis-ridden small and medium scale engineering units.

Even items like shaving brushes, hair brushes, toilet brushes, hair remover equipment, fountain pens and ball pens, inks, combs, various cosmetic items, toys and video-games, carpets, rugs and woolen items, mostly produced by the small and medium scale manufacturers are not spared from desperate import liberalisation.

## SEVERE FALL OUT

The fall out on the industrial economy of the country will be most severe. As observed by 'The Outlook' (7-02-2000), " the biggest fall out in India will be a drop in labour opportunities. Since the manufacture of many items on the QR list is the preserve of the small scale

sector, big Indian industries are not interested in them.... It is highly unlikely that the small scale sector will have the marketing muscle to take on the foreign companies and their products." Madhusudan Khambte, President of Small Scale Industries Association of Maharashtra said: "As a result of Govt policy, 40% of SSIs have already closed down. Now(with total import liberalisation), more units are likely to be affected. This is like an invitation to the East India Company to come in through the back door."

Owners of 1800 small scale industrial units of Jamshedpur, Bihar, under the leadership of Adityapur Small Industries Association, Singhbhum Industries Association And Singhbhum Chambers of Commerce and Industry observed industry-bandh in protest of the Govt policy on 11th May 2000.

As observed by the noted columnist, M K Venu, in Economic Times(13-01-2000), "All the quantitative restrictions on import will be removed by March 2001.....The Govt has shown little transparency....The attitude of the Govt so far has been to do things on the quiet...The Indian manufacturers have been thrown off-guard, particularly by the speed and suddenness of India's decision to remove all quantitative restrictions on import...Now large section of industries are faced with this basic dilemma of whether to continue investing in manufacturing or just import from abroad and sell, it is possible that some five years

down the line, we turn into a nation of traders or shopkeepers..."

In the field of agriculture, the ramifications will be disastrous. Items liberated for import in the agro sector include, inter alia, almost all agricultural products, rice, wheat, maize, bajra, barley oats and what not. The free import list also includes various traditional Indian fruits and vegetable items, cloves, ginger, cardamom, coconut, edible roots and tubers, almost all varieties of rubber, tea, coffee etc. Almost all dairy products like milk, cream concentrates, butter, ghee, edible oil, and other products consisting of natural milk are also in the list. Almost all varieties of processed food items like potato chips, jams and jelly, pickles, chutnies, fruit-juices, mushrooms, and spice items like tamarind pastes, onion and chillies concentrates etc and all varieties of meat and fish are also not spared by the Govt of India in their faithful service to the market hungry MNCs of the West.

#### **GRIEVOUS IMPACT**

The grievous impact of the above is not impossible to guess and predict. As estimated by M S Swaminathan, eminent Agricultural Expert, the subsidy given to the Dairy sector was 87% in Japan, 59% in Canada, 54% in European Union. Additionally the export subsidy in the USA and EU per tonne of milk powder was \$875 and \$ 811 respectively.(Trade Union Record, 20-06-2000) The subsidies available to Indian agro sector is nowhere comparable to that in rich

nations.

In that event despite being competitive and cost effective, it will be most difficult, rather impossible for the Indian agro/dairy/animal products to compete with their foreign counterparts. Danger of loss of occupation and livelihood for lakhs of the farming community is already looming large. In such a situation, the removal of all restrictions on import on agro-products would mean inviting sharks in a pool of small fishes. The disaster has already started. Thousands of industries are rolling down their shutters and several lakhs losing jobs. In the farm sector as well, according to a Commerce Ministry Official, "...eventually the farming community will have to face the challenges. The smaller players will be simply squeezed out." (The Outlook).

The Tribune on 7th June reported that the scare of imported milk at cheaper rate has created such panic in the milk producing community that the milch cattles are being put on distress sale in many parts of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. This situation is preceded by the already setting-in crisis in desi-ghee and edible-oil producing segment all over the country. Prices of these products of even the Govt owned Dairy farms are facing a downward pressure.

The abject surrender of national interests by the Vajpayee Govt to the imperialist pressure is destined to bring down disaster to the economy, its self reliance and sovereignty. We have to fight back these policies.

*(Mursoli Maran, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, represented India at the meeting of Ministers of Trade/Economy of the Group of 15 (G 15) countries at Cairo on 15th June 2000. We reproduce the text of his speech, which is a tell-tale of the dismal surrender of Govt. of India before the WTO—Editor)*

## **“WE KNELT DOWN, SUCCUMBED TO PRESSURE, SIGNED ON DOTTED LINES” -MURASOLI MARAN**

“We all know the reasons for the failure of the Seattle Ministerial Conference. Let us go to the roots of the matter. There is a proverb that just because the camel knelt down, it was loaded. We, the developing countries, met the same fate in the Uruguay Round, because we knelt down. We succumbed to bilateral and multilateral pressures and signed the agreements on the dotted line. Perhaps we could have limited the damage if we had been together. But the round also saw the collapse of coordination amongst the developing countries. As Rubens Ricupero, Secretary General, UNCTAD, has said: “Some countries did not realise what the implications of what they signed in the Uruguay Round would be, and in many cases there are rules whose effects only become perceptible when they have to be implemented.” The result is that we, the developing countries, now feel the millstone around our neck and the key issue is the need to remove that heavy burden - I mean - the inequities, imbalances and anomalies of the existing agreements.

The inbuilt imbalances have come to light more dramatically during their implementation in the last five years. Far from treating us as a special category and treating us with special and differential treatment, they have imposed onerous obligations on us. Promises made at the Uruguay Round regarding market access for our products still remain a mirage. On the contrary, the developed countries have cleverly found new methods of keeping our goods out, replacing tariff barriers with non-tariff barriers like health and safety standards. The frequency with which such standards are changed is only matched by their arbitrariness and lack of transparency. Standards are frequently imposed without adequate notice and knowing fully well that developing countries cannot meet them.

The textiles and clothing sector is of importance to most developing countries. But despite the promises of meaningful liberalisation, the actual

implementation has been very dismal. The developed countries till date have integrated only 4% of the restrained items. As the testimony of Julia A Hughes, Chairman, US Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel, to the US House Sub-committee on Trade reveals that “during the first seven years of this ten-year transition, fully 93% of the trade in textiles and apparel will remain restricted. Fully 89% of the quotas on clothing will remain in place till January 1, 2005”. That is how they backload the scheme and backtrack on their commitments. Even in some areas where developing countries show competitiveness in some products, innovative trade defence measures, including anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigations are initiated, effectively crippling their export effort.

Not surprisingly, therefore, there is deep skepticism prevailing among our people about WTO and its attendant benefits. They are asking a question: what is the use of signing new agreements when we are not in a position to address the difficulties in implementing earlier Agreements? This issue is agitating the minds of all sections, who are questioning the apparent inequity of the multilateral trading system. Therefore, it is imperative that the issues of implementations of Uruguay Round Agreements are addressed upfront and key imbalances removed.

Ironically, we saw the world upside down in Seattle: while developing countries were pleading for freer trade, the developed countries were seeking Trojan horses to hide their protectionist intentions. Why?

When the process of globalisation, unleashed by the developed countries, began to lead to the relocation of some manufacturing activities to low-wages countries, then there was a sudden upsurge of love and affection for the welfare of workers of developing world. And the pressure has been mounted to observe strict core labour

standards. They want to take away our comparative advantages and condemn us once again to remain in the Third World in perpetuity. The issue was put to rest once and for all at Singapore Ministerial Conference. Why are we against it, even for establishment of a working group on this issue? For us, this issue will be like a proverbial camel's head in the tent. As the Wall Street Journal has pointed out editorially:

"Once established, any labour-environment working groups will be impossible to get rid of. Soon they will be determining everything—from minimums wage rates to environmental standards that would preclude all sorts of development. It is hard to see why countries trying desperately to bring prosperity to their peoples should sign on to a deal giving politicians from rich countries the right to dictate Third World domestic policies in order to appease First World special interests and dilettantes."

Most of us have experienced colonialism. **We lost about tow centuries because of colonialism. We are not prepared to lose the 21st century because of core labour standards.**

Regarding environment, there is already a Committee on Trade and Environment working on the basis of an agreed work programme. If they are very particular about environment, the debate in the Committee should have been on the concerns of the developed countries. But instead, they are trying to amend the provisions of GATT for widening the environment window and to restrict and deny market access of the products of developing countries. **Their interest is not environment, but protectionism.**

There is also a dangerous trend evolving in the Appellate body of the WTO giving clever interpretations of the WTO provisions, thus, undermining the intent of the Membership by upholding unilateral trade measures in the name of environment. The time has come for the Members to put an end to this dangerous trend of protectionism by back door.

All this does not bode well for the multilateral trading system. "Why should there be a move to 'strengthen' the coherence between WTO and Bretton Woods institutions? Why should there be similar moves to include non-trade issues?

"Because WTO has the 'rule of law' because once WTO's Appellate Body has declared a country's

law WTO-inconsistent, the concerned country has to either change its law or face punishment in the form of trade sanctions and cross retaliations. Because WTO can bite (while other organisations can only bark, they want to make it a 'world government' subsuming the sovereignty of nations. Any such effort would worsen the fears of "globophobia" and undermine the very institution itself.

After Seattle the question reverberating around the world is: **Has globalisation gone too far?** There is a growing feeling that the decisions affecting the daily lives of millions of citizens—the farmer, the small shopkeeper in the street corner and the work force—should not be hijacked away from our national parliamentary institutions and subjected to the vagaries of unbalanced international negotiations and organisations.

This is why we believe that the most important item in the WTO agenda is the restoration of its credibility. This can only happen if the imbalances, inequities and anomalies of the past are addressed frontally. This is why we argue that implementation issues must be tackled first of all. This is why we are against introduction of new issues in the WTO agenda—because the developing countries have their old fears—that they would be the main targets for extracting concessions; that the new subjects of interest to developed countries would take priority over the issues of interest to developing countries; and that the subjects of interest of developing countries as yet unaddressed would be relegated to the background.

First, we should reform WTO and it is time for a major re-think. WTO's remit needs to be restricted to trade and trade alone. Second, all countries must be allowed to liberalise at their own pace like every major industrialised country, like USA, Japan, Germany etc. did in the past.

The culture, needs and desires of the countries should be recognised and respected. If developing countries do not realise this danger to their own interests and once again repeat the mistakes of the past, then it will tantamount to committing collective 'harakiri'.

Last time, faced with depression, fascism and the Second World War, we had a re-think of how we manage global affairs. This time, we should see the writing on the wall and re-think before it is too late.

## REPORTS & EVENTS

### DELHI: STATE LEVEL WORKSHOP ON ORGANISATION

The State Committee of Delhi, CITU organised a two-day workshop on organisation on 3-4th June, 2000 in BTR Bhawan, New Delhi. From Ghaziabad, Noida, Faridabad and Delhi, 85 delegates representing various unions participated in the workshop. The workshop was organised with an object to discuss thoroughly to expand the organisation in those areas that come under Delhi State Committee, identifying the impediment in the growth of the organisation, finding the ways to overcome the same, improve the level of ideological consciousness of the members and organising the working women, etc, on the basis of Bhubaneswar report on organisation. The State Centre prepared a draft and circulated it among the delegates in the workshop.

W R Varada Rajan, Secretary, All India CITU, inaugurated the workshop and in his opening remarks explained the discussions held on organisation at all India level. Pointing out that the

organised sector is shrinking, unorganised, unconventional, contract labour system and service sectors are expanding, he said it had become a more challenging task to organise the working class and keep up the revolutionary zeal of the trade unions. In the changed circumstances, new methods have to be evolved to expand and strengthen the organisation.

Suraj Bhan Bhardwaj, General Secretary, Delhi State Committee, welcomed the delegates to the workshop and explained the modalities of workshop.

All the delegates of workshop were divided into 4 groups. Each group discussed each of the following subjects separately for two hours: (1) Expansion of Organisation (2) Working Women (3) Democratic Functioning (4) Ideological Education.

After thorough discussion on each topic, all the delegates assembled together and from each group one spokesman placed the summary of their group.

Tapan Sen, Secretary, All India CITU, who was present

throughout the workshop, in the concluding session on 4th June, summarised the discussions held on all the four subjects. He underlined the need to increase membership of CITU and expansion of the organisation in unorganised sector. He hoped that the State Committee would consider the suggestions that came up in the workshop and implement them.

Suraj Bhan Bhardwaj, in his concluding speech congratulated the delegates for their valuable suggestions. The most important recommendation of the workshop is that the membership of Delhi State shall be raised to 1.25 lakhs by December, 2000. The State Committee meeting held on 16.6.2000, discussed the outcome of the workshop and chalked out a programme of mass campaign and membership enrollment to be achieved by December 2000. The Committee fixed a target of 5 lakh signatures to be collected on the CITU petition to the President and also finalised the dates of District/Area level conference.

### TEXTILE MINISTER ON SATYAM COMMITTEE REPORT

As was reported earlier (May issue of Working Class), the Satyam Committee recommendations regarding the forthcoming new Textile Policy augurs danger for the Indian Textile industry as a whole.

Particularly, it will strike a death knell for the handloom sector and the public sector NTC.

The CITU has been pursuing since the last about two years for an official meeting of the trade unions to be convened by the

Ministry, as was the practice earlier. But since the BJP Govt came to power not a single meeting was called by the Govt. The Textile Minister called only P K Ganguly, Secretary CITU on 20th June for a discussion. He

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assured again that the Ministry has decided to call a meeting of the five major central trade unions some time in July, when the Ministry prepares its final note on the Satyam Committee recommendations. He, however, assured that the recommendations regarding repeal of the Handloom Reservation Act and the Hank Yarn Obligation Scheme would not be accepted. However, that will not solve the problems, because other recommendations of the Satyam Committee are

equally adverse to threaten disaster for the Handloom sector. Regarding NTC, he said that the Ministry is of the view that 30 mills should be modernised and a part of the fund required should be advanced by the Finance Ministry. The Cabinet has taken a decision to constitute a Group of Ministers to look into the proposals. The JAC of Textiles, however, has demanded an official meeting to discuss the Satyam Committee as a whole and NTC both. The JAC will meet

shortly to decide the next course of action. Conventions and demonstrations have already started in different states, as the proposal is to close all the NTC mills in Bengal, UP, MP, Gujarat and Punjab. On Handloom, the CITU has convened an All India Convention at Calcutta on July 26 and 27 to decide action plans.

A joint letter has been given to the Finance Minister, the Chairman of the Group of Ministers demanding a meeting of the trade unions by the Group of Ministers.

### ALL INDIA CONVENTION OF HANDLOOM WORKERS

An All India Convention of Handloom Workers will be held at Calcutta on July 26 and 27, 2000 as per the following details:

1. Dates: July 26 and 27, 2000
2. Venue: Yuva Bharati Karirangan, Salt Lake, Calcutta
3. Accommodation: Same as above
4. Number of Delegates: Total 250, out of which 150 from outside Bengal and 100 from Bengal.
5. Delegate fee: Rs 100/- per delegate

The convention will start at 10 am on 26th July. All delegates should reach Calcutta by 25th July evening.

The States must send informations immediately about the number of delegates and their arrival details to:

Com.Mrinal Das/Com.Gopal Bhattacharya

W.Bengal State Committee of CITU

53 Acharya JC Bose Road

Calcutta 700 016

NB: Up and down tickets should be booked from the places of journey.

### CONVENTION ON POWER SECTOR REFORMS

More than 220 delegates from different parts of the country, power sector employees and engineers participated in the First National Convention on Power Sector Reforms and Electricity Bill-2000 at Jaipur on 30th April, 2000. It was organised by Rajasthan Vidhyut Karamchari

Abhiyanta and Adhikari Sanyukta Sangharsh Samithy, Jaipur. It decided to vehemently oppose the Electricity Bill-2000, which is to accelerate power sector reforms. Electricity Employees Federation of India, All India Power Engineers Federation, All India Diploma Engineers Federation,

Akhil Bhartiya Vidhyut Mazdoor Sangh, All India Federation of Electricity Employees, and Employees Unions in Central Electricity Authority, NTPC, NHPC and Nuclear Power Corporation and attended the one day convention.

The President of Electricity

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Employees Federation of India, E Balanandan said that Electricity Bill-2000 is drawn from vacuum instead of based on our experience and is an exercise in futility. Hence, Govt should forget about it. Balanandan stressed that the Centre wanted to encroach upon the rights of the State Govts which was unconstitutional and illegal. He reminded power men that they alone can force the Govt to change the World Bank dictated power policy.

A B Bardhan, Chairman of All India Federation of Electricity Employees, Shailendra Dubey, Secretary General of All India

Power Engineers Federation, Sarvesh Dwivedi, Vice President of Akhil Bhartiya Vidhyut Mazdoor Sangh, Hajarilal Sharma, Vice President of Rajasthan Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), Girish Pandey, HMKP Trade Union leader, and others spoke.

A eleven member committee was formed, titled as "National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers", which included E Balanandan and B S Meel of EFFI. An action plan to launch an agitation for mobilising rank and file in the struggle to oppose

power sector reforms including Electricity Bill-2000, and force the Government to change power policy, was formulated.

It envisaged holding of regional conventions, rallies in the States on 11th July, 2000, a nationwide rally at New Delhi on the first day of monsoon session of Parliament, etc. In the rally to be held before Parliament, the date of one day token protest strike will be announced. If the government does not change its power policy even then, the Electricity Employees and Engineers will resort to indefinite direct action.

*(Report from R K Verma)*

## KERALA PLANTATION WORKERS CONFERENCE

The 9th conference of the Kerala Plantation Labour Federation was held at Kumili in Idukki district on 28-30 May, 2000. On 28th at Vandiperiyar, a huge rally of plantation workers was organised. K N Ravindranath, P Lalaji Babu, J Hemachandran, K Padmanabhan and M M Money addressed the rally. P Kunjikannan

presided.

K N Raveendranath inaugurated the conference. K Padmanabhan presented the report. P Lalaji Babu, General Secretary, AIPWF presented the organisational report. 26 delegates participated in the two day discussions.

On 29th, a seminar on globalisation and its effect on

plantation industry was held.

The conference elected a 41 member executive and 77 member General Council with P Kunjikannan as President and K Padmanabhan as General Secretary in the 14 member secretariat.

*(Report from P Lalaji Babu)*

## MASS DHARNA AT KANPUR

The Kanpur District Committee of CITU organised a day long mass dharna before the office of the State Labour Commission at Kanpur on

June 12. Braving the scorching heat, around one thousand workers of different industries, including the sick units from NTC, BIC, etc and from Engineering

units, various unorganised sector units and organised sector units, Govt employees, electricity workers, etc and a large number women participated in the dharna.

## REPORTS & EVENTS

The dharna was launched as a part of the campaign programme taken in the Calicut General Council forward to the CITU conference

against the economic policies. The signature campaign to the President of India was also launched in the dharna.

The dharna was addressed by P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU, Daulatram, President UP State CITU, Subhasini Ali etc.

## RAJASTHAN: WORKSHOP ON UNORGANISED SECTOR

The Rajasthan State Committee of CITU organised a state level workshop of unorganised sector workers at Sriganganagar on 15th June. The workshop was attended by about 50 leaders and activists of different unorganised sector units including several women.

The workshop was presided over by Hethram Beniwal, the State CITU President, who briefed the purpose of the workshop. After introduction by Ravindra Shukla, the State General Secretary, P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU spoke on "Organising Unorganised

Sector" and on the issue of minimum wage. Hemlata, Secretary, CITU spoke on working women in unorganised sector. Thirty comrades representing various sectors participated in lively discussions. The workshop decided to select priority units in the unorganised sector in the State and form unions and also expand membership in all units. It also recommended for putting the unorganised sector as a regular agenda in the State Committee meetings.

The workshop was followed by a State Committee meeting on 16th

June, which was attended by 22nd members and P K Ganguly or Hemalata from the centre.

The meeting chalked out detailed plans for implementation of the campaign programme forwarded to the CITU conference as decided at the Calicut General Council. The planning was concretised upto the torch light procession/human chain programme to be completed by 10th September. Another State Committee meeting will be held on 12.8.2000, followed by a State convention on 13.8.2000 to take further concretised planning for the next phase of programme.

### CITU CAMPAIGN MATERIALS JUST RELEASED

- |   |   |
|---|---|
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Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers on base: 1982 = 100

Sr. No	Centre	Feb 2000	Mar. 2000	Apr. 2000	Sr. No.	Centre	Feb 2000	Mar. 2000	Apr. 2000
1	Gudur	426	434	442	45	Amritsar	379	382	389
2	Guntur	419	426	438	46	Ludhiana	380	383	392
3	Hyderabad	403	412	422	47	Ajmer	423	429	433
4	Visakhapatnam	431	432	436	48	Jaipur	395	398	403
5	Warangal	432	424	435	49	Chennai	462	467	473
6	D D Tinsukia	382	381	386	50	Coimbatore	424	422	426
7	Guwahati	450	451	457	51	Coonoor	429	434	432
8	Labac-Silchar	360	366	369	52	Madurai	430	433	423
9	Mariani Jorhat	422	421	419	53	Salem	421	431	436
10	Rangapara-Tezpur	401	402	406	54	Tiruchirapally	470	472	480
11	Jamshedpur	397	397	400	55	Agra	399	407	407
12	Jharia	365	360	356	56	Ghaziabad	441	446	446
13	Kodarma	369	370	372	57	Kanpur	428	430	426
14	Monghyr Jamalpur	423	421	417	58	Saharanpur	392	399	403
15	Noamundi	387	396	399	59	Varanasi	463	470	470
16	Ranchi-Hatia	413	418	418	60	Asansol	399	401	405
17	Ahmedabad	432	434	439	61	Calcutta	430	434	434
18	Bhavnagar	458	458	466	62	Darjeeling	372	369	376
19	Rajkot	415	427	444	63	Durgapur	451	448	456
20	Surat	437	442	447	64	Haldia	471	482	480
21	Vadodra	416	413	429	65	Howrah	474	477	484
22	Faridabad	432	437	441	66	Jalpaiguri	395	392	397
23	Yamunanagar	397	403	409	67	Raniganj	370	369	376
24	Srinagar	480	477	471	68	Chandigarh	448	452	456
25	Bangalore	414	415	422	69	Delhi	491	512	517
26	Belgaum	469	470	473	70	Pondicherry	463	467	475
27	Hubli-Dharwar	426	429	435					
28	Mercara	460	460	458		All India	430	434	438
29	Alwaye	436	437	439					
30	Mundakayam	455	453	450		<b>Additional Series of Labour Bureau</b>			
31	Quilon	452	454	450	1	Kothagudem	424	426	433
32	Thiruvananthapuram	488	490	496	2	Himachal Pradesh	415	418	428
33	Balaghat	379	373	378	3	Bhilwara	430	432	436
34	Bhilai	378	381	388	4	Chhindwara	416	415	417
35	Bhopal	442	449	452	5	Tripura	394	396	419
36	Indore	426	436	452	6	Goa	506	505	520
37	Jabalpur	439	443	451					
38	Mumbai	489	491	501					
39	Nagpur	435	447	451					
40	Nasik	445	446	452					
41	Pune	469	483	488					
42	Solapur	458	467	465					
43	Barbil	397	394	403					
44	Rourkela	401	400	401					

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## SOME IMPORTANT DECISIONS OF THE ESI CORPORATION

The 149th meeting of the Standing Committee and 117th meeting of the Employees State Insurance Corporation was held on 13th and 16th May, 2000 respectively. The meetings reviewed the functioning of the ESI Scheme in various States and some important decisions were taken which were as follows:-

1. Earlier, Corporation decided to grant exemption to Workers drawing was Rs.40/- p.d. for payment of his own contribution. The said decision has since been notified amending Rule 52.

2. For the purpose of payment of Sickness Benefit, Rule 55 has already been amended bringing down the contributory condition to 78 days in place of 90/91 days. The rule has been further amended providing that in the case of a person who becomes an employee for the first time and for whom a shorter period of 156 days is available, he shall be qualified to claim Sickness Benefit if the contribution in respect of him were payable for not less than half the number of days available for working in such contribution period.

3. A proposal to amend Rule 58 regarding payment of Dependents' Benefits was approved. The amendment provided that the Dependent Benefit be paid in full to the widow if there is no dependent children or when the dependent children become ineligible for receipt of the Dependent Benefit.

It may be mentioned that so long the widow of deceased IP was entitled to receive only three fifth of the full rate payable.

The meeting also approved that widow mother of the deceased be also eligible for Dependent Benefit.

4. In view of the Supreme Court judgement, the meeting recommended amendment of Sec.2(12) of ESI Act (definition of factory) for extended coverage of the IP and the establishment. Representatives of the employers opposed this amendment in one voice.

5. Proposal to amend 56(3) of the ESI Act and Rule 60 and Regulation 103(B) was approved. The amendment provides that an Insured Person, who ceases to be in insurable employment on account of permanent disabilities, caused due to employment injury, shall continue to receive medial benefit for himself and spouse beyond the age of superannuation.

6. Another important decision that was taken by the ESI Corporation was enhancement in the rates of permanent disablement and dependent benefit to compensate the erosion in the real value due to inflation. The overall impact of this decision will be around Rs 10/- crore per annum.

7. To avoid harassment of workers as well as employees and also smoothen the payment of cash benefits, there was consistent demand for decentralisation of powers. Now Local Office Managers have been empowered to accept employment injury cases that result in permanent physical disability. These powers were so long exercised by the Regional Directors. On the other hand, Local Offices have also been authorised to accept return of contributions from the employers. Moreover, limit of cash payment from Local Office has been raised from Rs.1000/- to Rs.2000/-.

It may be noted that the above changes could be effected due to sustained effort and effective intervention of Kali Ghosh, Secretary, CITU and the CITU Representative in the ESI Corporation.

## PREPARATION FOR CITU ALL INDIA CONFERENCE

Preparations are in full swing for the 10th All India Conference of CITU to be held from December 27 - 31 in Hyderabad. Subsequent to formation of the Reception Committee on April 16th, various sub committees are being formed to organise the All India Conference in a befitting manner. As reported earlier, the Reception Committee was formed with 359 members, under the chairmanship of Nanduru Prasada Rao, eminent freedom fighter, and one of the frontline leaders of the Trade Union movement in India. 27 eminent personalities from different walks of life are elected patrons of the Reception Committee. Actually the City Committee of the CITU started the yearlong preparations for the All India Conference from January 1st itself. New Year greetings were sent to working class conveying the message of All India Conference. Seminars were held on the World Bank conditionalities, Constitution Review, Caste based discrimination etc. to mark the preparations for All India Conference. Seminars will also be held on various aspects concerning the working class movement in particular and people in general as part of the activity towards All India Conference. About 6 lakh pamphlets were distributed focussing various problems of working class during this period, which carried the logo of All India Conference. About 3000 workers participated in a rally on May day highlighting the All India Conference to be held at Hyderabad. The City Committee of the CITU chalked out an elaborate plan to collect contribution towards All India Conference from every worker and employees in the city. The City Committee plans to utilise this unique opportunity of hosting the All India Conference for expansion of the movement in different sectors of the City. G.Rambabu and S. Narasimhareddy were elected General Secretary and Treasurer of the Reception Committee which is sphereheading the preparations for All India Conference.

*(Photographs of the meeting on 16.4.2000, where Reception Committee was formed)*

