

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

SECOND CONFERENCE

Presidential Address

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President CITU

**Azhikodan Raghavan Nagar
Ernakulam, April 18-22, 1973**

Comrades,

We are meeting nearly three years after our foundation session and on behalf of the Working Committee, I convey my apologies to you for our inability to hold the session in time. The Bangla Desh developments, the Indo-Pak War and the elections came in the way of convening our biennial Conference, according to schedule.

On behalf of all of you, I salute the memory of our departed comrades—three valiant members of our General Council who are no more with us. Comrade Azhikodan Raghavan fell a victim to the assassins' dagger to a cowardly attack by the enemies of the working class. A rank and file worker, he rose by his sacrifice and qualities of leadership to occupy leading position in our movement, and also carried the burden of the Secretaryship of the CPI(M), the biggest political party in Kerala. His memory will remain ever green in our minds.

We will forever remember the names of Comrade Rajen Sinha whose sudden death deprived us of a valuable comrade. We cannot forget our fighting comrade Sunil Sen, leader of our Dum Dum unions, who fell a victim to goonda attack.

Comrades, we salute the memory of the hundreds of martyrs of our movement who have fallen victims to semi-fascist terror in West Bengal—sons of proletariat and leaders of trade union movement—and leaders of other democratic movements. They came from the ranks of the working class, the students, teachers, peasants, employees—all of whom were martyrs to the same cause—the cause of democracy and Socialism.

We dip our banner in the name of all our comrades in Kerala and elsewhere—in Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra, who fell fighting for the cause of the workers.

We send our message of solidarity to the thousands of our comrades—trade union leaders, leaders of the democratic and kisan movements, languishing in the prisons of West Bengal and elsewhere. Thousands have been detained under the outrageous MISA Act and other obnoxious

legislations; there are many who have been held for years under trumped-up criminal charges but denied bail. We assure them that the trade union movement will continue to work for their release.

Comrades, our session is meeting just a few days before May Day, that great day of international solidarity of the working class of the world. On this day, the entire working class renews its pledge of international solidarity and its determination to end imperialism and capitalism and establish Socialism, a world free from exploitation, free from all possibilities of war, a world of permanent peace and freedom, from the fear of bestial bombings, aggression and nuclear blackmail.

International Solidarity

Let me take this occasion to express our fraternal feelings of solidarity and brotherhood with the entire world working class. We salute the working class and people of the Soviet Union, of Peoples China, of all Socialist countries and wish them continued successes in their onward march.

Above all, we offer our greetings, full of emotion and fervent feelings to the working class and people of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, to the working class and people of South Vietnam led by the National Liberation Front. Their struggle, unprecedented in history, has been a relentless ordeal for freedom, for advancing the cause of the international working class. Having forced a cease-fire on the American enemy, they have to undergo further trials because of Nixon's treachery. We express our firm support to them and are confident that once again they will emerge triumphant.

Comrades, nearer home, we send our warm greetings to the working class and people of Bangla Desh bent on the task of consolidating their freedom and expanding democracy. We offer our warm greetings to the working class and people of Pakistan who still are struggling to secure elementary democratic rights and a democratic Constitution.

An unprecedented situation has developed in West Bengal since we met last. Never was the trade union movement, even during the British days was faced with such monstrous repression as during the last three years. Com. P. Ramamurti's report deals with this in some detail and I do not wish to devote much space to it. These assaults continue today also, the latest instance being the goonda attacks on our Ranigunj comrades and unions and the murder of Com. Bimal Chowdhury leader of our Durgapur Union. It reveals the relentless efforts of the Congress Party to maintain its rule at all cost and underlines the trend towards one-party dictatorship. While open semi-fascist terror stalks through W. Bengal, the violation of all accepted parliamentary norms to keep the Congress Party in power is seen elsewhere also. The unscrupulous behaviour of the Governor in Orissa under the instruction of the Centre only repeats what happened a couple of years back in W. Bengal and other States.

The gruesome happenings in Kerala in connection with the recent strike of the NGOs emphasise the same trend. Under a ministry headed by Right C. P. Chief Minister and a Congress Home Minister, unprecedented terror was let loose on the struggling employees and the people, while the Congress leaders were plying the country with the slogan of Garibi Hatao. The raping inside police stations, the brutalities committed on the arrested people, the mass beatings, the raids on colleges and beatings of students, of employees and other members of the public and the mass arrests constitute the beginning of the processes leading to the semi-fascist terror. The invasion of Trivandrum College, the blood-spattered walls, the criminal assaults on students—they constitute new milestones towards annihilation of democracy and establishment of one-Party dictatorship.

The NGOs of Kerala deserve our full congratulations for withstanding this terror and holding on for fiftytwo days. The working class and the trade union movement of Kerala, our CITU unions deserve full praise for their active solidarity and support to the cause of the employees, for facing repression in their solidarity action with them. The students, teachers and the entire people of Kerala turned the NGO's struggle into a democratic struggle, a popular struggle and deserve our congratulations. This is

the sign of the times. The local economic struggle of one section evokes the support of all downtrodden section, and has the potentiality of developing into a common democratic struggle in face of repression.

What we have passed through in W. Bengal is something unprecedented. Our trade unions, our working class and leaders have withstood the onslaught and by their courage and devotion, have brought new glory to our movement. It is the duty of all CITU unions to rouse the working class against the common menace of semi-fascist terror and one-party dictatorship and activate them to defend and help our fighting movement in W. Bengal.

Rising Resistance

The magnificent and rising resistance of the working class despite increased repression is seen from the following :

Year	No. of strikes and lockouts	No of workers participated	No of mandays lost
1965	1835	9,91,158	64,69,992
1966	2556	14,10,056	1,38,46,329
1967	2815	14,90,346	1,71,47,951
1968	2776	16,69,294	1,72,43,679
1969	2627	18,26,866	1,90,48,288
1970	2889	18,27,752	2,05,63,381
1971	2137	12,26,812	1,65,45,636
1972			1,51,81,977

(Provisional)

On an average a million and a half workers have been participating in widespread struggles since 1966—the year of recession and crisis, of enforced devaluation at the dictates of the American imperialists. The number of mandays lost reveals the protracted character of the struggles waged against heavy odds. We the CITU are a part of this great and continuous struggle waged by India's working class.

I need not detail the privations, the sufferings and oppression our working class had to undergo during the course of these strikes.

Along with these were also political and sympathetic strikes undertaken by the working class, through protest or solidarity actions.

In 1970, there were in all 118 political and sympathetic strikes involving 3 lakh 31 thousand workers which accounted for a time loss of 3 lakh 86 thousand man-days. The highest time loss was in W. Bengal.

In 1971, there were 110 political and sympathetic strikes involving a maximum number of 3 lakh 51

thousand workers accounting for a loss of 5 lakh 79 thousand mandays, the highest time loss was recorded by Maharashtra.

Comrades,

How during this period, the employers tried to coerce us, break down our resistance by means of lock-outs will be clear from the following. Figures for all India show that in this period the loss of mandays due to deliberate lockouts has been substantial. In 1968, it was more than 50 per cent of the loss due to strikes. For W. Bengal, the figures are revealing. In 1967, loss due to strikes was 15,32,000 mandays while that due to lockouts was 34,83,000 ; in 1968, the loss due to strikes was 31,56,000 while that due to lockouts was 35,65,000 ; in 1970, loss due to strikes was 57 lakhs that due to lockouts was 36 lakhs. In 1971, the corresponding figures were 16 lakhs for strikes and 28 lakhs for lockout. In 1972, 10 lakhs for strikes and 26 lakhs for lockouts. The loss through lockouts is often bigger than that through strikes.

The vindictive attitude of the employing class is seen through these lockouts which were intended to bring the workers to their knees. The bourgeois papers always condemned strikes, the Govt. represed them. All talked of loss of national production in relation to strikes. But they never raised a word of protest against the monstrous loss through lockouts which often exceeded the loss through strikes. Naturally so, because the lockout was the class weapon of the capitalist class to coerce the workers into submission. One should remember that these agencies raised a hue and cry against the U. F. Govt. in W. Bengal because of the rising strikes. But they concealed the fact of the offensive through lockouts.

The incessant economic conflicts of these years arose out of the direct efforts of the ruling classes to make the workers the scapegoat of the crisis. Through prices, through taxation, retrenchment and increased workload the ruling class was attempting to make the workers pay for the crisis. The workers went on fighting, they were in the earlier years tremendously helped by the United Front Governments of left parties. They secured important gains but again and again they were attacked and their direct advance was again nullified through rising prices engineered by Govt.'s deficit financing. In many industries, the workers after prolonged

battles had to accept retrenchment, increased workload or premature retirement. And yet again, the workers fought and made gains, as for instance, the 8.1/3 per cent minimum bonus, the increase in wages in jute and steel industries.

But for these incessant struggles, the working class would have been saddled with further load of work and further cut in wages. As matters stand, despite heroic battles the working class under Congress regime could hardly defend its real wages.

During the last years the real wage of the workers working in manufacturing industries has actually declined. This is the most bizarre comment on Congress planning and reveals the severe limitations on our achievements placed by the laws of the Govt. and of the capitalist society.

Average annual earnings of workers employed in manufacturing industries of employees earning less than Rs. 400 per month.

	1961	1966	1968	1969	1970
Average Annual Earnings in Rs.	1540	2112	2449	2591	2655
Index of Money Earning	100	139	160	171	175
Index of Real Earning	100	95	94	101	98

The entire course of real wages of the working class since independence underlines the constant war of the employing class and its Govt. against the working class wage and the truth that under capitalism the worker cannot think of radically improving his conditions. The stark truth must be realised that in spite of the gains of some sections the real wage of the working class is only marginally above what it got under—under the hated rule of the British ; notwithstanding the shameless claim of the Indira Govt. and its apologists—the revisionists. There has been a continuous trend towards fall in real wages since 1955—the effect of capitalist planning. Remember 1951 real wage index 100 was equal to 92.2 based on 1939=100. The course of real wage index since 1955 has been as follows :

	1951 = 100
1955	123.7
1960	113.8
1961	115.5
1962	116.3
1964	104.1

The 1964 index came to 96 of the 1939 level,

If the 1970 and other indices are reduced to 1939 level, they will be found to be only three or four per cent above 1939 level. Such is the story of wage movement under Congress rule.

In this connection, we may note the following findings of a leading economic daily in relation to the Bombay textile worker who is supposed to be better paid : "Though the incomes of workers in the cotton mills of Bombay increased from Rs. 130 in 1961 to Rs. 255 in 1972 their real earnings at 1961 prices remained more or less static, at the 1961 level. The inference is clear. The bare needs of the workers are barely met and better standard of living for him remains a mirage."

It will be understood that while we were desperately fighting to hold on to what little we had the capitalist and the Govt. were straining every nerve to defraud us. The increase in money earnings was used by the bourgeois press, the Govt. and others to charge the workers with insatiable and unrealisable demands. There was a constant propaganda barrage against us and some bourgeois theoreticians also started talking about the tyranny of the trade unions or describing the working class a privileged class. The reality was that to retain its miserable real wage of a decade back which differed very little from the pre-war wage of the British period. The working class had to undertake protracted strikes and face lathis and bullets.

Comrades, it is instructive to find how the reformist hangers-on of the bourgeois—the AITUC leaders like Dange embellish the capitalist rule by advertising progress where none exists. When India's workers are hardly able to maintain their old real wage of British days, Dange in his report to the AITUC advertises that under the Congress rule the colonial wage structure has been ideologically smashed. He says in his report to the AITUC Session: "It was only after independence that the whole framework of colonial cum-federal wage was first ideologically smashed. It began to be replaced by the new humanist concepts and norms with the adoption of the resolution on need-based wage. The new definitions were forced on the bourgeoisie in our country by the mass struggles which gathered new momentum in the Second Plan period." Only a confirmed class collaborator will advertise the passing of a mere resolution as an ideological smashing of colonial wage structure. And to do this

when the wages were being forced down by the capitalists to the pre-war level one requires an uncommon love for the bourgeoisie.

Of late, the Prime Minister and her paid retinue, are vociferously raising the demand for linking wage increase with productivity and it has been solemnly enshrined in the Approach to the Fifth Plan. In the absence of provision for a stable need-based wage, the stability of prices, provision for full neutralisation of the rise in the cost of living and elimination of the fraudulent manipulation of the cost of living index, the demand is one for sweated slave labour and nothing else. We and other organisations have rejected it.

The reality is that what the working class has got for increased productivity is reduction in real wage, unemployment; the profits have been garnered by the capitalists, their State and Govt. and the parasitical bureaucratic and social structure they support.

The National Commission on Labour observed: "We find that production per worker has increased by about 62 per cent between 1952 and 1964". It had to concede that the rise in real wages has not been commensurate with the improvements in productivity—a mere euphemism saying that workers were being forced to work more for low wages.

The same story continues in the last decade. Between 1961 and 1970, the index number of factory employment (base 1961=100) rose to 126.0 while the index number of production in manufacturing industry rose from 109.2 in 1961 to 177.2 in 1970-71. There was thus 28 per cent rise in productivity per worker while the index for real earnings dropped from 100 to 98.

Index number of employment in mining industry declined from 100 in 1960 to 95.1 in 1970; index of mineral production increased from 110 to 177 in the same period whereas real earnings increased by 15.9 per cent. With five per cent reduction in the number of workers, production has increased by 60 per cent.

More productivity means less employment and less wages to workers—this law of capitalist society is proved by the course of production and real wages since independence. The entire propaganda that the working class is not producing more or that it is gaining without productive effort is just a lying propaganda.

Factories are maiming houses

The increased workload, extraction of more work to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the workers, has transformed the factories and mines into workers' maiming houses. The abnormal rise in accidents unprecedented perhaps in the history of any country exposes the hazard, to which a worker is exposed under the benign rule of the Congress party.

Between 1951 and 1964, production per worker increased by 62 per cent and the rate of accidents and injuries has also increased by more than 60 per cent. It was 29.93 per thousand in 1951; it reached 47.12 per thousand in 1964.

The following figures tell their own tale :

Accident rate per thousand workers

1951—29.93 ; 1954—36.31 ; 1957—42.78 ;

1960—43.05 ; 1964—47.12.

Between 1961 and 1970, productivity per worker increased by 28 per cent and the accident rate increased by more than 50 per cent.

1961—45.67 ; 1964—47.12 ; 1967—48.13 ;

1968—55.93 ; 1969—63.48 ; 1970—70.11

The number of workers involved in accidents and injuries was nearly 76,000 in 1951; it rose to 145,000 in 1969 and the provisional figure for 1970 placed it at 238,000, a grand march of the injured and maimed.

The rates in certain States are still more alarming. In West Bengal, the rate was 108.65 in 1969; and 127.08 in 1970. Every one person in ten had to sacrifice his limb, impair his capacity or get other body injuries to satisfy the lust for increased productivity. Madhya Pradesh vies with W. Bengal and produces a rate of 115.5 in 1970.

It seems that W. Bengal officials, now face to face with the huge increase of accidents from 57,000 in 1966 to 118,000 in 1971, have started doctoring the figures. In 1972, the official figures now show a fall of 30,000 in accounts.

The colossal loss in mandays through these accidents is concealed by the ruling classes. According to a reply given in Parliament on March 3, 1973, the loss amounted to 28,95,000 mandays in 1970, which is one-seventh of the loss due to strikes and lockouts in that year.

If further this is not sufficient to shock the placid conscience of detractors of labour, the following from the Chief Inspector of Factories might do it.

In Oct. last, he stated at the 22nd Annual Conference of Chief Inspectors of Factories : "Over all frequency rates of injuries have gone up by 25 per cent in 1971 over previous year." He further said that the total loss of mandays due to accidents surpassed that due to strikes and lockouts in 1971. The accidents caused a loss of 17 million while strikes and lockouts caused a loss of 13 million.

Such is the grim reality about the effect of productivity which also underlines the collapse of factory legislation, safety rules and inspection. The capitalist class in need of more production and exploitation in the midst of the crisis has no time to bother about safety rules, and workers' lives. Was Karl Marx not correct when he compared human progress under capitalism to "that Hindu pagan idol that would not drink nectar but from the skulls of of the slain."

Comrades,

The increased workload, the intensity of work, and the deterioration in wage conditions have caused deterioration in the health conditions of the working class. It is precisely at this time that the ESI scheme which was supposed to confer sickness and other benefits on the workers is failing or is being deliberately manipulated to deny the legal benefits to the workers. It seems that the capitalist class, not satisfied with the open robbery through reduced wages and increase in workload is resorting to underhand pilfering of workers' benefits. The mounting arrears of Provident Fund which now amount to Rs. 22 crores due to failure of the employers have already become a scandal.

Save the Peasantry

This is a year of widespread famine for our peasant masses, for our agricultural workers and peasants. The condition is so serious that hundreds may fall victims to starvation and death if a cruel and callous Govt. is not forced to change its ways. Millions in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, W. Bengal today are facing utter starvation and death. A bankrupt and callous Govt. plays with their lives by refusing to accept the affected areas as famine areas.

These hungry masses of peasantry are in certain places—Ahmednagar Dist. of Maharashtra are forced to undergo vasectomy operations before they could claim relief. Can monstrosity go further ?

The relief works constitute a scandal and the relief wage is also not regularly paid. With the arrival of the monsoon the Congress Govt. intends to close the relief works and compel the peasant to shift for himself. That is the real danger, the time when hundreds might die unnoticed because the people will be made to believe that the famine is over.

The destitute peasant, with his cattle dead and gone, will neither be able to undertake agricultural operations nor maintain himself during these days.

The working class and the CITU must raise their voice in defence of the agricultural worker and peasants and compel the Govt. to see that they are not deprived of relief and literally thrown to the wolves.

The working class has yet to make its contribution for the defence and relief of the peasantry. Though some sections have contributed liberally for financial relief. Still we cannot say that we have discharged our duty. Much less can we say that we have brought our full strength to bear on the Govt. and compel it to provide adequate relief to the peasantry.

Failure in this respect will be an act of callousness, of political suicide and betrayal. All talk of socialism and democracy in the mouth of trade unionists must end if they cannot defend the peasant mass, the ally in the struggle for democracy and socialism.

Shall we not raise our righteous protest against the supply of American milo liberally mixed with Dhatura poisonous seeds, to our famine-stricken brethren; of milk powder unfit for human consumption to the children of these suffering people; of gram mixed with iron pieces to our people?

Prices, Taxation and Wages.

Comrades,

One of the persistent propaganda of the Govt. and its agencies is that the workers' wages are more responsible than anything for the rise in prices of commodities. We have repeatedly replied to this showing how wages belatedly follow prices and how the real wage of the workers' lags behind the cost of living index.

We have also laid bare how official deficit financing is responsible for rising prices. Our workers however do not yet realise that the

high commodity taxation of the Government is also responsible for continuously pushing up the prices. Official propaganda against workers' wages is intended to conceal the responsibility of the Government and pit the consumer against the worker.

The following figures show how the Government garners huge sums through excise and other duties, sums which often exceed many times the total wage-bill in the industry. It shows how these duties add substantially to the prices while the workers' wages form only a small part of the value of the product.

Wages and Excise Duty in relation to the value of output in certain industries (Rs. in crores)

Industry	Estimated value of production in 1972	Estimated money earnings of workers 1972	Excise duty revised estimate 1972-73 budget	Column 3 as % of Col. 2	Column 4 as % of Col. 2
1	2	3	4	5	6
Sugar	480.36	21.37	177.40	4.4	36.9
Cement	213.57	9.45	56.00	4.4	21.5
Iron & Steel	1096.26	119.05	158.90	10.9	14.5
Cigar & Cigarettes	324.82	10.23	152.00	3.1	49.9
All Textiles	2299.16	304.38	319.43	13.2	13.9
Non-Ferrous Metals	216.39	18.26	61.18	8.4	28.3

While workers' wage constitutes only a small percentage of the value of the product, contribution of Government's taxation to the price of the commodity is 36.9 per cent in sugar, 21.5 per cent in cement, 49.9 per cent in cigar and cigarettes and so on.

Unemployment

The full effects of Congress-sponsored capitalist path are being felt by lakhs of workers through the mounting unemployment. The rapid strides with which it is overwhelming the industrial workers and educated classes can be easily seen through the official figures released by Employment Exchanges. The staggering scale of rural unemployment which

is estimated to be nearer 30 million is reducing the rural areas to a vast ocean of destitution.

In 1961, the number of registered unemployed was 18 lakhs ; in 1966 when the recession was starting it was 26 lakhs, a rise of 45 per cent in five years. By 1969, it was 34 lakhs, a rise of 30 per cent in three years. In 1970, it was 40 lakhs, a rise of 17 per cent in a year. By November, 1971, it was 50 lakhs, a rise of 25 per cent in a year ; by June 1972, it had reached nearly 57 lakhs and now exceeds 68 lakhs.

The number of educated unemployed has risen from 20.53 lakhs to 26.12 lakhs between June 1971 and June 1972 ; according to the latest Economic Survey in the same period it has risen by 39.1 per cent in West Bengal the actual figure being 4.48 lakhs. The number of unemployed engineers was according to other estimates 49000 in December 1972 and ITI trained craftsmen 112000 in July 1972.

The number of unemployed educated women increased from 54,000 to 103,000 between 1960 and 1964 ; and to 194,000 by 1968.

Such are the staggering facts of the last decade. West Bengal and Kerala are the worst victims of this development. By 1970, the former had 45,000 unemployed educated women. Twenty per cent of India's registered unemployed were from West Bengal in 1971.

It is estimated that there are a million unemployed in the State of Kerala. By the end of the Fourth Plan, the number of unemployed doctors may exceed 900 and of graduates 5,000 in that state.

These bare figures do not really reveal the full tale of misery imposed on the working class and the educated section. They denote not only absence of new jobs but forcible deprivation of existing jobs throwing thousands on the street.

Situation in Industrial Centres

The workers in the industry are facing intense hardships. Thousands of beedi workers from Cannanore District and thousands of cashew factory workers from Quilon District have been thrown out of work. The plight of Kerala's Coir workers, handloom workers and over India is well-known. There have been closures of industries started under the Rural Industries Projects also.

Similar has been the situation in all industrial

centres with closures, retrenchment, lockouts, a mass offensive against the employment and livelihood of the workers. Never before had the working class of India to face such a sweeping offensive against its jobs ; never before do the working class youth entering the labour market face such bleak prospects.

In this attack of mass unemployment it is the sons of the workers and poorer classes that suffer most, even if they have requisite qualifications.

Mr. Bhagwati, Chairman of the Expert Committee on Unemployment recently stated that the number of engineer job seekers was 73,000 at the end of December 1972. Nearly two-fifths of the applicants were from families whose income was less than Rs. 100 per month. About 30 per cent came from families with income between Rs. 100 and Rs. 200 per month.

Not A Passing Phenomenon

The working class and the trade union movement have to realise that present unemployment is not a passing phenomenon, that the situation will continue to deteriorate rapidly so long as the Congress rule continues.

It is not accidental that every Five Year Plan of the Congress Govt. has led to increased unemployment. The backlog of unemployment was 5.3 million at the end of First Plan, it was estimated to be 12.6 million (an underestimate) by 1969. The total urban and rural unemployment is estimated to be 4 crores.

The tortuous rate of the progress imposed by the capitalist path, the failure to achieve the miserable objectives, and the consequent slow expansion of employment opportunities condemns the workers, middle classes and rural masses to increasing unemployment.

What chance has employment to increase when the growth of employment in public sector is three per cent per year and in the private sector only 1/3 per cent as has been the case in recent times ; what chance have the workers got when total employment in certain sectors absolutely declines because of capitalist crisis ?

The much advertised Fifth Plan Approach with its play with huge sums not only is not going to alleviate the situation ; it is going to aggravate it. They themselves promise that there will be more

unemployment in organised industries at the end of the Fifth Plan when they admit "wage-employment likely to be generated in the Fifth Plan period shows that the total will fall short of the estimated increase in the labour force."

Their proposals to spend big sums for rural unemployment, for giving jobs to the educated unemployed are just palliatives to raise hopes, to give some miserly relief, they only mock at the problem.

Government Attacks Jobs

While The Government advertises its unemployment measures it, at the same time finances the textile and jute capitalist to displace labour, retrench old hands in the name of modernisation. The employment potential of certain industries is being reduced by the deliberate introduction of new automatic machinery.

Already there are 180 computers in use ; seventy six of these are used by the private sector and as many as 61 by Govt. agencies.

In the third week of November last, Smt. Indira Gandhi approvingly stated in the Rajya Sabha that the Electronics Corporation of India had formulated a programme with the object of making the country "self-sufficient" in computers. This self-sufficiency means, according to the Director of Information analysis group of Electronics Commission, that the country must produce in the next five years 1300 computers, at an annual average demand of about 260 systems. Has middle class employment any chance before this planned onslaught of the computers ?

The workers and employees alike must face this menace unitedly. The latter who have hitherto kept themselves away from the main trade union current must see the folly of this policy, realise the girm danger from the automation drive and join hands with the workers to defeat it.

Capitalism Creates Unemployment

Why is this happening ? Capitalism cannot exist without continually creating unemployment. That is why we find unemployment in advanced countries like the U.S.A., England, Japan. The profits of the monopolists increase when more capital or bigger means of production are set in motion by a smaller number of workers.

In India, productive capital employed per workers was Rs. 2645 in 1946 ; Rs. 5424 in 1955; by 1964, Rs. 16,214 were required to keep one worker engaged.

That is one of the reasons why unemployment grows despite increased production. That is why the Indian worker cannot escape the curse of unemployment under the present rule. Here besides the misery becomes multiplied because capitalist methods are superimposed on antiquated land relations which deny land to the tiller, which keep the peasantry poverty stricken. With the workers and peasants poverty-stricken, the market for industrial goods becomes narrow and it further hampers industrial development. At present, industrial goods in India are mostly consumed by a thin narrow upper crust of the population.

This is inevitable under capitalist-landlord rule because the means of production are owned by these classes and their profits can be secured only by more and more exploiting the people. That is why no capitalist country is free from unemployment.

Socialism Ends Unemployment

It is also seen that only in the Socialist countries where political power is in the hands of a proletarian state where the means of production no longer constitute the private property of individuals belonging to a small class, but are socially owned and controlled, where the means of distribution also are socially owned and controlled and where the objective of production is not individual profit but satisfaction of the needs of society, unemployment has been banished and the right to work has been fully inscribed in the Constitution. In India, the right to work is described as only one of the directive principles of the Constitution, but not juridically enforced. It is thus just a hoax. But in the Socialist countries, it is an enforceable right and the State binds itself to provide employment to all able-bodied people.

The amazing progress made by the Soviet Union immediately after the Revolution, and the successes it scored in socialist planning leading to the abolition of unemployment and exploitation are known to all. The remarkable achievements of People's Republic of China stand out as another historic

Success of the Socialist System on the soil of Asia. The conditions under which the People's Republic of China was founded were perhaps more backward than those obtaining in India. Backlog of unemployment was perhaps more serious in China than in India. The problems facing the leadership of the People's Republic of China were at least as stupendous as those facing India, yet, the achievements of the two countries stand out in sharp contrast to each other. Even the worst critics of China have to admit that she has gone a long way towards solving her basic problems and is today in a position to provide work and decent livelihood for every one while in India the problem of unemployment, destitution and improvement becomes accentuated every day.

The working class must fully realise that to escape unemployment and poverty it has to wage a battle for replacing the present rule by a democratic regime of the people led by the working class for abolishing the capitalist-landlord system and establishing Socialism.

This is the socialism of the working class, of the toilers as distinguished from the Socialism of the Congress Party which protects the landlords and the monopolists.

Fight for Unemployment Relief

While working for this final consummation, the trade union movement must wage a fight for security of jobs, here and now, for providing work for the unemployed and pending that full unemployment relief. The trade union movement must unitedly demand that the right to work be accepted as a fundamental right in the Constitution.

It must at the same time fight all attempts to set the unemployed against employed, and forge unity between the two. The ruling class, unable to offer any relief, sets workers of one linguistic region against another, in the name of jobs for the sons of the soil. Against this offensive the trade union movement must combine the struggle of the two sections, to secure the demands of the unemployed.

Ideological offensive

Comrades,

The ruling classes and their party have while launching repression against the workers opened a new ideological offensive to breakdown the resistance

of the organised class—the working class—which is valiantly fighting the social battle against poverty.

The essence of this offensive is to present the working class as a privileged class, as a class not suffering from poverty, by drawing comparison between what the working class earns and what the pauperised peasantry or agricultural worker earns. The utterly destitute condition of the rural masses, of the agricultural workers, is a fact and the biggest condemnation of the Congress Government policies. But the destitution of the rural masses does not make the working class a favoured class, does not push it above the poverty line. At best, it makes it less destitute and less poor than the mass of rural workers.

All this interested propaganda is to conceal the real criminals—keep from the view the real privileged classes—the capitalists and landlords. It is obvious that the condition of the rural mass can be immediately improved by taking away the land of the landlords and distributing it gratis to the agricultural workers and poor peasants. It is not the working class that is monopolising this land.

Not wanting to attack the landlords and capitalists and monopolists, the Government, the planners and their agents seek to pit the two oppressed sections of workers and peasants, against each other so that both can be kept in enslavement. Along with the working class the middle class also is to be attacked in the name of providing relief to the lowest 30 per cent. By drawing an arbitrary poverty line the planners plan to attack the working class and the middle classes under the pretext of serving the lowest strata.

This deliberate attempt to pit two sections of exploited, to mix one with the exploiters is the usual trick of capitalist government, especially those taking the path towards one-party dictatorship. In this, they are aided by their sycophantic theoreticians who are prepared to do violence to economic science by lumping together the big monopolist and his sweated employees. Listen to the following outpouring of one of these gentries: "The entire industrial production gets geared to the growing incomes and needs of this sector. This is what the organised sector today is. It consists of the entrepreneurs, the owners of capital, the managerial class and the organised workers ably led by their unions." (It is not known whe-

ther the landlords are included under entrepreneurs, managerial class, owners of capital or organised workers). "Together they constitute only 10 per cent of the labour force. But they have monopolised the entire economic apparatus and are using it mercilessly to their own selfish ends. (The workers also). The facade is provided by 'socialist planning.' The drama enacted is one of class conflict, and the march of industrial workers on the socialist path. The fact is that a small organised sector, aided and abetted by the politician, is busy feathering its little nest to exclusion of all unorganised masses."

This is the language of emerging fascist outlook. It is the usual trick to do away with all distinctions between the exploited and the exploiters, to talk of sectors. Its advocates pretend to fight for the unorganised masses, but in reality they are the servitors of the landlords and the monopolists. They don radical clothes to criticise the Congress but act as its fifth column. We are reminded that the Nazis came to power thundering against capitalists but waging war against the organised trade union movement.

Comrades, we have our own programme for emancipating the lowest strata, the entire down-trodden of Indian society. We stand for a thorough-going agrarian revolution, for taking away all land of the landlords and distributing it gratis to the poorer sections in the villages, the agricultural workers, tribals, untouchables, poor peasants. We demand immediate nationalisation of foreign monopoly concerns. We demand nationalisation of all

monopoly concerns owned by Indian capitalists. And we work for ending this accursed capitalist-landlord rule and replacing it by democratic regime led by the working class, opening the road to Socialism. We know where the blow is to be struck.

The ruling classes have been spreading this outlook for some time. Now their Fifth Plan is based on this approach. The working class must take note of this offensive and fight it.

Under the Congress rule, the unity of the country is fast disintegrating. In fact, the bourgeois-landlord classes encourage fissiparous tendencies—Andhra—Assam—to be able to maintain their rule. It is the duty of our movement to protect our class unity, and the unity of our people. Let every worker know that disintegration of nation's unity means invitation to American imperialists intervene in our country and enslave us.

Comrades, Before I conclude, let me draw your attention to the fact that this is the 125th anniversary of that mighty document, 'The Communist Manifesto' written by Marx and Engels. The resounding call of that document, "Proletarians of the World Unite, You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have the whole world to conquer" has been the mighty instrument of changing the world. But the pledge has been only partially fulfilled. Let us rededicate ourselves to the call for proletarian unity and pledge to bring about the triumph of Socialism over the whole world.