B T Ranadive

ON TRADE UNION MOVEMENT



Vol. II

B. T. Ranadive on Trade Union Movement

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FOREWORD

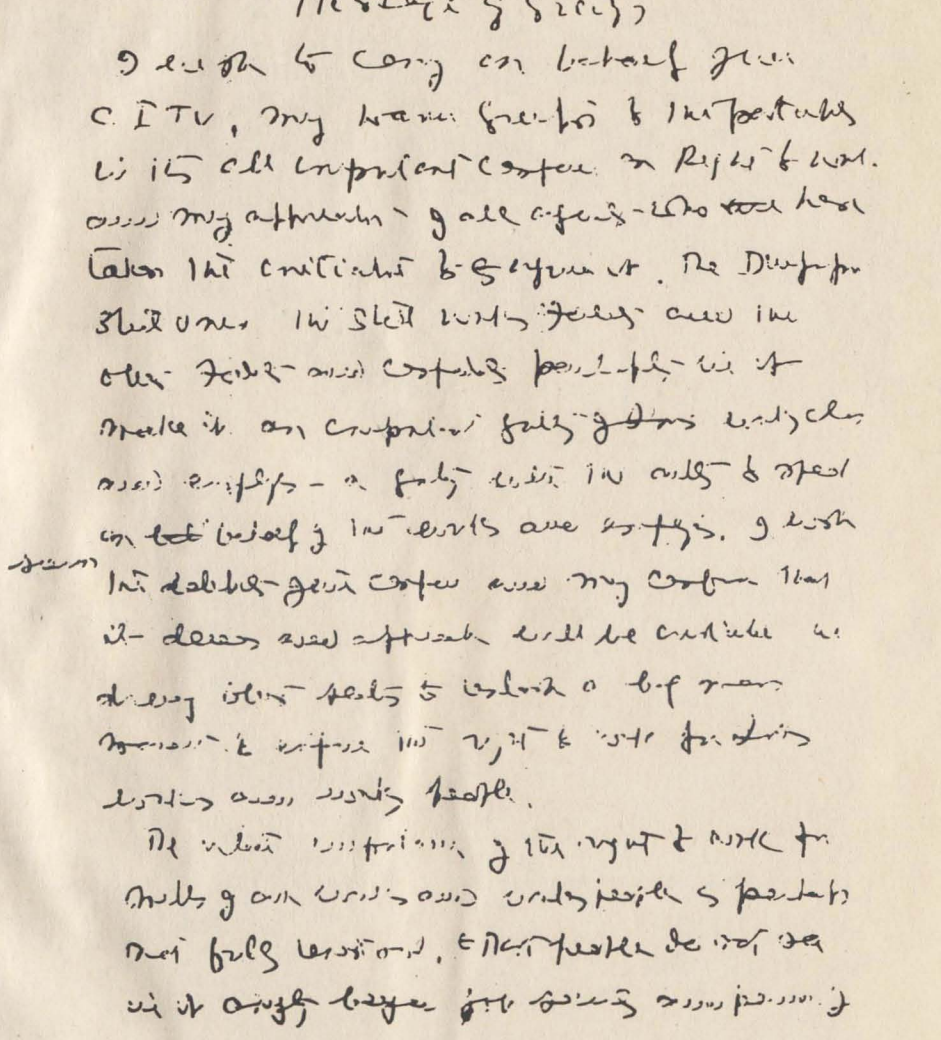
The first volume of Com. BTR's writings contained his articles from 1970 to 1980. It was decided to bring out the second volume with his writings upto 1990. However, as it would have become too voluminous, the Editorial Board decided to bring out the second volume with his writings upto 1985-86. The third volume will therefore be published shortly, which will contain his writings upto 1990 before his passing away.

The second volume contains his writings and speeches in **The Working Class** and in various CITU meetings, focussing the tasks of the working class facing contemporary challenges with the march of time, both internationally and on the national scene. Defence of Socialism, the struggle against war and for peace, to fight the scourge of unemployment, defence of public sector and self-reliant economy and safeguarding the unity and integrity of the country from the divisive forces are the centre pieces of his writings in the second volume.

The Editorial Board thanks all the comrades who worked hard in compiling the articles and helped in proof correction.

April 6, 1991 **Editorial Board**

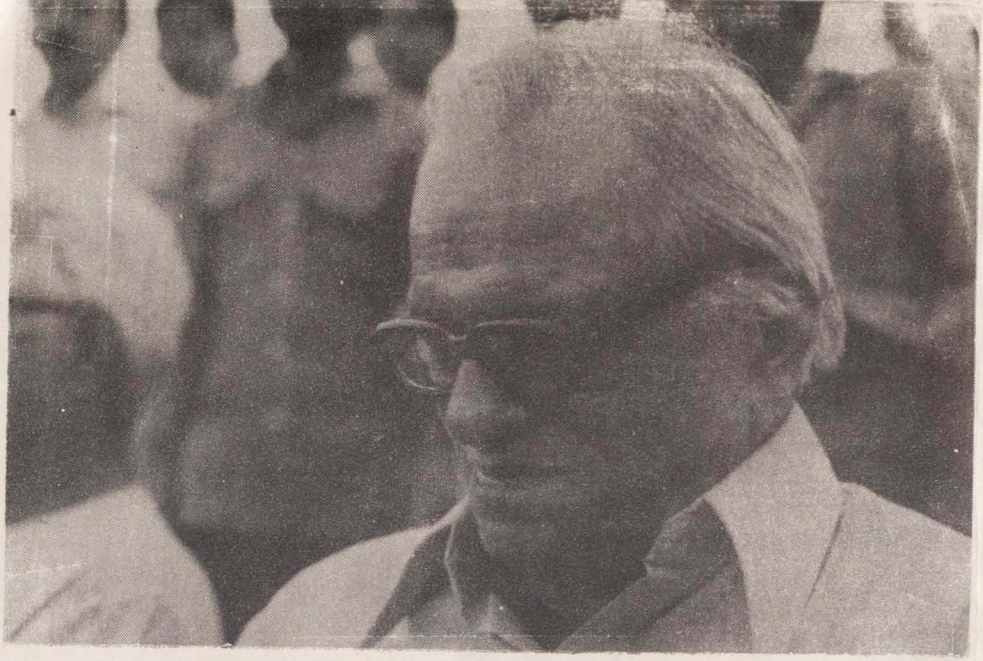
The Last Manuscript



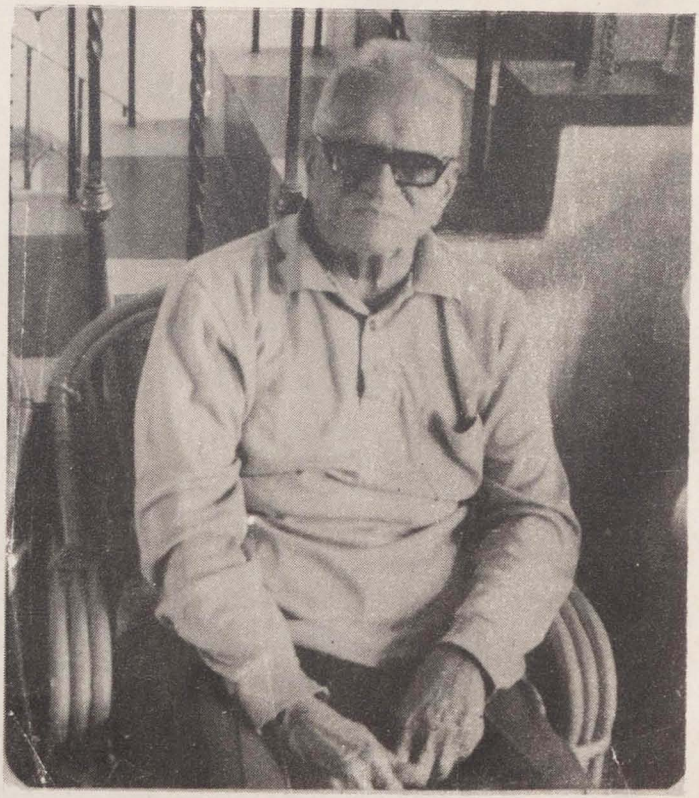
(Com. B.T.R. started writing this message of greetings to the "Right to Work Convention" held at Durgapur from 1st to 3rd April 1990 just few days before his death.)



Com. B.T. Ranadive



Com. B.T. Ranadive



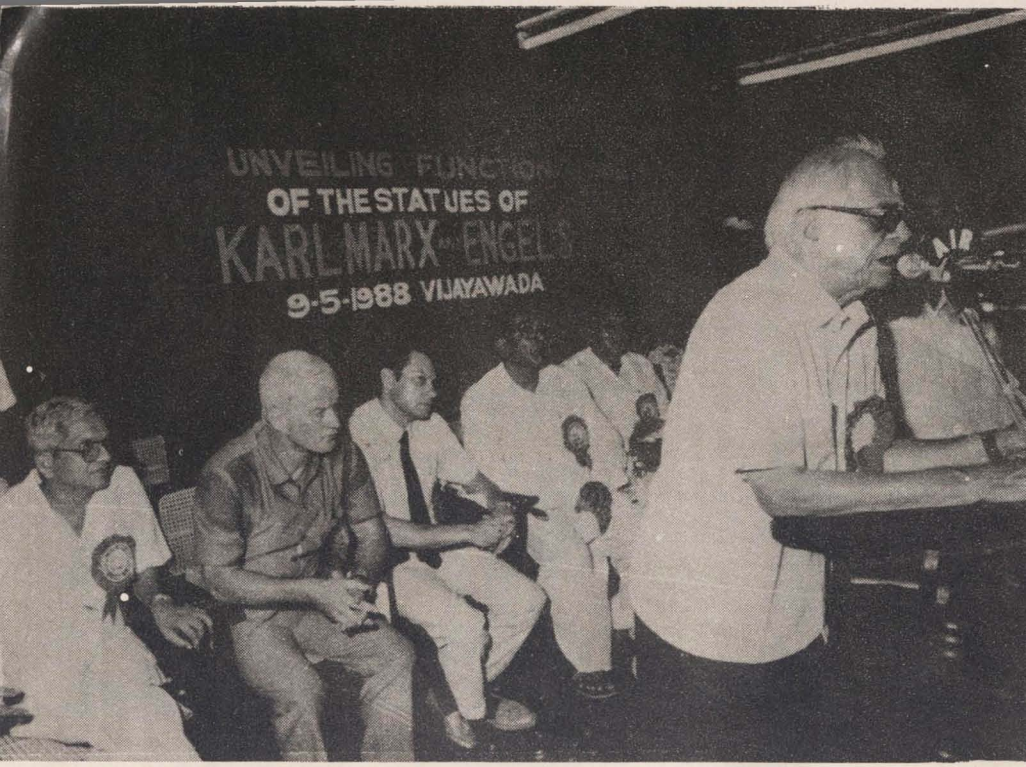
Com. B.T. Ranadive



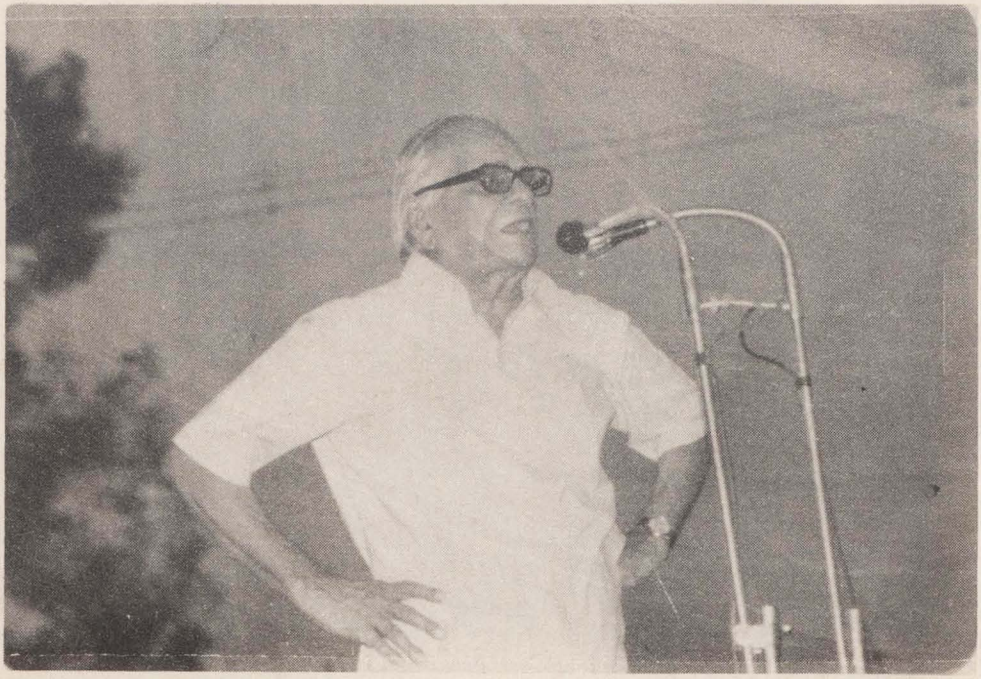
Addressing May Day Rally



Addressing Rally



Addressing Meeting



Addressing Rally



Addressing a Public Meeting



At Conference of the Steel Workers Federation of India



Addressing T.U. School—organised by Steel workers



Addressing Meeting



Addressing 6th Conference of CITU

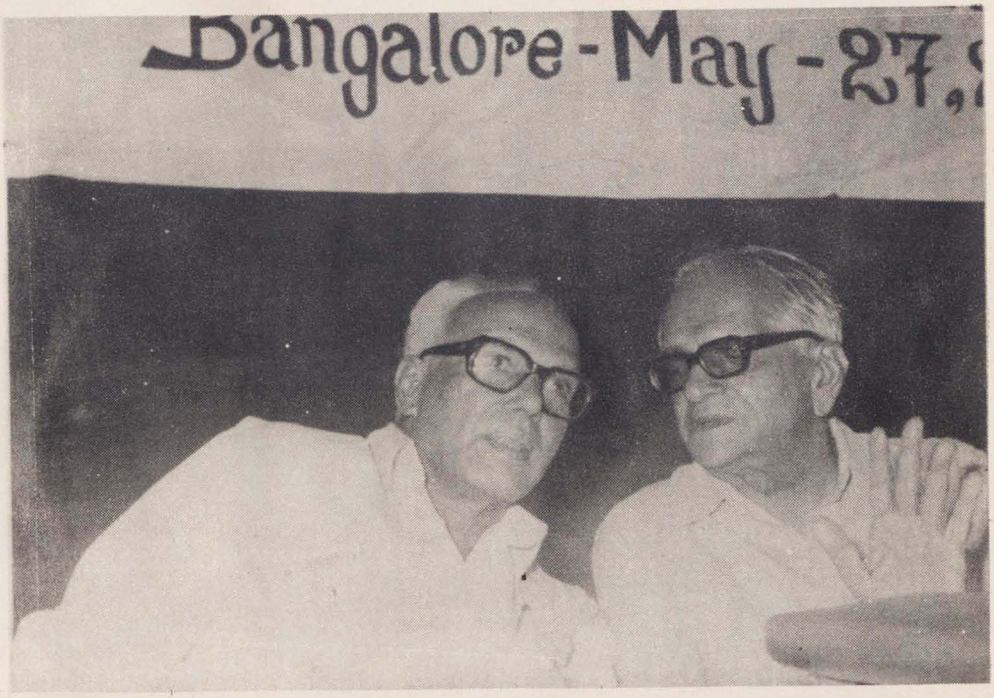


All India Public Sector Employees Meeting



With Com. Balanandan

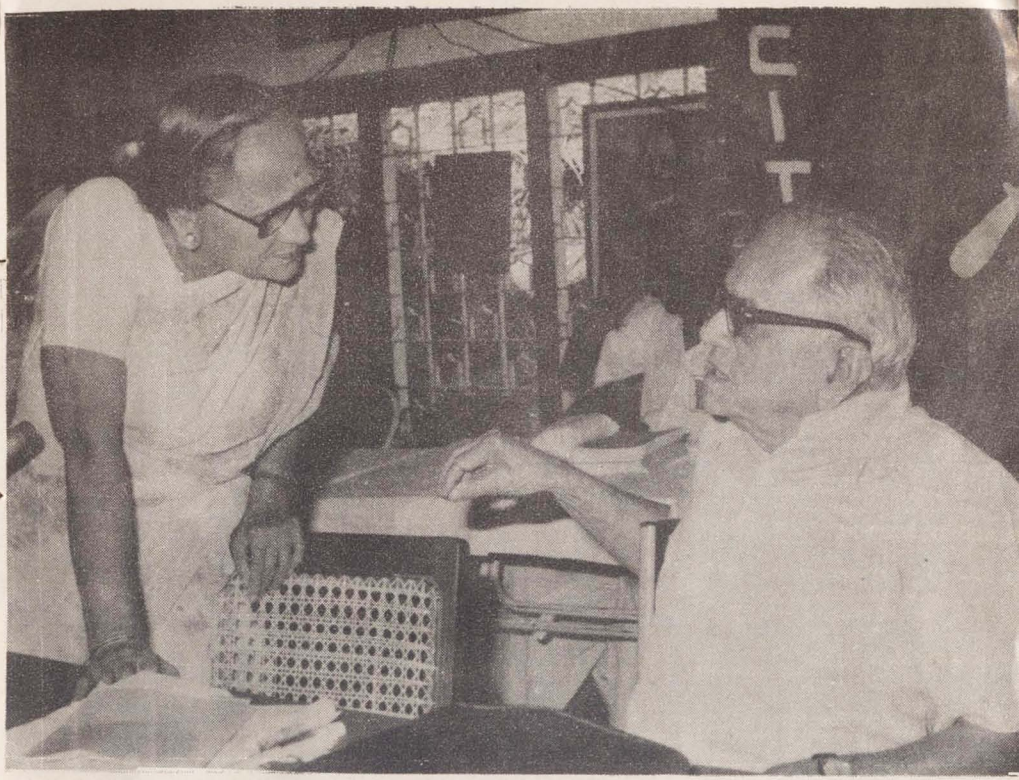
Presiding Over the CITU Conference



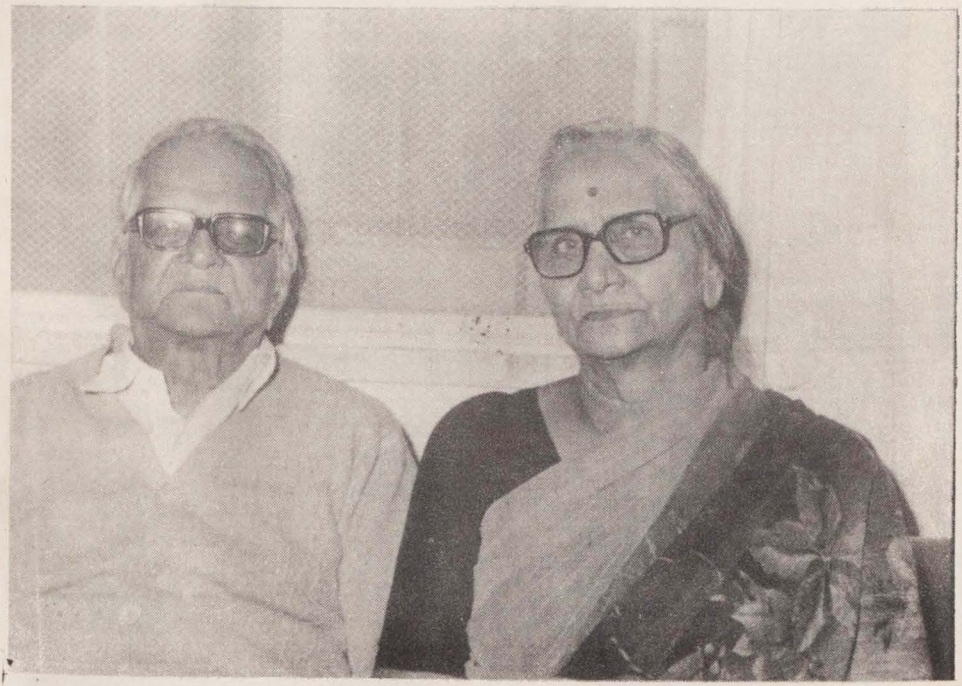
With Com. Samar Mukherjee



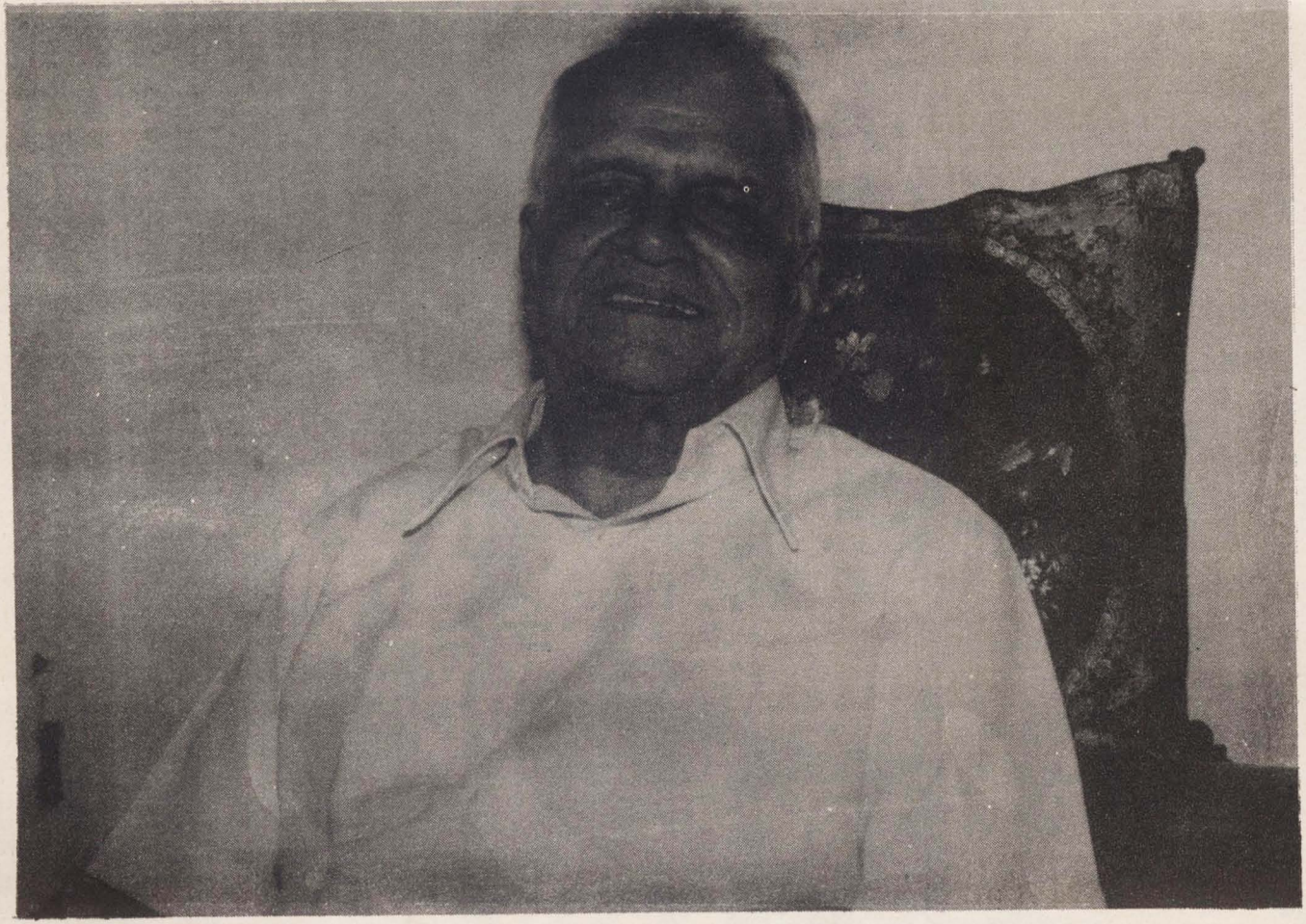
Addressing Meeting



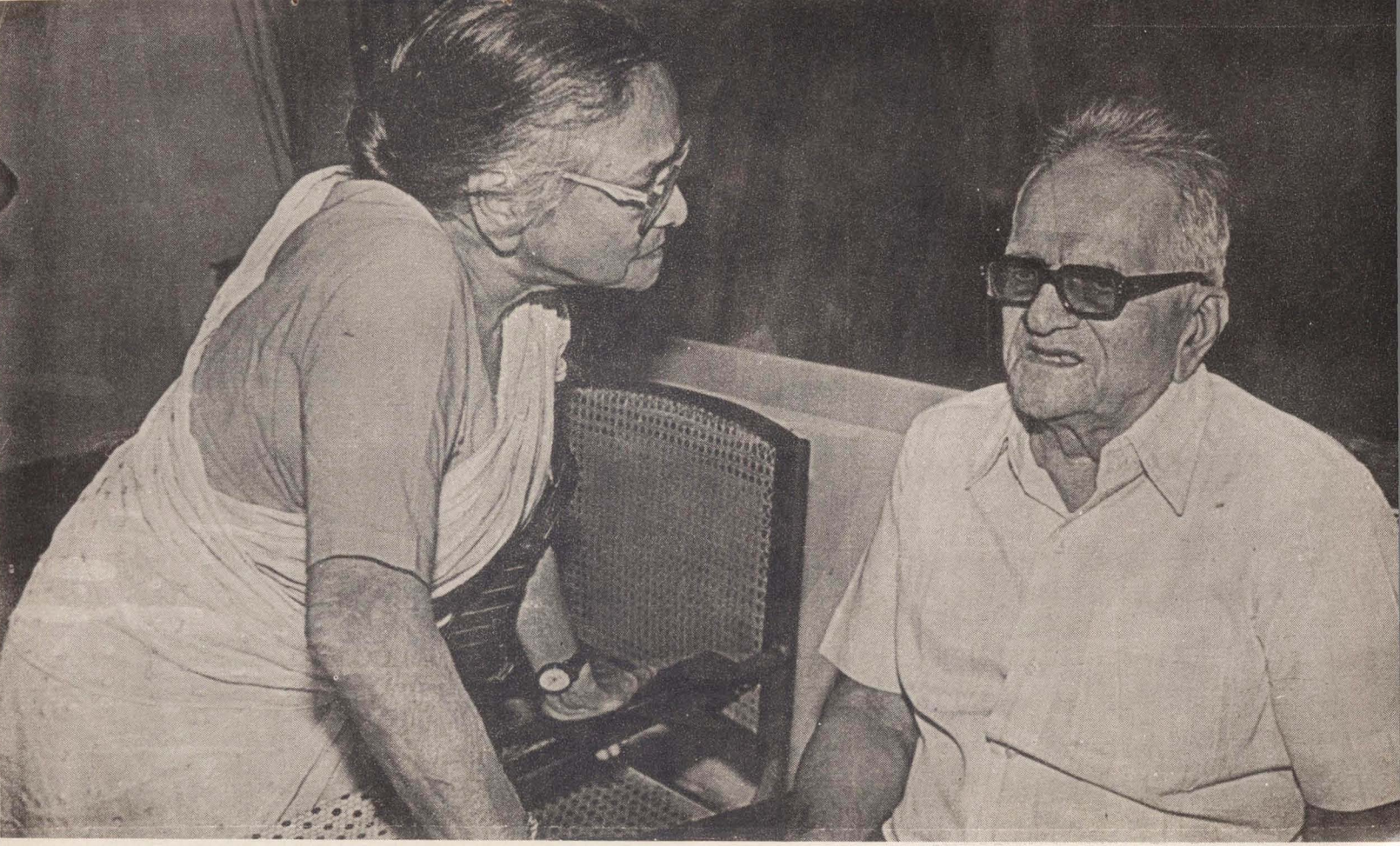
With wife Com. Vimala Ranadive



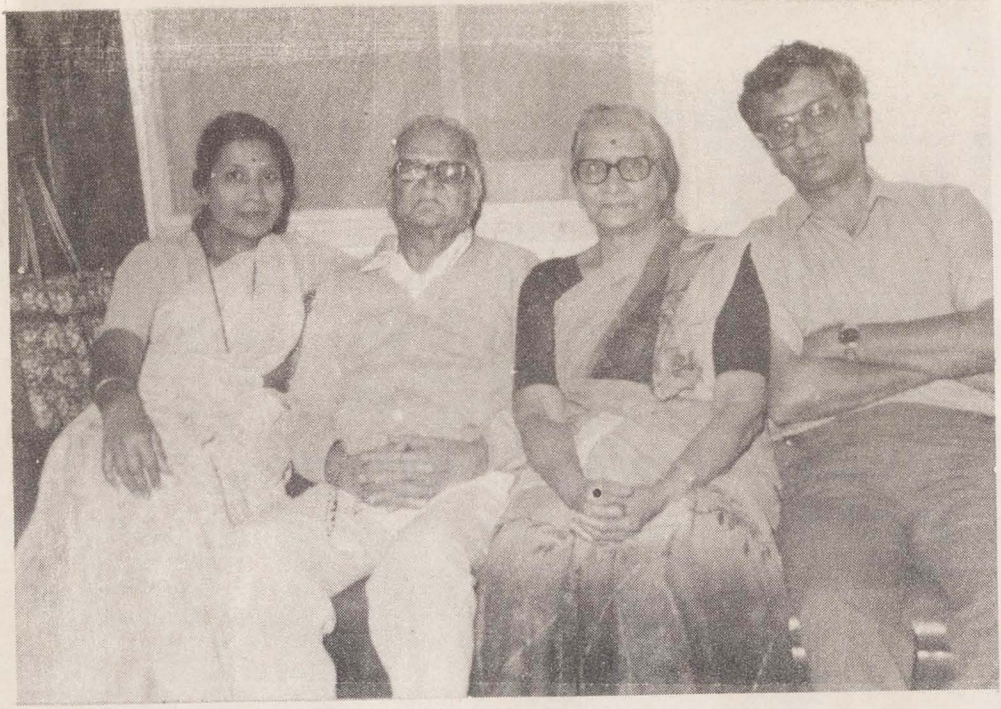
With Com. Vimala Ranadive



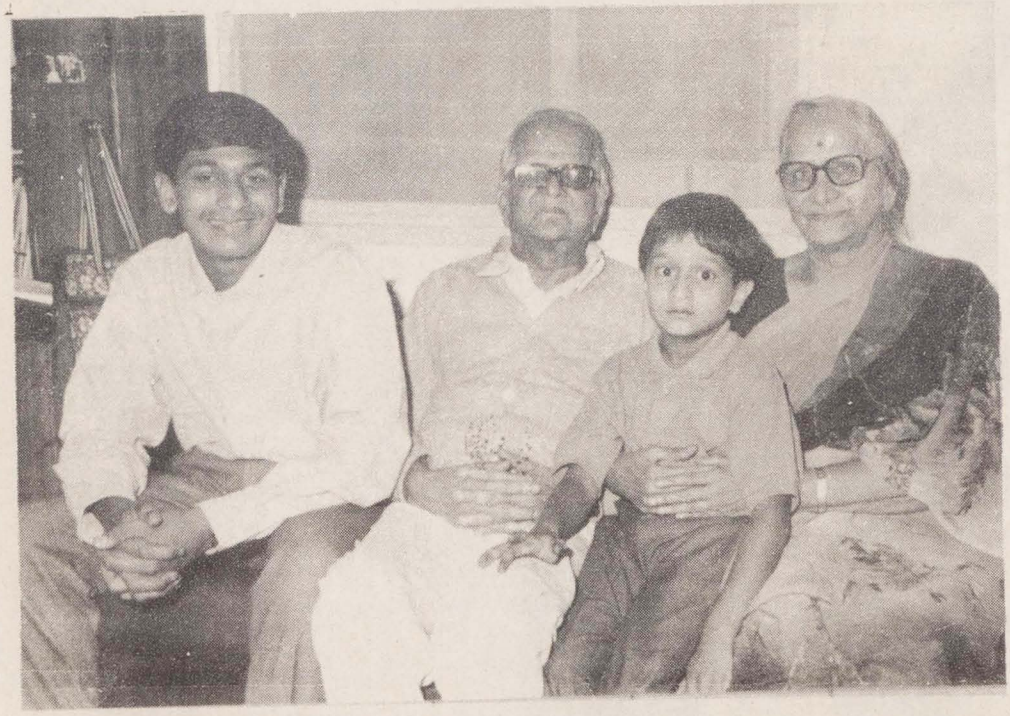
In a relaxing mood



With Sister Com. Ahilya Raganakar



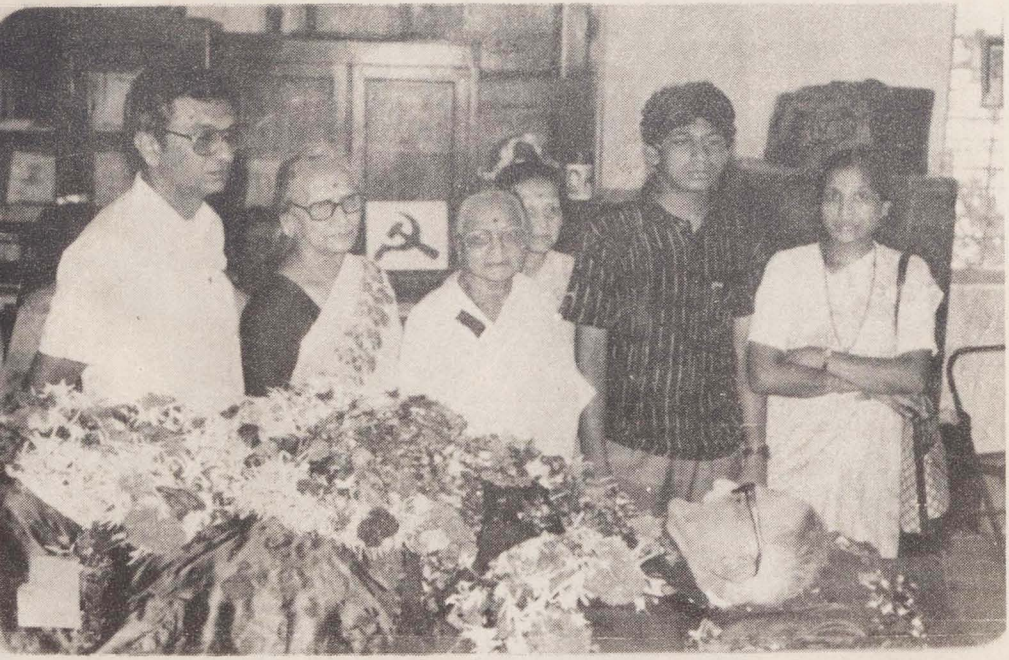
With wife, son & daughter-in-law



With wife & grand sons



The Last Journey



The Last Journey



The Last Journey

2

The Present Economic Situation In India

Indian economy has been experiencing a creeping paralysis for the last so many years. The situation tends to be temporarily relieved by a sudden favourable monsoon which increases agricultural and food production. But in recent years the capacity of agrarian production to offer resilience to the economy, to offer a temporary increased market to industry is going down and a permanent crisis of recession, over-production, euphemistically called under-utilisation of production capacity, has set in.

All the weaknesses of the capitalist path—the contradictions of building capitalism in an under-developed country—in the period of decay of capitalism—in alliance with landlord interests, in co-operation with imperialism and in collaboration with foreign monopolists—have burst forth in the sharpest form. These were hastened and accentuated by the pillaging process of public finance—financing and high taxation—a process which gathered on uncontrolled momentum in the last three or four years. This combined with the strong dependence on the Western capitalist countries, shaken by wild inflation and economic crisis, led in India to wild inflationary price spiral combined with widespread recession all over the economy. Notwithstanding the kudos from the World Bank and the self-advertisement of Indira Gandhi and her sycophants, the economy is still deep in the rut of recession, unable to solve the problems of the market, organise its expansion and utilise the full capacity in consumer goods as well as in means of

production.

This has led to an immense dependence both on foreign aid and more on Western markets. The limits of the home market having been reached the viability of the economy can only be maintained by reliance on exports of Western markets supplemented by help offered by Soviet Union and other Socialist countries for increased exports. This has enhanced the role of the World Bank, of agreement with the Western world and reliance on them. In fact, the World Bank has long been pressing India to oerientate her economy to exports and slow down and give up the programme of 'garibi hatao' and industrialisation.

Logically this has further led to growing relaxation of the control on foreign capital, delicensing, freedom to increase capacity, and increased promises to foreign capital. Above all, a race is on for partnership with Western foreign capital, for joint ventures abroad, for securing sub-contracts and export of capital to Asian and African countries strongly linked with the capitalist markets or under the direct influence of some Western countries. It has also led to opening of the Indian market to foreign imports in competition with home products or imports not urgently required.

The official measures to counteract recession consisted of direct attacks on the earnings of the working class and the salaried employees; mass loss of jobs, mass unemployment, lay-offs and retrenchment; freezing of wage and bonus agreements. They include forcible reduction of consumption of necessities of life—sugar, oil, food-grains, cloth through restricted supplies or high prices, also of milk, vegetables, fruits, etc.

For the rural masses the situation beggars description. Prices of all necessities of life are beyond their means. In spite of recession, cloth prices—even of controlled cloth—continues to be beyond the means of the rural masses. The much advertised bumper crop, has ruined many—the cotton and jute growers, the growers of jawar, Bajra; the small grower of all agricultural produce in one way or other have to face the burden of the crisis.

For the capitalists there have been one concession after another. Tax rates have been reduced, export subsidies have been lavishly given. Strikes have been banned. Lowering of dearness allowance by fraudulent manipulation of cost of living indices, and even outright wage reductions in certain cases and layoffs have been permitted. Excise relief, rebates, every type of conceivable conces-

sions have been given to the industrial capitalist class. The monopolists are not excluded from these concessions. Besides liberty to issue bonus shares, freedom to declare dividends and authorisation of unlimited capacity have been assured.

The landed interests have been allowed to escape with hardly any taxation on their huge incomes amassed, through high prices of foodgrains, and cornering. They have been the main beneficiaries of the thousand of crores spent on irrigation, rural electrification, credit loans; so far as the affluent sections are concerned, they are securing all these services at subsidised rates—the tax and cess they pay are far below the need of maintenance.

In its efforts to control diversion of capital, government has directed attack against trading and speculative capital—smugglers, blackmarketeers— and has also sued for a compromise with them. This paralled economy had become a threat to the bourgeois-landlord economy stiffling the sources of capital and diverting them to non-industrial speculative channels.

At the same time, in order to mobilise resources, control inflation and restrict consumption the Government has launched a drive against middle class incomes—professional doctors, lawyers, small traders and businessmen—large number of whom are harassed, their houses raided, for alleged tax evasion. Earnings of some are compulsorily impounded. Others are openly robbed to finance family planning, youth activists. The other counter-thrust is Government's effort to put some life in the finance, loans and consumer loans and grants to sections of the rural masses. This programme was pressed for and partly financed by the World Bank,—which is concerned with the growing discontent of the rural masses in all under-developed countries, and out of its fear of Communism has been pressing for some kind of land reforms and easing of the situation for the rural masses. This also meets the needs of the Indian bourgeoisie to enliven the rural market. However, the pitful results from all these manoeuvres are there for all to see.

Recession

The inflationary spiral of 1973, 1974, 1975 was accompanied by a growing slow-down of economy. Inflation—which was a systematic robbery of the people and a forcible transfer of purchasing power from the dispossessed to the possessing classes. This led to shrinkage of the internal market and could not but lead to the

downward process of the economy. Further, under conditions of a protected market, and with the exaggerated role of trading capital in India, it led to cornering, blakmarketeering, speculation and smuggling threatening the avenues of growing of industrial capital. Even industrialists, with their greed of quick money participated in this.

Counteracting measures were called for if the economy was not to be wrecked. They consisted first of all of attack on the working masses. Secondly, they consisted of an attack on tax evaders, speculative capital; and *thirdly of large-scale credit restriction measures which fell heavily on the lower sections of industrial capitalists,* though they were paraded as curbs on the growth of specualtion and balckmarketing activities. *The credit restrictions, and the high rate of interest affected building of inventories, the supply of working capital to smaller concerns; affected the flow of trading activity, among retailers and accentuated the recessionary tendencies.* The market which was already shrunk because of high prices now shrank still further with loss of jobs and with hardly any relief from the peak of high prices. The anti-inflationary measures of the Government, as elsewhere led to further depletion of the economy without offering much respite from high prices.

The Government brazen-facedly denied that there was recession. But facts were obvious. The following sums up the situation as it existed by the end of 1975. "Official statements notwithstanding it is now obvious that it is suffering not from 'recessionary trends in some pockets' but from a depression of unprecedented severity, one hundred and five out of 132 mini steel plants in the country are closed, but even so the integrated steel plants are saddled with nearly a million tonnes of steel. This is more than two months production. The stockpile of unsold aluminium is now in the neighbourhood of 24,000 tonnes—again almost two months' production. The automobile industry is working at hardly half its capacity, and partly as a result of this, there is glut of tyres in the market till the other day, is now saddled with unprecedented stocks. The wagon-builders, the machine tools plants, public enterprises like the Integral Coach Factory and the diesel locomotive works are receiving few new orders and many units have been found to have their rates of production. There is an emerging glut of cement, and the various coal mines authorities have been found to cut down their production to clear their mounting stocks."

By April 1976, the situation had further deteriorated. According to Dr. Hazari, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, recession was telling upon the public sector undertakings. For example, Bharat Heavy Electricals had no orders in hand for the Sixth Plan period. In fact it had nothing in hand for 1978.

One million tonnes of steel and 10 million tonnes of coal had piled up with no internal demand. There was also accumulation of 15 million tonnes of foodgrains in Government godowns, but it could not be said that the mass of agricultural workers and poor peasants were having two square meals a day. In fact, the overall rate of consumption has been falling. The jute and the cotton textile industries, the handloom employing lakhs, and a number of other industries like mini steel plants, engineering factories were in doldrums. The number of sick cotton mills exceed 100 and were supplemented by sick jute mills, sick tea gardens and sick engineering concerns.

"The accumulation of stocks of saleable still in the country has gone up considerably following substantial increase in production. According to official sources stocks which stood at only 4.75 lakhs on April 1, 1975 crossed the million mark by the end of the year and touched 11.5 lakh tonnes by the end of August last year. In the first five months of the current financial year production of saleable steel increased by 26 per cent, but the off-take increased from 1.1 million tonnes during April-August 1975 to 1.5 million tonnes only during the same period this year. In fact, the monthly average despatch from the steel plants under the Steel Authoritiy of India which was over 2.56 lakh tonnes during 1975-76 has come down to 2.43 lakhs tonnes during April-July this year. According to official circles the demand for saleable steel is likely to taper off."

The slow march of saleable steel is of course due to stagnation in industries—especially engineering industries. The engineering industry is far from being able to come anywhere near using its full production capacity, though it is claimed that the situation has somewhat improved as compared with last year.

A survey conducted by the Association of Indian Engineering Industry shows that (the survey covered 157 companies involving a total capital of Rs. 1,002 crores and employing 2.26 lakh people) that only only 54 per cent of the firms had a utilisation higher than 60 per cent in April 1976 while the rest had even lower utilisation. In October 1975 the percentage was 43 per cent. It further showed

that in the six months (October-April) only 39 per cent of the firms benefitted from rising orders while 26 suffered a decline. The convulsions of the jute industry are known—the workers and jute growers being the worst sufferers.

"This year Dusserah and Diwali festival season is yet to bring cheer to the cloth trade. The present situation is quite in contrast with the previous year when inquiries used to be steady and substantial business had been put through. According to reliable trade estimates Bombay market nurses stocks of 80,000 bales, while the Ahmedabad wholesale market one lakh bales, the total running to Rs. 60 crores."

How is it that inspite of the bumper harvest and Government godowns bursting with foodgrains, the recession is not lifting?—the demand for consumer goods—essential goods like cloth is also not increasing? The bumper has not added to the purchasing power of the vast rural masses. The astute trading and industrial circles are now realising it, though they are shy of pointing out that the main grabber is the land monopolist-cum-trader and rich farmer. "Trade and industry circles attribute the current malady to two main factors; in the first place they contend that the 15 per cent increase in foodgrain production has been completely wiped out by a fall of almost the same order in the prices of wheat, rice and cereals. What used to being the support prices has now become selling price in most cases, while in others the open market prices of some of these items are less than the statutory prices. This shows how successful official procurement is.

"Secondly, while the labour force has increased from 170 million in 1971 to 183.1 million in 1974, the index of real income of labour remained stationary at 103 between 1962 and 1972..... Experts opine that in spite of improvements in almost all sectors of the economy, disposable income has not increased; in fact, it may well have decreased. It is obvious from 1973 onwards real incomes went down.

In face of this reality what importance can one attach to Govt. claims about the non-existence of a recession or the Reserve Bank's statement "the year 1975-76 would be characterised as a year in which it has been possible to put the economy back on its normal growth path." It is known that the favourable monsoon and 8 percent growth in agricultural production are the main constituents of the 5.5 per cent growth rate of 1975-76 and the growth in

industrial production has been accompanied by stock accumulation.

The Economic Survey 1975-76 points out that the rate of growth of national income during the Fourth Plan averaged only 3.3 per cent. According to the quick Estimates of National Income the rate of growth was only 0.2 per cent for 1974-75. the 1975-76 estimate is 5.5. per cent. The position over the years can be seen from the following:

National Income at Constant (1960-61) Prices

	P.C. change over previous year
1969-70	6.5
1970-71	5.2
1971-72	1.8
1972-73	—1.5
1973-74	5.0
1974-75	0.2
1975-76	5.5

Foodgrains production, notwithstanding a sudden rise in a year, has shown a declining growth rate over a period. "It was also evident at the time that, even if the output realised in 1973-74 was as high as the original estimate of 114 million tonnes, the compound rate of growth of foodgrains output in the period 1964-65 to 1973-74 would be only 2.5 per cent per annum compared to the rate of 2.9 per cent per annum achieved in the period of 1952-53 to 1964-65. In other words, despite the impressive growth of output of some foodgrains after the middle sixties, particularly of wheat, the rate of output of foodgrains as a whole was clearly lower in the period associated with the Green Revolution in India than in the period preceding it. It is now estimated that the bumper harvests of 1975-76 are likely to yield an output of 118 million tonnes of foodgrains. However if it turns out to be correct, the rate of growth of foodgrains output recorded over the period of 1964-65 to 1975-76 would still be no more than 2.6 per cent per annum. i.e., lower than the earlier period.

The existing semi-feudal land relations exercise a veto over a rapid development of foodgrains production and dictate a slowdown of the rate. The alliance with landlords demands a heavy price in the shape of perpetual agrarian crisis and impoverishment of the vast majority of peasant and agricultural labourers.

Imports of foodgrains also have started rising again. They reached

a peak of 10.36 million tonnes in 1966, gradually diminished to 0.45 million tonnes in 1972 and again started rising, they were 3.6 million tonnes in 1973; 4.87 million tonnes in 1974 and 7.41 million tonnes in 1975.

Per capita availability of foodgrains—cereals and pulses shows a downward trend and has been generally below the level reached in 1961. That level was exceeded only once—in the year 1971. For the rest during the last 15 years availability has gone down.

Per capita availability per day of cereals and pulses	**Ounces**
1961	16.53
1969	15.71
1970	16.05
1971	16.55
1972	16.48
1973	14.97
1974	15.97
1975	14.65

It may be noted that in 1956 per capita availability was 15.20 ounces.

Source: Economic Survey 1975-76

The same story is told about other essentials of life:

	Per capita availability			
	Edible Oils Kgs.	Vanaspati	Sugar Nov-Oct. Kgs.	Cotton cloth metres
1961-3.2	3.2	0.7	5.8	14.8
1970-71	3.5	1.0	7.3	13.6
1971-72	3.0	1.1	6.7	12.4
1972-73	2.4	1.0	6.1	13.2
1973-74	3.4	0.8	6.0	12.0
1974-75	3.2	0.6	5.8	12.9

Ibid.

In some of these years the Government was boasting of huge exports of some of these commodities—like cloth, sugar etc.

The manufacturing industry and industrial development have come up against the barrier of the limitation of the home market. Import substitution was the polite synonym for capturing the home market and keeping out foreign competition by the use of state power—a legitimate measure to satisfy the aspiration of many rising bourgeoisie and for the development of an underdeveloped country. The talk of self-reliance, economic freedom

was parimarily addressed to this need. But rate of industrial growth could show a rising trend only for some time. For, in an under-developed country, the limits of the home and increasing collaboration with imperialism supplement the process of capitalist devastation. The rate of industrial growth must start going down. "In the period before 1964-65, the output of manufacturing industries as whole could grow at a much faster rate than would have been possible on the basis of the rate of growth of agricultural output alone. This was mainly because many metallurgical and chemical industries were being rapidly expanded to reduce imports. But the process of import substitution was to a large extent completed by the middle sixties and consequently the rate of growth of output of manufacturing industries has been significantly lower since then. According to the available data on indices on industrial production, it grew at a compound rate of nearly 7 per cent per annum in the period of 1950-61 and about 9 per cent in the period of 1961-65, but declined to about 3.25 per cent per annum in the period 1965-70 and less than 3 per cent per annum in the period 1970-74."

The semi-feudal agrarian relations and the capitalist path having denied the minimum purchasing power to the rural masses and minimised the need for re-organisation of agrarian technique, the development of the market has to be sought in the needs of higher classes—what the bourgeois economists call "catering to the needs of elitist consumption." That means the market is reduced to a thin narrow strata of 5 per cent or so of the population. "The only way of getting out of the contradiction imposed by the pace of agricultural growth on industrial expansion is to concentrate on manufacturing industries which neither depend very much on growth of demand from the mass of population nor require agricultural raw material to any extent. The conversions are satisfied by many metallurgical and chemical industries catering to the requirements of the higher income groups in our society."

But even this market is too limited and it was found that the limited production capacity built to cater to the needs of this section could not be fully utilised. Factories were closed; production was cut down; industries languished and rate of growth slowed down. To divert attention the problem was presented as if it was only a question of will to use the capacity and everything will be alright.

The Export—A New Talisman

This is having a tremendous impact on official policies, on the policies of the capitalist class. The new watchword, the new talisman is exports—which means link yourself more firmly to the world market especially the capitalist market. Of late the Government of India and its spokesmen have been parading their exploits in exports as great triumphs of the economy. This orientation of Indian economy towards exports, to keep the existing industrial units viable is a new menacing feature as it increases the dependence of our economy on Western countries.

In the past also there was a certain emphasis on exports. But then exports were primarily meant for paying off the imports bill. Today apart from paying for imports, exports have become a necessity for many industries to maintain their viability. Unless the unutilised capacity is used in a large measure to export their products many units have to close down.

The great strides made in exports are seen from the following:

Value of exports

	(in crores of Rupees)
1971-72	1608.2
1972-73	1970.8
1973-74	2523.4
1974-75	3304.1
1975-76(Apr-Sept)	1728.3

This progress in exports was not however a one-sided beneficial affair. India had to pay a high price, though she tried to take advantage of the inflationary conditions in the Western countries. These mounting exports were accompanied by an enormous imports bill—the prices of imports outstripping the price of Indian exports.

Value of imports

	(in Crores of Rs.)
1971-72	1824.5
1972-73	1867.4
1973-74	2955.4
1974-75	4468.1
1975-76 (June-Dec)	3808.3

The exports were a kind of compulsion to meet the rising imports bill. The adverse terms can be seen from the following. In 1974-75, the quantum of exports went up by 6.4 per cent, while its value went up by 31 per cent. The quantum of imports in the period declined by 12.3 per cent, but its value went up by 51.2 per cent. The crisis of capitalist economy abroad, and the restrictive measures taken by the Governments of the advanced capitalist countries led to a certain fall in export prices, forcing India to export more goods even at lower prices or exporting goods not previously exported in large quantities (sugar etc.) with the aid of huge export subsidies, cutting the Indian costs of production at the expense of the workers and financing underselling of Indian goods through the State Trading Corporation.

The cost of the people of this compulsory exports has to be realised. They were made compulsory because of the rising import bill. To meet the imports cost, any article which could fetch a price abroad was exported. An essential commodity like sugar was denied to the Indian people, they were kept on short rations and huge quantities were exported. "The largest contribution to the increase in India's exports was made by sugar. Exports of sugar in this year were Rs. 339 crores, i.e., about eight times the 1973-74 level of Rs. 42.7 crores. This increase was the combined result of a rise of 189 per cent in unit value as well as 175 per cent in quantum of exports." In 1974-75,695,000 tonnes of sugar were exported-which means 14 to 15 per cent of total production was sold abroad. During April-September 1975-76 431.3 thousand tonnes were exported and total for the year is confidently expected to reach a Million tonnes.

Another article of consumption which is earning more than Rs. 100 crores is sea food, export of fish. Indian diet is notoriously lacking in animal protein and yet a huge quantity is being exported. The poor Indians under Congress rule cannot afford to taste fish. These exports besides are subsidised at the expense of the common man which lowers his purchasing power still more and thus accentuating the crisis of the domestic market. According to the revised estimates of 1975-76 budget grants and exports promotion schemes including cash subsidies etc. amounted to Rs. 274 crores. Under the 1976-77 budget proposals the amount is likely to reach Rs. 290 crores. The announcements and concessions made since then have gifted away many more crores than Rs. 300 crores to the exporters

accompanied by the impounding of Rs. 1,000 crores belonging to the toiling workers sums up the policy. "The value of these direct incentives has gone up from 4 per cent of total exports in 1969-70 to 7.1 per cent in 1975-76. In fact if these incentives are related to export earnings from the specific commodities to which they apply, their proportion would turn out to much higher in most cases.... in innumerable cases the effective rate of subsidy is ridiculously high—exceeding say, 50 to 70 per cent of the net foreign exchange earning—resulting in sheer waste of resources." This underselling and exports at throw-away prices is leading to colossal losses and is evoking strong criticism from bourgeois papers. "In most industries therefore exports can only be increased if the manufacturers are prepared to accept throw-away prices. This is highlighted by the fact that in a recent export order the Government was able to obtain just over Rs. 900 per tonne for mild steel—the Government will do well to realise that exporting the very commodity during a worldwide recession that it has been importing at the height of inflation is the essence of bad economic management. Only two years ago the country was paying Rs. 2,800 per tonne of imported steel. Today it is exporting it for a third of the price. In 1973-74, it imported aluminum for Rs. 10,000/- a tonne, but today it will be lucky to secure export contracts at two fifth of the price. In the same way the country will be forced to sell more than two tonnes of paper abroad to pay for every one tonne it imported two years ago. Not even rich countries can afford such a colossal drain of wealth."

This is the story behind India's rising exports. They express unequal terms of trade, they express exploitation and deprivation of the Indian people and the dependence of India's economy on the world market. They are necessary to maintain the required imports and above all necessary to keep the economy running. Notwithstanding the fact that the Government boasts of increased exports in non-traditional goods—exports running into 500 to 600 crores of rupees and exports of steel and other goods—the story behind them is not one of a prosperous economy selling its goods abroad, but a poor country compelled to deliver its products at throw-away prices. Exports have now become the basis of survival for the big capitalists.

This necessity is leading to certain important changes in the economic policies of the Government. It is in the first place leading to

further dependence on the West, a greater integration with the capitalist world market with relations with Socialist countries abating rigour and pace.

Thirdly, it is leading to releasing of controls over Indian big capital, further concessions to the private sector, the collapse of the formal anti-monopoly acts, opening of new avenues to the monopolists and big business and export subsidies to them. Above all the desperate need to enter foreign markets is leading to efforts to build joint ventures abroad, export of capital, sub-contracting with foreign monopoly firms in third countries. This is creating few economic interests, new economic allies. The content of the entire proces, of exports and imports, of offering concessions at home and seeking them abroad, is the striving for collaboration and partnership with foreign monopoly capital, though it is also accompanied by similar measures and concessions to Socialist countries. New relations with some of the Third World countries where Indian capital seeks to establish some industries with the rising native capitalists are also emerging. A new phenomenon of joint ventures with Socialist countries in Third World countries is arising. Subcontracting in joint projects in Third World countries is also being offered to India by Socialist countries. However, the pull of the Western capitalist market is stronger since the rich West Asian oil markets including South East Asian are largely controlled by them.

In the first place, exports of non-traditional items like coal, textile and sugar, machinery, other engineering goods, railway wagons, locos, are being pushed. They are sent to West Asian, African and South East Asian countries—a large number of them are under the influence of the Western powers. Iran and some other oil countries, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Phillipines, Bangla Desh, etc., are strongly linked with the West. Besides some anti-traditional goods are exported to Western countries also. All this requires a quid pro quo—corresponding concessions to Western capitalists—either for their products or their investment in India. A couple of instances may be cited. The efforts to promote exports of leather goods has led to proposals for tie-ups with foreign capital, joint ventures with Italy in the field of leather goods and ready-made garments may become a reality. For Italians the allurement is cheap Indian labour. "Thus Italian shoe manufacturers find Indian conditions ideal as labour is cheap and the level of craftsmanship is fairly high". Foreign collaboration is encouraged in fishing

also.

Tomato paste, apple concentrates, gramaphone records, leather shoes and particualr gift articles are among the fields in which foreign collaboration proposals involving foreign equity were approved last year. Export obligation in most cases is limited to a period of five to 15 years and forms a percentage of total production.

The retreat on the application of Foreign Exchange Regulation Act under the pressure of multinationals and the various other concessions given to them all betoken to the necessity for wooing them for without their goodwill and protective umbrella, at least the umbrella of their governments, India's export drive cannot be successful.

In this drive for market joint ventures occupy an important place. This was spelt by the Commerce Minister Shri D.P. Chattopadhyaya in the Lok Sabha on 3rd of May 1975. There are joint ventures with local bourgeoisie; joint ventures with Western capitalists in Third World countries, and joint ventures with Soviet Union and other Socialist countries in the Third World.

India's big capitalists also realise that mere export of commodities, traditional or otherwise, is not enough. They are out for subcontracting to secure market for their products. Apart from export of goods, considerable scope also exists for exports of consultancy services, turn-key projects and undertaking other large value contracts and for sub-contracting arrangements between Indian and developed country firms, especially in West Asia in the fields of construction and engineering" (Draft Resolution on Role of Exports—Annual session of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce.)

On April 7, Mr. Maurya, Minister of State for Industry, told the Lok Sabha that advanced countries like the USA, Canada and France have made proposals for joint ventures. He said that up to the end of March 1976, 12 proposals had been received for setting up joint ventures in Canada, Indonesia, Muscat, Dubai, the U.S., Kenya, France, Malaysia and Abu Dhabi.

In March, the Union Commerce Minister specially pointed out the joint areas of collaboration. They include Africa, Asia and Latin America, especially the West Asian countries, with substantial oil resources. In May he said that 268 joint ventures abroad had been cleared involving an investment of Rs. 40 crores in the form of

capital goods exports. The Annual Report of the Ministry of Commerce for 1975-76 looks upon these ventures as instruments for keeping a permanent hold over the export market. "Besides the usual advantages of providing a ready market for the capital goods, recurring exports of raw materials, semi-processed manufactures, spare parts and components—investment on **the joint ventures abroad effectively serve to retain the export market and open new areas for export.**" (Emphasis added)

Joint ventures with Western capitalists, joint ventures with local capitalists of Third World countries, sub contracting in these countries, and direct securing of huge orders for construction of factories, building of railways, air terminus, civic construction—for jobs which do not require sophisticated skills or equipment—these are the new instruments of products exports to utilise industrial capacity built up.

But a number of these countries are firmly tied to the West and India's progress in securing contracts and joint ventures depends on how far she succeeds in placating the Western powers. Besides some of these governments are notoriously anti-people. They have dictatorial regimes. Iran, the oil sheikhdoms, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, South Korea and a number of other countries belong to this category.

India's recent advances in securing big orders from some of these countries are to be viewed from this angle. They are drawing her into the questionable company of countries who seek firm integration with the capitalist markets and are under the influence of imperialist powers.

How these orders and contracts some times directly impose American firms on India is seen from the conditions of Kudremukh (Horse's face in Kannada) Joint Project. Iran has committed a huge loan of $ 630 million to this project and India has guaranteed to supply 120 million tonnes of iron ore to Iran over twenty years. This is the first big investment of petro-dollars in India. It was extolled as shining example of Indo-Iranian co-operation. But now it seems that the Americans are all over the place. A wholly owned subsidiary of U.S. Steel, the biggest steel company in the U.S., Met-chem consultants of Montreal, has been appointed "mining associates and engineering consultants" of the project. It is to be responsible for planning, design, engineering, procurement services, project management and supervision. Not merely that, it will also be

responsible for operating the plant during the first three years of production— It is clear that Met-chem or rather U.S. Steel has been awarded a turnkey contract. This is sub-contracting in your own country.

It is significant to note in this background that India and Iran have a number of joint ventures in action or on the anvil. There is a proposal for processing alumina in Gujarat with the help of Iranian firms for export to that country. Other schemes include the establishment of captive sugar plants in India for Iran; for supply of automobile ancillaries and the setting up of a textile machinery plant. A joint shipping venture is already in operation. On May 14 India and Iran signed a protocol in Bombay envisaging further co-operation in setting up plants in Iran for processing alumina, joint ventures for the production of refinery and paper manufacturing facilities.

Utilising her bargaining position between the two camps India is able to secure big orders and contracts from a few Third World countries friendly to the USSR. She has secured a contract worth Rs. 900 crores in Iraq. She is also entering a bid for another contract worth Rs. 1400 crores for the construction of a railway line.

India's economic collaboration with Libya is already worth Rs. 100 crores. In March this year the Deputy Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Bipin Pal Das, stated that already some 1600 Indian experts were working in Libya on a number of projects from the building of Rs. 40 crores Airport Project to the setting up of a modern textile mill.

The Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and others have entered into contracts for lifting the products of India's steel industry, engineering and electronic industries and offer sub-contracting to India in the Third World countries. India is avidly seizing every opportunity since her domestic market is clogged and she is unable to use her productive capacity. This is how the ruling classes try to find a way out of their inability to utilise their installed capacity for the consumption of the Indian people. It will make the Indian economy an appendage of outside forces; its complete dependence on the West being some what delayed and reduced by its ties with the Socialist world. In any case the present export orientation is at the cost of the Indian masses. And it opens the danger of growing domination of the economy by Western countries and its greater integration with the capitalist world market.

Control of Prices

If export drive is a major component of official attempts to get out of the crisis and stabilise the economy, other steps include inflation control attacks against the people and attempts to ease the situation for sections of the masses by giving them relief at the expense of other employees.

Unable to control deficit financing, the Congress Government landed the economy into the worst kind of inflationary spiral with prices rising in one year by more than 30%. By 1973-74, the rate of inflation has reached 27%. The situation was further accentuated by the mounting inflation in the capitalist countries with whose Indian economy is linked and the hike in oil prices, demanded by the oil producing countries. The rise in the price of oil contributed to the strengthening of the spiral. But this also meant further robbery of the people, lowering the wages, salaries and earnings of the mass of people and transferring them to the capitalists, landlords, traders, speculators and the Government. It meant again a shrinkage in the market demand.

The inflationary spiral reached a point beyond which it could not be allowed to go. The Government with great demagogy went in for its so-called anti-inflationary measures which once more meant an attack on the earnings of the toilers. They involved a hunge withdrawal of purchasing power from the working class and employees by way of compulsory deposits of additional D.A. and wages, delay of D.A. payments, attack on bonus, *huge taxation against all sections of the people including the rural masses, inflation of transport rates, electricity rates, petrol prices, bus charges and so on, all in the name of bringing down the price level.* The price level did not come down—only the rate of rise was brought down— but the purchasing power of people was drastically reduced. People had to purchase at virtually the same prices with reduced incomes—an invitation to demand slump and recession.

In 1974-75 alone, the Governments—Central and State together raised taxes by more than Rs. 1,000 crores. The Central taxation measures including increased railways fares, freight rates and postal rates amounted to additional taxation of Rs. 690 crores in 1974-75 and Rs. 935 crores in a full year. The additional burdens imposed by the State Governments amounted to Rs. 358 crores. (RBI Annual Report and Trend and Progress of Banking, p. 10, 12).

"These resource mobilisation efforts were further reinforced by

another set of measures designed to mop up additional purchasing power; impounding a one-half additional dearness allowance and almost of all of any other wage or salary increases, ceiling on the amount of distributable profit and compulsory savings for tax payers in the higher income brackets." (P. 2).

The compulsory deposit of additional D.A. and wage alone involved withdrawal of more than Rs. 200 crores of purchasing power. The latest bonus ordinance deprives the workers of another Rs. 200 crores of purchasing power. The denial of bonus to bank employees, and others adds to the sum. The high prices and taxation measures denuded the rural masses. The wages of the agricultural workers were not raised for years with the prices rising in an inflationary spiral. The implementation of the Minimum Wages Act was farcical in relation to the agricultural workers as well as to other categories. The cost of living index was manipulated to lower D.A. Is it any wonder that this huge denudation of the purchasing power of the common mass should cause a slump in the demand especially for consumer goods and the recession should spread all over the country. If today, recessionary tendenices are in evidence with lay-offs, closures, inability to utilise full capacity of industries it is the Government that is directly reponsible for it.

At the same time the question is, how far has the Government succeeded in bringing down prices and giving relief to the people? It is notorious that the officially announced reduction in wholesale prices not reflected in the retail prices. But even the course of wholesale prices shows that the Government by and large has failed to bring down prices to a level that common people can afford in spite of the successive bumper harvests and they continue to be at a high level putting the necessaries of life beyond the reach of the people. Government claims success for its policies by comparing prices with only the prices prevailing at the peak of inflation but does not refer to the earlier period when inflation started mounting. At best the Government can claim that they moderated the rate of inflation and nothing more.

The real situation can be grasped if we compare the present price level with the pre-inflation year, and the first year of inflation.

Index number of wholesale prices on base 1961-62=100 was 207.1 in 1972-73 before inflation started in right earnest. In 1973-74 after one year of inflation it rose to 254.3; and in 1974-75 the peak

year it reached 313.7. How have the prices behaved in 1975 when the full force of official measures was seen? Though helped by good harvests the fall has been just a small percentage below the peak but they are nowhere near the pre-inflation year or the first year of inflation. Between January 1975 and October 1975 Index of wholesale prices oscillated between 315.8 and 308.0, i.e. the lowest level reached was only five points lower than the peak of 1974-75 (313.7) and 64 points higher than 1973-74. At the end of March 1976 the index number of wholesale prices fell to 282.9 or still 64.4 points or 30% above the level at the end of March 1973 when the current spell of inflation started. But again prices started rising.
The September 25 index at 314.4 was higher compared to the index for the corresponding week of last year when it stood at 306.0 and was higher than the average of 313.4 for the peak year of 1974-75.

Price control for Government means maintaining prices at nearly the high peak of 1974 and that is what it has so far succeeded in. And now prices have started rising.

The same story is told of the Consumers' Price Index Number (Industrial workers—base 1960-100) the General Index was 207 for the year 1972-73, 250 for 1973-74 and 317 for 1974-75. For the year 1975 between April and September the index was higher than in 1974-75 and ranged between 323 and 319. Only towards the end of the year it was lower than the peak year. By December it was 306. In April 1976, it was 289; in May it was 290; in June 291 and in July 297. At 297 it was 47 points higher than in 1973-74 and only 20 points lower than the peak of 1974-75. Besides it should be realised the working class cost of living Index was manipulated in recent months beyond the usual manipulations to suit the needs of the Government and the employers.

In 1975-76 upto February 1976 the expansion of money supply has been of the order of 6.7 percent as compared to an increase of 4.1 percent in the corresponding period of 1974.75.

Notwithstanding strict credit rationing and high interest rates the current year is witnessing further expansion. "The increase in money supply during the current finacial year upto the end of August 1976 at Rs. 846 crores or 6.7 percent has been double the increase of Rs. 402 crores or 3.5 percent in the corresponding period of 1975-76. It is important to note that during 1975-76 financial year money supply has increased by 9.7 percent. On present reckoning during the current financial year money supply may increase by 14

or 15 percent.

The necessity of artificially pushing up the economy demands credit and monetary expansion making nonsense of price control. *At the same time the expansion had to be selective which meant ruin for the smaller firms and clogging of trade channels at the lower level.* The new expansion at the same time raised fears of a further inflationary spiral and offical policy sought to make the credit still more selective. Once more the capitalist class in India is facing the same problem. Increased industrial activity means fear of inflation; countinuing inflation means more unemployment and unused productive capacity.

The 20-Point Programme and the Crisis

Apart from an attempt to reforge Congress links with the vast rural electorate, the twenty-points programme in part is a manoeuvre against the criris. Politically it keeps up Congress pretensions of working for the downtrodden while it openly attacks the earnings and incomes of the working class and the middle class employees saying they are privileged people in comparison to the agricultural labourers. At the same time, it is intended to serve a certain essential purpose, that of bolstering the market, the purchasing power of the rurals. Experience of 1966 was that the gains of a bumper harvest were dissipated in paying back the debts of rural money-lenders and the demand for cloth and other commodities did not pick up.

Besides it has to be remembered that the 20-point programme or a substantial part of it has its genesis in the demand of the World Bank. The World Bank financiers are afraid of the rising discontent of the rural masses and have been demanding of their clients they take certain steps for land reforms, and certain other measures to combat communism. Hence there has been insistence on more attention to agriculture—India was also repeatedly told to pay more attention to rural areas and pay less attention to grandiose industrial projects. Mr. Mac Namara's passionate plea for the poor was part of this policy of insuring against the revolt of the rural poor. He asked developing nations to make a strong commitment to internal policy reforms to secure wider distribution of growth benefit. They should increase food production, moderate population growth and direct social services more equitably towards the poor."

Some bourgeois paper have not been slow in estimating the sig-

nificance of this new type of aid. "The Government of India has put up for World Bank Aid for 21 major and minor irrigation projects estimated to cost as much as Rs. 2,200 crores—The role of foreign aid in this context is vastly different—Project and programmes in the field of agricultrue do not require large imports—a good part of the foreign aid for these purposes is thus a cover for their rupee costs—The implication of a heavy reliance on the latest form of foreign aid for agriculture, irrigation and rural credit can be far-reaching and ominous—Foreign exchange thus secured will tend to obscure the real extent of foreign trade and payments gaps.

"There is another aspect of the form of aid which has been examined in some detail in Yojana Bhavan. A note on the subject prepared in Yojana Bhavan pointed out some time ago that foreign experts have to be associated with aid financed projects and programmes. The aid for such projects is always pre-conceived notions. The aid for such projects is always subject to matching contributions from the budgetary resources or financing institutions in India. This results in a significant portion of available resources being tied to aided projects, in preference to others which might have otherwise enjoyed priority. This has its own implication for the pattern of development. There is also a tendency for over-mechanisation and excessive use of trained manpower and sophisticated equipment. The impact on the attitudes of high officials and their engagement in frequent conferences with visiting World Bank officials and experts is an imponderable which requires separate attention in this context." (Embarrassment of Riches by B.M. in Economic & Political Weekly, dated September 18, 1976.)

However, the 20-point programme also serves the immediate needs of the ruling party and the bourgeoise against the crisis. It gets complete support of the capitalist class since it does not contain any demand addresssed to them. On the other hand, the declaration on the Radio on June 27, 1975, two days before the announcement of the 20-point programme and some items of the programme like liberalising the licensing procedures are directly in their interest. Secondly, in so far as it is implemented it will serve to ease the market situation for the capitalists. Within the framework of bourgeois-landlord alliance it seeks to give relief to the lower sections of the rural masses at the expense of the big landlords by enforcing laws on land ceiling and minimum agricultural wages. This beto-

kens to a certain strain between the two ruling partners, with the one trying to improve its position at the expense of the other.

Of late the strain has been developing in a somewhat accentuated form. The Central Government and its spokesmen are repeatedly pointing out that the cesses and taxes paid by this gentry for irrigation and electricity do not cover even maintenance expenses; that they can easily contribute Rs. 500 to 600 crores a year in taxation. The Planning Commission and the centre have been repeatedly asking the States to tax agricultural incomes of the affluent but none is prepared to bell the cat.

It seems, however, that the attempt to redistribute purchasing power through a land redistribution has more or less failed. How far it was seriously meant is not known. In any case the landlord ally is too powerful to be easily curbed. His hold over the State bureaucracy and State machinery is too strong to allow the ruling party or the bourgeoisie to have their way. He is able to delay, postpone and sabotage the efforts to implement the reforms.

There is no dearth of statements from the Chief Ministers of various States about the progress of land reforms; lakhs of acres distributed and pattas given to lakhs of harijans and tribals all beaming with happiness. Bihar, West Bengal, U.P., the Punjab, Madhya Pradesh made fantastic claims about the surplus land distributed. These claims turn out to be bogus. Some times the figures are inflated by adding figures of distribution of Government waste land or land distributed from the surplus available under earlier Acts. Besides, all the Governments have grossly under-estimated the surplus available under the new Acts. They will soon announce that no surplus land remains to be distributed.

The official note of the AICC on the implementation of the 20-point programme throws light on the achievements in relation to the advertised land distribution programme. It says, "So far a total of 13.16 lakh returns have been filed of which 6.95 lakh have been disposed of, resulting in the declaration of 16.67 lakh acres as surplus land. The land ditribution to the landless so far is 4.24 lakh acres, the number of beneficiaries being over 1.79 lakhs." This is all after all the padayatras, self-advertisement, international praise from the Soviet Union, and sychophantic support from the renegade Right Communists. The landlords must be having a hearty laugh at the end of one year of completion of land reforms.

The Government seems to have already set a ceiling on the

surplus available. According to Dwivedi, the Land Commissioner, and surplus available will be only 35 lakh acres, and this is the maximum that is likely to be distributed and the Congress will then shout hurrah to the land reforms.

However, it should be remembered that the landlord lobbies, the bureaucrats and Ministers in various States, while sabotaging the Ceiling legislation are distributing waste land, Government forest land—a substantial part of which is barren—to the rural poor, to lay claims to the implementation of the 20-point programme. The Orissa Government claims to have distributed 1,680 thousand hectares of Government waste land to 264,780 tribals, harijans, etc. Maharashtra, U.P., Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Governments have made similar claims.

A radical revision of the wages of the agricultural workers and its implementation would have partially bolstered the market for some consumer goods at the expense of the landlord gentry. But once again the way has been barred by rural vested interests, bureaucratic callousness and official indifference.

The farcical implementation of the agricultural workers' minimum wage is now widely known. The State Governments, out to pay lip sympathy to the demands of the agricultural workers, have announced increases, some also provide for dearness allowance—almost a revolutionary provision in Indian conditions. But of course these have hardly affected the wage or conditions of the agricultural workers. For instance, the West Bengal Government has announced a daily wage of Rs. 8.10 (including Rs. 2.50 as dearness allowance). What possibility is there for any section of agricutural workers of West Bengal to realise this wage? Hardly any !! For vast masses of these workers do not even know that there is any such legislation. The State Government's "Labour in West Bengal—1975" says, despite minimum wage rates fixed at Rs. 6.63 for adult workers per day, 90 per cent of the total number interviwed are not aware of the minimum rates of wages fixed by the Government. And the Chief Minister of the Government passes himself as a great democrat, wanting to bring democracy near to the people. Besides the Government by declaring Emergency, by choking off the right of the Opposition parties and the Kisan Sabha to hold meetings and carry on propaganda, have seen to it that the masses neither learn about the legislation nor agitate for it. What chance is there for implementation then?

In fact, these Acts are mostly violated and the agricultural worker gets a wage below the prescribed minimum. The Right Communists, loyal supporters of 20-point programme, themselves had to protest against the breach. Bihar Right Communist party Secretary, Jagannath Sarkar, on his return from Padayatra, said in Patna in May that except in one village the wages given to the farm workers were not more than half the rate prescribed under the Minimum Wages Act. He also said that there were quite a few bonded labourers in several villages. The Government knows that there is hardly any implementation. The State and the Central Governments are now talking of an implementation machinery, appointment of labour inspectorate—the usual claptrap. The vested interests are too strong and they cannot be controlled by strengthening the bureaucratic apparatus. But afraid of the people, afraid of the democratic movement, and Congress Governments have no other way. And the AICC note referred to above, while admitting that implementation is lacking, relies on the same bankrupt proposals. "The main problem in the implementation of minimum wages is at the field level. States have already taken steps to gear up administrative machinery—in some States separate directorates of agricultural labour have been set up and inspectors have been appointed in areas where the wages are specially depressed."

It is quite possible that even these formal attempts to implement may be called off. For, because of the drop in foodgrains prices and prices of other agricultural produce, the middle peasant bas been hard hit and it being wooed by the landlords and rich peasants to oppose any rise in agricultural wages. Faced with this prospect, implementation efforts are likely to die a natural death.

Debt Moratorium

Here was another attempt to give relief to the lower sections of the rural masses—at the expense of the usurer—the professional moneylender and (also the new landed moneylender)—but mostly the professional moneylender. Abolition of the debt of the landless section and moratorium on the debt of the marginal section would, it was thought, not only give immediate relief to the marginal section, put them under obligation to the Congress Government but also release substantial money to add to the purchasing capacity of the rural masses. The bigger exploiters, try to pacify the people and bolster the market at the expense of the smaller sharks—this is the practice of the capitalist society. The British Government

tried to play the same trick, posing as the defender of the peasant's interests against the moneylender.

According to Samachar, in Karnataka, one crore of people have been discharged of a debt of Rs. 116 crores; in West Bengal, 75 lakhs have been discharged of Rs. 67 crores; in Gujarat 2.46 lakhs of Rs. 10.75 crores; in Madhya Pradesh 10,000 of Rs. 1.5 crores; in U.P. three crores of people, in Punjab 11 lakhs, in Haryana one lakh; in Maharashtra 28,481 have been benefitted. The monetary extent of their benefit is being determined. To what extent these claims bear any relation to reality, no one can say. But it is quite possible that one section of the rural landed interests might have encouraged a drive against the money-lending fraternity and a large number of peasants might have secured respite in a number of places and districts.

In any case, the drive seems to have frightened none else than the Congress leadership itself. They are now afraid that the money-lender might retaliate and refuse to give further credit, without which large sections of the peasantry can neither start their agricultural operations, nor manage their daily expenses. It is known that a large number of peasants had refused to take advantage of debt cancellation and moratorium, precisely for this reason. These fears are expressed in the AICC Note on the 20-point Programme.

"States have to guard against the tendency to overdo things with regard to moratorium on debts." This Note says : "The establishment of alternative sources of credit will obviously take some time. Liquidation schemes should be practical and should not be such as to completely dry up the existing credit channels." In short, enough is enough. Let the money lender be. Let not the moratorium manoeuvre be taken so seriously. Some push and pull, a little bit of rough handling, some relief at his expense to glorify the Government, the Congress Party and to stabilise the market, is enough but let there not be too much pressure, or elimination. The poor fellow has to finance agriculture next season. This is the sum and substance of this convention.

A Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Shri S. Shivarman to examine the question of consumption credit to the vulnerable sections. The Committee submitted its report at the end of April. It estimated the consumption requirements of the lowest section, those with holdings between nil and 0.01 to 0.05 acres and upto 5 acres at Rs. 125 crores. It recorded that these should be met

by giving loans through institutions like co-operative credit societies and other societies and other agencies.

This is, however, a direct injection of State money into the rural area for relief as well as economic manoeuvering. However, it appears that the Congress and the Government may adopt a lukewarm attitude towards the proposal. For the AICC Note asking the State Governments to go slow with debt liquidation, comes a month later after the Committee's proposals.

The question for the Committee and the ruling party is how to recover the loans from the lowest sections. The Committee says, 'the fact that there are agricutlural labourers and marginal farmers who live mainly on wages for whom pure consumption credit is required, a system of controlled employment scheme would be of great advantage. To solve the twin problem of provision of employment and collection of consumption loans, the Committee had recommended that on the model of the scheme enumerated by the Maharashtra Government, the borrowers be put on the employment scheme worked out by Government departments. The Committee has recommeded that each State should indentify such production schemes so that the loans can be recovered promptly."

Here again we see the extremely limited character of the recommendation. The Committee starts with assessing the consumption requirements of the entire lowest section and ends by suggesting loans only to those who can be employed on Government departmental works, i.e. a very small percentage of the total mass. This is the dilemma of the bourgeois-landlord classes and their government. The relief can be only minimal, miserable. And what the Committee suggests—tying of loan to work under Government department—may just become a variant of bonded labour.

It may be concluded that because of the powerful landed interests the attempt of the Government and the bourgeoisie to bolster the market have failed. Neither redistribution through Ceiling Act, nor the announcement of new rates of agricultural wages have resulted in any redistribution of the purchasing power at the expense of the vested interests. Similarly, the efforts to temporarily expand the market at the expense of the moneylenders have failed whatever relief they might have given to individuals and localities. The measures to expand the market—direct consumption loans—are also not being pursued with vigour—the more so because the cost will have to be borne by the Central

Government and the bourgoisie.

The Victimisation of The Agrarian Masses

The various measures—moratorium of debts, minimum wages, ceiling on land—were part of the programme to prevent a collapse of the market. The bourgeois-landlord Government wanted to reimburse the purchasing power to these masses because they were made to bear the main burdens of the crisis of the Indian economy and were defenceless against the rapid attacks engineered by the pursuit of the capitalist path. With the growing monetisation of the economy and the subjugation of the agricultural production to the market forces, the small producer and the agricultural worker reduced to penury as never before. All measures of governmental intervention—price support, procurement, monopoly procurement, credit loans, etc. went against these sections and bolstering the inequality, in the rural areas.

The two years of inflation left them completely defenceless against the forces of market and price rise. There was no provision for automatic adjustment of the wages to the cost of living index; nor was there a provison to compensate the small producer against the rise in prices once he had parted with his produce to Government agencies and appeared in the market as buyer for other necessities of life. No section of the Indian people was left so defenceless as this section. Again he was the worst victim of the government's counter-recession and deflationary measures. He was also robbed by the taxation measures of the Government.

Along with this, the old enemies of the small peasant and the agricultural workers were active in robbing him. The earlier drought years, the inflation and speculation and the various measures of the Government with the adverse effects on the rural masses, forced it to seek more accommodation with the money-lender—both the professional and agricultural moneylender. The burden of debt and exploitation through it increased. The crisis with its increasing pressure for land kept the rents high; the sharecroppers were parting with more than the legal produce; there was increased loot through rent and interest. The vast rural unemployment kept the wages low, led to a fall in real wages of the agricultural workers and often led to bonded relations.

The inflation and recession added two more sections as its victims. The middle peasant now caught in the inflationary spiral began to lose more than he gained as the prices rose to giddy

heights. Both the rich peasant and sections of middle peasants lost heavily on the prices of input—especially fertilisers—and consumption of fertilisers went down. Both besides were hurt with the increased taxation of the Government on many things affecting agricutlure—irrigation, electricity, fertilisers, etc. with surcharges, cesses and so on. Official taxation measures which were not graded between the big ones and the other producers,fall heavily on these sections. Taxation, usury, rent, prices and their manipulations—these were the instruments of passing the burdens of the crisis on to the masses.

The process of this transfer of burdens of the crisis was further intensified by the expropriatory process of the capitalist path under which millions were ousted from their land. Landless households increased from 6.6 million in 1954 to 18.6 million in 1961-62 and to 21.9 million in 1971-72 (NSS Data). Of these, according to Dr. Raj, not less than 9 millions came from the ranks of displaced tenants. Thus before the present crisis burst out the situation among the landless had already become desperate.

In the same period during the ten years 1960-61 to 1970-71 real wages of agricultural labourers went down in many states. There was some rise in others on their earlier miserable level.

Indices of real wages base 1956-57=100

	1961-62	1971-72
Andhra Pradesh	124	119
Assam	095	078
Gujarat	117	125
Karnataka	114	092
Kerala	103	151
M. P.	119	102
Maharashtra	114	099
Punjab & Haryana	121	140
Tamilnadu	094	113
U. P.	143	172
W. Bengal	096	096
Orissa	119	096

(Ref : Deepak Lal, Economic & Political Weekly, June 26, 1976).

The succeeding years have deeply eroded this wage because of inflation and high prices and the minimum wages fixed by the

Government announced the precipitous fall in real wages during the intervening period. The agricultural workers has been one of the worst victims of the recession and inflation, so much so that even the government has now to take into consideration that he is completely dependent of the moneylender for his consumption needs, and that the loot of the moneylender limits the capitalist market.

The moratorium measures of the Governments are again an indication of the firm grip which the feudal money lender has secured on the small producer. The process has accentuated in the years of crsis, recesion and inflation and the total indebtedness of the peasant has increased from Rs. 4,000 crores to nearly Rs. 7,000 crores. The semi-feudal tribute levied on this debt can only be gauged from the enormous rate of interest charged. If the co-operataives are charging not less than 12 per cent, the moneylenders' rates can be imagined. Justifying the co-operatives' rate of interest Mr. Baby John, the Kerala Revenue Minister (in the sinful Right C.P.—Congress coalition) said that moneylenders charged 60 to 3,000 per cent and an interest of 500 per cent is very common. (Economic Times, 5/8/76). Even if the rate of interest is taken at the low level of 25 per cent—double the co-operative rate—the tribute by way of this fedual exploitation will not be less than Rs., 1,000 crores.'

This is what the small cultivator has to pay. With the rise in banks' credit rate, and loans to co-operatives, etc. the moneylenders must have tightened the screw and made the peasant shoulder the burden of the crisis. The same is the case with rent. The burden of procurement in conditions of a bumper crop fell on the small producer. In the name of controlling disposable incomes in 1974-75 when inflation was raging high the procurement price was not allowed to rise, loading the dice againt the small producer. The workers' DA and wage were impounded but they were at least promised that they would be paid back. No such promise was given to the small producer. Secondly, in the execution of the procurement the small producer was cheated in the main. He could not sell his grain at the minimum procurement or support price. There being a bumper crop and the big landlords finding that the market might crash rushed to fill in the Government godowns leaving the small peasant to the mercy of the traders. The Government, the Food Corporation and the bureaucracy tried various

mean devices to reject the peasants' produce and force him to sell it at reduced prices to the trader.

The National Herald Special Correspondent reported in 9th May 1976 issue, "Haryana farmers have also started distress sales of barley since the Food Corporation of India is not extending a blanket price support to all the barley stocks offered to it for sale on plea discolouration of these stocks."

The West Bengal Agriculture Minister admitted distress sales of wheat far below the procurement price in the districts. In many areas of Maldah and Murshidabad districts growers were not receiving even the support price of Rs. 105 per quintal. They were forced to sell wheat at Rs. 80 per quintal (Patriot 30th March 1975).

The Union Government is reported to have asked the surplus states to procure only quality wheat during this year's procurement season. (National Herald, 10th April). If today open market prices of foodgrains are lower than those charged by the public distribution system, it is mainly due to distress sale of the peasants, the beating down of the peasant by the trader helped by the Government.

In December 1975 itself, this policy was systematically pursued with the Government claiming that it has been able to bring down the prices of cereals and foodgrains, claiming success for its anti-inflationary measures.

In U.P., it was reported in December 1975 that while the fair price shops sold wheat at Rs. 135 per quintal, in open market it was available at Rs. 100 to Rs. 120. While rice was sold at Rs. 154 per quintal by the fair price shops, its price was quoted between Rs. 135 and Rs. 150 quintal in bigger towns. In smaller towns it was selling at Rs. 120 only.

Behind this fall was the story of beating down of the small producer, his ruination. The good kharif harvest brought ruin to him. His produce flooded the market. He could not hold out, for the moneylender and others were waiting at the door. He was forced to sell below the floor price announced by the Government but the Government and its agents deliberately held themselves from purchasing and allow his price to crash and advertise that their anti-inflationary measures have succeeded. This is how the anti-inflation drive defrauded the small grower in December 1975. Set on this policy, the Government and its agents refused to intervene for ensuring the support price to the peasant.

Inspite of the "bumper crop" the Government lowered its procurement target so that it should not be necessary to intervene in the market in a big way and obstruct the fall in prices below the support level. Secondly, the method of procuring rice through the millers ruined the small peasants. The millers paid the peasant less than the support price and charged the Government at the official rate. In West Bental and U.P. the main reliance for procuring rice was placed on the millers.

The Indian Express, Nov. 15, 1975, reported : "The coarse grain market owing to the large harvest has been rendered a buyer's market. The grain purchasers in mandis are taking full advantage of the situation. Traders and in many instances even the government purchasing agencies have been reported to offer lower rates for the producers on the plea that the grains contained higher moisture content. Knowledgeable circles maintain that this is just an excuse to buy the grains at cheaper prices."

The result was that by October last year in many markets in surplus States coarse cereal prices dipped below the officially announced floor level of Rs. 74 a quintal. Those directly affected were mostly small peasants— who grow coarse grains as rain-fed crops. To quote but one concrete instance, in Punjab, in the last week of October, 1975 maize prices dipped as low as Rs. 62 a quintal—the range being Rs. 62 to Rs. 85 a quintal. In the previous years the prices fluctuated between Rs. 100 to Rs. 140 a quintal.

The present plight of the jute grower again reveals the same callous policy of ruining him in collusion with the jute mill bosses. The installation of Jute Corporation of India has proved to be farcical leaving the peasant unprotected against the market forces. Government's total unwillingess to protect the peasant is seen through the inaction of the Corporation. It seeks to sell jute goods abroad in a competitive market, both the Government and the mill owners are competing to beat down the peasant. The peasant is once more the victim of abundance—the large crops of 7.8 millions bales he has produced. Raw jute prices have been consistently below the statutory minimum prices fixed by the Government. The mill-owners refused to buy the jute and the Jute Corporation buys only 10,000 bales out of the daily arrivals of 25,000 bales. Price will fall further as the daily arrival rate will reach 30,000 bales.

The agrarian crisis is the crisis of the land relations, of the capitalist path and it manifests itself in ruination of the small

producer, stagnant agricultural production—progressing by leaps and bounds, unable to meet the needs of the people. Impoverishment under it has gone to this extent that the peasant and the agricultural labourer, famished though he remains, is unable to consume the food produced by himself. As Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Shri P.N. Haksar said recently, "The large domestic market of India suffered considerable shrinkage on account of the skewed income generation and income distribution patterns. Consequently, when food production goes up in the economy food stocks are increased not because everybody's demand for food is fulfilled, but because almost 40 per cent of our population have inadequate purchasing power."

To the monstrous exploitation through rent and interest is added exploitation through monetisation of the economy, play of market forces and official policies accentuating the crisis at every step. They are followed by a tremendous concentration of land, means of production and wealth in the hands of a few people in the villages. According to All India Debt and Investment Survey 1971-72 those with assets of Rs. 20,000 and above represented 14.97 per cent of the households and their share in the total assets was 61.04 per cent, while the remainding 85 per cent of the households has assets of less than Rs. 20,000 and their share was only 39 per cent of the total assets of the rural population. For the country as a whole 1.28 per cent of the cultivator households had assets of Rs. 1 lakh and above and they possessed 14.32 per cent of total assets. In Punjab as many as 17.94 per cent of "cultivator" households had assets of Rs. 1 lakh and above per household and they appropriated more than 51 per cent of the total assets.

All these social malformations are due to the antiquated land relations. These cannot be eliminated without an agrarian revolution and embarking upon a People's Democratic Path. The agrarian crisis is the basis of the crisis of the Indian economy and all attempts to alleviate it by-passing the agrarian relations are bound to boomerang.

The Plan and the Economy

Notwithstanding tall talk about spectacular increased production in industries, even official supporters are unable to claim that the economy will fare better this year. The RBI Report sedulously and loyally breathing optimism says that the picture of industrial growth prospects is that it may not be possible to repeat the

unusually high rates of increase in production achieved in 1975-76 by some core sector industries while declining trend in production witnessed by some industries might be reversed.

The fear of inflation haunts the RBI. It is fear of investment, deimpounding on the deposits and the banking system. The Fifth Plan Targets, their financing, the control of the Plan all irresistibly point to the perilous condition of the economy, its dependence on foreign finance, its inability to reach the minimum targets, the colossal burdens it puts through taxation and deficit financing on the people, and its reliance on the exports or external market. In the first place it has to be realised that India's reliance on foreign debt has been increasing and not decreasing—and the new loans are almost exclusively secured from the Western countries. According to the Economic Survey 1975-76, the USSR had contributed Rs. 494.6 crores upto the end of the Third Plan; Rs. 212.5 crores in 1966-67; Rs. 80 lakhs in 1967-68; and Rs. 70 lakhs in 1968-69 and after that till 1974-75 there is blank. External assistance from all sources increased from Rs. 447.8 crores in 1969-70 to Rs. 810.5 crores in 1971-72, Rs. 1170.6 crores in 1973-74 and Rs. 1671.2 crores in 1974-75 and Rs. 2,000 crores in 1975-76. It had never reached this high level before. The World Bank and its affiliates further obliged India by lending $ 894 million for the fiscal year 1975, $ 54 million more than in 1974.

India's Fifth Plan has also to increase its reliance on foreign aid. Foreign aid would account for Rs. 5834 crores or 14.9 per cent of the plan outlay. This is an increase of Rs. 3,000 crores in the earlier estimated figure of Rs. 2,400 crores. At the same time in view of the sharp rise in import prices of investment and intermediate goods, the effective contribution of external assistance in sustaining investment in real terms has been lower than would appear from these exercises.

It should be noted that India has started getting increased aid during the critical years since 1973-74. A serious attempt was being made to bail India out of her difficulties and India as will be seen had to pay the price by accepting the policy dictates of the World Bank. It should also be noted that there were years of Indo-American tension, unfriendliness, and anti-American demagogy. While the US Government officially cut down its "aid-its allies and its instrument the World Bank went on increasing it, praising India for its economic policies.

The final estimates for the Fifth Plan on the basis of 1975-76 prices envisage a total investment of Rs. 63,751 crores out of which Rs. 36,703 crores will be in the public sector and Rs. 27,048 crores in the private sector as against a total investment of Rs. 47,561 crores (Rs. 31,400 crores in the public sector and Rs. 16,161 crores in the private sector) provided in the Draft Plan. The Final Plan, it will be seen, is very generous to the private sector. In the Draft Plan, private sector expenditure was a little above 50 per cent of the public sector. In the final plan it has amounted to 75 per cent. Quite a touching faith in the private sector for those who are valiantly changing the preamble of the Constitution to make it a Socialist Constitution.

The increase in expenditure of the Plan is however a monetary increase and does not lead to increased growth rate. On the other hand the Fifth Plan envisages that the average annual growth of gross domestic production (GDP) in the Plan period will be 4.37 per cent as against a 5.5 per cent annual growth rate estimated in the draft Fifth Plan. Notwithstanding the paraded growth of industrial production in 1975-76 the planners have to reduce the average growth rate.

The people will have to pay heavily for implementing the plan. The Final Plan demands an additional mobilisation of domestic resources from Rs. 6850 crores in the Draft Plan to Rs. 14,693 crores in the Final Plan. and deficit financing goes from Rs. 1,000 crores in the draft stage to Rs. 1,354 crores in the Final Plan. This heavy dose of "mobilisation" will further drain away the purchasing power. With increased dependence on foreign aid the planners still talk of promoting self-reliance and lay stress on the growth of the three leading sectors—agriculture including irrigation, energy and critical intermediates—industry to be confined to critical intermediates. This has importance in view of World Bank's insistance on avoiding "grandiose" industrial plans.

How will the finances be spent? While the Congress rulers are loudly talking about meeting the minimum needs of the masses they have decided to lower down targets of food production, production of coal, steel and fertilisers and cut down allocations for education, social community services and Hill and Tribal Areas Schemes.

The allocation for education has been cut down from Rs. 1726.6 crores in the Draft Plan to Rs. 1284.29 coroes—a cut of 25 per cent and with it is deflated one of the Directive Principles of the

Constitution which are declared sacrosanct by the Congress in its attack on fundamental rights.

The allocation on social and community services is reduced from Rs. 5074.00 crores to Rs. 4766.77 crores. And while in Congress propaganda one hears nothing except its concern for the welfare of the tribals the allocation for Hill and tribal areas has been reduced from Rs. 500 crores in the Draft to Rs. 450 crores in the final plan. It should be noted that while the Draft Plan figures were based on 1971-72 prices, the final plan figures are based on 1975-76 prices.

According to the Final Plan the revised physical outputs in 1978-79 for some important products will be as follows as compared with the figures of the Draft Plan.

	Final Plan	Draft
Foodgrains	125 million tonnes	140 million tonnes
Coal	124 million tonnes	135 million tonnes
Iron Ore.	56 " "	58 " "
Crude Petroleum	14.18 "	12 " "
Cotton Cloth	9500 " Metres	10,000 " meters
Nitrogen Fertilisers	2.9 " tonnes	4 million tonnes
Phosphate Fertilisers	770,000 "	1,250,000 "
Cement	20.8 million tonnes	25 million tonnes
Mild Steel	8.8 " "	9.4 " "
Electricity Generation	116.117 GWH	120.0 GWH

The scaling down of the minimum targets once more underlines the ramshackle condition of the economy. It is realised that sufficient financial resources cannot be raised to reach the target within the present framework and that even if the target is realised, the domestic market cannot absorb the increased production.

In the name of promoting growth with stability the planners demand further restrictions on consumption of the people. Of course they say the restraint should be especially on the consumption of the affluent section, but people know where the real blow falls. This is achieved by such tricks as huge exports of sugar, leaving a small quantity for levy sugar, and allowing the rich to make merry with the free market sugar.

The final plan calls for further improvement in the performance of the public sector to promote growth with stability. With all the

propaganda for the great success of the public undertakings that we have been witnessing, one thought that the problem was already over. But the reality is that the public sector functioning is as bad as ever and it is one of the main defaulter and the Planners have no hope that it will improve. Financial resources expected from the profits of public enterprises are now only Rs. 849 crores compared to Rs. 5988 crores expected in the Draft Plan. The main defaulter in providing resources is the railways whose contribution of Rs. 649 crores in the Draft Plan has become a burden of minus Rs. 1818 crores in the Final Plan. The contribution expected from other public enterprises also has gone down from Rs. 4497 crores to Rs. 2287 crores.

Notwithstanding claims of increased production and efficiency, recession combined with incompetence and corruption has taken its toll.

Unemployment

Fantastic claims are made for the potentiality of the Plan to provide huge employment opportunities and attack the unemployment problem.

The Plan aims at absorbing the addition to the labour force estimated at about 27 million in the agricultural and non-agricultural sector during the Plan period. It hopes that the increase in the labour force in the Fifth Plan will be absorbed fully and a substantial effort made to solve the problem of backlog in the Sixth Plan.

This is nothing but adding insult to injury when every successful plan has added millions to the number of unemployed. Today the registered unemployed alone number 10 million—more than 10 lakhs having been added in the course of the last year—a successful year of Fifth Plan. They include 4 million educated unemployed.

People have not forgotten how the boastful claims made on behalf of special programme to tackle unemployment have ended in smoke. During the first three years of the present plan unemployment has grown apace. Recession prevailed over the vaunted claims of the Plan. According to the Economic Survey between March 1973 and March 1975 employment in the private sector decreased from 68.5 lakhs to 68.0 lakhs. During the same period employment in the public sector increased only by 9 lakhs—and in one year alone registered unemployment grew by one million.

The planners it seems are basing their claims on statistical ma-

nipulation. Ashamed to own the mass unemployment figures, the Government started challenging them; started new inquiries, one of which put the unemployment figure at only 2.47 million in urban areas and 6.97 million in rural areas. The Planning Commission readily accepted the estimates. These estimates opine that the rural unemployment situation may not have deteriorated in a marked manner through the past decade. One cannot utter a bigger untruth. A significant dent in the rural unemployment situation in the remaining period of the Fifth Plan and the early years of the Sixth Plan is expected on the assumption that the land reforms programme and the 20-point programme would be vigorously implemented.

The Government itself is doing its best to promote unemployment to make its export drive successful. The competition in international market requires production of goods at competitive basis, lower costs which can be secured by lowering of wage levels and reduction in number of employed by modernisation of industries. This means less employment in industries and less capacity to absorb the surplus from rural areas. It must contribute further to unemployment in urban and rural areas alike.

On November 2, 1976 Government had finalised and announced its scheme of financing by soft loans, the modernisation of the textile, jute, sugar, cement and engineering industries. These are the industries which employ the largest labour force. Mechanisation of coal mines is already on. All this would lead to hundreds of thousands of workers now employed in these industries being retrenched. All the tall talk that labour intensive industries have no place has no meaning when the industries have to produce not for satisfying the consumption needs of the common people but is forced to produce for the international market. Incidentally, the modernisation of the jute industry entails import of machinery, which is currently valued at Rs. 108 crores—one more excuse to allow the Western capitalists to loot the Indian people.

The investment and direction of the Fifth Plan, its heavy taxation and deficit financing, the restriction it imposes on consumption must intensify the crisis of the market, making it more dependent on the external market. Its increased need for foreign aid drives it in the same direction. The crisis of the market can be overcome only to the extent there is successful drive for exports with the help of the Western countries—but that means tying the economy

firmly to the apron-strings of the West, while imposing further impoverishment on the people.

The World Bank & Western Consortium

The increased role of the World Bank and the Aid India Consortium, their pressure to direct India's economic policies should be clear when we compare the World Bank's suggestion", with the practice of the Indian Government.

It has already been pointed out that the Bank and its affiliates have been increasing their "aid" to India. The Bank wishes to continue increased aid till 1985-86. A World Bank Study Team suggested towards the end of 1975 that gross aid to India should rise from an estimated level of 2332 million dollars (Rs. 2098 crores) in 1975-76 to 5327 million dollars (Rs. 4720 crores) in 1985-86. While offering this aid, the team urges that Indian economic activity should be more export oriented and rely for finances on export earning and foreign aid.

Its recommendations, in brief, are : India should restructure its industrial development programme, lean away from heavy and capital goods industry and go in for massive export production during the coming decade; exports and massive aid should form the major part of saving, investment and growth for boosting India's flagging industrial growth rate.

The Report says, " a strong revival could be expected to follow from a sucessful strategic emphasis on the development of India, considerable agricultural export and energy capabilities." The expression " critical industrial intermediates" in the final Plan conveys what the Bank seeks.

According to the report, the heavy emphasis on basic and capital goods industries and on virtually complete substitution of domestic mrket for imported manufactures has lost much of its significance. The scope for home market has shrunk in relation to the size of domestic industrial activity.

It counsels India to abandon its home market or at least attach less importance to it. It says that for poverty reasons the linkage of mass consumption market with industrial structures is limited and weak and are largely confined to textiles, kerosene and to a lesser extent processed goods. The report demands an alternative strategy of adequate outlets for existing industrial capacities.

In May 1976, the Aid India Consortium again gave the same prescription while expanding its aid. Its communique of 28th May

said" At the same time the meeting stressed the need for the Government of India to take advantage of the present favourable situation and gave proposals for the economy to pursue policies leading to sustained long-term growth; of particular importance in this respect, its view, are containing inflationary policies and appropriate adjustments in imports policy." The Consortium expressed the hope that "the Government of India would continue to strengthen its efforts in priority areas of exports, agriculture and energy and lay stress on the importance of effective family planning."

This describes the policy which the Government and its planners are following. It also reveals the origin and tainted source of the mass sterilisation drive of the Central Government.

Only one point needs to be explained with regard to the World Bank's and Consortium's insistence of the change in the imports policy. After all the foreign financiers do expect and demand a free market for their products and are opposed to India's having a complete sway over her home market. They have often succeeded in thrusting unwanted goods on India as a price of their "aid", goods which compete with Indian industries. Recently a large number of tractors highly priced were forced on India though the Indian tractor industry was working below capacity.

Now the pressure has increased and yielding to it the Government has liberalised imports on several occasions under the hypocritical plea that there ws sufficient foreign exchange and imports were required to meet the needs of Indian industry. The Planners had already started yielding to the Bank pressure and began to have reservations about import substitution. In the past the cost of domestic manufactures has some times been inordinately high compared to the landed cost of similar items. In such cases import substitution loses much of its significance said the Draft Fifth Plan.

The liberalisation of imports policy announced on October 1, goes further to meet the wishes of the Bank financiers and permits import of goods competing with Indian industries in certain cases. This is done in the name of using the foreign exchange resources, productivity and meeting the raw material needs of industry and also to keep down prices!

Commenting on the new imports policy a well-known daily wrote in its editorial, "Indeed, except for the vegetable oil, cotton polyster fibre, resin and some non-ferrous metals like antimony

there is hardly a raw material of importance that is in short supply. The known shortage can be overcome by earmarking a quarter or at the most half of the sum proposed for additional imports... If, on the other hand, the international price of any item is lower than at home, it cannot be freely imported without hitting the home producers who in many cases are still suffering from demand recession, particularly in the chemical and engineering industries.... The basic problem of the Indian industry today is not so much shortage of raw materials, spare parts, or other inputs as the lack of demand at remunerative prices." This is enough to expose official claims about import liberalisation. It should be clear that the capitalist path enmeshed in recession is putting Indian economy more and more under the constant pressure of World Bank and Western economy, that export orientation is leading to economic integration and creating a dangerous situation for India.

Notwithstanding all the brave demagogic declarations that India will not allow herself to be dictated to, economic compulsions of the capitalist path of development are overriding and Government has conceded, one by one, all the demands of the World Bank and the Aid India consortium. Only these are not termed 'dictates'. The more sophisticated term "counsel" is used; failure to heed the 'counsel' will entail dire consequences in terms of foreign aid, collaboration, etc.

Article written in 1977 was brought out in the form of a booklet (A CITU Publiction)

3

Tasks Before The Trade Union Movement

The trade union movement of the country—the organisations of workers and employees are called upon to tackle an unprecedented situation which demands their intervention in developments connected with the country's economy. If this does not take place there is every danger of the trade union movement getting fragmented, loosing its class solidarity and its following being rallied by anti-class forces. This is apart from the chaos and ruin that surely threatens our entire economy if it is left in the hands of the present Government protecting the interests of the landlords and the big capitalists.

The foremost question is what has the trade unions to say regarding the electoral victory of the authoritarian party, its return to power. It is known that a major part of the working class and employees voted for the Congress(I). Should all our sacrifices in our battle for economic betterment, our victimisations and prolonged struggles against, the police firings and jailings, in defence of our trade union rights produce this political results? Isn't there something wrong in the conduct of the movement, with the leadership, when its fighting forces contribute to the victory of a party which had enchained the nation only recently? The entire trade union movement has to ponder over this. Again how does our common movement propose to protect democracy and fight the forces of authoritarianism? It is a political battle which has to be waged by fully uniting all the forces of the trade union movement

and further uniting them with the other vast forces fighting for democracy—the peasants, students, professionals, women etc.

But the immediate task lies within our movement and that is to growingly unite the trade unions and its membership as a strong anti-authoritarian force. This demands above all working together of central trade union organisations, federations etc. Any organisation which keeps aloof from this common democratic struggle will fail to serve the interests of the workers. The problem for the trade union movement is in the first place how to disillusion certain sections of workers who harbour illusions about the ruling party.

The trade union movement must unitedly resist all attacks on democratic rights, all violation of the rights of the people and above all police atrocities on the people.

The last few months of Congress(I) rule have revealed unbearable happenings—a series of rape stories rapes committed by policemen against women in their custody. Adivasis, Harijans, peasant and working class women have been the target of this brutality. In Haryana, in Hansi the wife of striking workers were raped by management goondas and policemen. Rape is being used as a terror weapon in the class struggle to intimidate the workers and peasants. Apart from this the police molest and rape women for whom they take a fancy. The horror story of Baghpat has shaken every honest man. The policemen murdered three people in cold blood and the wife of one of them was paraded naked in the street and later on, it is alleged, raped. Has the Government, Indira's ministry prosecuted any one? Has any one of the policemen concerned been suspended and arrested. Oh no—A judicial inquiry is going on leisurely to find out what is what.

While women's protests are going on against these inhuman brutalities, while hundreds of satyagrahis are going to jail—what have the trade unions and employees' organisations done? Have they called their members to join in this democratic protest? Hardly anything has been done. This lack of sensitivity, bordering on inhumanity, shows how deep rooted is the disease of economism, of isolation of the trade union movement from the democratic movement of the people. If this reformist outlook of the leadership does not change the movement will loose its credentials with all decent men.

Another vital issue is facing the country—the issue of India's unity and integrity. Are the workers and their orgainsations,

employees and their organisations not concerned with this problem? But from their behaviour it appears as if they think it is none of their business whether the country remain united or gets disintegrated.

For nearly a year now a secessionist challenge has developed in Assam, threatening separation of the whole North-Eastern region from India. Exploiting certain just grievances like entry of foreign nationals the opportunist leaders of the movement have taken it into anti-Indian channels. Behind them stands American imperialism and the Christian churches financed by it. The imperialists for a long time have been planning this attack and now they have launched it.

Only the left parties of Assam and the working class organised in the trade unions led by them is fighting and resisting this attack. They are attacked by the secessionists, belaboured and even murdered. The linguisti, (Bengalees) and religious (Muslims) minorities are also being attacked and ousted.

But what is our trade union movement in the rest of the country doing? Has it awakened the workers to the danger of national disintegration nd make them aware of the plans of American imperialism and rouse them to defend national unity? Has it done anything to help our courageous workers in Assam who are fighting to keep the country together? Has anything been done to defend the minorities in Assam and tell the participants of the movement that they are pursuing a wrong path. Once more it is found that on another vital question the trade union leadership and movement has failed, justifically earning the charge of being self-centred. The same attitude is to be found on the question of Tripura. Here again the imperialists and their agents have launched a disruptive attack, leading to masscres. And the Congress(I) is exploiting the situation to ask the Centre to dismiss the Left Front Government. Shouldn't the voice of the trade union movement denounce the reactionary moves of the Congress(I) in Tripura and do everthing to help the Left Front Government meet the crisis?

Even collection of relief is undertaken by a few unions only.

In the midst of these serious challenges to democracy and the unity of the country, comes the all round economic challenge. Foremost among these is the rise in prices, following an annual inflation rate of nearly 30 per cent. In just one month the price of sugar has gone up by 30 per cent in Delhi. By 28th of July edible oils

cost between Rs. 12.50 to Rs. 20 per kilo; pulses cost Rs. 4.50 to 5.60 per kilo, sugar cost Rs. 8.20 per kilo—bread has become scarce and so on. By June end the all India wholesale price index was 249.8 a rice of 22.8 per cent over the year.

The uncovered deficit of Rs. 1,400 crores in the budget of this year, following a deficit of Rs. 2,700 crores last year is bound to inflate prices further, putting a crushing burden on the people.

Simultaneoulsy the Government has raised the prices of inputs for agriculture—like fertilizers and is prepared to give only a minimal increase to the peasants who produce foodgrains.

The crushing burdens of inflation are victimising the peasants, the agricultural workers, the workers and the employees.

Inflation and price control has become a major problem for our people.

The trade unions must now unitedly come forward to champion the cause of the entire people and demand a drastic reduction of the high prices of necessaries of life and an adequate price for the peasants—the produced of foodgrains. The system of dearness allowance does not properly protect the workers and employees because the cost of living index is manipulated. Besides cent per cent of neutralisation is not provided. For thousands of workers and employees there is no provision for dearness allowance. While continuing to demand full neutralisation the trade unions must raise the question of reduction of prices in the interest of all. For this purpose they must demand nationalisation of wholesals trade in essential commodities and provision of fair price shops superivsed by citizens committees.

The fight against high prices must become a united fight of all sections led by the trade unions.

Having failed in their efforts to make the economy work, the capitalists and their agents are again blaming the workers. The Prime Minister taking the cue from these circles calls upon the workers to produce more and admonishes the workers for their strike struggles. Is electricity not being produced because the workers are not working or they are on strike? Is sufficient coal not being produced because the miners are not working or are on strike? Have the steel workers stopped producing or resorted to go slow?

The fact is that the crisis ridden economy is unable to utilise the full productive capacity meagre though it is. Underutilisation of

capacity announces the bankruptcy of the capitalist path and the crisis of the economy. With the number of those living below the povery line increasing every year, what chance is there for the market of industrial goods? The Government therefore relies on exports and exports rice, fish and other necessaries when three-fourth of India is starving.

Added to the situation is the mismanagement of the economy by the capitalists and the bureaucrats. The tales of corruption and jobbery that get exposed in connection with industrial concerns, the permanent sickness of certain concerns are enough to show the parasitic character of the management.

The Public Sector has become a bureaucratic sector, a haven for the most corrupt officials. Frauds are committed on the people by using sub-standard materials while claiming money for higher quality; products are stolen. In the Dhanbad area wagons of coal produced by nationalised mines are being taken away by goondas with the connivance of the authorities.

Officials incharge of executing agreements with foreign collaborators often sell national interests, offer fantastic terms to the foreign collaborators for huge consideration and loot the nation's treasury. What chance has production under these circumstances?

Instead of exposing these evils and asking the workers to rescue the country the Prime Minister blames them.

But the workers must accept the challenge. None can save the country and the economy except the working class. Unless the working class and its organisations are allowed to occupy strategic and equal position in running the industries the mess cannot be removed and new policies pomoting rapid growth will not be embarked upon. The trade union movement must announce its willingness to accept responsibility for the economy provided the workers are given an equal status in decision making, in runing the industry and all the necessary information including finances etc. is put before them. The workers must be allowed to have equal say in running drug companies, factories transport industry, public and private industrial concerns.

The Indira Government once talked about workers participation in industry. This was not meant seriously. It was to be a device to exploit the workers more. But even this farce of workers participation was thought to be too dangerous and it was not extended to the public sector at all.

But as against this farcical participation, the trade union movement demands participation on terms of equality. It is our earnest to the people that we are ready to shoulder our responsibility to our country.

29th July, 1980
(Article published in Annual Number September 1980 issue of "SRAMIK EKTA', the Orissa State CITU Journal)

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New Dangers !

THE LIC employees, under the leadership of AIIEA have recently won a resounding legal victory against the authorites. The Supreme Court has rejected the arbitrary charges introduced by the authorities and given a verdict in favour of the employees upholding the old bonus agreement for the year 1978 and 1979. It seems the authorities are intend on prolonging the legal battle and the employees may have to come out in the arena to defend their legal gains.

The LIC employees' experience shows how the authorities can introduce illegal changes this was done under the Janata rule and involved the workers in protracted litigation undermining the faith in settlement through negotiations and understanding.

Similar is the experience of the RBI workers. The RBI workers, led by their organisation AIRBEA went on a prolonged strike to enforce their demands. A bilateral settlement was reached to the satisfaction of the employees but it was not implemented for nearly a year. In other industries also disputes get prolonged, extend over months or years, the authorities stepping from one court to another to avoid a final settlement. The crassest instance relate to the wage settlement of the working journalists and newspaper workers, whose emoluments have not been raised for a period of ten years. The employees and workers may protest against this situation. But the fact is that it is going to the worsening in the near future. The LIC employees congratulating themselves on their legal victory, should

realise that in future they may not have any access to the courts or that if there is such access, it will be formal and with the courts deprived of the last vestiges of their independence and acting as the rubber stamp of unscrupulous executives.

Realise the dangers

It is doubtful if the LIC and other employees realise the danger that they and the country are facing. They perhaps do not realise that the present favourable verdict is not exactly and entirely due either to their own strength or the justness of their cause. If the emergency had lasted till now, if powerful democratic forces had not toppled the authoritarian regime in 1977 this verdict would not have been possible. Because the authoritarian regime was making every effort to revamp the Supreme Court with its 'committed' minions.

The thousands who faced jail and imprisonment in the fight against the emergency rule, the thousands who faced lathi charges and firings during the course of the forcible sterilisation campaign prepared the way for the electoral rout of the authoritarian party and succeeded in re-establishing parliamentry norms and the role of the judiciary.

Search for committed judiciary

There is every need for the LIC employees to remember this, because new attacks are being planned by the ruling party against peoples' rights including attacks against the judiciary. For months the ruling party has held up the filling in of vacancies in High Courts and Supreme Court obviously because it is looking for firmly 'committed' judges whose loyalty to the ruling party is beyond doubt. In Indian conditions there are various ways in which the courts can be vamped. Hypocritical concern for Harijans, minorities, backward and weaker sections enables the authorities to justify the selection of their own nominees.

To tame the judiciary, the executive is claiming the right to transfer High Court judges from one State to another.

These developments form part of the grim political situation that has developed since the victory of the Indira Congress in the Parliamentary elections in the beginning of the 1980.

Damocles sword

What are the counter steps taken by the Government to control the political situation? The steps regarding the control of the judiciary are already mentioned. The most unimportant step

towards uncontrolled rule, denigration of the rule of law is the National Security Act with wide powers to the bureaucracy to detain people without trial. While enacting the measure the Government tried to hoodwink the announcing that it was directed to curb the activities of the anti-socials only. It is really meant to attack the democratic movement and remind one of the notorious MISA. Under it, strike leaders have been arrested, and leaders of political movement imprisoned and detained. This damocles sword now hangs on the entire people and the democratic movement.

But all this is not enough in the context of the rapidly worsening situation. The authoritarian party wants to change the constitution and secure dictatorial powers for itself. During the Emergency a conspiracy was afoot to scuttle the existing Constitution and replace it by a Presidential one. The efforts aborted at a time for several reasons.

Notorious proposal

Now the notorious proposal is again being revived slyly. The ruling party is some time supporting it brazenly and some time repudiating all responsibility for it. A conference of lawyers was arranged by the ruling party to advocate a change in the Constitution and several speeches were made in favour of a Presidential form of Government. Indira Gandhi addressed the conference and the people to debate the issue, giving an intention of her mind. But finding extremely adverse reaction of the proposal her Law Minister had to announce in Parliament that the Central Government had no intention of changing the present form of Government and the Constitution.

But it will be suicidal to think that these quarters have given up all plans to institute dictatorship utilising their majority in the Parliament. They are forced to wait for some time because they have'nt got the requisite strength in the Rajya Sabha. The employees and workers must realise what the sponsors of the Presidential Form of Government are aiming at; otherwise they will be caught napping.

It should be clear in the first place that both the Parliamentry form of Government as exists in Britain and the Presidential form of Government as it exists in the USA are forms of class rule of the vested interests, the big bourgeoisie and the monopolists etc. By themselves they do not represent any fundamental change in the position of the masses with respect to political power or control over State.

Growing rebellious spirit

In India the question is raised by the ruling party because the present Constitution with its Parliamentary form, is bound to be too inconvenient to practice open dictatorship on the people. The need for such dictatorship arises rrom the growing rebellious spirit of the masses against a government, a party which has failed to deliver them from the bondage of poverty and impoverishment. The executive now wants all restrictions on its power to be removed and it calls this a presidential form of government.

Cry for presidential system

Indira Gandhi's main propagandist Shri Antulay, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, makes it quite clear that the first objective is to transform the judiciary into an appendage of the executive, a sychophantic crowd who will deliver judgement according to the dictates of the President. He complains "But in India our Constitution envisage that any ordinary law enacted by Parliament can be struck down as un-constitutional by the Supreme Court. Besides, not only ordinary laws but even constitution ammendments passed by a two-third majority can be declared invalid by our courts. I firmly believe that Parliament must be vested with supreme power in order to uplift the lot of the poor and the down-trodden. But under the present Constitution as interpreted by our Supreme Court, this can not be done." It does not strike this crusador of the presidential system that if there is a conflict between the Parliament and the Judiciary on vital question affecting the life of the people, the democratic method is to seek a popular referendum. No he wants a solution by concentrating all power in the hands of one person—the President. He says, "Now in the presidential system, the President within his ambit has powers where even the Supreme Court can not interfere. And he is not removable by the Senate, or the Congress, nor even the two put together." **An irremovable President, who can back the Courts with his nominees, and cannot be removed by either house, this is the gist of the demand for the presidential form of government. Imagine the havoc that will be done to the country if Indira Gandhi is installed as President without any fear of removal by the Parliament.**

The people of America themselves have had lot of trouble with their President Nixon who abused his presidential position, violated the privacy and rights of other parties, could not be easily removed. Besides the American Presidents have involved their

removed. Besides the American Presidents have involved their country into external wars, expeditions and murderous conspiracies—Vietnam, Pig's bey without consulting the people, often by deceiving them. Antulay seems to be obsessed with the idea of hunting down the judiciary, for in the interview quoted above he again observes that the American President is all powerful and says, "There the President could say as Roosevelt did—I shall pack the Supreme Court with judges of my choice if these will not approve of my New Deal Legislation. I do not think any Prime Minister in this country can say so." Presidential form is openly equated here with packing of the Supreme Court and that is what the sponsors of this form desire.

A call for open dictatorship

This is a call for open dicatorship of an individual for concentrating all powers in one hand. It is ridiculous to say that under our Constitution power is not concentrated in the hands of the ruling party and its leaders. Those who could impose emergency on the country and enslave a nation of sixty crores can not make this ridiculous plea. Neither the USA President nor the French President could claim such powers even during war time. Experience shows that it is necessary to provide built in defence in the constitution against the dictatorial ambitions of the leaders of the ruling party.

It is quite clear that the attack is not only against the judiciary, but the entire Parlimentary system with the fundamental rights of the people placed at the mercy of an irremovable executive till his term expires. And the executive may entirely change the Constitution of the country as Zias of Pakistan and other countries have done, establishing open dictatorship.

Actually this is a quest for the personal dictator ship of Mrs. Gandhi who is rapidly losing her support among the people and whose party is cracking under the pressure of economic events in the country. And what is the ridiculous excuse for this advocacy of this dictatorship. It is hypocritically asserted that the change is necessary in the interest of the common suffering people of our country. The Parlimentary system and the judiciary are made scapegoat for the failures of the Congress Governments to bring any relief to the masses. The Congress has been ruling the country three decades and it has ruled in the interest of the monopolists, big bourgeoisie and the landlords cheating the peasants and the

workers. **Was it the judiciary and the Parliamentary system that stalled the progress of India? Or, the subservance of the Congress to the vested interests? Once again the people are being cheated so that they could be betrayed again.**

And finally one may ask has the presidential system brought relief to the masses and solved any problem. In the USA under the presidential system a military industrial complex rules the people. More than seven million are permanently unemployed while tycoons and multinationals thrive all the times. Billions of dollars are spent on military expenditure to intimidate other nations.

Expose the conspiracy

It will be a mistake for the employees and the working class to ignore this challenge of personal dictatorship. Once again Indira's ruling party is conspiring to impose dictatorship on the country. Let not the employees be caught napping as they were last time. Let there be full debate and information on what is at stake and let there be clear understanding of the issue involved. This will enable the employees and the workers to rouse public opinion against the new proposals and expose the conspiracy. The LIC and other employees owe this much to their country and their people. If the advance elements in the country—the employees and the workers show indifference to the impending danger, it will be an act bordering on treachery to the people.

— *Working Class*, Vol. 10 No. 5, January 1981

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Rising Attacks— Growing Struggles !

Comrades,

I am glad to be in your midst on the occasion of the Third Conference of the Karnataka State Committee of the C.I.T.U. I congratulate all who have assembled here on the remarkable progress that our organisation has registered in recent months. This progress could not have been achieved without selfless and devoted work of our worker comrades and leaders. A large number of our worker comrades had to undergo dismissals, victimisation, suffer starvation of families along with police repression and imprisonment. Workers and our prominent trade union leaders alike were involved in absurd criminal cases, charged with murder and what not.

Those who think that the trade union movement is a bed of roses should give a little attention to the heavy odds against which the workers and leaders have to fight despite the loudly proclaimed freedom of organisation under the constitution.

I offer my homage to those who fell victims to police brutality defending the cause of the workers. They belong to our organisation. They belong to many other organisations. Their sacrifice will not be in vain.

I congratulate the public sector workers of Bangalore, Hyderabad and other places who have been waging a justified struggle for increase in wages on the basis of an earlier understanding. The tenacity and unity of the workers has drawn admiration from all

sections of workers; the justice of their cause is seen by all. But the Indira Government and its irresponsible Minister Stephen have chosen the path of repudiating written agreements. Those whose profession has been to break electoral promises have now taken to go back on written agreements with the workers.

Comrades, this brings us to the labour policies pursued by the Indira Government since its return to power in 1980. Large number of workers in this State voted for the authoritarian party in the 1980 Parliamentary elections. The Congress(I) swept the polls, in many constituencies where industrial workers and employees were in a strong position to decide the issue. The punishment for voting for this party which had imposed Emergency on the country in 1975 was not slow to come. It is now seen in the labour policy of the Government which considers every trade union dispute as only a law and order question.

Immediately on the installation of the Indira Government the AIOE (All India Organisation of Employers) called for measures to crush the trade union movement especially its fighting section. There is no doubt that during the course of the last year Congress(I) Governments in States aided and encouraged by the Central Government have been taking rapid steps to meet this demand.

Rapidly Growing Attacks

The National Security Act—the new name for the MISA of Emergency days—is being shamelessly utilised against locomen and other strikers despite loudly proclaimed assurances that the measure was only intended against the anti-socials. In Bangalore under the Congress(I) State Government the police opened fire on striking workers, killing three people. The U.P. Government continues to ban strikes in an increasing number of industries almost every month. That Government openly and shamelessly discriminates against CITU unions, and foists on the workers agreements signed with Congress(I) unions who have hardly any following. Rowdies with labels of Youth Congress(I) are used to terrorise the workers. The promulgation of the L.I.C. Ordinance constitutes the beginning of the Emergency Rule against the workers' movement.

The vengeful and barbarous attitude of the Indira Government towards labour is seen in its treatment of the loco railwaymen. This same Government entered into an agreement with the locomen after the strike of 1973 stipulating ten hour duty for the emloyees. But after seven years, every stipulated promise stands repudiated.

The ten-hour work, restructuring of pay scales and a number of other agreed demands remain unimplemented. The administration has been conspiring to attack the organisation. And they did it in a dastardly way. At Talcher where railwaymen's wives were raped by anti-social elements, connected with railway appointed contractors, protesting railway locomen were victimised. Further protests led to further victimisation and almost all office-bearers of the organisation were suspended or dismissed, driving the locomen to take mass leave. Instead of settling the dispute the railway administration resorted to arrests under the National Security Act.

The Indira Government has created another scandal by issuing the L.I.C. Ordinance to circumvent the verdict and directives of the Supreme Court to pay bonus to the employees according to the earlier agreement. The Supreme Court had asked the Corporation to negotiate a new agreement with the union, if any change was to be introduced.

The Government has now thrown to the wind the sanctity of agreements and collective bargaining and usurped authoritarian powers to impose on the employees whatever wages and conditions it arbitrarily decides. It has also reduced to a farce the employees' right to approach the court against injustice at the hands of the Corporation and the Government. The Ordinance presages similar attacks on the wages and conditions of all employees, all those who are described as "high wage islands" and ultimately against the entire working class. The authoritarian attack against the trade union movement and the right to organise has started in right earnest. The Government demands the right to police wages, fix service conditions arbitrarily and reduce the working class to a rightless work force. This is the import of the Ordinance though at present it is confined to the L.I.C. employees. The principles it proclaims and the powers it gives to the Government when exercised widely will extinguish all trade union rights.

Big Battles Ahead

Despite these attacks the resistance to accept the burdens of Government's policies, of the crisis of the economy is expanding. New contingents are being drawn into the arena.

It is true that there was some lull in the strike struggle in the year 1980, which was partly perhaps the result of illusions about the new regime and partly the result of workers enjoying the fruits of

the struggle of 1979. In 1979 the total of mandays lost in strikes and lockouts was 43.87 million whereas in the first nine months of 1980 it stood at only 9.89 million. In December the labour minister admitted in the Parliament that there was a distinct improvement in industrial relations in terms of mandays lost. And as a reward for this in January the repression against loco workers was launched and the L.I.C. Ordinance was passed.

It is obvious that with the Government intent on putting a ceiling on dearness allowance and other restrictive measures in the name of a wage and income policy, intent on making the working class scapegoat of the crisis and its bankrupt promonopolist policies, big battles are ahead of us, battles in which we will have to face the full impact of authoritarian repression.

Sixth Five Year Plan :

A Menacing Direction

Comrades, the finalised Sixth Five Year Plan document lays down the direction of official policies for the next five years. It is a menacing document giving a menacing direction for throwing the burdens of the Plan and development on the common man. The other day Shrimati Indira Gandhi addressed a kisan rally in Delhi assuring the assembled peasants of government's goodwill towards them. She is the President of the Planning Commission and what does she promise to the famished peasant and agricultural labourer? In the document extending over a 1,000 pages there are only a few lines about land reform, without even a promise of distribution of land to the tiller without any promise of taking possession of millions of acres of surplus land for distribution. There is no promise whatsoever to break the enormous concentration of land in rural areas which puts 30% of the land in the possession of 6 per cent of rural families.

And there is no assurance of remunerative prices for the peasant producer.

The Plan besides calls for withdrawal of subsidies on sale of foodgrains which is bound to raise food prices for all without benefiting the peasant. To compensate for the withdrawal of subsidies the peasants prices will be still further reduced. Every device will be used to beat him down on his sales.

The Five Year Plan intends to impose higher foodgrains prices on the people and at the same time defraud the peasant of adequate price.

Peasants Defrauded

The organised working class and the trade union movement must understand how the mass of peasants has been defrauded during the last three decades, to control the cost of living in the cities so that the capitalists do not have to pay higher D.A. and their profits are ensured.

The foodgrains prices in cities have been kept at a certain level partly through subsidies but also through forcing the small peasant to sell at ruinous prices. The entire procurement policy of the Government of India has been one of ensuring that the peasant is forced to sell below the announced prices. He has been defrauded not in the interest of the working class but to protect the profits of the capitalists.

The working class should refuse to accept barbarous exploitation of the peasant, demand remunerative prices for his produce, and increased subsidies at the expense of the landlords and capitalists.

The paid agents of the capitalist class are frightening the workers and urban people that better prices for peasants' produce will mean increased foodgrain prices in the cities. This will not be the case if the issue price is fixed and subsidised as stated above.

The workers know that whenever they demand higher wages or dearness allowance the same argument is advanced. It is stated now that the peasant and the consumer will be penalised. This once again is the argument of the capitalists who do not want their profits to be lowered. They seek to penalise the peasant or the consumer for having to pay increased wages to the worker. There are other agents of the capitalists who argue that the demand for higher price only benefits the landlords and the richer gentry in the rural areas. These people make it appear as if in our villages small peasants do not exist and do not produce anything for the country. The trade union movement refutes these hypocritical arguments of the capitalist spokesmen and also condemns the outlook of the planners towards the peasantry.

New Burdens On Common People

As regards the agricultural workers the planners satisfy their conscience by mumbling about implementation of minimum wages legislation, organisation of rural labour and a meagre provision for house building assistance. For the people as a whole what does this plan offer? Does it at least offer a respite from rising prices? The

Plan calls for additional resources mobilisation of Rs. 21,302 crores. It calls for deficit financing to the extent of Rs. 5,000 crores. People should thank themselves if the defecit financing does not exceed three times proposed figure. In any case this means that inflation will continue and people will be repeatedly fleeced through high prices.

But this is not all. The additional resources of Rs. 21,000 crores will be again raised by imposing new burdens on the common people.

The bourgeois-landlord government and their planners do not desire to curb the Indian monopolists and foreign multinationals. On the other hand they give them incentives and facilities in the name of promoting development. Their latest concession to the black-marketeers and profiteers is the scheme of Bearer Bonds. But they want the poorer sections to pay for the development.

The planners therefore argue that taxation, especially direct taxation which would affect the incomes of the big capitalists and landlords has only a limited scope, though they admit that there is scope for tapping the surpluses of the "affluent sections of the farming communiy". Nonetheless more than Rs. 5,000 crores will be raised through taxation mainly indirect taxation falling on the common man.

Rs. 3,250 crores will be raised by reducing subsidies including food subsidies. This burden will again fall on the consumer man, mostly through a raise in the price of foodgrains.

Then the Planners concentrate on raising resources by a extortionate rise in the price of services. The railway budget of 1981 has already put new surcharges amounting to Rs. 320 crores, following in the wake of last years' surcharge of 15 to 20 per cent on fares and freight. People are shocked and protesting. But this is only the beginning.Because the railways have been asked to contribute Rs. 1,200 crores during the Plan. And if the present measures do not mobilise the necessary resources, additional imposts will be imposed. In fact the railways have already started exceeding the limits. The P & T has been asked to mobilise Rs. 200 crores during the Plan period.

Class-Bias of the Plan Openly Manifested

The Public Sector undertakings, which are incurring enormous losses, are expected to contribute Rs. 1,000 crores, through "efficient management and appropriate pricing." There is no doubt that the Public Sector undertakings can make a big contribution by

increasing their efficiency. But this is not possible for the present corrupt and bureaucratic management which is hostile to the workers. The Bangalore strike shows how this management can bring about stoppages of work by its open breach of agreements, and hostility to labour organisations. The total of man-days lost in public sector in the first nine months of 1980 was 1.2 million, in the years 1979 the loss was 7.66 million. The Public sector can improve its production only if the present anti-labour attitude is changed and worker's participation on equal terms in running the concern is ensured. The CITU has repeatedly stated that its unions and the working class are prepared to accept responsibility for the efficient running of industries in public and private sectors, if participation is sought on equal terms, and all facts regarding finances, raw material and commercial transactions are made available to the workers' representatives.

There has been no response from either the government or the employers. It is obvious that the inclusion of workers participation in industries, in the 20 points programme was just a stunt to soften the impact of Emergency. During the last six or seven years, no public sector or departmental undertakings like the railways has even shown awareness about official declarations in this regard.

Under these circumstances the contribution of the inefficient Public Sector—Rs. 1,000 crores will be made through "appropriate price charges" by raising the price of the product.

The Coal India has been asked to eliminate its losses—Rs. 500 crores during the period. It has started by raising the price of coal by Rs. 20 per ton.

And the State Governments are asked to impose further burdens to raise their part of additional resources. They have to raise electricity charges so that losses of Rs. 3,500 crores in five years are covered. Additional resources of Rs. 1,378 crores are to be raised through increase in bus fares by State Transport undertakings. Bus fares have already been raised in several States in the midst of firings, killings, burning of buses by angry people and they are estimated to yield Rs. 825 crores. Other States will follow suit with their quota of firings and killings to raise the sum of Rs. 1,300 crores. Increase in Irrigation Levy will contribute Rs. 325 crores.

Further Block Level Committees and Panchayats are to raise specified resources and last but not least house rent control legislation in the cities it is suggested should be withdrawn or modified

to raise resources for the local authorities.

This is the wide net for raising resources at the expense of the common man. Apart from commodity taxation, every requirement of modern life, transport, electricity, water, heavy postal and railway service—is to be made more expensive almost beyond his reach, while the incomes of big capitalists and landlords are sheltered from direct higher taxation. The planners observe "possibilities of raising additional resources through income tax, corporation tax and wealth tax are somewhat limited". So only concentrate on tax evasion. Actually there is a demand for reducing the taxation rate on the millionaires. "Check tax evasion".... through an imaginative adjustment of tax policy so as to reduce the incentive as well as scope for such evasion."

The Planners observe "Direct taxes on agriculture at present constitute less than 1 per cent of the total agricultural income". They do not identify the big landlords as the section which can bear further taxation. Not to offend them they talk in the terms of "agricultural sector". They suggest a progressive tax but again fail to identify the big landlords.

The class-bias on the Plan is openly manifested in the resource mobilisation proposals.

An Opposite Course

The Planners are loud-mouthed in talking about removal of poverty and economic disparities. They shed tears about those living below the poverty line, but their attitude is not directed against those who create this poverty through exploitation. It is directed towards protecting them and make a show of tackling poverty by redistributing it among the poverty stricken.

This is clearly seen in their incomes and Wages Policy which is nothing but a carbon copy of the notorious Bhoothalingam Report prepared by a director of foreign multinational company.

The purpose of a genuine incomes and wages policy is to reduce economic disparities by redistributing incomes as between classes and push ahead the incomes of the lower strata—the peasants, workers, etc. It can be done only by attacking the privileges, the profits of the monopolies, of the exploiting strata and not by highlighting the minor differences among the exploited. But the Planners follow an opposite course, give an alibi to the exploiting classes and fail to demand that redistribution of incomes should take place at their expense and more so redistribution of assets and

the power over production.

The incomes of these classes are first compared with the incomes of small owners and then allowed to escape any control or redistribution. "The paramount need to promote sustained increase in agricultural productivity requires maintenance of adequate incentives for farmers (read big landlords) simultaneously incentives for private industrial investment are also required consistent with the objective of avoiding concentration of wealth and economic power." Everyone knows that neither the Planners nor the Congress(I) Government is serious about the objective. During three decades of planning economic concentration and monopolies have grown rapidly.

So what remains. Allow the private capitalists including the monopolists to garner huge profits in the name of incentives; allow the landlords too the same. Don't touch their incomes and accumulation in their hands. This is the basis of the Incomes Policy of the Sixth Five Year Plan to remove Indian poverty.

Blast of the Income Policy

The Planners do not forget another "needy section" and protects their incomes as well as Bhoothalingam did. This is the managerial staff. They are afraid that the existing ceiling might repel people with managerial skill and observe, "however, suitable differentials in emoluments in favour of management and high skill jobs will have to be permitted in order to attract the best people to these jobs."

After assuring the big landlords and the monopolists that their incomes will not be affected, the Planners turn to the problem of Indian poverty and observe: "the most important task of incomes policy has to be to increase the income levels of poorer and weaker sections (without breaking the stranglehold of the landlords and the monopolists, without land reforms and serious implementation of wage legislation for agricultural workers) This is accompanied by the usual reference to Rural Development programme, cottage industries.

The blast of the incomes policy is reserved for the working class and the employees whose wages and incomes are to be attacked. After shedding tears over low wages of workers in unorganised industries, and pleading for employment opportunities, attention is directed towards the wages of workers in organised industries, wages and emoluments earned through bitter struggle and not

through charity.

Not it is discovered that wages differ from industry to industry and this disparity is considered to be a great evil. Question is not asked whether the higher wages in certain industries reflect need-based or living wage; whether it is a luxurious wage. Those who give cover to the disparity in incomes between the millionaire and the worker, now demand "rationalisation" of wage structure meaning thereby reduction of higher wages to a lower standard. The low wages are not to be raised. Now they demand unless the worker accepts increased work load in organised industries, he should not claim higher wages. They also demand even if the worker produces more he should not be given a higher wage for some time to come so that the capitalists are able to accumulate huge profits. No restriction on the incomes of the capitalists and landlords, but restrictions on the wages of the workers. This is the incomes and wage policy of the Planners. This is put in the following words:

"There is, therefore, need for bringing about a greater rationalisation of the wage structure and linking wages at least in some measure to productivity." The workers know that the present relationship between their wages and their productivity is biased against them and pays them a wage far less than what is their due. But now the Planners want to deny any wage increase unless further exploitation is assured.

If a worker thinks that the above will entitle him to higher emoluments if he individually works hard that will be an illusion. He is not entitled to increase unless the economy as a whole shows growth in production. "In the mid and long term, real wages must be allowed to move with gains in productivity in the economy as a whole." Every individual capitalist requires incentive but a worker does not require any incentive to increase production. He must await the result of the economy as a whole. But even the above is modified. "But such a policy may still require those engaged in occupations with rapidly rising productivity to accept a somewhat lower increase in earnings in order to permit a measure of equity vis-a-vis occupation in which productivity growth is likely to be small." If you increase your productivity rapidly then also you will not get full return. And then finally it is stated and those who are fully employed under the Congress(I) rule should thank their favourable stars and should not demand any increase in real

wages, inspite of increased productivity. "Also in the immediate period ahead, there should be less insistance on improvement in real incomes on the part of those who are fully employed to help establish expectations of price stability, so important for mounting the development effort called for by the Plan."

Mockery of the Self-Reliance

These are the main features of the Sixth Plan. Besides the Plan depends on foreign loans of nearly Rs. 10,000 crores which is equal to ten per cent of the total plan expenditure. This will increase the burdens of foreign payment on the people and the working class and make the country more dependent on the Western Imperialist World. This makes mockery of the objective of self-reliance proclaimed in the Plan. The working class must realise the danger to our country's freedom from this growing dependence on imperialist loans. It is because of this that foreign multinationals are being given more freedom to exploit our people and capture our markets. And these multinationals have now grown arrogant and defy and disobey the laws of our country. Notorious among them are the multinational drug companies who victimise the workers, sell their drugs at high prices and lift crores out of our country. Any day this situation may create danger for our freedom and independence.

The working class and our people do not realise that such anti-people measures as reduction and abolition of food subsidies, and lowering the earnings of the workers and reduction of measures of social welfare have been the demand of the World Bank for a long time. Obviously a plan based on economic war against the people and protecting the gains of the big landlords and capitalists will neither be able to achieve the proclaimed increase in national income, the production targets much less create an impact on the prevailing impoverishment and unemployment.

General Opposition to Wage Increase

Immediately the attack on the working class manifests itself through the determined efforts of the employers and the Government to erode and eliminate the concept of bonus as deferred wage. This is a big vantage point won by the workers which is now directly or indirectly being assailed. It is eroded by making new contingents agree to bonus linked with productivity. The first breach was made when the leaders of All-India Railwaymen's Federation and National Federation of Indian Railwaymen agreed to

link bonus with productivity. This was followed by a number of Central Government Employees organisations falling in the trap. But the battle must go on and the concept of bonus as deferred wage must be consistently reasserted till the working class secures a living wage as the minimum wage.

The second prong of attack is an attempt to put a ceiling on income for those entitled to bonus. The third prong is attack on D.A.—standardisation at an arbitrary rate and ceiling on the amount, or periodical instalment or denial of D.A. to those above a certain wage or earnings. The fourth is a general opposition to any wage increase. To achieve these aims one agreement after another is being broken by the Government.

The Palekar award and its manipulation by the Government demonstrates the real character of official policies. For more than a decade the newspaper employers refused to agree to a settlement with the employees. The Government had no desire to check the employers who frustrate one effort after another. When the Interim Palekar Award was announced government brought pressure to change it to the detriment of the employees. And now after final award the press barons are again active to sabotage or delay the implementation of the award.

Unity of Trade Union Movement

These onslaughts are already in evidence. They will increase with the implementation of the policies advocated in the Sixth Plan. These have to be fought unitedly by the entire trade union movement. The repression on locomen, the attempts to suppress the Bangalore strike, the L.I.C., Ordinance and illegalisation of number of strikes in U.P. warn the working class and the trade union movement that the attack is too big to be warded off by a single contingent. The attack is big and going to be ferocious with increased use of repressive measures, because Indian economy like the economies of capitalist countries is in deep throes of a crisis and the ruling classes demand that the burdens of the crisis should be borne by the masses.

In this big battle what are disputed are the class policies of the Government ; what are to be defeated are these policies under the name of the Plan fleecing taxation of the people, imposing of lower standards on them and attacks on the working class.

Since its inception the CITU has been actively working for united actions and the unity of the trade union movement. Today the need

is greater than ever before. Because these are no longer questions affecting this or that industry but matters of official policies towards labour.

It is extremely regrettable that certain strong contingents of employees-Insurance, Banks, railway, defence remain aloof from central organisations, threby weakening the strength of the working class resistance. How many times our strength will increase, what powerful voice we have in the affairs of our nation, in shaping its economic and labour-policies if we come under one umbrella speaking with one strong and firm voice ? In recent past on a number of issues, we organised joint actions, our organisations met on 22nd February and gave a call for solidarity action on March 11 in support of the striking Public Sector Workers. This is welcome no doubt. But we have outgrown this stage. We require constant consultations and united decisions. The CITU repeats in all earnestness its call for a confederation of all Central organisations and federations of workers and employees for constant review of situation and agreed decisions for action.

Right to Work

Comrades, our CITU unions cannot forget the mounting unemployment in the country and our unions must join hands with the unemployed to fight their battle. The total rural and urban unemployment on a single day according to the Sixth Plan was 21 million. This itself is an under-estimate. The registered unemployment in the cities already exceeds 10 million. It has increaed rapidly during the last three years.

It is a matter of satisfaction that the left front government of West Bengal and the Left Democratic Coalition of Kerala have taken steps to introduce unemployment relief to these unemployed. All unions must demand that right to work be inscribed in the constitution as a fundamental right.

It is a matter of satisfaction that some rural employment schemes, however unsatisfactory, have been introduced by some States. It is the victory of a principle for which we have been fighting-work or relief.

Working Women : Part of the Working Class

Comrades, the CITU called a convention of working women at the time of our Madras Conference and our Working Women's Co-ordination Committee has been doing good work and is able to rally interest behind its activity. But it cannot be said that our

unions have paid proper attention to this question which really affect their strength. By and large our unions are indifferent to working women's questions. Their demands continue to be neglected. Their membership and participation in trade union activities continues to be thin and no special steps are taken to encourage it. Trade unions mostly become a man's show even where women work in large numbers. The establishment of Co-ordination Committees of CITU is precisely meant to overcome these weaknesses and enable women workers to take their proper share and responsibility in participation and leadership of the union. Without this the trade union movement will continue to be weak. Many unions fail to realise that working women are part of the working class. The establishment of these committees, the promotion of their activities should help to overcome this deviation and weakness.

Comrades, similar mistake is committed by some trade union leaders who think that fight against women's disabilities, discrimination, unequal wages is the task of women's organisation. This is open denial to treat women as part of the class. While General women's organisations will support the struggle, the fight for women's demands in each industry is the duty of the trade union concerned.

Comrades, as in the capitalist world in India also women are the first victim of the crisis. They are the first to be retrenched, rendered surplus. We all must protest and denouce the retrenchment of thousands of women in Andhra—our tobacco workers by a foreign multinational company—Imperial Tobacco. This company has introduced new machines which has deprived thousands of them their jobs. The scandalous part is that the Government of India has permitted the company to import this machinery.

Strongest Democratic &
Revolutionary Force

Comrades, like the working class other sections of the people, students, engineers, doctors have been fighting against the economic and anti-democratic policies of the authoritarian government. There have been lathi-charges, jailings, firing and killings of students and others. The most outstanding feature of recent agitations is the entry of the peasant masses in the battle arena. They fought in Karnataka and got bullets. They fought in Maharashtra and got bullets and jail. They fought in Andhra and Punjab and

were again repressed. But the movement goes on. It has forced the Congress(I) Governments to make several concessions.

The CITU and the working class warmly support the movement of the peasants, for remunerative prices and other demands like cancellation of debts and loans, it supports the demands of agricultural workers for wages and other reliefs. It supports the demands in the charters of the peasants that the issue prices of foodgrains should be raised.

The alliance of the workers, agricultural workers and peasants will be the strongest democratic and revolutionary force in India before which no Government of the exploiting classes can stand. The trade union movement has to contribute to the shaping of this alliance by championing the cause of the peasantry. The working class has to realise that there is no end to its exploitation, no socialism, unless the present ruling classes are deposed, a new state expressing genuine democracy of the people is reared and the present iniquitous order is liquidated. This cannot be done without enlisting the help of the mighty force of the Indian peasantry.

The sympathy and intervention of the working class are all the more urgent and necessary because in their absence, in the absence of a radical kisan organisation, the landlords and richer gentry in the rural areas head the peasant discontent to protect their narrow interests.

New Weapons of Attack

The Indira Government has already forged new weapons to silence the people. After the National Security Act comes the attack on the Judiciary, the second step towards the scuttling of the parliamentary system and the esablishment of a Presidential form of Government. The crude attempt to lower the dignity of the Judiciary and make it subservient to the Executive is seen in the orders of transfer served on two Chief Justices of the High Court. It has evoked strong protests from the legal profession and all democratic forces.

Shining Performance

In the midst of this attack on civil liberties and democratic rights, stands the shining performance of the three Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. They have loyally served the common man, protected democratic rights, upheld his dignity and thrown their weight on the side of the exploited in economic struggles. Working under inhibiting financial restrictions arbitrar-

ily imposed by the Central Government, the three Governments have shown how to do justice to the common man and protect democracy. The three Governments have refused to use the National Security Act or any other preventive detention measure. They are the advanced outposts of the democratic forces struggling all over the country against the forces of dictatorship.

Two Dangers

Comrades, our present sruggle, our woes and sufferings are part of our people's struggle to maintain democracy and defeat the authoritarian regime which is preparing for another emergency. The working class and the democratic forces are locked in a grim battle against the forces of dictatorship. We have to frustrate their plans to impose a Presidential dictatorship on the nation.

Before I conclude I wish to refer to two dangers facing our country and our movement. The forces of disintegration are out in the field to divide the country and the common movement. Communal riots in which the Muslim minority suffers the most are unleashed. Both Hindu and Muslim communalists exploit these riots to divide the working class and democratic movements, which serves the interests of the ruling classes.

Caste feelings against Harijans are roused which again serves the same purpose. Backward classes, advanced castes all are brought into the picture to create rifts in the common movement. These caste and other movements exploit genuine grievances of unequal treatment to separate the fighting masses instead of jointly struggling against these inequalities. As if all this was not enough, taking advantage of the unemployment situation, local chauvinism, advocating sons of the soil theory, jobs for the sons of the soil—is roused, making short work of Indian citizenship, and India as a nation. The Chief Minister of Karnataka himself indulged in this anti-national appeal recently threatening to create Assam like situation in Karnataka.

It will be seen that every weapon is used against our movement to divide it and we have to wage a running battle against these attacks.

Defend Integrity & Unity of Country

The danger of disintegration threatens the country. In Assam people are victims of secessionist movement angered by the unequal treatment meted out to them and fearful of the consequences of influx of foreign nationals. The USA imperialists are secretly

helping the agitation to partition our country. One can realise from this what reactionary role the BJP is playing when it supports the movement in Assam. The Congress(I) Government cannot defend the integrity of the country. If unity of the country is not maintained, freedom also will be lost. It is the privilige and duty of the working class to defend this integrity and unity in cooperation with other democratic forces.

Frustrate Imperialist Attempts Against Our Country

Comrades, finally we cannot ignore the internationl situation which is worsening every day. The aggressive U.S. imperialists are feverishly arming themselves to break the peace of the world. They concentrate their fire on the USSR and the socialist camp while they are doing everything to undermine the freedom and independence of countries like India and other Asian and African nations. The CITU demands cessation of piling up of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction by the USA and other imperialist powers, it demands firm guarantees of peace and rapid progress towards nuclear disarmament. It warns all countries against the aggressive designs of the USA imperialists whose plots against Iran were recently frustrated. For India again the USA imperialists whose navy now donminates the Indian Ocean represent the biggest danger. The USA is arming Pakistan to stage another war between the two countries. Parties like BJP who certifying the dictatorial regime of Pakistan and belittle the USA plot for war between the two countries only serve the USA interests.

The working class must frustrate all imperialist attempts against our country and warn the people against the USA war plot. Frustrating these designs, fighting for world peace, firmly determined to defeat the authoritarian regime and its policies, our unions should defend the workers against daily attacks and help the other sections in the common battle against exploitation, dictatorship and for better living conditions.

Speech delivered in the 3rd Conference of Krnataka State Committee of CITU, Harihar, Mrch 5-6, 1981

6

Defend The Left-Led Governments

ON the 3rd of April the working class of West Bengal, led by the CITU, the CPI(M) in cooperation with other trade union organisations and political parties, administered a severe rebuff to the Congress(I) plan to paralyse economic life and express want of confidence in the Left Front Government.

All industries, mines and concerns worked to full capacity giving full confidence to the Left Front Government. The working class of West Bengal showed maturity of political consciousness and loyalty to the cause of democracy when it frustrated the evil designs of the Congress(I).

The meaning of this success of West Bengal's Working Class has to be fully understood by the working class of India.

Ever since the return of Indira Gandhi to power a grim struggle is going on between the forces of democracy and forces of dectatorship in India. The dictatorial forces got a big defeat in the Parliamentary elections in 1980 in the three States of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and they were also defeated in the Assembly elections in Kerala in that year. The defeat of Congress(I) in the Parliamentary elections in West Bengal and Tripura stabilised the Assemblies which had left majorities and with them the left front ministries in these States.

Since January 1980 therefore the Congress(I) efforts have been directed towards undermining the three left ministries the advanced outposts of democratic forces of India. The Congress(I)

realises that without destabilising them the road to dictatorship is not cleared.

The working class of India which suffered most under the emergency rule, which was reduced to the status of a slave without rights, cannot ignore this challenge of dictatorship, must do everything to defeat it and save and protect the three left front governments.

A Big Obstacle

What is the urgency of this attack against the left front governments? It lies in the fact that under the impact of economic crisis the bourgeois-landlord government of Indira Gandhi plans to launch widespread attacks against the working class, the peasantry, the employees and repress their struggle. It wants to impose the burdens of the crisis on these sections to protect the profits and gains of the big capitalists and landlords.

To fleece the people, to forcibly transfer their purchasing power to the vested interests the Government has imposed a regime of uncontrolled prices sowing widespread sufferings.

This leads to repressing the spreading discontent and suppression of the democratic rights of the people and the working class and makes it necessary to instal a dictatorial regime. Under these circumstances the existence of left front governments which guarantee democratic rights to the people, refuses to help the capitalists and landlords to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the common man and generates more supports among the people proves a big obstacle to the plans of the authoritarian regime.

The Congress(I) Party and its government therefore concentrate their fire on the left front governments,slander them and organise disorder in these States in order to destabilise them.

The contrast between the functioning of the Congress(I) government and the left front ministry is there for all to see. The former wants to protect the interests of the landlords and the capitalists, the later wants to protect the common man—the worker, peasant, agricultural worker, employees, teachers etc.

Anti-Labour Policies

The vengeful and barbarous attitude of the Indira Government towards labour is seen in its treatment of the striking loco railway men. For seven long years the Government refused to implement the agreement signed with the loco workers in 1973. The Janata Government also ignored it. The workers forced to go on strike

were repressed. More than 1,000 locomen have been dismissed, suspended or prematurely retired.

The Government also repudiated its agreement with the Public Sector workers and took repressive measures against the strikers. They repudiated the agreement with the LIC employees and refused till now to give bonus according to the agreement, despite the directive of the Supreme Court. They passed a new Act virtually abolishing all trade union rights.

Immediately the attack on the working class manifests itself through determined efforts of the employers and the Government to erode and eliminate the concept of bonus as deferred wage. This is a big vantage point won by the workers which is now directly or indirectly being assailed. It is being eroded by making new contingents agree to bonus linked with productvity. The first breach was made when the leaders of All India Railwaymen's Federation and Indian National Federation of Railway Workers agreed to link bonus with productivity. This was followed by a number of Central Government Employees' organisations falling in the trap.

The second prong of attack is an attempt to put a ceiling on income for those entitled to bonus. The third prong is attack on D.A.—standardisation at an arbitrary rate and ceiling on the amount, or instalment and denial of D.A. to those above a certain wage or earnings. The fourth is a general opposition to any wage increase. To achieve these aims one agreement after another is broken by the Government.

These attacks on workers' wages are enshrined in the wages and incomes policy of the Sixth Five Year Plan. The Planners do not want to reduce the disparity of incomes between the capitalists and the workers, between the big landlords and the peasants. They want to leave the incomes of the monopolists and millionaires in tact.

But they want to reduce the disparity in wages between worker and worker by reducing the wages of those who earn better. Besides they demand that no rise in wages should be sanctioned unless a worker produces more—rise in wages should be linked with productivity. Everyone knows that our present wage is low in proportion to our productivity and far below our needs. But the planners demand unless you accept more exploitation you should not get a higher wage. Besides even if a worker produces more he will not be entitled to a rise for a long time and also till the entire

economy shows a higher productivity. This is a policy of wage-freeze while demanding greater production.

Pursuing this policy the Congress(I) State Governments attack the workers' struggles and especially the CITU unions. The U.P. Government specialises in illegalising one strike after another. It brings pressures on employers to derecognise CITU unions which have full mass backing in Kanpur and demand that the employers negotiate and settle with Congress(I) unions with no following.

In Rampur the employers have refused to accept Government directive to give the legal wage to the textile workers; the government in collusion with the employers are determind to starve out the workers who have staged a prolonged strike for nearly four months. Now again the government directs that a fake settlement be reached with INTUC union which has been helping the employers by organising strike breaking. The Congress(I) State Governments, in some places used the hated NSA against the striking locomen.

Such is the face of the anti-working class policy of the Congress(I).

Attacks on other Sections

Like the working class, other sections of the poeple, students, engineers, doctors have been victims of Congress(I) repression. There have been lathi-charges, jailings, firings and killings of students and others. And now the Congress(I) State Governments have started training its guns on the peasant masses. The peasants fought in Karnataka and got bullets. More than 12 were killed. The Karnataka Government first to begin the shooting down of peasants has not yet stopped its killing spree. Last week it again shot down a few peasants in Nipani.

The peasants fought in Maharashtra and got jail and bullets. They fought in Panjab and Andhra and were again repressed. Side by side police atrocities on women and other sections continue unabated. Harijan and adivasis woman are raped in police stations. Homeguards and police failing to get free feed loot hotels. There are instances of villages being raided by policemen out for lust and loot. Atrocities on Harijans continue as before with no police protection to the Harijan. In Gujarat during the anti-reservation agitation the police has been accused of repressing Harijans but the Congress(I) ministry has not moved its little finger to help them. The Muslim minority is hunted down in communal riots. This is the march of the forces of dictatorship.

In contrast to this see the picture in the three States ruled by left front ministries.

Free Air of Democracy

These Governments have loyally served the common man, protected democratic rights, and thrown the weight of their administration on the side of the exploited in economic struggles. Working under inhibiting financial restrictions arbitrarily imposed by the Central Government, the three Governments have endeavoured to do justice to the common man and protect democracy. They have refused to use the National Security Act or any other meausre for preventive detention.

Under the left-front ministries both Muslim minority and Harijans are well protected; there are no communal riots which are replaced by amity for common struggle. Atrocities on Harijans do not take place. The workers' right to strike is fully protected and it is ensured for the State Government employees also. There are no police firings against striking workers, there is no police intervention against the workers and the people to support the capitalists; the share croppers, the agricultural workers, peasants, all are having a new deal with their interests fully protected. The employees and the entire people feel the free air of democracy.

Relief to the People in West Bengal

The concrete measures taken by these governments to give relief to the people have angered the capitalist-landlord classes and their representative the Congress(I) and the Central Government. They are angry because instead of passing on the burdens of the crisis to the people, the three Governments give them relief at the expense of the capitalist-landlord classes.

Take West Bengal. What is the crime of the left front ministry—the worst crime in the eyes of the Congress(I)? The fact that it is giving relief to the people, defending their livelihood and getting more and more popular baring the Congress(I) way to power in the State.

The Left ministry saw to it that the jute barons gave proper bonus to the jute workers; the ministry enabled textile and engineering workers to win their demands without a strike; it ensured democratic rights for the State Government employees including the right to strike and accepted the Pay Commission's recommendations to increase the salaries of State Government employees, municipal employees, teachers etc. It gave a sense of new life to

sharecroppers through operation Barga and now has adopted a comprehensive Land Act in the interest of the peasantry. It wrote off government loans given to small farmers and exempted wet and dry lands up to four and six acres respectively from payment of rent. It introduced unemployment relief to the unemployed, executed with a maximum efficiency the food for work programme and provided old age pensions for peasants. It raised the wage of agricultual worker and ensured the legal minimum wage enforced.

The latest budget of the West Bengal Government shows its earnest consideration for the peasants and the common man. Relief of Rs. 40 crores through cancellation of debts of the peasant. The acceptance of the pay Commission recommendations for low-wage employess, lowering of sales tax on medicines, and a number of new facilities for teachers, employees and workers, these are the features of this year's budgets of Left Front Governments.

This is the long list of crimes in the eyes of the capitalists and landlords. And the Congrees(I) gave expression to their chagrin and desperation by organising hooligans to throw bombs at running trams and buses on 3rd April.

The anger is all the more because these measures have immensely increased the strength of mass resistance and organisation. The strength of the CITU has reached 6.2 lakhs, the membership of Kisan Sabha, SFI, DYF and Mahila Samiti has increased to 31.8, 2.4, 5.1 and 5 lakhs respectively. Thus over 50 lakhs of people are now organised in various mass organisations.

Unholy Purpose

This means growing resistance to plans for putting increased burdens on the shoulders of the people. How can the exploiting classes like it? Similar are the achievements and situation in Kerala. Here also incenced by the progress of the coalition ministry, Indira Gandhi opens her broadside against it, joining hands with the RSS for this unholy purpose. In the election to the Assembly the Congress(I) formed a virtual front with the RSS to defeat the united front of several left and other parties. Today when the RSS is on a murderous rampage in Kerala—recently a bomb was thrown at the CPI(M), MLA. Indira attacks the CPI(M) and throws all blame on it. She is also trying to exploit the vacillations of certain elements in the coalitions for her own purpose of undermining the ministry.

A New Mass Upsurge in Kerala

In its latest budget the Kerala Ministry has made a total provision of Rs. 46.25 crores for measures like agricultural workers' pension, unemployment relief, pension to journalists, film and cinema artists.

Over 20 lakh workers in factories, plantations and farms received total wage-increases amounting to Rs. 71 crores. The rectification in the cost of living index calculated in accordance with the recommendations of the Index Committee brought permanent gain in real wages to lakhs of workers.

The D.A. of State Government employees has been increased four times during the year to keep parity with the Central D.A. and of pensioners twice this year.

Upto now 37 lakhs tenants have been granted ownership of the land they have been tilling.

Four and half lakh hutment dwellers have been made owners of their small plots on which they have built their tiny homes. Compensation for small landowners whose lands have been assigned to tenants has been increased from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 10,000.

During the past one year one lakh title deeds have been issued benefitting 20,000 Harijan and other scheduled caste families. Price support for paddy was raised to Rs. 140 per quintal and sugarcane to Rs. 180 per quintal.

Once again these measures have unleashed a new mass upsurge increasing the strength of the CITU, SFI, DYFI and agricultural workers and kisan organisations. The membership of CITU unions in Kerala is now 2,47,900; of Kisan Sabha 3,36,000; of agricultural workers' organisation 3,47,000; of women organisation 2,67,000; of Democratic Youth Federation of India 5,17,000; of Students Federation of India 1,72,000; bringing the total organised force to 18.86 lakhs.

Massive Relief Measures in Tripura

The left front Government in Tripura took massive steps for soil conservation and creating work in the villages. On an average a million man-days per year have been created under "Food for Work" programme. The burden of revenues, taxes and debts have been removed and education made free so that the weaker sections get relief. Through popular gaon sabhas, the Government extended the banks and co-operatives to the remotest corner of the state so that the rural people, the weavers, the fisherman, the milk

men and those in various cottage industries could be free from usurious exploitation by the money lenders, dishonest traders, contractors etc. A begining has been made towards industrialisation by setting up Jute Mill, Paper plant and introducing rubber plantation for the first time. A massive scheme for upliftment of the tribal people by aids like bullocks, seeds, scholarships, distribution of land and other facilities amounting to Rs. 5.5 crores has been implemented. The Government recognised the right of the Tripura people by recognising their language "Kokborok" as state language and formation of an autonomous district council for them. A separate co-operative Development corporation for the Tripuri people has been set-up. Despite lack of resources the government employees have been benefitted by certain interim measures while a pay commission has been set up. In this state also, the State Government Employees organisation has been recognised by the Government. Thus along with economic help and relief, the democratic rights of the people are being strengthened.

Advanced Outposts

The West Bengal Ministry led by Com. Jyoti Basu, Vice-President of CITU and Polit Bureau member of the CPI(M), the Kerala Ministry headed by Com. E.K. Nayanar, member of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) and Tripura Ministry headed by Com. Nripen Chakravorty, member of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) have shown these remarkable achievements in defending people's livelihood and steeling their determination to defend democracy.

That is why they deserve to be called the advanced outposts of democracy in our country. That is why the Congress(I) party aided by the Central Government is concentrating its fire against them.

Common Battle

It is not a battle between these ministries and the ruling party at the Centre. It is a battle between forces of democracy and forces of dictatorship.

The working class of India if it wants to protect its trade union rights and its earlier gains, in wages, D.A., and bonus, must accept this challenge to frustrate the efforts of the Congress(I) to bring down these ministries.

As a vanguard fighter in the cause of democracy the entire strength of the working class must be mobilised to defend these ministries and defeat the challenge of dictatorial authoritarian

forces.

The CITU calls on all its unions to rouse their own following to this danger, to mobilise the workers following sister organisations and unite the entire working class in this common battle of India's democratic forces.

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ESI Scheme—A Hoax

This is a foreward to the CITU's memorandum submitted to the ESI Review Committee and published as a booklet "ESI Scheme—A hoax." in 1981

The memorandum submitted by the CITU to ESI Review Committee speaks for itself. It constitutes a flaming indictment of the authorities who run the scheme and play with the health and lives of thousands of workers.

In the first place the scheme is applicable only to a small section of workers in organised industries. The drum beaters of Congress socialism could not achieve anything more than this.

The right to health and medical care must be declared to be a fundamental right under any civilised Government. But the Congress(I) Government does not believe in it. The performance under the ESI legislation and the policy pursued by the authorities reveal that for the Congress Government legislation providing benefits to the workers is only a fraudulent design to show a civilised face abroad. The formal acceptance of ILO Conventions, is accomapanied by farcical legislation measures and equally farcical implementation of these measures.

The ESI scheme and its operation substantiate these charges. The Report of the Ministry of Labour of the Government of India for the year 1980-81 makes the following grand claim for the progress of the ESI scheme "The ESI Scheme which was first introduced at Kanpur in February 1952 has been progressively implemented in other areas/centres and is now in force in 408 centres all over the country. The Scheme covered 60.22 lakhs employees as on 31st December 1980 as against 58.53 lakhs on the 31st December 1979;

this represents nearly 29% of the organised work force." Less than thirty per cent of workers covered in more than 30 years thus is the grand claim. At this rate it will take hundred years to cover the entire work force.

This is the real face of such legislation in an ex-colonial underdeveloped country. Make boastful claims but do nothing in practice.

Social security has to be all embracing. It must cover (a) medical care, (b) sickness benefit, (c) maternity benefit, (d) invalidating benefit, (e) old age benefit, (f) survivors' benefit, (g) benefit in respect of occupational injuries and diseases, (h) unemployment benefit, (i) family benefit.

But the ESI Act covers only a very small part of social secuity and that too in the most niggardly way.

No worker drawing a salary of more than Rs. 1,000 per month is eligible to get the benefit of the Act. Besides the total per capita expenditure is restricted to Rs. 120 per annum. A worker must adjust all his illness from T.B. to typhoid to Rs. 120 per annum. And for this handsome medical aid the workers are forced to contribute from their hard earned wages which are too inadequate to maintain them and their families in good health.

The promised hospitalisation is another farce. As the CITU's memorandum points out the hospital accommodatian work works out at one bed per 1,500.

The memorandum points out further scandals "Even if a worker requires additional medical treatment it is curtly denied to him by the corporation due to restrictive rules. Cases of workers succumbing to death for want of additional facilities have been reported in the past. Quite often, ESI dispensaries do not have the supply of required medicines and the worker has to run from pillar to post to get the medicine. The prices of medicine have gone up but the quantum of monetary benefit has not increased with the result that medical benefit has shrunk further. Besides ESI dispensaries often use substandard drugs. This criminal neglect of workers' health is not due to paucity of funds. The corporation has already accumulated more than Rs. 300 crores of ESI money and is solemnly discussing its investment policy.

It is a part of Government's policy to deny and restrict as much as possible the benefits of the ESI scheme to the workers, and in the first place to deny its expanision to sections not yet covered by it.

The World Bank has been pressing the Government for a long time to curtail all labour welfare measures and these pressures are also perhaps responsible for the policy pursued in relation to the ESI. In the first place during 30 years only 30 per cent of the orgnised sector workers have been covered. This could not have been the result of just lack of policy and negligence.

The latest report of the Labour Ministry shows there is deliberate design to curtail and restrict expansion of facilities as much as possible. During the year there was an addition of more than 1-1/2 lakhs to the number of unemployed. But the increase in the number of hospital beds is only 750.

The refusal to use accumulated funds, the refusal to take any serious action against defaulting employers, the waiting period before benefit can be claimed, the proposal to withdraw benefits during strike—all form part of the single policy to curtail benefits—while appropriating workers' contribution for use by the Government.

Can one then seriously talk about extending ESI benefits to workers in unorganised sections?

In contrast to this fake Congress (I) socialism the genuine scientific socialism achieved through the political power of the working class offers quite a different picture of social security.

The right to health protection in the USSR is guaranteed by free qualified medical care provided by State health institutions. There is free provision of all types of medical aid for all citizens, free treatment in hospitals including free medication, treatment procedures and food; free or cut-rate treatment at sanatoria and resorts; the right of women to free medical aid during pregnancy and child birth; house nursing of ailing infants. The Soviet Constitution guarantees the right to maintenance in old age, in sickness, and in the event of complete or partial disability or loss of a bread-winner. The Soviet system represents a comprehensive system of security. Soviet people receive not only pensions and allowances but other social aid as well including vocational training for the disabled, free prosthetic and orthopedic services and provision of special transport means, maintenance of the elderly and disabled at boarding houses, sanatorium and resort treatment etc. Pensions of all types are provided from social insurance funds, with no deduction from wages or salaries. The Soviet Union was the first country in the world which freed the workers from the burden of social

insurance deductions.

The trade unions in India including the CITU unions have not made sufficient efforts to assert the rights of the working class regarding social security. Nor have they paid proper attention to the callous functioning of the ESI corporation and the negligence of the workers' interests by the authorities.

The CITU General Council at its meeting held last August in Bali (Howrah) discussed these shortcomings of the affiliated unions and directed them to overcome their weaknesses.

The trade unions should now raise the demand for ensuring the benefits accepted under the scheme and demand their expansion. They must protest against the current farcical performance under the scheme and support the demands raised in the CITU memorandum. In particular they should ask for adequate representation of the trade unions in the directive and supervisory and policy making bodies of the corporation; end to monetery limitation in medical aid for workers; a time bound programme to cover the entire working class and the unorganised sector; use of accumulated funds to immediately expand hospital and other facilities; abolition of the waiting period, opposition to all plan to stop ESI aid during the strikes; provision of adequate stock of medicines; punishment for supply of substandard medicines and provision of drastic punishment for defaulting employers who withhold their or the workers' constributions. The trade unions besides should announce that they stand for non-contribution social insurance and should mobilise all sections of workers to support the demand.

It is the primary duty of the trade unions to protect the health and physical well being of the workers and their families and they should no longer neglect it.

8

On the Foundation Day of the CITU, 1981

The Speech delivered on the 12th Foundation day of CITU at New Delhi

Comrades, we have gathered this evening to observe the foundation day of the CITU and it is with pride that we look on the work we have done since the start of our organisation. There is no doubt that the foundation of the CITU fulfilled a historic need of a trade union organisation, understanding the trade union movement as part of the class struggle in our country and deeply rooted in internationalism and committed to socialism. You will find that these three conditions were not fulfilled by the then existing trade union organisations. Those who talked about internationalism succumbed to class-collaboration, those who thundered against exploitation took a hostile attitude to internationalism and especially to the victorious socialist revolutions.

If the CITU has made rapid advance, it is because it remained loyal to these basic principles and was able to identify itself with the growing militancy of the working class and its aspirations, its sensitivity to exploitation and adverse changes in its condition. Other organisations failed to express this mood and fell behind. In the period since our foundation we conducted innumerable battles and prolonged strikes in which the workers showed their tenacity and determination to fight unitedly under our banner.

The CITU prestige and mass base rapidly increased, its prestige as a militant and fighting organisation increased, thanks to the courage and sufferings and self-sacrifice of our workers, cadres and leaders. Repression has heavily hit our members, their houses

have been raided, worker's wives have been outraged, workers have been jailed, beaten, shot down or murdered at the hands of goonda gangs, but the inflexible determination to resist never wavered either in defeat, victory or compromise.

CITU for Trade Union Unity

Comrades, while the CITU has made progress in many States it has also reached stagnation in some States, for which the CITU leadership in these States is entirely responsible. Among the States which have recently forged ahead I must mention Karnataka, the State Conference of which I recently attended. Haryana must get the place of pride not only for its advance but for the courage and consistency with which it has faced feudal barbaric repression of the State Government. Faridabad, Hansi, Sonepat - are the landmarks both of our courage and advance. Punjab is another State which demands full mention for its progress, once more in the teeth of repression. Our organisation not only reflected the militancy of the masses, it also represented the need as well as the growing urge among workers for unity. Knowing that the full strength of the working class cannot be brought into operation without united action of several organisation, the CITU has been striving for trade union unity.

At its Madras Conference it called for a Confederation of all Central Trade Unions and Federations to discuss trade union problems and take decisions by common agreement. As yet there has been no response from other organisations but if we popularise the idea among the workers there is bound to be quick response from the leaders. As you know we do not miss a single genuine step for trade union unity. The CITU took a prominent part in the formation and functioning of the U.C.T.U. whose convenor was George Fernandes. It advocated for united activities and consultations under the Congress rule. One fruit of this unity was that later, the anti-working class legislation—The Industrial Relations Bill—of the Janata Government was scuttled with the help of Janata trade union M.Ps standing by the United Trade Union Movement.

Landmark in our Struggle

The defeat of the Janata Party and the return of Congress(I) to power gave a temporary setback to the struggle for unity. During the last year and half very few achievements could be recorded. But this year the urge for unity is again coming to the forefront, faced by the repressive policy as announced in the Sixth Five Year Plan

document. The crushing of the loco strike, the LIC Act and the suppression of public sector workers' struggle have again roused the trade union movement to come together and the representatives of the trade union will meet in Bombay on June 4 to discuss the anti-labour policy of the Congress(I) Government and oppose it unitedly. This will be a big landmark in our struggle for trade union unity.

Comrades, we must clearly understand the meaning of the struggle for trade union unity. This unity has a purpose to defend the interests of the working class to defend the principles of trade union movement, to move the movement forward. If any organisation demands impossible conditions as price for unity, we have to reject such conditions and unity with such people. There are people who demand that we would not expose Congress(I) Government, should not attack its policies, as a price for joining hands with us. We have no use for such people who are not prepared to fight a Government pursuing anti-labour policy and conspiring to impose an authoritarian regime. There are people who demand that we should not raise the slogan, 'workers of the world unite'. These people are interested in disuniting the workers of the world and we have no use for them. The struggle for unity is directed against the capitalist class and the Indira Government which protects them. The struggle for unity is directed to unite the democratic and socialist forces and defeat the authoritarian forces.

CITU Supports Reservation

Comrades, the question of working class unity is now no longer confined to bringing together different trade union organisations and their members. The Gujarat events have shown the assault on our unity was from a different direction. The Reservation issue divided the workers so much that one day 75,000 non-Harijan workers struck work to oppose reservation, next day 2 lakh 25 thousand Harijan workers struck to support reservation. What change has working class unity, when two sections of workers confront each other as two hostile camps?

I do not wish to go into details. But it is of course wrong to oppose reservation of jobs for Harijans. Knowing that they are outcasts of society and even the workers observe caste distinctions, the CITU supports reservation. It considers that by neglecting the special demands of Harijans like social discrimination, fight against inferior status, by neglecting fight against the practice of untouchabil-

ity, the trade union create difficulties in the way of full Harijan participation in trade union common struggles. At the same time the Harijan leaders who only harp on reservation and keep the mass of Harijans away from the common struggles harm the interests of the Harijans as well as the common struggle. Our struggle for trade union unity cannot neglect this problem.

Comrades, having said good words about ourselves, let me point out some grave weaknesses. If you read constitution of our CITU you will find it does not confine itself to defending the day to day interests of the working class only. It has several other objectives. I will mention only one or two to show that we are extremely lax in relation to them.

Good Beginning

Among the aims objects it is stated: "The CITU promotes relations of solidarity with the peasants and agricultural workers in the fight for land, against usury and rent, and high taxation, and lend any help to the agrarian revolution, to support in full the struggle for the agricultural workers for higher wages and decent conditions. The CITU believes that no lasting improvement in the economic conditions of the working class is possible without a complete liquidation of the feudal land relations ending the land monopoly of the big landlords."

How far we have been conscious of this objective? How far have we done anything to discharge this responsibility? It must be admitted that there has hardly been any conscious united mass effort on our part to make the working class conscious of this responsibility which has to be discharged if the working class standard of living is to be raised.

This weakness has created a dangerous situation for the country, for the democratic forces. Recent events have shown that the apathy of the working class towards this question has pushed the peasant under the leadership of the landlords in some states. If the main mass of the peasantry and agricultural workers gets divided between the landlords and the ruling party what chance has democracy?

In West Bengal because of the left ministry led by CPI(M) and our distinguished Vice-President Jyoti Basu, the share croppers, the agricultural workers and others have rallied round the left and the vested interests are isolated. Tripura and Kerala ministries also follow the same path.

But the trade union movement as a whole, our CITU has yet to discharge its responsibility. It is a matter of satisfaction, however that thousands of workers from Haryana, Delhi, Ghaziabad, participated in the Kissan march of 26th March and hundreds joined as volunteers to help the peasants and agricultural workers who had come to the capital. This is a good but small beginning of the fraternity that we wish to bring about between the working class and the peasantry.

Fight for World Peace

Further among the aims and objects it is stated: "It promotes international solidarity and unity with the workers of other countries in the common fight for socialism, promotes fraternal relations and deep bonds of unity with workers and people of socialist countries."

"CITU fights for the maintenance of world peace against all imperialist plots for unleashing world war, against nuclear war and for the abolition of all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction."

"It fights for a foreign policy based on friendly relations with neighbouring countries, opposing war and supporting peace and national liberation movements."

Once again how far our trade unions and trade union leaders are aware of this responsibility and what they have been doing to carry the message to the mass of workers? Again very little. Although I must admit that this May Day when I listened to the speeches of our comrades in Delhi and Gaziabad, I found they were seized of the responsibility and did educate the workers. It cannot be however said that all over India this is a constant part of our activity. The weakness will prove dangerous to the working class and the country when the forces of world imperialism are plotting a new war and have brought it to our doorstep; when the imperialists are supporting secessionist movements in our country and feverishly arming Pakistan to unleash a war between the two countries and when the Government of India is under constant pressure to change its foreign policy-pressures form the imperialists and parties like BJP.

The CITU can no longer neglect the fight for world peace, against war. It has to do everything to expose the danger from the U.S. to our country and warn the working class against plots for a nuclear war and rouse it to solidarity with the socialist camp and the

international working class.

Properly Equipped Leadership

Comrades, these tasks demand a new type, a better type of leadership. A leadership steeped in day to day demands, reared only in the experience of struggle for these demands, a leadership expert only in the choice of exposure of the management of a particular factory or industry, but ignorant about the world affairs, about foreign policy and the danger of dictatorship to the country, will not be effective and will not hold the loyalty of the workers for a long time. For the workers are also influenced by bourgeois propaganda about political affairs, foreign policy, socialist countries—they are told that there are two super powers etc. Unless our leaders from factories and trade unions are properly equipped to combat the bourgeois propaganda we will not achieve our objective. A large number of our leaders are ill-equipped to meet these responsibilities and the CITU must endeavour to rear a better type of leader. Let us look with confidence to the future and when we meet next year let us be in a position to say that we are meeting our international responsibilities fully and squarely.

Working Class, Vol. 10, No. 10, June 1981

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Forward to Preparation for One Day Strike in All Industries

The National Convention of Central Trade Union organisations and Federations which met in Bombay on June 4 should prove an outstanding event in the struggle of the trade unions, if all faithfully carry out its call for State-Conventions and one-day all-India strike. The materialisation of one day all-India strike will be a historic step forward of the trade union movement, an announcement of unprecedented labour unity, and will give a new dimension to the widespread democratic protest movement against the anti-people policies of the Congress(I) Government.

The CITU, its state Committees and its affiliated unions should see to it that the Statewide Conventions become centres of mass mobilisation and countribute effectively to the preparation of one day India-wide action.

The Convention while exposing the anti-Labour policies of the Congress(I) Government spoke on behalf of the entire people on many issues.

Important Development

It demanded remunerative price for the peasants and higher wage to industrial workers. This was perhaps the first time that an all-India Trade Union gathering representing diverse political and ideological currents raised its voice in defence of the peasant and agricultural workers—the majority of the Indian people. Besides the CITU participants there are very few organisations who declare in their constitution support for the peasantry and need of worker-

peasant alliance. In the Convention however speaker after speaker supported the peasant and the agricultural worker and expressed keen desire that the working class should take initiative in organising agricultural workers.

This was of course the effect of the valiant struggle of the peasantry over the last year.

This is a very important development and if carried forward it will add immensely to the strength of the democratic and anti-vested interests forces in the country.

Against Repressive Policies

The Convention once again spoke on behalf of the entire people when it raised its voice against price-rise and demanded "sale of all essential commodities such as food-grains, edible oil, cloth, sugar, etc. at subsidised prices, through a network of shops in the public distribution system under the control and supervision of popular committees."

The Convention flayed the Congress(I) Government for its repressive policy, for going back on earlier agreements, for its wages and incomes policy, for extortionate taxation measure, for callous attitudes towards contract and migrant workers, for attack on the rights of collective bargaining, favouritism towards the INTUC and demanded repeal of National Security Act, full guarantee of trade union rights, recognition of trade unions through secret ballot, ban on retrenchment and closure, introduction of unemployment, allowance, bonus for all and need based minimum wage.

There is no doubt that the CITU unions will mobilise the working class on these demands during the preparation for State Conventions.

Intensified Attacks

The problems facing the trade union movement the attacks on rights, living standards-are part of the struggle of the Indian people against the Congress(I) rule and its growingly authoritarian manifestation. They cannot be divorced from the political situation existing in the country.

The Congress(I) Government is determined to make the judiciary a subservient instrument of the executive. This attack has been growingly intensified. The grant of bouns to LIC employees has not decided the battle between the judiciary and executive. If the trade union movement does not consciously throw in all its weight to frustrate and defeat these attacks it will loose its battle for trade

union rights. This means cooperating with all anti-authoritarian forces.

The trade union movement should note the dangers of Presidential system which the Congress(I) Party is seeking to impose on the country. The call for Presidential system is nothing but a call for one party rule, for personal dictatorship and the working class should have been fully warned and called upon to join other democratic forces in opposing this authoritarian conspiracy. The battle between the democratic and authoritarian forces sees ups and downs and the active participation of workers and the trade union movement is required to ensure its continuous success.

Authoritarian Party Routed in West Bengal

A week before the Convention the authoritarian party and its allies met with a big defeat in West Bengal. In the municipal elections they were routed, the Left Front headed by CPI(M) winning 68 out of 78 municipalities. This was possible because the working class and other democratic elements stood solidly by the left.

A bigger defeat was inflicted on the Congress(I) in the Assembly and Lok Sabha Elections. This victory of the working class and democratic forces was ensured by the policies of the Left Front Government which firmly protected all democratic and trade union rights and stood by the peasantry.

In other states opposition parties lost all bye-elections, partly as a result of rigging by the unscrupulous Congress(I) administration. But it cannot be denied that these parties also failed to rouse the workers because they had no alternative policies to show.

Broaden the Struggle against Authoritarianism

In their fight for trade union rights and living conditions for the workers, the trade union movement cannot ignore these realities. Its united voice should speak against attacks on judiciary and against the design of imposing a Presidential system. It should unhesitatingly appreciate the fight put by the Left Front Ministries against the Congress(I) and welcome their growing mass influence. And while working for the Convention and one-day action it should ensure the active participation of its followers in broadening the struggle against authoritariansim.

Working Class, Vol. No. 10, No. 11, July 1981

10

Presidential Address

General Council Meeting, Howrah, August 1981

Comrades,

I pay my homage to our martyrs, to those who in recent struggles have laid their lives for the working class. Some of our colleagues and comrades are no longer with us. We cherish their memory and remember their devotion to the common cause. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Bhupesh Gupta—outstanding parliamentarian and leader of the CPI. His death is a loss to the left forces of India. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Bal Dandvate—President of our sister organisation HMS. He was an ardent advocate of trade union unity and his passing away is a great loss to our common struggle for unity. We all mourn the passing away of Com. Dinesh Mazumdar and Com P.C. Joshi.

Comrades, a number of important developments have taken place since we met last in Cannanore. Among them the most outstanding are the successful struggle of the Left Front Government against Congress(I) attempts to destabilise them and the proclamation of the notorious Essential Services Ordinance. These contradictory developments are part of the same political reality—the intense struggle between the authoritarian and democratic forces that dominates the political and economic scene.

The continued existence of the three Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala is itself a victory of the democratic forces because it announce the failure of the ruling party to isolate them from the people. This victory is enhanced by the three big

defeats inflicted on a desperate Congress(I) in West Bengal.

The working class and the people of West Bengal inflicted an ignominious defeat on the Congress(I) party and its followers from the underworld when the 2nd April bandh flopped and its sponsors resorted to raw violence to intimidate the people. The working class kept the wheels of industry running. Praiseworthy courageous and inspiring was the role of our tramway and state transport workers who rebuffed the bandh arsonists by running the trams and buses. We all must honour the memory of the workers who sacrificed their lives in this grim struggle. The CITU raises its banner in honour of our proleterian heroes who knew that they were fighting a battle on behalf of the people, for democracy. The Congress(I) frightened by the indignation of the people over its black deeds on 3rd April ran away from the Municipal elections and got its second defeat. It was again routed in the byelections to the Parliament and Assembly. These victories under the leadership of the left forces headed by the CPI(M) stand in sharp contrast to the defeat of the opposition parties in neighobouring states. Low polling, rigging, malpractices no doubt played their role in those Congress(I) successes. Yet it cannot be denied that the opposition parties neither presented a united electoral opposition nor were able to inspire the confidence of the people with an alternative policy in the interest of the people.

These developments show that the left forces aided by the working class and the people have played an outstanding role in rebuffing the advance of the authoritarian forces and served the cause of democracy in India.

Comrades, we cannot rest on our laurels. The Central Government intends to replace the West Bengal Governor by a nominee of its heart to relaunch an attack for destabilisation. A desperate Government cannot be credited with any norms of behaviour.

Drive Towards Authoritarian Rule

The Central Government elated by its electoral victory in recent bye-elections in other States has launched its counter offensive in the shape of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance.

The Ordinance carries forward the attack against fundamental rights initiated by the NSA. The provision for preventive detention is now accompanied by conviction and imprisonment for legitimate economic activities. The right to organise is now attacked openly. Emergency is now being introduced piecemeal to lull the

vigilance of the people.

The attacks on the judiciary, preparations for a Presidential form of Government, the NSA and now the prohibition of strikes—these are the successive steps of Indira Gandhi towards the installation of a full authoritarian rule.

This is an assault which demands the united resistance of all trade union organisations and political parties.

I extend my warm greetings to the Chief Ministers of the three Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura for their forthright condemnation of this monstrosity of a legislation. The West Bengal Government has earned the applause and approbration of the entrie working class by demanding the withdrawal of the Ordinance.

What The Ordinance Contains?

Under the Ordinance the Central Government is authorised to prohibit strikes in any essential service. The prohibition may intially be in force for six months, but it may be extended by another six months.

"Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure all offences under this Ordinance shall be tried in a summary way by any Metropolitan Magistrate."

Police officer here means any policeman. And Summary trial means a police dominated trial with guarantee of conviction. The convicted person can be safely locked up for two years because he has no right of appeal.

Comrades, the introduction of summary trial in trade union disputes constitutes a totalitarian measure. Even the British regime never thought of putting such a measure on the statute book to curb strikes. The Congress(I) Government is outdoing the British and has introduced a measure which has no precedents in our country.

The definition of strike is now made flexible to suit the plans for increased exploitation of workers and incresed workload. Strike under the ordinance includes "refusal to work overtime when such work is necessary for the maintenance of any essential service." It also includes "any other conduct which is likely to result in, or results in cessation or substantial retardation of work in any essential service." Such are the arbitrary restrictive and prohibitive provisions of the ordinance, placing the workers and their leaders at the mercy of police officials and summary courts.

The essential services under the Ordinance include Postal, Tele-

graphs and Telephones, Railways and other transport Services by land and water loading and unloading at ports, services connected with operation and maintenance of aerodromes, service connected with the safety of employees of industry in Scheduled Industries, services connected with purchase supply storage and distribution of foodgrains by Government Undertakings, services connected with public conservancy system, hospitals etc., in union territory; services connected with banking, oilfield, refinery, mint, Security press etc. It also includes any other service connected with matters with respect to which Parliament has the right to make laws and which the Central Government being of opinion that the strikes there in would prejudicially affect the maintenance of any public utility service....

Such is the wide scope of essential service. It includes almost every industrial activity, every industrial concern and the Government has arrogated to itself powers to ban and prohibit strikes wherever it chooses to do so.

This monstrosity of a legislation has met with universal condemnation. Only the big capitalists and the Congress(I) sychophants nurtured and trained in treachery to the people have welcomed it. This widespread attack on the trade union movement, on the workers' basic right to fight against exploitation, is nothing but declaration of the hated emergency in relation to labour. What has occasioned it? It cannot be said that last year was a year full of strikes. On the other hand in 1980 the strike figure had gone down with Government spokesmen expressing satisfaction over industrial relations and peace. The measure is not due to "irresponsible wild cat strikes". What is its urgency for the ruling party then?

Reasons for This Monstrous Attack

The Congress(I) Government in face of the urgent need to pass on the burdens of inflation and economic crisis to the working class, has already announced its policy of wage-freeze in the Sixth Five Year plan document. But this is not sufficient. It is in need of direct attack on the existing wages. It has therefore started resiling from earlier agreements the agreement with the Loco workers was broken and they were forced to go on strike. The agreements with the LIC employees was broken and the Supreme Court has to intervene. The Bangalore strike, the Loco strike met with severe repression. Mr. Stephen the Communication Minister had gone back on his word promising certain concessions to the P&T work-

ers. And further with the rise in the prices, the cost of living index rises, and raises the question of dearness allowance. The wage bill of the Government goes on mounting and Government wants to go back on the agreed rate of D.A. There are also plans to start massive retrenchment in many industries—coal, Government departments etc. and other industries.

A direct attack on the wages, on D.A. on the existing living standards and jobs is being planned. But the Government knows that it has to deal with organised workers and employees who are bound to resist such attack.

The ordinance is proclaimed to crush their legitimate agitation and give the Government and the private employers the right to impose arbitrary working conditions of the workers. The Ordinance has the same objective as the recent LIC legislation which puts an end to all collective bargaining.

The Ordinance places the entire trade union movement at the mercy of the policy; makes workers' struggle a law and order question and makes it a criminal offence to fight for decent wages, resist erosion of wage through Government Policies.

Resist This Onslaught

All trade union centres have condemned it. The entire trade Union movement should start a campaign for unitedly resisting it and compelling the Government to withdraw it. All political parties worth their salt must fight this black legislation on the floor of the Parliament and their fight should be supported from outside by huge mass mobilisation.

It is time that all trade union centres and federations unitedly appeal to the international trade union centres, to the WFTU and others to raise their voice in portest against this suppression of workers' rights.

The Ordinance shows the utter desperation of the Indira Government in dealing with the economic situation, its bizarre failure to control inflation and prices. It is bound to be followed by attacks on the unorganised sector. The Government's resistance to remunerative prices for the peasants led to widespread agitation leading to police firings and loss of life. The food for work programme which gave some partial relief to a small section in the rural areas is at standstill and the public distribution system is threatened with collapse. In this back ground the World Bank is demanding withdrawal of food subsidies. Thus the ground is ready to attack all

vulnerable sections to transfer the burdens of inflation and high prices to their shoulders. This will be accompanied by further draconian measures to curtail civil liberaties and democratic rights. It is interesting to note that the present Ordinance does not pretend that the arbitrary powers of arrest are given to higher officials. Usually this is a pretence in every ordinance which arms only officers of certain ranks with such power. Under the present measure any police constable, any one who can be legally described as a police officer can drag any worker or trade union leader for a summary trial and quickly despatch him to the prison.

Facade of Impartiality Torn to Pieces

Also generally every such measure, to show its impartiality, bans lock-outs alongwith strikes. But this blessed Ordinance forgets to exercise this show of impartiality. And the Prime Minister without batting an eyelash utters a plain untruth when she says that lock outs are prohibited under the Ordinance.

Some one in the legal ministry will pay for this loss of image, for failure to provide a facade of "impartiality."

Comrades, the type of scurrilous prapaganda unleashed to justify the Ordinance can be seen from the following from the Home Ministry's note "The industrial climate of the country continues to be characterised by a mainly political trade union movement, with intense intra-union rivalries at local levels, at times cutting across trade union loyalties and discipline." Once again the fictitious excuse of trade union rivalries is resurrected and that too at a time when all the Central Trade Union Organisations and Federations stand united to resist Government's anti-labour policies and the Essential Services Ordinance. And again the bankrupt argu ment about political motivation. The Home Ministry does not know that there is double digit inflation in the country, that the workers cost of living index is rising every month. It seems to accept the Finance Minister's claim that inflation is under control. Strikes therefore are due to the victimisation of workers by political parties. The Home Ministry's note says further "Utter absence and disregard of trade union norms and industrial action by the labour and at times by the employees, militates against the development of normal relationship. Such a situation which generates climate of distrust and indiscipline takes a heavy toll of the industrial production." Nothing can be farther from truth than this false accusation against labour and the trade union movement. Did the Govern-

ment call a tripartite conference to consider this accusation of inter union rivalries and labour indiscipline? They dared not because they knew the accusation would be torn to pieces.

The Home Ministery's note claims that the repression directed against the Loco, LIC and Public Sector workers has paid dividends. The note says "the strict handling of the strikes by workers of public undertakings, loco men and the LIC employees has led to a definite feeling in the minds of the Central trade union organisations that the Government insisted on handling the labour situation in a firm manner." Therefore, be still more firm with the workers' discontent.

The strike resistance of the working class had of course started increasing in recent months from the low level of 1980. What did the Home Ministry expect with the consumer price index for industrial workers rising by 12.6 per cent in 1980-81? By April 1981 this manipulated index was 427 compared with 373 in 1979-80. Besides people had to purchase at fantastic prices in the black market. The strike wave was bound to accentuate. But instead of controlling the inflation the Government bars working class resistance to inflation.

Shielding Corrupt and Inefficient Management

It is at the same time clear that the strike resistance is as yet far below what it was in 1978 or 1979. The number of strikes fell from 2,117 in 1978 to 1,338 in 1979 to 899 in 1980. For 1981 upto March the figure was 255.

The Home Ministry officials, it is obvious, do not study the Economic Survey of the Government of India. Otherwise they would have known the havoc done to production by management in private and public sector alike. Electricity generation is vital to industrial production. And yet it is found that the capacity utilised fell from 55.3 per cent in 1976-77 to 45.4 per cent in 1979-80. The Economic Survey, though it casually mentions labour in this connection places the blame mainly on the inefficient and corrupt management.

Commenting on this fall in utilised capacity the Survey says, "Management shortcomings are reflected in inadequate preventive maintenances and frequent failure to follow schedules of maintenance of major issues of equipment such as boilers, turbines, and generators eventually resulting in unplanned outages. Lack of industrial discipline and also inadequate training of labour skills

aggravate these conditions. There are also some complaints relating to the quality of equipment supplied especially the accessory equipment and instrumentation, the latter being particularly important for maintaining plant operations. Inadequate availability of spares adds to the period of time taken for repairs and maintenance. Finally complaints about the quality of coal have risen singificantly in recent years. The ash content has been increasing and the coal supplied also contained abrasives. Since the thermal plant equipment is designed for better or different specifications, the steady deterioration, variation in coal quality has contributed significantly to lowering their performance." One may only add that the coal industry is nationalised industry. Comrades, this is how class propaganda is carried on and now the Home Ministry under Shri Zail Singh does not shrink from suppressing truth.

Mounting Attacks

The fact is that the Indira Government has been planning to launch several attacks against the workers' living standards, with a view to wrest away the gains they had secured earlier. This was to be preceded by a policy of wage freeze.

In pursuance of this policy, the Finance department of the Indira Government has been pressing the various ministries to go back on concessions given in negotiations.

Instead of appreciating settlement between the Central Trade Unions and coal authority, the Finance Ministry castigates the latter for making concessions regarding casual leave, leave travel concessions, Sunday wages and carry forward of casual leave for four days in 1980-81, and it asks the authority to submit all future proposals for concessions to the Bureau of Public Enterprises.

The same department has castigated the Commuication Ministry for agreeing to certain concessions like two promotions to the P&T workers and the Minister has been forced to eat his words.

Besides there is an attempt to arbitrarily force Rs. 1.30 per point of rise in consumers cost of living index.

Immediately the attack on the working class manifests itself through the determined efforts of the employers and the Government to erode and eliminate the concept of bonus as deferred wage. This is a big vantage point won by the workers which is now directly or indirectly being assailed. It is being eroded by making new contingents agree to bonus linked with productivity. The first

breach was made when the leaders of National Federation of Indian Railway Workers and others agreed to bonus linked with productivity. This was followed by a number of Central Government Employees' organisations falling in the trap.

The second prong of attack is on attempt to put a ceiling on income for those entitled to bonus. The third prong is attack on D.A.—standardisation at an arbitrary rate and ceiling on the amount, and denial of D.A. to those earning above a certain limit. Now after ordinance the Compulsory Deposit Scheme for D.A., will be soon forthcoming. The fourth is a general opposition to any wage increase. To achieve these aims one agreement after another is broken by the Government.

Sixth Five Year Plan

These attacks on workers' wages are enshrined in the wages and incomes policy of the Sixth Five Year Plan. The Planners do not want to reduce the disparity of incomes between the capitalists and the workers, between the big landlords and the peasants. They want to leave the incomes of the monopolists and millionaires intact.

But they want to reduce the disparity of wages between workers and worker by reducing the wages of those who earn better. Besides they demand that no rise in wages should be sanctioned unless a worker produces more-rise in wages should be linked with productivity. Everyone knows that our present wage is low in proportion to our productivity and far below our needs. But the planners demand unless you accept more exploitation you should not get a higher wage. Besides even if a worker produces more he will not be entitled to a rise for a long time and also till the entire economy shows higher productivity. This is a policy of wage-freeze while demanding greater production. Comrades, these concerted attacks have to be met by growing unity on our part and that is what the CITU is calling for. These onslaughts will continue because the capitalist-landlord ecomomy of our country is in crisis, with everything in disorder. The bourgeois-landlord Government wants to pass on the burden of the crisis to the common man—the working class and is therefore preparing for further attacks accompanied by repression.

Class Bias of The Planners

The new Sixth Five Year Plan advances the interests of the capitalist-landlord classes at the expense of the masses and embarks on

a big attack on the incomes and living conditions of the mass of our people.

While offering nothing to the peasants-neither land nor remunerative prices for his produce, while making some noise about ameliorating the conditions of the agricultural workers and directing attacks against the wages and salaries of workers and employees, the Plan in the name of new targets of production demands heavy taxation load on the people. Under it inflation and high prices will increase because it provides for a deficit financing of Rs. 5,000 crores. This figure will be doubled by the end of the plan period leading to mounting increase in prices.

The Plan calls for additional resources mobilisation of Rs. 21,302 crores. Of these Rs. 5,000 crores will come through additional taxation—mainly indirect taxation borne by the common man.

Attempts to Foist Wage Boards

To enforce this policy the Government further proposes to reintroduce the discredited system of wage-board. The Labour Minister, Mr. Narain Dutt Tewari, made this announcement in May addressing the annual session of the All India Organisation of Employers. He said "There is a view that the system of Wage-Board, which provides a machinery of collective bargaining in an orderly fashion under the aegis of an umpire, should be raised to evolve the wage structure for each industry on a scientific and rational basis. Our experience of the wage boards set up in the past has not been encouraging. Even so, Government wish to give another trial to the system. It is, therefore, proposed to bring forward a legislation to enable the Government to set up wage boards on a statutory footing investing them with necessary powers and authority."

The wage-boards were discarded by the trade union movement because they proved to be time-consuming and delaying machinery. They took ten years to finalise their recommendations in some disputes. Under the Wage-board the workers are at the mercy of the bogus balance sheets submitted by the employers, which the boards consider to be reliable. There is thus hardly any chance to get a favourable verdict for the workers. And the Government will always have the last word if recommendations go in favour of the workers. This discredited machinery for protracting disputes and tiring out the workers is being revived along with prohibition of strikes.

Comrades will you believe that an Industrial Tribunal a near

cousin of the Wage Board took twenty years to give its verdict? Let me quote from the IPA dated 20th June 1981 "A classic case of 'Justice delayed is justice denied' is that of the 202 workmen of Punjab worsted spinning Mills, Chherta whose services were terminated on December 3, 1960 and the Industial Tribunal, Punjab was given an award in their case—published in Punjab.... Government Gazette dated May 29, 1981—In these 20 years 5 workmen have died, eighty one were untraceable, young boys have become old and old ones are on the verge of death.

Fight For Trade Union Unity

The CITU has been working for reviving trade union unity for the last year and a half. It took some time for other organisations to get out of the slough of despondency and we could not register much progress for some time. The Bangalore strike and the call for March 11 action which was widely responded to by the workers was the fruit of our efforts to forge unity.

Consultations on other policy matters were going on between the several central organisations. They related to the question of recognition of unions-verification and ballot, ILO representation and common stand in industrial negotiations in Coal, Steel etc.

The June Convention in Bombay was a culmination of this process of coming together and its call has to be carried forward. All our unions must seriously prepare for the March to Parliament and for one day strike of all Industries.

Comrades, we must once more renew our call for a confederation of all central trade unions and Federations acting on the basis of agreed decisions. Nothing short of close association and co-ordination of all trade union centres will put the full strengh of the organised working class against the repression machinery of the ruling party- of the bourgeois-landlord government.

Brutal Exploitation of Labour

Comrades, with the collapse of the administration in the greater part of India, with the economy in deep throes of crisis is it surprising that all labour laws have collapsed or are being defied? Lakhs of bonded labourers are mercilessly exploited in brick kilns and farms; contract labour, a euphemism for bonded labour in many cases, continues to increase in number despite official declaration about abolition of such labour.

There is no data on the number of these workers employed by the private sector or the state governments. The number employed by

the Central employing ministries is 3.77 lakhs. Railways employ 2.37 lakhs. P&T 70,000, Ministry of works and Housing 14,000, Defence 14,000 and Bureau of Public Enterprises 36,000.

This section of the working class is most brutally exploited by central government agencies and the trade union movement must uphold their cause and release them from the bonded conditions.

Comrades, safety legislation has collapsed. Welfare measures have cracked. The Employees Provident Fund is being swallowed by employers but the government refuses to take drastic measures.

The EPF Review Committee appointed by the Government found that total arrears of exempted and unexempted establishments has reached Rs. 57.42 crores. And this, when the Committee has not been able to assess the total arrears because the accounts of EPF organisation were drawn on a cash basis while the amount involved in enquiries both pending and in progress had not been assessed.

Attack on Freedom of Association

The Government of India has been violating the ILO conventions one after another. To earn the certificate of progressism abroad it signs conventions which it takes no time in breaking. It attacks freedom of organisation. It indulges in unfair labour practices when it itself victimises office bearers of trade unions or permits private employers to do it. No wonder the Labour Minister Tiwari asked freedom to repudiate ILO conventions recently. He made this plea on behalf of under-developed countries.

Eeonomic Crisis

These developments are part of the grim economic situation that dominates that scene today. Uncontrolled inflation, erosion of people's living standards through high prices, increased load of taxation, restricted market, incapacity to use industrial capacity, and mounting unemployment character the crisis. The way out for the ruling party is based on intense exploitation of the peasantry by denying it a remunerative price for its produce and by a general assault on the earnings of all sections—workers, employees, agricultural workers etc.

Deficit financing of the Government has exceeded by more than hundred per cent the bugeted provision. After the buget the country has seen at least two spurts of taxation and increase in prices of petrol, diesel, fertilisers-the latest increase netting more than Rs. 1,000 crores from the consumers. No wonder the consumer

price index number rose from 373 in March 1980 to 408 in December 1980 and to 433 in May 1981. The sufferings imposed on our people by the unscrupulous rise in price are beyond description. The working class and employees alike, are finding it impossible to meet their daily needs. The rocketing prices of necessities of life like oil, vegetables, milk, the non availability of foodgrains in ration shops have all reduced their living standards to a farce. Add to this the prohibitive cost of medicine geared up by foreign multinationals who are allowed by the Congress(I) government to play with our peoples' lives, and the black market price and captitation fees people have to pay for seeking admission into colleges and universities—and the cup of bitterness is full.

If this is the position of those who have regular jobs and who hold them in organised industry, what can one say about the lakhs in cities who have no regular jobs, who are employed in unorganised industry unregulated by any law. The organised working class, may I say, is callous to the conditions of outright misery imposed on this section. Its demands are hardly taken by our unions. And but for this callous and indifference the Antulay Government of Maharashtra would have dared launch its illegal and inhuman ejection of "pavement dwellers" in Bombay.

And finally comrades the inflation and high prices have brought about the ruination of the small peasant and agricultural worker. The farmer is doubly ruined. He is denied remunerative price for his produce and he has to pay rising prices for what he has to purchase.

The question of high prices, of fight against inflation, has become an acute problem for the entire people. It is proper that the CITU and the Bombay Convention have recognised this and in their fight against high prices have raised the demands of the entire people including the demand for remunerative price for the peasantry, no rise in issue price to the consumer. The fight against high prices arising out of the crisis cannot be confined to fight over the cost of living indices and rates of D.A.

Crisis In Industry

Comrades, I have already referred to the inability under the capitalist path to utilise full industrial capacity.

According to the Sixth Plan document integrated steel plants were able to utilse only 69.2 per cent of their capacity in 1979-80; the aluminium industry 58.2 per cent; fertilizers (N) stabilised plants

75.6 per cent; newsprint 68.2 per cent and so on. Commenting on this the Sixth Plan document observes "As is evident from the table recent trends in capacity utilisation in several industries are discouraging. This is also true for agriculture, the irrigation potential which has been created is not fully utilised. Levels of yield per acre for many parts of the country are far below what can be attained with known technology".

In some cases there may be deliberate suppression of capacity to peg up prices. In some cases understatement of production by private producers to be able to sell clandestinely in a seller's market.

The basic cause is the economic crisis and inability to use the production capacity with 'profit'. Naturally industrial sickness grows.

According to the Reserve Bank of India at the end of June 1979 there were 345 large sick industries units in which bank credit amounting to Rs. 1,011.2 crores was locked up. This exceeds the value of the total investment in the Public Sector under Heavy Industry. According to returns received by the RBI from Commercial Banks the number of sick units in small sector was as high as 20,326 involving bank finance of Rs. 231 crores. During the calender year 1980 four industrial undertakings had to be taken over. Industrial sickness involving both large and small-scale industries is a matter of serious concern. This is explicitly stated in the Industrial Policy Statement made by the Government in July 1980, which also took note of the mismanagement sickness". (Economic Survey 1980-81)

The sickness which locks hundreds of scores of rupees cost tens of thousands of workers their jobs, wages and inflicts untold misery on thousands of working class families.

Figures for unutilised capacity in 1980-81 are not available. But the situation does not seem to have very much improved judging by the index of industrial production of 1980-81. It was 153.9 last year compared with 148.6 in 1979-80 an increase of 4.4 per cent, the cost of this increase itself has been too high for the people.

Comrades, the Economic Survey and the Finance Minister promised pick up in the economy basing themselves on the figures of consents for capital issues.

The consents for capital issues which decreased from Rs. 417.63 crores in 1978-79 to Rs. 378.63 crores in 1979-80 picked up during

the first two quarters of 1980-81. The amount of consents for capital issues more than doubled in three quarters of 1980-81 as compared to the corresponding period of 1979-80.

Concessions to Multinationals

However the Survey failed to note that this widened record foreign collaboration agreements. The total number of collaboration approvals during the year reached a new record of 596, surpassing the previous peak of 403 in 1961. Foreign collaboration approvals as well those involving foreign capital participation in 1980, doubled as compared with those in 1979. As in the previous year, the majority of collaboration approvals was with three countries, namely FRG, USA and U.K. (Commerce 11th April.)

This spurt was perhaps due to the various concessions offered to multinationals and foreign capital in recent Government decisions.

This was done at a time when the multinationals were defying governments' directives regarding dilution of equity. The drug and other multinationals have protested the requirements to reduce their equity share to 40%. Their protest seems to have earned them the freedom to violate FERA Regulations and maintain 74% holdings under the plea that they are contributing advanced technology or that they are exporting large part of their product. They are so powerful that neither the Janata Government nor the Indira Government dare implement the recommendations of the Hathi Committee to nationalise the drug multinationals. The increased foreign collaboration and investment, the concessions made to them are not unconnected with the World Bank pressure to make more use of private foreign sources if Bank aid was to continue.

This reveals another aspect of the crisis-ridden economy, its increasing need for private foreign capital which intensifies all the elements of the crisis.

Comrades, our trade union movement has not properly understood the danger arising form the increased penetration of multinationals in our economy. They come to dominate and subjugate our country. To start with they demand favourable conditions for exploitation—withdrawal of concessions, of welfare measures, of trade union freedom and finally repression.

The duty and privilege to defend the country's economic independence along with our livelihood rests on the shoulders of the workers. We must make fight against multinationals a part of our

daily struggle rousing the working class to the portending danger. We must consistently resist all concessions to the foreign exploiters and along with other organisations demand nationalisation of multinationals. It is heartening to note that Bombay Convention expressed complete unanimity of opinion on this vital issue.

Dependence on Foreign Aid

Comrades, the crisis and dilapidated condition of the economy have led to greater and greater borrowing by the Government from the World Bank.

Successive plans have relied on larger amounts of foreign aid. They also reveal that a greater part of new aid is spent on repayments. In 1976-77 out of a gross disbursement of Rs. 1,599 crores, debt servicing absorbed Rs. 755 crores, leaving net external assistance of Rs. 844 crores. In 1977-78 total gross disbursement was Rs. 1,290 crores and debt servicing amount to Rs. 821 crores. In 1978-79 the corresponding figures were Rs. 1,266 crores and Rs. 882 crores, in 1980-81 they were 2,341 crores and Rs. 882 crores.

The Sixth Five Year Plan document contemplates net external assistance of Rs. 10,000 crores which means the gross 'aid' may amount to Rs. 15,000 crores to Rs. 20,000 crores.

Comrades, this is a dangerous situation which may end in mortgaging the resources of the country i.e. our labour to pay the foreign charges. Already export orientation means enforced exports to creditor and other countries to earn sufficient foreign exchange to pay off the debts. This also means exporting at dictated prices by some of our creditors.

The Government is now seeking a big loan from the IMF to meet the economic situation. The loan will not be granted without stringent conditions. we know that the fund imposed rigorous conditions on Great Britain when the Conservative Government approached for a loan. The result is now seen in widespread unemployment cut down in welfare measures and widespread riots.

We should not be surprised if the Essential Services Ordinance is a propitiatory measure to secure the favours of the IMF, in anticipation of demand it is likely to make or the pursuance of what it has already demanded. It is no doubt an assurance to the multinationals that Indian climate will be healthy for their profit-making.

Protesting against these developments we must demand an immediate moratorium on foreign debt payments. We should de-

mand reliance on our own resources mobilised through nationalisation of all foreign and Indian monopolies. In this respect the Socialist countries have proved to be reliable friends and their help has been extremely valuable to us.

Bankrupt Path of Capitalist Development

Comrades, there is no relief from this crisis imposed misery of the capitalist path. According to the Government's Sixth Five Year Plan document, there will be no less than 215 million of our people living below the poverty line i.e. 30 per cent of the population—at the end of the plan period. This is supposed to be achieved by expenditure of thousands of crores of rupees to eradicate poverty. In reality the percentage of people living below poverty line will not be reduced from the present 48 per cent. On the contrary it is going to increase.

I have already mentioned rising unemployment as a manifestation of the crisis. Every successful Five Year Plan has added to the number unemployed. The backlog was 5.3 million at the end of the First plan; it was 7.1 million at the end of the 2nd plan; it stood at 9.6 million at the end of the Fourth and 22.1 million at the end of the Fifth Plan.

The official figures however understate the real extent of unemployment.

In the next five years there will be 32 million new entrants into the labour market and the planners claim to find jobs for 30 million, still leaving a backlog of 24.2 million.

The claim to find 30 million new jobs is a fantastic claim, since it is based on remedies and Schemes which stand exposed during the last three decades. The Planning Commission observes; "The major employment generation activities are to be found in agriculture, rural development, village and small-scale industries, construction, public administration and other services". i.e. mostly in industries with low pay and sweated labour.

Organised industries can give employment only to a small number. "The increase (in employment in organised sector) form year to year has been around 0.8 million. Even if it is found that the future increase in employment in the organised sector is wholly taken by the educated person alone we find that there is not enough room for educated persons unless they are diverted into self-employment "....The lure of self-employment in the present condition of the economy is nothing but a fraud on the millions waiting for

jobs.

On to The Slums

The planners observe: "of the total urban population nearly a fifth is estimated to constitute the slum population. In 1985 the magnitude of such population needing housing accommodation is estimated to be about 37 million." For these the capitalist path-planners will provide 21 lakh houses, the rest being left to the private sector, i.e. to the slums.

Equally bizarre is the achievement of capitalist path in relation to rural housing. "It is estimated that the number of eligible families needing housing assistance would be around 14.5 million families by March 1985. Of these 7.7 million families have already been allotted house-sites.... of the families who have been provided house-sites only about 0.56 million families have been given construction houses."

Fight Against Unemployment

This situation once again calls on the organised trade union movement to take up the fight against unemployment seriously and demand relief for the unemployed. Let it be remembered that there is very little chance for the sons and daughters of workers on job to find permanent jobs in the near future. Besides the danger of the mass of unemployed will be difinitely used by the bourgeois-landlord government against the workers. The question of unemployment cannot be sloved without nationalising big industry which means a serious economic and political battle for power. In reality only under socialism unemployment will finally disappear. The movement has to prepare itself for this big battle.

In the meanwhile it must demand the right to work to be enshrined as a fundamental right and pending it adequate relief to the unemployed. Let it be remembered that unless we fight a major part of our youth will have not jobs and will be forced to live in slums.

Recently it was reported in the Press that the Labour Ministry of the Government of India is strongly opposed to payment of allowance to the unemployed. This means it does not approve of the schemes in operation in West Bengal and Kerala. One of the grounds of opposition is that allowances to registered unemployed will mean discrimination against those who are unregistered? Can you beat this reasoning? It is not known whether the Labour Ministry intends to go to the Supreme Court against the West

Bengal Government for this discriminatory practice and assert the equal right of all to starve outright.

Build up Worker-Peasant-Agricultural Labour Alliance

Comrades during these years the peasants and agricultural workers have been the worst victims of the economic crisis and official policies. Exploited on all sides they are being driven to destitution. They have borne the main brunt of the burdens of the crisis because they were unorgaised. But now the situation has changed.

In recent months several sections—students, teachers, professional have fought various battles. The battles against rise in bus fares in Punjab and other States have been widespread, with mass participation of students. But the most outstanding feature of recent agitation in the country is of the peasant masses in the battle arena. They fought in Karnataka and got bullets. They fought in Maharashtra and got bullets and jails. They fought in Andhra and Punjab and were again repressed. But the movement went on. It forced the Congress(I) Governments to make several concessions.

The Kisan Morcha of 26th March in which the CITU participated was a visible demonstration of Kisan awakening and fraternity between the working class, the agricultural workers and the peasants. The CITU and the working class warmly support the movement of the peasants, for remunerative prices and other demands like cancellation of debts and loans, it supports the demands of agricultural workers for wages and other reliefs. It supports the demand in the charters of the peasants that the issue price of foodgrains should not be raised.

The alliance of the workers, agricultural workers and peasants will be the strongest democratic and revolutionary force in India before which no Government of the exploiting classes can stand. The trade union movement has to contribute to the shaping of this alliance by championing the cause of peasantry. The working class has to realise that there is no end to its exploitation, no socialism, unless the present ruling class are deposed, a new state expressing genuine democracy of the people is reared and the present iniquitous order is liquidated. This cannot be done without enlisting the help of the mighty force of the Indian peasantry.

The sympathy and intervention of the working class are all the more urgent and necessary because in their absence, in the absence of a radical kisan organisation, the landlords and richer gentry in

the rural areas head the peasant discontent to protect their own narrow interests.

Divisive Attacks

Comrades, while we are endeavouring to unite the trade union movement and our class, divisive forces are attacking our unity—and sometimes, succeeding in pitting one section of workers against another in open battle.

This happened during the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat where all bourgeois opposition parties supported it. The CPI(M), the CPI, the CITU opposed it and stood by workers unity.

The agitation lasted three months. In the course of it, almost all major towns came under curfew one time or another. Repeated firings were resorted to by the police. The total toll of lives was 45.

The Harijans were the worst sufferers from police brutalities in the beginning. Later on, perhaps, the police beat everyone they came across.

The big bourgeois press, the capitalists, mill owners, the medical profession, all non-Harijan University students, Professors Teachers, Central and State Government employees, the trading community and mill workers supported the agitation. Some leaders of the Central Government employees' organisations and some leadders of the All India Insurance Employees' Association waged a heroic battle for unity and refused to succumb to the anti-reservation mood. Some of them were removed from the office-bearership of the AIIEA, but later on were restored to their position when the call for LIC strike came.

As against this 75,000 Harijan mill workers employed in the spinning departments of the mills went on strike to support reservation. On this the Sawarna Hitrakshak Samiti called on the Sawarna workers to go on strike and the caste division among the workers was complete.

This divisive mobilisation, this confrontation between two sections both of whom are victims of the bourgeois-landlord rule, was rendered possible because of the deteriorating economic situation and the mounting mass unemployment of recent years.

Comrades, the Gujarat experience in which thousands of Harijan workers were pitted against thousands of others should be a warning to the trade union movement. The gimmick of reservation will be used again and again by the ruling party to keep the Harijan workers away from the common struggle. The opportunism of

bourgeois parties will rouse the caste feelings of other workers against untouchable workers, to gain petty electoral successes. The ruling and the opposition bourgeois parties will not take the really effective step against untouchability—overhaul of agrarian relations accompanied by a genuine anti-casteist outlook.

The ruling and the opposition bourgeois parties exploit the weakness of our movement to divide our class. Reservation in promotion is again generating angry feelings in some undertakings. It is an inevitable consequence when one individual feels that he is cheated of his legitimate promotion because of reservation. By holding counsel with other trade union centres and with the leaders of untouchable workers we should be in a positon to find a solution for this touchy problem regarding promotion. One way would be not to deny promotion to any one who deserves it according to normal rules, but ensure proper quota for Harijans etc. by creating additional posts.

Considering the revolting conditions imposed on the untouchables, the caste-discrimination, reservation in jobs cannot be opposed. It should be realised that there is absolutely no change for a Harijan or adivasi to get a job on merit in this caste-ridden society. Besides the claims of the Congress(I) Government to have given them adequate jobs in services are bogus claims. They may have got proper representation only in the lowest paid jobs. It is at the same time futile to expect that under the bourgeois landlord rule they will get jobs in higher services according to their population strength.

The day to day mass struggles led by the trade unions in the country have been insensitive to the special problems of Harijan workers as Harijans and this has created an indifference in the minds of these sections to the common class struggle.

Whether it is working class struggles, struggle against high prices, movement of peasants and agricultural workers, fight against the emergency rule or movement for socialism, the Harijan masses whose emancipation is linked with the success of the movements largely keep away from them.

These weaknesses have to be removed by the trade unions and the walls of separation have to be broken down. The trade unions have to pay special attention to this downtrodden section and bring it in the common movement. Simultaneously the Harijan masses should be made to realise the truth that the condition of their real

emancipation is the same as the condition for the emancipation of all the poverty stricken people of India—a new social order, overhaul of agrarian relations, nationlisation of monopoly concerns and power in the hands of the people.

Defend National Integration

Comrades, the divisive forces are not active only to divide the working class. Their target is national unity, their objective is national disintegration so that India becomes an easy prey to the neo-colonial designs of imperialist powers. The Congress(I) government at the centre is unable to protect nation's unity and the ruling party leaders themselves undermine national unity in the most blatant manner. Communal riots in which the Muslims suffer the most are unleashed. Both Hindu and Muslim communalists exploit them to fan feelings of separatism. RSS talks about the Hindu character of our nation. Extreme wings of Muslim communalism virtually preach that the Muslims are a separate nation. There is talk of another partition of India. Reactionary Sikh agencies claim that Sikhs are a separate nation and demand Khalistan. Some of these communal agencies preaching for separate nationhood get funds from reactionary circles abroad. The hand of imperialism is evident in this propaganda. Certain foreign Christian missions propagate among the tribals for an independent State of tribals.

And finally some Congress(I) Chief Ministers openly rouse provincial and chauvinist feelings. The sons of the soil slogan supported at one time openly by the ruling party is again used to divide Indian from Indian. Maharashtra Chief Minister Antulay a few months back patronised the Shiv Sena which carries on a campaign against people from other States. A few months back shops of non-Maharashtrians were attacked in Bombay. Antulay's recent cruel drive against pavement dwellers was perhaps more in the spirit of Shiv Sena ideology than anything else. A large number of these pavement dwellers were poor people from Tamil Nadu who were forced into trains and sent back to Tamil Nadu. And now Antulay is announcing that he intends to introduce work permit system for entry into Bombay. It seems Maharashtra has already been declared to be an independendent State and people from other States would require a visa to enter Bombay. Such are the misdeeds of Congress(I) Chief Minister undermining national unity. But Smt. Indira Gandhi will not disturb Antulay even to protect national

unity.

But Antulay is not the only Chief Minister openly torpedoing national unity. Gundu Rao, the Karnataka Chief Minister, does not lag behind. Last year he openly threatened to create Assam like situation in Karnataka—i.e. secessionist situation. During the Bangalore Public Sector Workers' strike chauvinistic threats were uttered against workers from Kerala and Tamil Nadu who formed a substantial part of the strikers. It was known that the source of the threat was Congress(I) circles. Comrades, a large section of the people of Assam is victim of the secessionist movement—fearful of the consequences of influx of foreign nationals. The USA imperialists are secretly helping this agitation to partition our country.

We all must congratulate our Assam CITU our valiant workers and their leaders on the heroic fight they are waging in defence of the unity of the country and the unity of the working class. They had to brave the fury of the reactionary secessionist forces. Many of our comrades were assaulted, maimed and wounded but they continue to uphold the banner of unity. All glory to them. Comrades, the working class led by CITU should take up the challenge of the divisive forces which directly or indirectly support imperialist plots to dismember the nation. To uphold the banner of national unity, to frustrate the designs of imperialism, to gather in one common fold the people and toilers irrespective of their religion and caste in the battle for the existence of our nation is the duty of the organised trade union movement. In discharging it, it has to see that our functioning and outlook is such that it is able to draw the Muslim minority, the untouchables, who today stand aloof from the trade union struggle, in the common class struggle.

Forging Ahead Braving Repression

Our CITU unions have been facing intense repression in a number of States and yet they are courageously carrying on the battle. In Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and above all in Assam our unions, workers and our leaders face incessant attacks from the police.

In Haryana, in Sirsa, Hissar and Sonepat Workers have been attacked by police, in-Sirsa for the crime of forming a union and preparing a charter of demands. Hired gangsters followed the police and women had to leave the workers' locality. In Sonepat in the factory of Milton Cycle Co. police followed by anti-socials entered the factory to beat the workers. The Textile strikers of

Hissar had to face the same ordeal.

Bhilai in Madhya Pradesh has become a hotbed of goonda assaults, managerial intrigues, and police attacks against our rising strength. Com. P.K. Maitra Vice-President of Madhya Pradesh CITU has been arrested and refused bail and several workers have been harassed with false criminal cases. All because our unions carried on a struggle against the owners of a number of factories, against retrenchment and victimisation in these industries. In Rajhara in the same State the police know no law. They have used NSA to suppress the contract workers' struggle in iron ore mine. Externment orders were issued against our leaders and workers and workers' residences were attacked. In Bihar during our Joint struggle for 12,000 contract workers employed by the Tatas in Jamshedpur 450 workers were arrested. Police lathi-charged on several occasions. The entire Executive of our TISCO Karmachari Union has been suspended by the management. Nothing however compares with the revolting crimes against Krishnakali Estate Workers. Tea Plantation hospital was converted into police camp. Family members of workers were attacked by the manager, the police and INTUC goondas. The police superintendent refused to take serious note of charge of rape, made by the women workers. Manager's bunglow was turned into a torture chamber, in which arrested workers were beaten severely. When a belaboured worker asked for water, the manager urinated on him and urine was poured in his mouth. When a worker excreted, he was forced to eat it by the police officer. This is Indira regime and our CITU has sent the details of these sadistic happenings to the ILO. Comrades, MICO Workers' union in Bangalore, whose President is our esteemed Comrade Surya Narayan Rao—President of Karnataka State Committee of CITU—is facing similar ordeal. One day gangsters attacked the union office and INTUC goondas captured it, but Gundu Rao's police took no action. These attacks it seems, were organised by the followers of F.M. Khan Congress(I) M.P.—INTUC leader and Plantation owner from Coorg. The Raza Textile Workers in Rampur, U.P. had to undergo prolonged strike and repression.

Com. Harsahay Singh, President, UP State Committee of CITU and Com. Ravi Sinha were assaulted upon during the course of the struggle, in J.K.Rayons', Kanpur, the management has imposed an illegal lay-off after having failed in the attempt to break the CITU

Union. The INTUC Camp before the mill gate has become the sanctuary of anti-socials who have repeatedly beaten up our workers and leaders. When the Police searched the camp under pressure from workers, bombs and other lethal weapons including fire arms were siezed. In orissa, our Com. Ajeya Rout, General Secretary of State Committee narrowly escaped from a murderous attack launched by the goonda hirelings of the management who were led by INTUC. In Tamilnadu our Comrade C. Govindarajan, a member of our General Council was attacked by anti-social elements and stabbed in the abdomen. He is lying in hospital now, though progressing well.

We also know that many of our sister organisations are objects of attacks. The Loco and Public Sector strikers were objects of police intimidation. Modinagar in U.P. is a place where workers have to face the collusion of Police with management and goondas. We denounce the murder of brother Jai Prakash HMS leader of Modinagar. The police showed no urgency to catch the suspects. There are serious allegations that the murder was organised by some men connected with the management. I have mentioned only a few instances of police highhandedness and oppression that our comrades have to meet at every step. Every step forward of the CITU is studded with intense sacrifice and suffering of our comrades, and rank and file workers whose families have to bear the brunt of this attack.

While appreciating the progress we have registered in the States like Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Karnataka we must ponder whether we are progressing at the speed required and rendered possible by the urgent economic situation. It will be realised that the momentum we developed in filling a vaccum, fulfilling the need for a militant and principled organisation can now be sustained only by a very planned work and a systematic review of our activities which should not be slackened in the name of trade union unity and review of our joint activities with others. Unless such reviews are available for the Central CITU it will be difficult to provide concrete guidance for the future.

Our State Committees and unions have loyally and consistently worked for united action of trade unions. They have overcome many difficulties created by others, put up with obstacles and carried forward the struggle for trade union unity. What effect has it produced on the consciousness of the workers? How has it

brought accession of strength to the CITU—these questions need to be answered. The struggle for correct policies, a struggle to overcome erroneous outlook and policies, and it must secure a change in the correlation of forces—the correct policies and out-look must be better appreciated by large and large sections of workers. We have instances when after prolonged united struggle for months, workers are enticed by opportunist elements. We have instances where in spite of our image some individuals mouthing left phrases or indulging in demonstrative action are able to draw large masses. The rise of individualist leaders with no ideology demands our vigilance and criticism of our weaknesses.

For lack of review the hurdles in the rapid expansion of trade union unity and its achievements are not properly understood. The Bombay Convention provided an instance in the midst of a genuine all round desire for trade union unity. In this struggle what should be ensured is not only agreement at the top but carrying the spirit of unity to the bottom. It is necessary that all organisations marshall their full force in demonstrations and actions and it is the duty of the CITU to overcome obstacle to this urgent step.

Defend The Left Front Government

Comrades, we all offer our congratulations to the West Bengal Ministry for completing four years in office. This is a memorable feat accompanied by memorable achievements in the service of the Working Class and the people. But reactionary forces are again hatching their conspiracies.

Like the West Bengal Ministry the Tripura Government has notable achievements to its credit. These achievements have been recorded despite a very difficult and acute situation created by the combined conspiracies of Congress(I) Amra Bengali and certain reactionary tribal elements some of whom were financed from abroad. The Ministry had to face the challenge of organised killings and massacres and it succeded in upholding the unity of the people and enacting measures for their benefit.

The Kerala Ministry also had to face a hostile attack from Congress(I), RSS, Naxalites and other reactionaries. But relying on the people, it has succeeded in initiating a number of progressive measures—like relief for the unemployed etc. and consolidated popular unity. The three ministries have ensured fundamental rights for the people and refused to use the NSA against its opponents.

To defend these outposts of democracy constitutes the urgent task of the working class of India. Our General Council should ensure that this task is discharged. Comrades, I once more wish to refer to the battle between the forces of democracy and authoritarianism that dominates the political and economic situation in India. There is no chance for democracy for economic advance unless the authoritarian party is curbed and its mandate to rule is withdrawn by the people. It is intent on establishing one party dictatorship through the Presidential form of government.

The working class is now called upon to play a leading role in this battle. It is called upon to marshall the full strength of its class through trade union unity and further attract all other oppositional and democratic forces for a common battle against authoritarianism. That is the urgent task facing us today.

Crisis Gripping Capitalist World

Comrades, we are meeting in the midst of a crisis situation for the capitalist world. All the countries of advanced capitalism are face to face with unheard of unemployment and inflation. The number of unemployed in the EEC nations has reached 10 million. In Britain itself the figure is 2.5 million— over one million more than last year. The unemployment rate of the country as a whole is 10.6 per cent. This year 720,000 British School leavers are getting ready to enter the labour market. Only 4,000 jobs await them. The recent riots has forced the Conservative Government to promise jobs to new entrants, but it will be only a promise. In the USA also there is massive unemployment and it is expected to mount. Unsold stocks have risen by $20.4 billion and a decline in GNP is likely.

Comrades, let me quote an American writer on the situation; 'Never before has there seen such a wave of plant shut-downs affecting such basic industries as steel and transportation equipment — But the selection of plants to be shut down and the location of the new enterprises are highly influenced by considerations of class-warfare—For the first time since the 1930s, corporations in major industries such as automobiles and air lines are able to impose direct wage-cuts on hundreds of thousands of workers. They insist that the cuts are necessary to save jobs, which would be forefeit in the event of bankruptcy. Chrysler Corporation Workers have already agreed to beg wage cuts and General Motors and Ford are demanding equal takeaways.

"Of course, with Washington taking more openly anti-labour positions, enforcement of labour-protective laws is deteriorating. In particular, the protection offered by minimum wage and minimum hours legislation has virtually vanished in industries where it is most needed-especially textiles; apparel and other light industries; agriculture; and service industries.

"At the present time, in New York City, there are reportedly, some 3,000 'sweatshops' employing 50,000 workers in the apparel trades. These workers are forced to work up to 12 hours a day and are paid less than half the official minimum wage. Many of them are 'undocumented workers'; from the Latin American and Asian countries they have fled to escape the even more brutal conditions imposed by the puppets of U.S. imperialism. Thousands, in fact, have fled EL Salvador to escape the murderous junta acting under the direction of U.S. military and political 'advisers'-as earlier victims fled the after-effects of the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic.

"A New York Times (Feb. 26 1981) journalist describes conditions in the sweatshop:

"Rows of women bent over sewing machines, separated by narrow aisles often made impassable by dress racks and piles of piece goods. Five exits and windows, too, are often blocked or even padlocked, reducing emergency escapes—Sweatshops may fail to comply with minimum wage and hour laws, child labour regulations and fire and safety codes laws..... The resurgency comes nearly 70 years after the fire at the Triangle Shirwaist Factory, where 146 garment workers died."

New International Tension

And these USA imperialists now want to save Poland to introduce massive unemployment and inflation.

Comrades, this is the desparate background to the international situation, to the new international tensions.

The Reagan administration has intensified the drive against detente initiated by the previous U.S. Administration. This is endangering world peace, threatening the security and peace of the countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and America. The people of Europe face the threat of a military confrontation involving the use of nuclear weapons and neutron bombs.

Reagon administration's decision to mass produce neutron bombs—that diabolical weapon of genocide, constitutes a crime

against humanity.

The nations inhabiting the West Asian region are faced with direct American intervention. Israel, with the aid of the Pentagon, is carrying on a regular war against Lebanon. And the same Zionist force, under the direct instructions of the USA, raided Iraq to destroy its nuclear reactor, U.S. imperialism though it has received a rebuff in Iran, is intent on firmly planting its feet in the oil region and is making Pakistan its military base under the excuse of helping the Afghan 'freedom-fighters'. The Soviet help to Afghanistan's progressive forces to ward off imperialist attacks is made the excuse to militarise the region.

Danger of War in Indian Subcontinent

The report of the External Affairs Ministry, placed before the Lok Sabha in March, notes the U.S. plans for a rapid deployment force of 110,000 personnel for use primarily in the Indian Ocean, The Diego Garcia base situated in the Indian Ocean makes it possible to carry on operations against the littoral States. It is a standing danger to India and all littoral States.

But the danger to India does not end here. The USA is bent on feverishly arming Pakistan's military rulers with the latest weapons to create a constant threat of war between the two countries. It encourages Pakistan to build its nuclear potential to produce nuclear bombs while it asks India to accept prohibition safeguards. The Pakistani dictator, unable to seize any issue to befool the people, is using the Afghanistan card, acting as the anti-Soviet spearhead of the USA, and is bent upon stockpiling arms to be used against India. Some reactionary Pakistani media are openly speculating on war between the two countries.

The USA is playing the Pakistan card to heighten tension and create threat of war to pressurise India to shift its foreign policy, especially its stand on Afghanistan.

These are pressures to weaken the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation and shift the Government's policy towards the imperialist camp. They are supplemented by other measures like refusal to supply uranium to the Tarapore nuclear plant, threat to cut off-economic aid to countries not toeing the U.S. line and so on.

The Indo-Pakistan talks outlined the gravity of the situation as they showed the firm resolve of Pakistan's rulers to ally with the U.S.A.

Comrades, it should be noted that while the working class and people of India denounce U.S.A, military aid to Pakistan as a conspiracy against the people of Pakistan and India, as an instrument of war between the two countries, the Government of Peoples' China takes an opposite view and supports the arming of Pakistan's military regime. Our country which has experience of three wars with Pakistan cannot be complacent on this issue, cannot turn a blind eye to the U.S.A conspiracy against our freedom.

We stand for friendly relations with our neighbouring countries. We stand for relations of peace and goodwill among the nations of the world. We are happy that the process of normalisation of relations with Peoples' China has started at last. The visit of the foreign minister of People's China to India no doubt marked an important step in this direction. The working class and people of both countries expect further progress to restore the close friendly relations which obtained in the earlier years of our independence.

Foil Imperialist Design, Fight For Peace

It cannot be said that our Working Class is prepared and trained to understand the danger facing the country. Reformist leaders, INTUC opportunists and others who look upon the workers as only voting cattle have combined to create indifference among the Working Class towards questions of foreign policy and external danger from imperialism. If this weakness is not overcome by us, the nation's independence might be imperiled any day. The bourgeois-landlord Government of Indira Gandhi is unable to mobilise popular forces and fight the imperialist designs. Some opposition parties like the BJP screen these very designs and mislead the people. It is again the duty of our trade unions to raise the warning signal in defence of our country, foil imperialist designs to create enemity between India and Pakistan and prepare the people to rebuff any aggressive move of imperialism or its stooges. Simultaneously we must now raise our voice in defence of world peace and against U.S.A. designs for aggressive confrontation. We all must endorse the struggle carried on by the U.S.S.R. and socialist camp to save the world from war and military confrontation.

11

Opening Of A New Phase

The Bombay Convention of Central Trade Unions and Federations which gave a call to fight the anti-labour policies of the Indira Government has stirred the workers. On August 17 demonstrations were held all over the country to protest against the ESMO that pernicious piece of legislation condemned by the entire trade union movement.

In Bombay more than a lakh of workers gathered to protest against the measure. The demonstration was organised by CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS and other Federations. In Calcutta at the call of the CITU, UTUC, TUC and Federations thousands gathered in a meeting to protest. In the Capital City of Delhi thousands of workers under the banner of the CITU, AITUC, BMS, HMS, AIRF and others marched in procession to be addressed by the leaders of the organisations. From Srinagar to Kerala the country reverbrated with protests against the black ordinance. In the meanwhile State and District Conventions are being held and the workers are getting ready for the march to Parliament to be followed by a one-day strike of industries all over India. On the 3rd September the working class of Kerala once again under the banner of the CITU, AITUC and other central organisations struck work to denounce the ordinance. And on 11th September the working class of West Bengal will come out into the streets to protest against this anti-working class legislation.

This gathering protest of united working class, this great mo-

mentum acquired by united activity of the working class is of outstanding importance in the present situation. In the first place it shows why the Indira Government hastened with an ordinance to curb strikes. It knew that the organised working class will be resisting attacks on its living standards and it wanted to illegalise its resistance.

In Justification of the ordinance the Home Ministry came out with the following fictitious reason. "The industrial climate of the country continues to be characterised by a mainly political trade union movement, with intense trade union rivalries at local levels at times cutting across trade union loyalties and discipline." In reality the number of strikes and mandays lost was less this year than in the preceeding years. Besides both the Home Ministry and the ordinance makers concealed the fact that loss of production due to lockouts was increasing in the last three years. According to official figures in 1978 loss of production due to lockouts was Rs. 108.76 crores; in 1979 it was 125.63 crores; in 1980 it was 124.53 crores. Lockouts of course are not prohibited under the ordinance. Such formal prohibition is generally included to make a show of impartiality. But this time some one forgot to display this fake show.

Having secured the power to ban strikes the Government is blackmailing certain sections of workers to haul down the flag, give up their demands, accept wage freeze and above all compulsory Deposit Scheme for impounding D.A. The Cabinet Secretary to Indira Government recently pressurised the leaders of Railway, Defence, P & T and other Central Government Employees' Federations to accept CDS in exchange for a merger of a paltry amount of D.A. with wages. The leaders refused to accept this shameful deal. But the Governments' intention in declaring the Ordinance is now quite clear. Under threat of illegalisation of strikes and punishment of two years' imprisonment, the workers must be forced to accept the burdens of high prices and reduce their wages.

But this is not all. The Ordinance has direct relation with the democratic rights of the people and with the freedom of our country. The Ordinance which attacks the right to organise and strike cuts at the roots of the right to organise. It is one more attack on democracy after the enactment of the National Security Act and other measures like the denigration of the judiciary and the preparations for a Presidential form of Government.

Further the Ordinance is inspired or dictated by USA dominated International Monetary Fund to whom the Government has applied for a loan of Rs. 5,000 crores. The Fund when it loans money lays down stringent conditions like cutting down the earnings of the workers, imposing high prices, compulsory exports and imports to bring the debtor economy under control.

By fighting the Ordinance unitedly the working class is carrying on the peoples' battle against authoritarianism and the battle for keeping our economy free from foreign interference.

This is the significance of united working class protests against the Ordinance and the anti-labour policy of the government.

At the Bombay Convention the working class representatives had already started speaking on behalf of the entire people—the peasantry, agricultural workers, middle classes etc—when they demanded remunerative prices for the peasants, decent wage for agricultural workers and supply of essential goods at cheap prices through public distribution system for the people. Their present united fight against the Ordinance continues the struggle for the people.

The new awakening and unity of the working class comes in the midst of a critical economic and political situation, in the midst of a growing confrontation between the people and the ruling party, between the democratic and the authoritarian forces. If the call of the Bombay Convention for march to the Parliament and for one day strike is fully implemented there is every possibility that the initiative in the anti-authoritarian struggle will pass to the working class and the left forces. The confrontation between the people and the ruling party—which represents authoritarianism has been growing rapidly in the last year. Having defeated bourgeois opposition parties in the electoral battle in the Parliamentary and State elections, the ruling party concentrated its attention on destabilising the three governments of the West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala. The battle between democratic and authoritarian forces centered round the existence of these ministries. The working class of West Bengal, the people of West Bengal foiled these repeated attacks and addressed a rebuff to the authoritarian forces. The working class and people of Kerala and Tripura similarly defeated the conspiracies of the Congress(I) to topple the State ministries. This was a big victory of the popular forces, of the democratic forces on behalf of the people of India. This was rendered possible because of the al-

ternative popular policies followed by the three Governments which rallied the people behind them.

These Governments refused to use the NSA or preventive detention against the people. The three governments have openly condemned the ESMO and demanded its withdrawal. The West Bengal Government has taken the foremost lead in ensuring the right to strike and beneficial wage agreements for the workers. It has taken effective measures for land reform and wages of agricultural workers. The Tripura Government has despite enormous difficulties stood by the tribals in meeting the demand for Tribal Autonomous District.

These democratic and economic measures have rallied the people isolating the Congress(I). They are the product of the policy pursued by the CPI(M) which heads these three ministries. They are the results of the policies of the left forces headed by the CPI(M).

Thanks to this, larger and larger numbers in other states realise the importance of the ministries in the fight against authoritarianism. The support comes from a wider section which includes the leadership of bourgeois-opposition parties also. Left forces and bourgeois opposition parties all agree that an attack against the ministries is an attack against democracy in general.

The united working class actions now developing must ensure growing broad support for the three ministries. That is part of the fight against authoritarianism.

But the confrontation between the forces of authoritariaism and democracy is not confined to the fight against the three ministries. Huge sections of masses in all States are coming out into the field against the economically oppressive policies of the Indira Government.

Last year witnessed widespread struggles of different sections of people against high prices, taxation, raising of transport charges. The battles against rise in bus fares raised under instructions from the Planning Commission to the State Governments—in Punjab and other States were widespread. Students and youths joined in thousands in these states. Women were prominent in anti-price rise struggles. Besides militant struggles of students, professors, engineers, lawyers are developing all over the country.

But the most outstanding feature of recent agitation in the country is the entry of the peasants in the battle arena. Demanding remunerative prices they fought in Karnataka and got bullets. They

fought in Maharashtra and got jail and bullets. They fought in Andhra and Punjab, were again repressed. More than hundred peasants were killed but they forced certain concessions from the Congress(I) State Governments.

The Kisan Morcha of 26th March was a big demonstration of Kisan awakening and fraternity between workers and peasants. The Kisan Coordination Committee which emerged out of the joint cooperation of these who organised the morcha and which includes several kisan organisations again demonstrates the growing unity of the kisan movement. If the Committee continues to be active and works in cooperation with the All-India Campaign Committee of the trade unions set up by the Bombay Convention then the struggle for democracy against authoritarianism and for economic rights will have the solid backing of the workers and peasants mass and initiative will be with them in shaping the anti-authoritarian fight.

The Kisan Coordination Committee shows its broad character in that the Kisan Organisation led by bourgeois opposition parties are also represented in the Committee.

The broad political resistance necessary to fight authoritarianism is again seen in the Coordination Committee also. Thus in the present situation, the trade unions have to play a vital role in helping forward the all-round resistance to the policies of the Congress(I) Government. It has to take the initiative to join hands with the peasantry and other sections to isolate and defeat the sponsors of dictatorship.

While discharging this vital task the trade union movement cannot forget the new challenge to the common movement of the working class. The working class of our country cannot march to socialism and end wage slavery unless it meets the challenges and develops sufficient strength among the people to end the present bourgeois-landlord rule. The CPI(M) the party of the working class is precisely working for this aim. These new challenges come from divisive forces, caste, untouchability, communalism—Hindu and Muslim, separatist appeals made by certain religious agencies like Christian Church, extreme Muslim communalists or Hindu RSS chauvinists—all of which undermine the unity of the country and play into the hands of imperialism. And the biggest challenge comes from the American imperialists who encourage the secessionist movements inside the country and from outside arm Paki-

stan to create war conflict and invade the sovereignty of our country. The country's freedom is being imperilled every day and the Indira Government with its anti-people policies and its compromising attitude towards imperialism is unable to put up an effective fight to protect it. Unless the people of our country are roused to this danger to protect our freedom, neither our unity nor our independence is secure. And who can rouse the people except the working class trained in many a battle? There should be no doubt that the trade union movement united to fight for democracy will remain equally united to fight U.S. imperialism and guard the freedom and independence of our country.

6th September, 1981

(Article published in 'Shramik Ekata' organ of Orissa State Committee of CITU November 1981—issue)

12

Defeat Imperialist Conspiracies Against The Socialist World

The historic day of 7th November comes this year in the midst of clank arms, of preparations for nuclear war. The imperialist language of the year is Neutron bomb, Pershing and Cruise missiles and billions of dollars to achieve superiority in war strength over the Soviet Union and the Socialist Camp.

The U.S. imperialists, the arch enemy of human freedom and world peace are bringing the world to the brink of a nuclear holocaust, which will lead to the destruction of million of lives.

The talk of detente has disappeared in thin air. Those who believed that detente could be made permanent with the imperialist system, in fact, forgot the cannibalistic traits and character of imperialism.

The sudden change from the sweet talk of detente, Helsinky declaration, Salt II agreement, is not due just to a change in the USA administration. It is the real face of U.S. imperialism, now faced by all round challenges and with the prospect of the world slipping out of its hand.

Therefore the bellicose and hypocritical language of a limited nuclear war.

Against whom is the effort directed? Reagan has made it clear that it is directed against socialism. He talks about the sunset of socialism in the coming years. And he is preparing for it with neutron bombs and new missiles. The USA imperialists are preparing to unleash a war against the socialist world to regain the lost world for

capitalism. Reagan is following in the footsteps of Hitler. He is openly supported in his preparations by some powers like Britain, though there are misgivings in the minds of some others. But the danger of war is real and has to be countered by the working class. It is intended to drown the world in a sea of blood, unleash unheard of destruction and mass killings by millions. To achieve what? To achieve and fulfill the sunset of socialism, the global ambition of the USA-the ambition of dominating and subjugating the world.

The working class cannot surrender the conquests of socialist revolutions to the American gunmen. The international movement fought unitedly to defeat Hitler and it succeeded.

Today also the same call for defence of the socialist world must reverberate throughout the country on the 7th November. Neither the working class of India nor the people as a whole realise the acuteness of this threat; still less they realise that the war is being organised for a counter-revolutionary purpose-sunset of socialism.

To rouse the working class and the people to oppose war, to frustrate imperialist designs against the socialist camp is today the primary task of proletarian internationalism and the working class in India should not be found wanting in discharging it.

It is all the more necessary because the ruling party and opposition bourgeois parties have all these years combined to conceal the real danger from imperialism and its war plans. The ruling party's incessant talk about two super powers-which eliminated the difference between the imperialist and socialist systems-conceals the criminal designs of U.S. imperialism. The opposition bourgeois parties generally follow the same line. And the BJP-that political signboard of RSS-concentrates fire on the Soviet and Socialist Camp in matters of international policies and gives a clear alibi to U.S. imperialism. Last three decades, successive Congress Governments continued to play between the two camps; they took valuable help from the USSR, signed the all important Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, but refused to tell the people that the danger to country's freedom and world peace emanated from one source—the imperialist camp headed by the USA.

The country is therefore likely to be caught unaware unless the working class and the trade union movement discharge its task and remind the people that the U.S. war preparations are also directed to intimidate the third world into subjugation. They are part of the

imperialist plans to remould the world to its own-needs. The need for this has become greater after the fiasco its policies have met in Afghanistan and Iran.

The country is therefore likely to be caught unawares unless the working class and the trade union movement discharge its task and remind the people that the U.S. war preparations are also directed to intimidate the third world into subjugation. They are part of the imperialist plans to remould the world to its own needs. The need for this has become greater after the fiasco its policies have met in Afghanistan and Iran.

In pursuance of its policy of global domination, the USA is threatening India with war and attack on its freedom. The feverish arming of Pakistan, the indulgence shown towards its plans to develop nuclear weapons, are part of the old plan of making Asians fight Asians. Immediately they constitute an attempt to pressurise India to relax or give up the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and join the American ring.

India's interests are directly involved in fighting the war and pursuing peace.

The war plans of the USA directly affect the safety and security of millions of people. Huge peace protests are surfacing all over the world and oppose U.S. This broad peace movement in which people from all walks of life are involved constitutes an important support in the proletarians struggle to maintain peace and defeat the war-mongers and constitutes an assurance that the people can defeat their plans and save the world from a genocidal catastrophe.

The working class and our people do not know the fact about aggressive war preparations.

The proposal to deploy Pershing and Cruise missiles in Europe is a direct threat to the USSR. These missile with their range extending from 1,000 to 2,000 kilometres bring for the first time since the defeat of Hitler, the European part of the USSR-under the threat of direct attack from German soil.

The U.S. defence budget exceeded 100 billion dollars in 1976, by 1980 it reached 145 billion dollars and raised by Reagan to 227 billion dollars. For 1986 it will approach 400 dollars.

By 1980 the Pentagon had more than 20,000 bases in 26 countries manned by 260,000 officers and men. The increased U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean and the attempts to dominate the Persian Gulf area have already led to wide protests from the countries in these

areas.

The U.S. further plans to include these areas part of the NATO operational area.

The USA is supported in these aggressive policies by Thatchers' Britain. During her visit to the USA in 1980 the British Prime Minister assured, "We, in Britain, stand with you. American's successes will be our successes—Your problems will be our problems. In Britain you will find a ready response, an ally, valiant, staunch and true."

Such are the ramifications of the plot against peace.

These aggressive plans have their origin in the desperate condition of the capitalist economy. The imperialists therefore are doing everything to undermine the advancing socialist economies, slander socialist countries, and support counter revolutionary forces as in Poland.

But their own economies are in disorder. Today again capitalism finds itself in another crisis which is considered to be the worst since the 1930 crisis. Following production loss in several countries in 1980, the capitalist world faces further drop in 1981. At the end of 1980, unemployment in capitalist countries rose to 24 million of which the USA share was 7.8 million, FRG had 1.3 million unemployed and France had 1.6 million. By the middle of 1981 Britain's figure exceeded 3 million. During the last ten years prices in capitalist countries have more than doubled and risen 50 per cent since 1975.

While real wages in most of the capitalist countries fell, profits of 500 largest U.S. companies rose by 23 per cent in 1979 and amounted to 110,000 million dollars.

Unproductive huge defence expenditure has been one of the measures of the ruling Industrial Military complex in these countries to steady the economy. This has failed, leading to a desperate situation.

That is why the danger of war has to be taken seriously and fought with determination.

In this critical situation for the world and the international working class movement, the exposure of imperialist camp is hampered by the stand of People's China which abets imperialist designs.

. In contrast to the capitalist world the USSR and the socialist countries show steady and boundless progress. The curse of unem-

ployment no longer affects their economies. The right to work is ensured. Prices are stable. Standards of living are continuously rising. The economic progress would have been far more rapid had the socialist countries not been compelled to spend large sums for defence to match the aggressive preparations of the USA imperialists.

It would have been an impermissible error if believing in the continuation of detente the USSR and the socialist countries had neglected that task of military preparedness. Today the strength of the USSR to meet all eventualities, its assurance that the USA will not be allowed to have military supremacy offer a standing guarantee that world peace will not be allowed to be violated with impunity.

The USSR is not only piling success in economic building and rising living standards for its people, it is also defending world peace and helping many countries to defend their independence. It stands in the way of U.S. global domination. Its help to Afghanistan and Angola has already roused the anger of the imperialists. On 7th November this year, the working class must firmly declare that it will frustrate all attacks against the USSR and the socialist world, protect peace and save the world from the holocaust of a nuclear war. The 1917 revolultion arose out of a fight against imperialist war; it defeated and survived the Nazi imperialist attack and again lent its full support to the cause of world peace. This time aided by the world working class and peoples of the world it is in a position to put the warmongers in a strait jacket. Let the working class and progressive forces in the country join hands to ensure success for its fight for world peace.

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On To One Day Strike

The mighty demonstration of trade union and working class unity on 23rd November constitutes an important event in the country's trade union movement.

Never before workers and employees from so many industries and concerns, from all states, and belonging to so many Central trade union organisations and Federations had participated in a common demonstrations in the capital. The contingents came from all States, from the Railways and Defence services, from Central and State Government organisations, from steel, coal, mining, jute textile, engineering and other industries.

They demonstrated against the anti-labour policies of the Indira Government. They protested against the ESMA and demanded its withdrawal. They raised their voice against high prices on behalf of the entire people and demanded supply of essential goods to the people at cheap prices through the Public Distribution system. The voice of the united working class was raised on behalf of the peasantry when the trade unions demanded remunerative prices for the peasant's produce. It was raised on behalf of the monstrously exploited agricultural workers when they demanded a decent wage for agricultural labour.

The new awakening among the trade unions was further marked by the participation of a big contingent of working women, carrying their trade union banner. They came from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab. It was a sign that

the women's wing of the trade union was getting active and proletarian women were getting ready to actively shoulder the banner of class struggle and its organisation.

Their mobilisation was facilitated by the Convention of working women called by the CITU on November 22.

The massive rally of November 23 has issued a call for one day All-India Protest Strike on the 19 January 1982 to register further disapproval of official policies.

It is a unique call to the entire working class to act together, to face as a single class in its great battle against present day policies. It is a call to consolidate the unity of the trade union movement already achieved, and take it ten strides further.

The implementation of the call; to carry its message to all industries, all sections and all States is the banner duty imposed on all participants. This warning to the authorities that it is the working class which runs all industries, transport and concerns and controls the sinews of the economy is necessary to check and curb the anti-labour policies of the Government and protect the rights of the working class. The united one day all-India strike will be a historic event in the annals of India's working class and trade union history coming in the context of a situation when all sections of the people are ground down by high prices, by unemployment, by suppression of democratic rights and are seeking effective forms of resistance. The united action of the working class will come as a great inspiration to organise and resist. It will definitely place the trade union movement in the forefront of the fight against authoritarianism inspiring the non-organised sections to follow it.

Till now the trade unions have failed to seize this initiative on behalf of the people. They could not do it because their inner unity was lacking. Now they can authoritatively speak on behalf of themselves as well as of the people. Let the coming strike be the first demonstration of this new role of them.

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All Parties And Organisations Hail The 19th January Call

The call for strike on 19th January is getting widespread response. The State Committees of the Central Trade Union Organisations and Federations are embarked upon serious preparations to make the call a success. In the Executives of the various Federations and unions resolutions are passed endorsing the call and calling upon the workers to join the all-India protest.

Allround Support

The united call of the central trade unions has secured the full support of the opposition parties in the Parliament. An appeal signed by the Democratic Socialist Party, R.S.P., Forward Blok. CPI, Janata, BJP, CPI(M), Lok Dal and Janwadi wholeheartedly supports the call and says: "We are happy to know that the working class has raised the issue of remunerative prices for the peasants, decent wage for agricultural workers and supply of food and other essential commodities at reasonable prices to the people."

Earlier, meeting on 6th December, the Central Committee of the CPI(M) lent its support to the call and said "At the call of the Central Trade Unions and National Federations, the working class is going into united action against the basic economic policies of the Government, policies of enormous concessions to multinationals and monopolies and compromise with landlords and growing dependence on foreign loans, and in defence of itself and all sections of the common people." The resolution adds: "The united voice of the working class will inspire the entire people and draw the

unorganised sections into the struggle against authoritarianism and for democratic advance, and full popular support has to be extended to it."

Thirteen youth and student organisations in a joint communique, issued on December 13 have also supported the call. They observe "We join the trade unions in the fight for democratic and trade union rights, against unemployment and price-rise, for the setting up of a public distribution system, raising together with them the specific demands of Indian youth and students for employment or unemployment relief, better education system, voting right at 18, eradication of corruption, elected students' unions, withdrawal of black-listing of students". The CITU fully endorses the demands raised by students and youth-demands regarding education and democratic rights.

The political parties, the democratic forces and the youth organisations all with one voice support the proposed action of the working class on 19th January. Never before was there such all-round support for any action of working class. The unity of the working class is accompanied by unity of popular opinion. The working class action is already laying the basis for country-wide resistance to official policies.

What Unity Can Achieve

What the working class and the employees can achieve through their united strength is already seen in Bihar where the State Government employees to a man have struck work to secure the implementation of the recommendations of the Pay Commission. They have been joined by Gazetted Officers and the administration has come to a standstill. The strength of the employees this time is reinforced by thousands of Government teachers who have thrown in their lot with the NGOs.

Never before was there such a disciplined and united strike of State Government employees which drew in all sections. The working class must protest against the repressive measures taken by the Bihar Government and condemn the Central Government for lending its repressive machinery to the State administration.

A New Page

In the background of big mass actions and the support from all democratic sections and political parties the working class must fully honour the expectations that are roused and open a new page of trade union history. Nineteenth January must be recorded as a

day when the full power of labour was asserted to show that nothing could move without its willing consent. There is no need for vacillation. With firm determination the entire working class army must march forward. The Government will be extremely illadvised to take repressive measures. But they will not affect the inexorable course set by common consent.

All contingents and unions will reiterate that day their firm determination to make the strike a success. Backed by the people the working class should realise that it is giving expression to the misery and woes of our countrymen ground down by high prices, shortage of essential commodities and outright starvation. It is the privilege of the organised working class to speak on their behalf, to fight on their behalf.

Significance Of The Strike

On 19th January the working class demands sale of essential commodities to our people at subsidised prices, remunerative prices to the peasants; minimum living wage and job security for agricultural workers, measures against blackmarketeers, repeal of National Security Act 1980 and the Essential Services Maintenance Act which was enacted to satisfy the conditions attached to the new IMF loan; recognition of trade unions on the basis of secret ballot and full guarantee of collective bargaining and trade union rights; ban on retrenchment and closure; unemployment allowance to the unemployed, withdrawal of all victimisation measures and need-based wage and full neutralisation of the rise in the cost of living and bonus for all. By combining the demands of the workers with the pressing demands of the peasants and the agricultural workers; with the demands of the suffering people against fleecing prices, the trade union movement is taking steps to unite all currents opposed to the exploiting rule of the bourgeois-landlord class, of the authoritarian party and seeks to discharge the historic responsibility of the working class towards the people.

Let 19th January be a worthy demonstration of the new role of the trade union movement-dour defence of the workers combined with defence of the people's interests.

The Working Class, Vol. 11, No. 5 January 1982

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May Day 1982

The day of the international solidarity and unity of the working class is a day of assessment of past activities and the progress of the world army of proletarians in its class struggle, for improved living standards, for peace, freedom, democracy and Socialism.

May Day this year sees the workers of capitalist countries locked in a grim combat against the attacks of rising prices, inflation, attacks on wages and against monstrous rise in unemployment. All the capitalist countries are in the grip of the economic crisis with the ruling classes intent on passing its burden to the backs of the workers.

Imperialist War Mongering

In the midst of the crisis hang the dangerous threat of nuclear war contrived by the U.S. imperialists. A war which is threatened to wipe out millions from the face of the earth to satisfy the money making apetities of the USA imperialists.

The war plans are directed against the successful socialist revolutions, against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. They are also intended to bring the entire world under the domination of the imperialists and reimpose slavery on the newly liberated countries.

The entire working class, the workers of socialist countries, of capitalist countries and of the newly liberated countries will raise on this day their voice against the diabolical plan of nuclear war and will announce the determination of the proletarian army to

frustrate the U.S. plans of annihiliation.

This May Day both in India and elsewhere must become the day of international protest against the war plans of U.S. imperialism.

Genocidal Character

The devastating character of the war can be seen from the fact that minimum casualities in a limited European war are likely to be 1018 million dead, 160 million wounded with the survivors envying the fate of the dead. This is just a peep into the genocidal character of a full scale nuclear war. To prepare for this carnage, U.S. imperialists and their allies are spending millions of dollars on so-called defence budgets and armaments perfecting nuclear weapons of mass destruction. For 1982 the U.S. defence budget was raised to 220 billion dollars by Reagan. For 1986 it will approach 400 billion dollars. In the period between 1981-86 the USA has budgeted to spend 1500 billion dollars for military purpose. These burdens of military expenditure in the midst of a fall in real wages and loss of jobs announces the thoroughly anti-social character of the imperialist capitalist system.

Inhuman Anti-Social System

The total number of unemployed in the advanced capitalist world is over 20 million. Millions have no job in the underdeveloped countries. In India itself, over 50 million people are estimated to be unemployed.

But the ruling classes of imperialist countries find no other way of expending public money than for preparing for massive massacre. These huge sums spent for productive purposes would have given jobs to millions of people. But this is precisely what goes against the profiteering interests of the monopolies and multinationals who rule in the capitalist countries. All this only shows that the imperialist-capitalist system has become an inhuman anti-social system and the sooner it is ended the better for the mankind.

Strengthen Peace Movement

In contrast to the policies of the capitalist world, the Socialist world pursue the policy of peace, avoidance of war and concentration on the economic development and well-being of people. The superiority of the Socialist system is exactly seen in the fact that it neither requires war for its advance nor does it consider war as a way for saving itself. That is why the socialist countries are not affected by any economic crisis. That is why during the last decade when the capitalist world is facing recession, the Socialist world is

forging ahead with speedy rates of production. In the capitalist world, in the last five years unemployment mounted by leaps and bounds while the socialist world continued to be free from unemployment.

At the same time it is noted that because of the war preparations of the imperialists against the socialist countries, the latter also have to divert part of their productive resources for defence which to a certain extent is the cause of the slower rates of economic advance in these countries. The pernicious existence of the imperialist system not only forces unemployment in the advanced capitalist countries but also slows down the rate of progress in socialist countries.

The entire working class and the progressive forces of the world welcome the peace proposals of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries to save the world from a war crisis. Repeatedly the Soviet Union has offered to put limitations on conventional and nuclear armaments, has given assurance, that it will not be the first to start nuclear war and has called for negotiations to end present arms race and gradually eliminate all nuclear weapons.

The war danger has shaken the progressive forces of the world. Huge popular movements for peace have developed in Europe, men, women, workers and others coming from differnt walks of life are drawn together in massive demonstrations to demand peace for Europe and elsewhere and limitation on armaments. That fraternal voice for peace and against war is massively raised in the U.S. where common men are ardently expressing their desire for peace.

Vital Significance for India

The working class of India on this day of international solidarity must fully support the peace movement of the world and join its voice with that of his brethren across the seas. At the same time the working class of India must realise that the trade union movement here has not done its minimum duty to discharge its international responsibility. It has failed to rouse India's industrial workers and employees to the danger of a nuclear war and the imperialist conspiracies behind it. This year there must be firm determination to overcome this lag and streamline India's working class with the rest of the world workers in the fight against war, in the fight for world peace.

The fight against war has assumed vital significance for India's

workers because it is now connected with the very free existence of the countries of this sub-continent. U.S. imperialism is pouring arms into Pakistan to help the military dictator of that country and create tensions between India and Pakistan. The military regime in Bangaladesh, the pro-imperialist regime in Sri-Lanka—all constitute a threat to the democracy and freedom of the people in these countries and, as is known, all anti-democratic regimes can easily become the instruments of imperialist policies. On May Day, therefore, the working class of India must send fraternal greetings to the oppressed workers and peoples of Pakistan, to the oppressed workers and peoples of Banglasesh and Sri Lanka and express its determination to prevent hostilities between the neighbouring countries.

Greetings to Workers of Socialist Countries

The working class of India greets the workers and peoples of Soviet Union, Peoples of China and other socialist countries on their achievenment, their great sucess in economic progress during the last year. The trade unions in these countries have played their part in building and advancing socialist economy and training their workers as builders of socialism and communism. Simultaneously they have waged a determined struggle for peace and amity among the nations of the world, exposing imperialist plans for war.

A great victory has been scored by the socialist working class and the international movement in defeating the counter-revolutionary conspiracy in Poland and reasserting the authority of the Socialist State. This was a serious challenge behind which stood the world of imperialist and capitalist who wanted to bring down the socialist system in Poland.

Greetings to the Workers of Capitalist World

In the capitalist world, a great fight is going on between the working class and the ruling capitalist circles. The working class of these countries is insistently fighting against attacks on the its living standards through inflation, wage reduction, dismissal and unemployment. It is also fighting against intensification of labour for effecting mass safety technology at industrial enterprises, for improved medical care and pension security. It has refused to accept wage-freeze in the name of fighting inflation.

Inflation in 1981-82 reached an annual rate of 12 to 15 per cent. Some 20 million people were looking for jobs in the industrialised capitalist countries alone. The official underestimated figure in the

USA showed about 8 million unemployed; their number was over three million in Great Britain. In FRG, France, Italy it exceeded two millions.

This year not only the factory workers but white-collar workers and other intellectuals were increasingly involved in the fight against the burdens of the crisis. The mounting wave of strike in Great Britain, in the first eight months of the year involved 1.1 million people and there were pitched class battles. The number of those participating in strikes was double that in 1980. Key branches of British industries like electro-technical industry besides transport and publication were involved. In Italy in the first five months of the year, there were more than 1000 strikes involving 6.3 million participants and 60 per cent of these strikes were connected with key economic sectors. In the United States more than 600,000 postal workers struck work in 1981 and this was followed by strikes of miners and air-traffic controllers. The strike of U.S. coal miners which invovled 1,60,000 workers lasted for 73 days from March 27 to June 7. The strike of air-traffic controllers which involved 15,500 workers was crushed by the authorities. Large number of trade unions leaders and members were arrested, unions were fined, and their assets in the banks and the strike funds were confiscated. This strike of the air-traffic controllers evoked tremendous international solidarity and there was the demand for withdrawal of all repressive actions against the workers.

Rising consciousness from these struggles is reflected in increased scale of action; at actions on national and international scale; in the merger of working class action, in general democratic actions, in defence of peace, against racialism, terrorism and for the rights of general people and women. Organised workers in their strikes are putting forward demands which go beyond the purely economic framework and contain elements of democratic alternative to the social economic policies of the ruling classes. In recent times trade unions in a number of advanced countries are devoting special attention to the question of women workers and their rights. The advanced trade unions are making every effort to ensure equal pay for equal work, equal opportunity for work and also equal opportunity for women to secure participation in the organised trade union movement.

The economic instability of the last ten years has led to political instability and there have been 80 governmental dissolutions in

advanced capitalist countries, the governments were unable to run their full term under the constitution.

This resistance of the workers was the direct result of the policies pursued by the ruling classes in the last decade as the C.P.S.U's Organ *Pravda* put it: "In the latter half of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's the monopolies and the State in a number of monopoly capitalist countries launched a new organised offensive on the economic rights of the working people and made a demand to abridge the social legislation won by the people in persistent struggle. The former Government of France, the conservative cabinet of Britain and the Reagan Administration in the United States were particularly zealous. The latter proclaimed an economic programme and set out to cut food aid to the poor, reduce allowance for the jobless and the invalids and curtailed expenses on the provisions of medicare and on education health and other programmes". In Washington there was a gigantic demonstration to protest against Reagan's policies.

The mood of the working class and the masses was seen in the socialist victory in France. Mitterand's Government supported by the trade unions has now extended state control to about 40 per cent of industrial output.

The fight against multinationals is getting intensified in these countries and there have been strikes embracing workers of the multinationals in different countries.

The trade unions of Western Europe constitute a very powerful force commanding of allegiance of millions of workers. They are in a position to make and unmake Governments. A Government hostile to them cannot be stable. Yet it cannot be said that they are using this power to enable the society to make quick transition to socialism. The leadership deeply steeped in bourgeois parliamentarism is unable to break the vicious circle of strikes, elections and again strikes and elections. It does not bid for real power in the hands of the working class.

In all the western countries there is a strong urge for trade union and international solidarity. The intensified struggle against multinationals has added to this urge. The trade union's struggle against monopolies of these countries is having widespread political repercussion and helping the mass of people to join in common combination to fight the rule of State monopoly capitalism.

Greetings to the Workers of Third World Countries

The working class of India greets on this day the workers of the Third World countries who are fighting their battle against heavy odds. Many liberated countries are ruled by dictators and consequently there is widespread repression and terror against the working class movement. In many of these countries—Asian and African—legislation forbids strikes, and regards participation in them as a punishable offence. In Egypt under Sadat, a law was promulgated in 1977 prescribed hard labour for life for participation in strike, rallies or demonstrations. In Pakistan workers are flogged or sent to imprisonment for 14 days for participation in strikes. In India, the Indira Government has passed the Essential Services Maintenance Act which prescribes two years imprisonment for participation in illegal strikes. Almost every productive activity is included under these essential services.

Despite these, thousands continue to participate in strikes. India contributes the largest number of strikes and participants.

In the course of the class struggle, the working class adopts varying methods and forms of struggles. Along with the traditional forms of struggles and demonstrations, the workers adopt gherao and seizure of factories, chess-board strikes when the work is ceased in various sections of the industry in accordance to a definite rule, work-to-rule and so on. A large nmber of strikes takes place despite official ban.

Inevitably the trade union movement of all Third World countries has to take up the fight against imperialist designs and multinational penetration of their countries. The workers find their living standards blocked by imperialist exploitation, neo-colonialist designs and penetration of multinationals. In a number of countries the policies of the ruling circles and classes help imperialist penetration. The working class and the trade union movement are therefore called upon to oppose these policies and come into conflict with the Government of their country. In India now there is a near unanimity among trade unions to fight the multinationals and official policies favouring them. The Bombay Convention gave a clear expression to trade union opinion on this issue. The IMF loan drawn widespread protest from the trade unions.

In all Third World countries the trade unions are waging an incessant struggle to end the colonial wage system and improve the living standards of the working class. And many of them are realising that without liberating the peasantry of their country

from pre-capitalist forms of exploitation, the working class cannot radically change its own living conditions.

The trade union movement in all countries has become a component part of the struggle for democracy, freedom and socialism in these countries. In some countries it is coming to the forefront as the steadiest fighter and initiative often lies with it. Anti-imperialist in its outlook the trade union movement of these countries develops fraternal feelings and relations with the Socialist countries and workers for peace and against war. It develops warm fraternal feelings for the working class of Third World countries and is a staunch supporter of non-alignment.

The three sections of the world trade union movement are coming together in the common fight against war for international solidarity of the working class, and the fight for freedom, peace, democracy and socialism.

Growing Struggles

A review of the last year's activities in India shows rapid progress as well as certain inhabitant weaknesses inherited from the past.

The failure of the trade union movement in the relation to the struggle for peace has already been pointed out. In the struggle for defence of standard of living of the workers the trade union movement have registered important advances. The illusions following the return of Indira are shattered and workers' actions and strikes which went down in 1980, increased in 1981. The number of man days lost went beyond 25 million, 4 million above 1980 figure, though much less than the 1979 figure. The number of mandays lost in the public sector almost doubled since the preceding year.

But the most outstanding feature of the year that has gone is the achievement of united action and trade union unity. There was a break with the morose conditions of the earlier year when some central trade unions reeling from the defeat that their political leaders had suffered in the 1980 elections were chary of mass actions.

The CITU has steadfastly worked for the united action and helped by others was successful in giving a push forward to trade union unity.

The Bombay Convention was a very important step in the direction of unity.

Never before so many organisations covering different indus-

tries, central trade unions and federations together with the organisations of employees had come together to voice their common protest against the anti-labour policies of the Government ; and champion the demands of the people, the peasant and the agricultural labourer.

The massive unity demonstrated on 23rd November when lakhs of workers gathered in the Capital to voice their protest and the demands raised on behalf of the people and the call for strike marked yet another step in the unity and consciousness of the trade union movement. The demonstration included hundreds of working women coming over a long distance to the Capital and reflected the new awakening among women workers which was made possible by CITU unions devoting special attention to their problems.

The unity demonstrated on 19th January to implement the call for strike was unprecedented in trade union history. With the support of major opposition parties the strike became a complete bandh in many places drawing tens of thousands of shopkeepers, hoteliers, lawyers and professionals.

The demands raised by the strike were significant and conformed to the international trend of merging of working class demand with the demads of democracy and defence of living standards of all sections of the downtrodden.

On 19th January the working class demanded sale of essential commodities to our people at subsidised prices, remunerative prices to the peasant, minimun living wage and job security to agricultural workers, measures against blackmarketeers, repeal of National Security Act 1980 and the Essential Services Maintenance Act 1980 and the Essential Services Maintenance Act which was enacted to satisfy the conditions attahced to the IMF loan; recognition of trade unions on the basis of secret ballot and full guarantee of collective bargaining and trade union rights; ban on retrenchment and closure, unemployment allowance to the unemployed; withdrawal of all victimisation measures, need-based wage and full neutralisation of the rise in the cost of living and bonus for all.

By combining the demands of the workers with the pressing demands of the peasants and the agricultural workers, with the demands of the suffering people against fleecing prices, the trade union movement is taking steps to unite all sections opposed to the exploiting rule of the bourgeois-landlord class, and the authoritar-

ian party and seeks to discharge the historic responsibility of the working class to the people.

The strike protest against the NSA and ESMA give expression to the working class protest against the authoritarian regime and the determination to defend the democratic rights of the people.

No wonder the authoritarian Government came down with a heavy hand against the workers. More than 60,000 workers—20,000 in Kerala alone—including trade union office-bearers were arrested and put behind the bars. The INTUC leaders were active in breaking the strike and attacks of anti-socials against the workers were common. More than ten workers fell victims of brutal police firings.

But the strike was a success and its lessons and heritage have to be carried forward.

Organisationally the weakest part of the strike was the railway and Central Government organisations including Defence organisation. The reformist leaders of these organisations could not make up their mind to join the strike though many of them have earler supported the call and also decided to join it. In West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura however the employees joined the common action in a big way.

Among the State Government employees the strike evoked magnificent response in West Bengal, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tripura. In other Statesd there was hardly any response.

Overcome Weaknesses

These weaknesses have to be removed. Unless this is done they are likely to prove exremely dangerous to future growth and encourage the Government to launch a general attack on the present gains of the workers.

The Government is already at the game. Exploiting the weakness and meakness of the leaders the Government has enforced compulsory deposit scheme of arrears of dearness allowance on the Central employees. This will be soon used as the precedent first in the relation to the central employees and then in the relation to all sections of employees and workers. It is the same leaders that let down the workers by agreeing to link bonus with productivity and now the Government is intent on introducing this principle in all industries.

It is necessary that the Central trade unions and federations hold a dialogue with these leaders making them aware of the great

harm done to the trade union movement by their policies. Above all, it is necessary to make an ardent appeal for unity and common action to the masses of Central Government, State Government, railway and defence employees to fight for their demands shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the working class, to fight unitedly for the common demands of the workers and the people.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses the 19th January strike was an unprecedented event and showed the rising consciousness of the trade union movement.

The unity that led to the 19th January strike, was the result of repression and attacks against the living standards of workers. The repression launched against the LRSA and public sector workers' strike, the offensive against the LIC employees, the growing illegalisation of strikes demanded united protests and activities from the working class.

Harness Class Strength

It may now be safely assumed that through the united protests the trade unions and federations are realising that they are now face to face with definite economic and political policies of the Government which can be combated only on the basis of their class strength. Questions of rising prices, inflation, deficit financing, imports and exports policy, IMF loan or ESMA and NSA are not matters that can be remedied by a section of the working class. To cambat them the working class should face the Government unitedly as a class. This is the realisation that is seeping to the movement through the experience of common action, especially the historic 19th January strike.

This consciousness has to be carried forward—the process of trade union demands merging with general democratic demands, the process of trade unions coming out as champions of the peasantry has to be carried forward. If carried forward consistantly it will result an important political developments, placing initiative in the fight against authoritarianism with the working class.

The 19th January strike itself revealed the possibilities of united working class action broadening into people's actions against the authoritarian regime. The decision of the organised trade union movement to go into united action, the certainty that the action will embrace lakhs of workers evoked support from the opposition political parties and led to the participation of wide sections of the people including the peasantry.

The championing by the trade unions of the demands of the peasants, agricultural workers and the people immensely widened the scope of the action.

Carry Forward the Heritage

On May day, there must be firm resolve to carry forward this heritage of the 19th January. The working class if it is to be true to itself and its people must courageously face the immediate problems that confront the country. At the centre is the grim fight against the authoritarian regime.

Certain sections of the working class, the working class of West Bengal, of Kerala and Tripura have been in the forefront of this struggle defending the Left Ministries and frustrating the designs of the Congress(I) Government against them and protecting these advanced outposts of democracy.

Defeat Authoritarianism

Today all over India the challenge of Congress(I) its arbitrary and corrupt rule with its collapsed law and order, with its attacks on judiciary and designs for Presidential form of Government continues to spread. It has to be combated at each step in cooperation established between the trade union movement and political parties opposed to the authoritarian party has to be carried forward. In particular, the trade union movement should establish strong bonds of cooperation with Left parties who are consistently fighting against the authoritarian Government.

The coming elections in West Bengal and Kerala call upon the working class in these States and the entire working class of India to do everything to defeat the Congress(I) and ensure the victory of the Left forces and their allies.

The performance of the Left-led ministries in these states is now well-known to the Indian people. They loyally stood by their electoral promises, protected workers' rights to strike, refused to employ police in industrial dispute or any democratic and economic agitations of the masses and condemned both the NSA and the ESMA. These acts of their made them advance outposts of democracy fighting against the attacks of the authoritarian party.

They did not protect democracy in the abstract. They gave a concrete meaning to it by protecting the workers, agricultural workers, sharecroppers Government employees, teachers, the unemployed and others against the ravaging exploitation of vested interests and high prices. The West Bengal ruling front openly

supported the 19th January strike and identified itself completely with the struggle of the working class.

These achievements of the Left ministries would not have been possible had they not been headed by the CPI(M), the trusted party of the working class which inside the ministry or outside does not hestitate to carry on this struggle against the authoritarian party and the bourgeois-landlord rule. It is not accidental that the CITU guided by the same party is in the forefront of the workers' struggle, leading its battle for unity and its class struggle. The official reports of Indira Government concede that the CITU has led the largest number of strikes and workers' agitations in the recent years.

The West Bengal election come in the wake of the defeat of the Congress(I) plot of sabotage them through court appeals. The people and the working class of West Bengal are now getting another opportunity to rout the Congress(I) once again and give a lead to the democratic forces in the country. The complete rout of Congress(I) will advance democratic movement in India by ten leagues and place the initiative in the hands of the working class and the Left forces. Let the working class of West Bengal, creator and inheritor of rich revolutionary traditions fulfil its role in the coming battle.

The working class of Kerala has to play a similar role and give a lead to the country. Here the Congress(I) cornered from all sides is relying on the forces of sectionalism, communalism and reaction to win the election. The working class of Kerala has broken these barriers several times. It knows the Congress(I) ministry in Kerala means a reign of terror, corruption and murders in police custody. The working class of Kerala headed by the CPI(M) lead the election battle to rout the authoritarian party and its communal allies like BJP and Koya Muslim League.

The working class of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh will throw all their weight to defeat the Congress(I) and strengthen the representation of Left forces in the legislature.

The working class in all states must propagate for the victory of the Left forces of West Bengal and Kerala.

Defend National Integration

This May Day calls upon the working class to attend to other challenges also.

The imperialists are at their old game of disintegrating the

country's unity. In Assam they are promoting secessionist movements, exploiting the economic backwardness of the people; in the Adivasi areas they are doing the same with the help of some foreign Christian missions; inside the country they are financing Hindu communal organisations to cause the resurgence of Hindu orthodox. The RSS plays the same game and the Jamait-e-Islami proponent of Isalmic fundamentalism also helps the imperialists' game to divide the country on communal lines. The oppression of harijans also contributes to this disintegrating process in a big way. This disintegration of the struggle of the common man and the disintegration of national unity are intended to help the imperialist plot to re-enslave the country. The working class has to fight against this danger by fighting the communal and casteist forces as it has to fight the danger to country's freedom from outside emanating from the feverish arming of Pakistan.

The working class is best suited to serve the nation because the class organisations can unite all communities and castes. Only they should learn to pay more attention to the demands of the oppressed communities and castes.

Hold High the Banner of Peace,
Democracy and Socialism

Protecting the unity of the country, fighting against disintegration, protecting its freedom from the attacks of the imperialists, the working class must raise high the banner of Socialism. It must direct all its energies to hasten progress towards the high aim of abolition of exploitation and installing people's power headed by the working class. It knows that its slavery and the economic exploitation of the Indian people will not end unless the rule of the bourgeoise-landlord classes is ended.

It should know that neither the unity of the country nor its freedom can be protected longer under the bourgeois landlord rule. The pace of disintegration under this class rule is bound to increase. That class forces organise behind them sufficient support of all democratic elements and especially the peasantry to change this social order and agricultural workers. The recent struggles of these sections, have created history and added to the boiling cauldron of discontent. By supporting their struggle the working class has taken an important step towards the alliance of workers and peasants.

This May Day must proclaim its firm resolve to work for the workers and peasants alliance.

Raising high the banner of proletarian internationalism the working class of India joins other contingents in the fight against war, against imperialist plots against the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries, against the freedom of newly liberated countries, for peace, freedom, democracy and Socialism.

The Working Class, Vol. 11, No. 9, May 1982

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Results of Elections

THE CITU greets the working class and the people of West Bengal on their magnificent victory in the May elections. They have routed the Cong(I) which was now supported by other bourgeois parties like the Janata Party and have given a definite rebuff to the ambitions of the authoritarian party.

Our Vice-President, Com Jyoti Basu, who headed the left-front ministry in W. Bengal, deserve special congratulation for having steered the ministry for the full five-year term, despite all machinations of the authoritarian, communal and divisive forces to destabilise it.

The working class areas of West Bengal have voted massively for the Left Front and given huge majorities to the winning candidates. The strongholds of the CITU have been in the fore front to shape this big victory.

The massive support of the working class and the peasant masses has given an absolute majority to the CPI(M) and more than three-fourth majority to the Left Front.

The working class and the people of West Bengal can now expect the left-front Govt. to function for another full five-year term in defence of their democratic rights and for betterment of their living and working conditions.

This great victory of the democratic forces under the leadership of the Left will strengthen the anti-authoritarian forces all over the country. It calls on the entire trade union movement to support left

forces for a decisive battle against authoritarianism.

The CITU greets the working class and the people of Kerala for their great fight against powerful combination of the reactionary forces. Headed by Cong(I), it represented the defectors and destructors who revolted against the popular measures of the Nayanar Ministry; it was supported by well-known forces of commuunalism, like the Indian Union Muslim League, the Catholic Church and caste organisations.

Despite this, the Cong(I) combination could secure only a marginal victory and the unstability of this alliance of opportune is easily seen.

In the 77 seats won by the combination, the Cong(I) has only 20 seats clearly exposing the extent to which it has surrendered to the communal forces. Without the 14 seats of the Indian Union Muslim League, the Cong(I) combination is in a clear minority.

The success of the Cong(I) is therefore clearly based on its disgraceful surrender to the forces of communalism.

The working class and people of Kerala are likely to be subjected to the pressure and acts of goondaism under the new Ministry. Its first concern will be to withdraw the progressive measures of the Nayanar Government like unemployment relief, and old-age pensions for agricultural workers.

The working class and the people of Kerala, the agricultural workers and small peasants will have to resist these attacks. They will have to defend the democartic rights of the people, the freedom of the trade union movement, which are bound to come under attack.

The left forces in the working class all over India highly appreciate the fight put up by the LDF combination and its success in resisting the attack of the forces of reaction. The 63 members of the LDF in the Assembly constitute a powerful shield for the democratic forces of Kerala to ward off the attacks of the totalitarian forces.

The elections in Haryana and Himachal also show that the Cong(I) is losing rapidly. In Haryana, it has resorted to underhand measures to get into the Ministry. The Haryana Governor has covered himself with utter disgrace by accepting Bhajan Lal's claims to form the Ministry. He has acted as a sychophant of the ruling party at the Centre.

In Himachal, the Cong(I) is nearly beaten by a reactionary party

like the BJP.

Within two years of its reign of power with huge majority, the Cong(I) is on the run: Its influence is getting daily eroded. The victory of Bahuguna in U.P. further marks its rapid erosion.

A party which pursued anti-working class and anti-people policies, which is plotting to impose the presidential system and mortgages the country to the IMF, how can it escape this fate?

The working class and the people of India must now redouble their efforts to fight this authoritarian party and deprive it of power. The West Bengal left front with a huge majority constitute a powerful bastion for the democratic forces. The Kerala LDF is yet another bastion along with Tripura Left Front Government. Let the working class and the people take every effort to unite and stand solidly against the authoritarian party. The trade union movement and its unity have a vital role to play in shaping this unity and strengthening the fight against authoritarianism. Let them not fail in this vital task.

The Working Class, Vol. 11, No. 10, June 1982

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On Present Situation

The characteristic feature of the year that has passed is the intensified economic crisis accompanied by closures of mills and factories, increased strikes and lockouts. Official spokesmen deny that there is a recession. But the fact of closures, prolonged strikes and stagnation in industrial production speak to the contrary.

It is now on record that more than 6,000 concerns are sick—euphemism for closures. In the jute industry more than 50,000 have been retrenched in recent times. Fourteen mills have been closed for a long time. In Bombay more that two lakh textile workers are on strike which because of the anti-labour policy of the Indian Government has been turned into a lockout.

Tens of thousand thrown out of job, or forced to go on strike for maintaining their living standards, and millions of unemployed on the registered list are manifestations of the crisis of the methods by which the burdens of the crisis are transferred to the workers.

The number of mandays lost went beyond 25 million during 1981, 4 millions above the 1980 figures, though it was lower than the 35 million figure in 1979.

The number of mandays lost in the public sector almost doubled in 1981. According to official report's the CITU was in the forefront and led more strikes than any other organisation.

End of 1981 and the first half of 1982 saw some of the most prolonged and bittlerly fought actions of recent times. The Bombay Textile Strike which has lasted more than six months takes the lead

in these prolonged battles. But besides these there have been many prolonged battles. U.P. has seen a large number of them some Itims due to Congress(I) Government's policy of coercing the workers to join the INTUC.

In this period of recession the employers are launching a counter offensive through declared and undeclared lockouts to coerce the workers into submission. They are incited and helped by the Congress(I) Governments. Many strikes have been prolonged because they have been converted into undeclared lockouts. The number of declared lockouts and the loss of mandays due to them has been increasing in the last three years showing the counter offensive of the employers.

Except in 1979 at least 40% of the mandays lost are due to lockouts as in seen from the following figures:

	Mandays lost in (000)	
Year	Due to strike	Due to Lockouts
1978	15,423	12,917
1979	35,804	08,050
1980	12,018	09,907
1981	15,658	10,806

The bourgeois-landlord government gives a clean alibi to the employers by suppressing facts about lockouts.

The crisis of the economy has been compounded and intensified by the conditions imposed on the Government by the International Monetary Fund when it sanctioned a loan of Rs. 5,000 crores to India. Credit restrictions imposed by the Fund have led to the closure of number of small concerns affecting the jobs of thousands. The import liberalisation policy imposed on the Government has also led to the same results. The CITU had warned against these consequences of IMF loans and told the workers that unless the trade union movement intervened on questions of policy, like the export and import policies, credit and taxation policies, it would not be able to defend effectively the living conditions and jobs of the workers.

With recession and joblessness sweeping the country the resistance of the working class is bound to grow. The Indira Government is already in the field to combat it. The Bureau of Public Enterprises has announced that no wage wiil be granted in the public sector without increased productivity and that the maximum permissive increase will be 10 per cent and this will remain

valid for four years. There will be no retrospective increase if wage negotiations are prolonged over months. And finally the rate of D.A. for per point rise in cost of living index will be only Rs. 1.30, which is totally inadequate to meet the rise in the cost of living.

With the inflationary spiral in the ascedency the real wage of the workers will be forced down with this inadequate provision. This wge policy is being applied to the private sector also and increase in wages is being linked with increase in productivity.

The determination of the employers and the Government to fight the workers is seen in the prolonged strikes of Bombay textile workers. The workers have held out for more than six months but neither the Government nor the employers are prepared for an agreed settlement.

But the Indira Government is not satisfied with starving the striking workers into submission. It has taken repressive measures to penalise strikes and enacted new acts to undermine the trade unions and workers resistance.

The Industrial Disputes Amendment passed by the Lok Sabha excludes lakhs of workers employed in "any agricultural operation", hospitals and dispensaries, "educational, scientific research and training institutions" from the perview of the Industrial Disputes Act. This is accompanied by the Hospitals and other institutions (Settlement of Disputes) Bill which precludes to introduce a grievance settling machinery which virtually throws these wokers on the mercy of the employers and which treats retrenchment as individual dispute.

The Industrial Disputes Amendment Act provides that every employer in factories employing more than 100 workers will set up a grievance settlement authority "who will go into dispute connected with each individual worker. Without going through this process the Government will not interfere in any dispute.

This is nothing but a dialatory measure to give the employers sufficient time to coerce the workers. It will only prolong the dispute.

A new provision lays down that where the appropriate Government is satisfied in relation to any industrial establishment or undertaking under the control of the Government that adequate provisions exist for investigation and settlement of industrial disputes in respect of workmen employed in such establishment, it may by notification exempt conditionally or unconditionally

such establishment or undertaking from all or any of the provisions of the Act.

Under this provision the Government may choose to retain only provisions barring strikes and also the right to appeal to a tribunal. It may make decision of the person chosen by the management to settle a dispute—a final decision against which there will be no appeal. It means that in all Public Sector undertakings strikes will be declared illegal in a surreptuous way. The Act also prohibits what is called unfair labour practices. This chapter bars the workers and trade unions from conducting any strike deemed to be illegal, picketting during strikes, resorting to go slow and squatting on the work premises after working hours, staging demonstrations at the residences of employers and the managerial staff, and indulging in any act which may be termed as acts of force and violence. Stringent punishment of imprisonment for six months have been provided for these "practices" besides summary dismissal from service.

Under the Trade Union Amendment Bill recognition as a representative union will be by verification. The demand for recognition by secret ballot stands rejected. And naturally so. When ballot has been taken it has gone against the INTUC, the patronised union.

The fraud of recognition by the Government can be seen clearly in the strike of 2.5 lakh textile workers of Bombay now in its sixth month. The leaders of the recognised INTUC union dare not even hold a meeting of the workers. But the Government and millowners continue to recognise it as the representative of the workers.

Under the Trade Union Amendment Bill the Registrar of Trade Unions is given power to cancel registration of a union if it participates in an illegal strike. A new chapter is added to deal with "Trade Union Disputes". This is a shameless attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of a union to create opportunities for official intervention in unions which refuse to be docile. The Registrar is authorised to arbitrate and declare the duly elected office bearers of a union if a worker raises a dispute. There is no appeal against its decision. The Bill also lays down that any person convicted under the Industrial Disputes Act cannot become office-bearer of any union.

It is quite clear why the Registrar is authorised with this arbitrary power. At present if militant leaders are elected by the workers neither the management nor the Government can do

anything about it. Now all that is necessary is a complaint to be filed by the management's stooge about the election and the Registrar is ready to dismiss the elected leaders. The Payment of Wages (Amendment Bill) legalises deduction from workers wages for payment of union subscriptions. This is a provision to fill the coffers of INTUC to secure compulsory payment from workers, to enable the INTUC to pose as the representative union and carry on its anti-working class activity.

Such is the sweeping scope of the new measures to stifle the trade union movement.

These attacks are part of the authoritation drive against the people and their democratic rights. The repression of the peasantry, the atrocities against agricultural workers, and Harijans, the beating of students and teachers by police, the total lack of respect shown to the opposition parties in the Parliament and the State Assemblies, the scandalous Bihar Press Bill, the Orissa Act, following the enactment of NSA, ESMA—describe the systematic drive against democratic rights launched by the authoritarian Party.

The agricultural workers and Harijans are not the only section of the working class open to murderous assaults. Contract workers a eupheism for bonded labourers under the Indira regime are open to every kind of brutality. In the areas surrounding the capital city of Delhi the quarry workers are treated with inhuman brutality, wounded, killed, starved by their employers. Nothing surpasses the horrid fate meted out to Oriya workers from the tribal belt—another section of bonded labourers employed in a central Project the Salal Project in Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa MLAs, who visited the place have stated that workers who protest against bondage conditions are murdered—just thrown into the river and drowned. But will the Congress(I) Ministry of Orissa do anything about it, and press the central government to stop this murder of Oriya workers. No. They dare not protest lest they loose their jobs as ministers.

The struggle of the trade unions is merging with the people's struggle for democratic rights, struggle against the authoritarian rule of Indira Gandhi.

While the authoritarian Government is using all its powers, curb the trade unions and the deomcratic forces, the latter are not keeping quiet. They are in the field countering these attacks and at times inflicting severe defeats on the authoritarian forces.

The left forces in West Bengal of which the CITU and trade union movement froms a substantial part have inflicted a defeat to the authoritarian forces in the May elections. In Kerala also they had rebuffed the Indira Policy.

In West Bengal where the CITU is strongest its unions saw to it that the Congress(I) was routed in industrial areas which returned mostly CPI(M) and CITU candidates along with some left elements.

The CPI(M) secured absolute majority in the Assembly, the total strength of the left forces mounting to 239 in an Assembly of 294.

In Kerala the Congress(I) could escape defeat and scraped through by getting together all the communal and casteist forces in opposition to the left and its allies. The obnoxious alliance of Congress(I) could secure only one lakh more votes in the elections than the opposing combination where the CPI(M) and the CITU played a leading role. In other States where the left forces were not in command of the situation and where the initiative lay with the bourgeois opposition parties, requisite unity was lacking and Congress(I) could manoeuvre to form its ministry.

This weakness has to be overcome. The trade union movement should support all efforts and plans for broader resistance if.

A great responsibility now rests on the trade union movement of the country, especially the CITU to carry forward the struggle for democratic rights and organise people's resistance to authoritarianism. The working class organised in the trade unions is a powerful force which with its united protest action can shake the country and rouse other section.

The 19th January strike revealed the power of the united working class, of a united trade union movement to unleash mass democratic actions of other sections and contribute to greater unity of the people in the struggle against authoritarianism.

The decision of the organised trade union movement for united action, the certainty that the call will be responded to by lakhs of workers evoked support form opposition political parties and led to the participation of wide sections of the people including the peasantry. The strike became a complete bandh in many places drawing into the common action tens of thousands of shopkeepers, hoteliers, teachers, students, lawyers and other professionals.

The demands raised by the strike were significant and conformed to the international trend of merging of the working class

demands with the demands of democracy, with the demands to maintain the living standards of all sections of the downtroden. By combining the demands of the working class with the pressing demands of the peasants and the agricultural wokers, with the demands of the suffering people against fleecing prices, the trade unions took the initiative to unite all sections of the people who are facing a miserable existence under the bourgeois-landlord rule.

The process of trade union demands merging with the general democratic demands, the process of trade unions coming out as champions of the pesantry and of the agricultural workers has to be carried forward. If carried forward consistently it will result in important political developments placing initiative in the fight against authoritarianism with the working class.

It has to be remembered however that this cannot be a spontaneous process with the mere coming together of several trade union organisations. The impulse and direction for trade union unity, for discharging its responsibility to the people has to be supplied by the more conscious elements and organisations. In fact this has been the role of the CITU in the struggle for trade union unity. It has consistently fought for a line based on class struggle, for discharging the political responsibility of the working class, for discharging the international responsibility of the working class.

When many organisations were supporting the hated emergency rule, the CITU along with others fought this anti democratic class collaborationist line and struggled for trade union unity. The CITU supported the fightoust the authoritarian party from power and supported all forces opposed to authoritarian one-party rule.

During the Janata regime the CITU opposed the Government's anti-labour bills along with some others.

The CITU unflinchingly supported the left forces in the country and hailed the formation of left ministries as a big achievement of the working class and democratic movement. This support of left forces is not always shared by all trade union orgainsations. Many other organisations wavered on these issues. Some let down the people.

The existence of several trade union organisations and their differences reflect the inner struggle in the trade union movement for a line based on class struggle, a militant line of trade unity, a line of alliance with other democratic forces to fight the burgeois-landlord class rule. The formation of the CITU, its separation form the

AITUC relfected this sruggle. It is therefore absolutely necessary that in pursuing the line of trade union unity the CITU is conscious of the aim and directions of other organisations wherever they manifest themselves. The emergence of National Campaign Committee no doubt bespeaks of a growing common understanding and the committee has to be strengthened. The same unity is being seen in the common activities in various industries. In coal steel, Bhel, etc. a united unerstanding exists on the question of negotiations and demands. This increases the responsibility of the CITU all the more to preserve and strengthen this unity and to orientate in a correct class direction.

There are organisations inside the trade union movement who use the united platform to malign the left front Government of West Bengal and act as the fifth column of Congress(I). But trade union unity will be meaningless if the united working class does not growingly support the left forces and their achievement the left front ministry.

The CITU has to combat such disruptive ideas like the attack on left mininstry while working for unity. That demands incraased mass activity, increased independent activity of the CITU unions also.

The CITU is conscious that the trade uion movement of India has to discharge its international responsibility. It cannot neglect the fight against U.S. organised war preparations, the preparations for a nuclear holocaust. Nor can it ignore aggressive Israeli attack on Lebanon and Palestine fighters.

Yet it has to be said that India's trade union movement has as yet failed to discharge its responisbility on these vital questions. The CITU working Committee has given a call to protest on Ist September against the war plans of U.S. imperialism directed against the USSR. This is in response to the call of the World Federation of Trade Unions to observe the day as a day of anti-war protest. The CITU unions must devote all their energies to make the day a success. it is clear that several Central Trade Unions will not participate in this vital endeavour to oppose war. Some of them are indifferent to international developments, others would like to attack the Soviet Union or put the USSR and USA on par.

The CITU is prepared to join hands with those who hold U.S. imperialism as the criminal, who do not attack any socialist country, and who do not indulge in a talk about two super powers. If

these conditions are observed there may be joint demonstrations of CITU and AITUC. All this should show that the struggle for trade union unity is not a simple process of accumulation of numbers. It is a serious struggle for a correct line and outlook in national and international affairs, in resisting the attacks on the working class, in discharging the national and international responsibility of the India's working class.

The CITU and the trade union movement have not done everything that is necessary to support the heroic PLO fighters who are victims of U.S. inspired Israeli aggression. It is a dastardly attempt of U.S. to subjugate the Arab world. It affects the freedom of all newly liberated countries and the international struggle. And yet India's trade union movement has hardly done anything to expose the designs of U.S. to our own people.

Barring the laudable example of West Bengal CITU unions even the CITU organisations have done very little. This shows how important it is for the CITU to keep a constant watch on orienting the united movement in a correct direction, how necessary it is to continue to struggle on its own when others vacillate or fail.

The national situation and the rapidly developing international events call upon India's Trade Union movement, and especially the CITU to wage an irreconciliable struggle for unity so that the trade union movement can discharge its responsibility in the fight against authoritarianism, can help in mobilising the broadest resistance to authoritarian rule and can help further the movement to unite left and democratic unity. Tehy also call upon the trade unions to rouse the people against the dnger of war and against U.S. imperialist aggression against the Palestinian freedom fighters.

The Congress(I) government is unable to protect the unity of the people and the integrity of the country. It is unable to control the secessionist movement in Assam. It is unable to combat the disruptionist forces like the Dal Khalsa forces in the Punjab. It is afraid of exposing the U.S. role in the developments in Assam or exposing the disruption which it carries through foreign Church missions or Islamic Fundamentalists. The Indira Government is presiding over a process of national disintegration.

Unless a powerful working class movement backed by the peasantry, uniting all the left and democratic forces comes forward as the alternative, the country cannot be saved from disintegration and the basic and fundamental problems of the people cannot be

solved. While helping to organise the widest possible resistance to authoritarian rule, the trade union movement must continue to move towards it goal of basic democratic change in society leading to its objective of socialism.

17th August, 1982

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Presidential Address

Working Committe Meeting
July 23-25, 1982, Bangalore

Comrades, almost immediately after our last session of the General Council we suffered a grievous loss in the passing away of Comrade Balasubramaniyam, one of the foremost leader of our organisation and one of its founders and a leader who had played an outstanding role in building the trade union movement in Tamilnadu over the last few decades.

Comrades, A.B. was a member of the working committee of C.I.T.U. since its inception and was one of the foremost leader of C.P.I.(M) and a member of Polit Bureau. His loss is a great loss to the working class movement of our country.

Dimitrov Centenary

This year the advanced sections of the working class the world over are observing the birth centenary of the great fighter and leader of international proletariat, General Secretary of Communist International founded by Lenin, Georgi Dimitrov. This printing worker from Bulgaria, loyal to Marxism and Leninism and proletarian internationalism, rose to the leadership of the international movement when Fascism had become a world danger and was intent on launching a World War. Guided by the council of Stalin whose name reformists of all shades dread, he succeeded in leading the International movement to unite and build up resistance to war and Fascism. Earlier he had distinguished himself by his indomitable courage while facing a Nazi Court. Facing a death sentence he defended the principles of Communism against Nazi

slander, stating that he was not interested in his personal defence, but the defence of the party and the ideology for which Communism stood.

The heritage left by Dimitrov is of intestimable value to us who are facing the danger of authoritarianism. To fight such danger, Dimitrov called for trade union unity, unity of the working class and backed by it, the united resistance of all progressive forces to stem the tide of Fascism.

The heritage of proletarian internationalism gets added significance today when the world is facing the danger of a nuclear war, the organisation of genocidal war by the hated U.S. Imperialism, a war directed against the Soviet Union.

U.S. Preparations for Nuclear War

To prepare for the War the U.S. Imperialists have been spending billions and billions of dollars on production of weapons of mass destruction. They now intends to place these weapons in the space so that death and destruction can rain on any country which dares contradict the wishes of this homicidal power.

The danger of Nuclear war threatening loss of millions of lives hangs over the world because of the criminal policies of US Imperialism which is intent on a war against the Soviet Union and its aim of global domination.

Comrades, Proletarian Internationalism, responsibility to our people and the people of the world demand that the entire working class of India, the entire trade union movement should actively intervene to expose and isolate the war mongers and join their voice with the working class and people of the world to prevent a nuclear war. There have been huge peace marches in Europe and the U.S.A., there have been wide protests and demonstrations from the working class pointing their accusing finger at the Imperialist.

Soviet Proposals

The forces of peace, of opposition to war, have been tremendously helped by the concrete proposals made by the U.S.S.R. to stop the armament race and gradually eliminate the production of nuclear weapons. The unilateral declaration by the U.S.S.R. that it will not be the first to use the nuclear weapons has been hailed by the International Working Class and all the peace loving forces. The Reagan administration has to reckon with it though it is trying to belittle its importance.

India's Trade Unions & Struggle Against War

Comrades, where does the Indian Trade Union Movement stand in this gigantic struggle, in this struggle against the human genocide? It has to be recognised that the trade union movement of our country under the influence of diverse idelogies is hardly playing a rôle in this international struggle and lowering banner of proletarian internationalism. No doubt, the CITU Unions all over the country did raise their protest against the war on this May Day and joined their voices with the International protest. The unions affiliated to the AITUC and perhaps some other organisations also protested against the war on May Day. But for the rest, the vast masses of workers and the trade union movement remained ignorant of this danger and their international responsibility. The narrow outlook which abjures internationalism and concentrates only on immediate demands disintegrates the proletarian consciousness.

Comrades, it is besides to be noted that even the CITU and AITUC were unable to combine their forces on May Day, when the AITUC leaders wanted to club China alongwith the U.S.A.

It is our task to see that the entire trade union movement moves alongwith the path of International Solidarity and struggles against the war.

We must act as the spearhead and in the coming months activise the working class resistance to war. The World Federation of Trade Unions has given a call to observe Ist September as an anti-War Day. We must warmly respond to this call. The CITU and its unions should take lead everywhere in mobilising the widest sections of trade unions for this anti-war International Day. We should be prepared to join hands with all those who regard US Imperialism as the source of war and do not indulge in the criticism of any socialist country and do not resort to the bogus talk about two Super Powers.

Israeli Aggression

Comrades, the entire progressive world, the working class movement, the Governments of all Socialist countries, Governments of Non-aligned countries have condemned the USA-directed Israeli aggression against Lebanon—an aggression accompanied with brutalities and massacres to destroy the PLO and its heroic resistance. The CITU denounces this aggression and raises its voice of protest against this act of US treachery and double

dealing. It acclaims the resistance put up by the Palestine Liberation Organisation, its union at several places have demonstrated their support for the PLO and protested against the U.S. attack. Much more, of course, remains to be done to save a fighting people. The CITU unions must continue to unite the working class, expose Israel and the Reagan Administration and support the PLO.

Comrades, it is surprising that in the face of this US directed aggression India's Prime Minister would not directly condemn US Imperialism and contended herself only with expressing sympathy for the Lebanese and Palestinians and condemning the Israeli Government.

The Israeli attack has also revealed that thoroughly treacherous character of a number of muslim regimes which proclaim themselves as defenders of Islam.

The advocates of Islamic fundamentalism stand exposed when they betray the Palestinain people openly and callously. The Islamic fundatmentalism reveals itself as a reactionary weapon to divide the democratic and revolutionary force movement in each country to stabilise the reactionary class regimes in these countries. It acts as an imperialist tool to stabilise the regimes which play second fiddle to the USA.

Israeli Workers Uphold International Solidarity

In contrast to the reactionary stands of these Govts. stand the shines of the action of the Israeli working class who has openly denounced the Isreali aggression and demanded justice and freedom for the people of Palestine. The bond of International solidarity, of proletarian internationalism is recognised by the Israeli working class and progressive forces who despite great difficulties have shown courage, condemned their own Govt. and demanded withdrawal of military forces from Lebanon.

Betrayed by these reactionary regimes the struggle for the Palestinan Liberation enters a more difficult phase. The spark of freedom once lit however will not be extinguished. After the great fight of the Vietnamese people, no other people, has shown such heroic resistance and capacity for sacrifice in the cause of freedom as the people of Palestine. What can we offer to this heroic people. We can only tell them in the words of Pablo Neruda :

"Not the dead hands of a thousand mights of oppression.

Stifle your living hope for the desired day that we throughout the world, so many of us are yearning towards, the final day of

suffering the day of justice won through bitter struggle."

Growing Breakdown

Comrades, last year saw further intensification of the authoritarian drive against the democratic liberties of the people. The election of a person, who openly admired Hitler on the floor of the Parliament, to the post of India's President does not augur well for the democracy and democratic rights.

The left forces of which our CITU forms a substantial part have addressed a rebuff to the authoritarian party in West Bengal and Kerala in the recent elections. But elsewhere the requisite unity was lacking. The trade union movement should support all the efforts for broad resistance to checkmate the authoritarian party.

At the same time, the working class must note that the entire bourgeois landlord order is collapsing. The law and order has collapsed where the Congress(I) party heads the administration in the States. The degeneration of the ruling party seen in the corruption of individual members, links of the leaders with anti-socials, surrender before the dacoits, policemen indulging in gang rape against peasant women mark the growing collapse of the order. It is further seen in the collapse of Parliamentary values. The Governor appointed by the ruling party smuggles the ruling party to power as in Haryana. The Governor appointed by the ruling party is described as a thief by the legislators of the same party in West Bengal. Inside legislatures and the Parliament erosion of norms is becoming the order of the day. The entire opposition is expelled from the assembly in Bihar. The ruling party is unable to protect the constitution. It is unable to protect the unity of the people and the integrity of the country. It is unable to control the secessionist movement in Assam. It is unable to check the reactionary forces in Punjab. It is afraid of exposing US role in the developments in Assam or exposing the disruption which it carries through foreign church missions or Islamic Fundamentalism. The Government is presiding over a process of national disintegration. Unless a powerful working class movement backed by the peasantry, uniting all the left and democratic force comes forward as the alternative, the country cannot be saved from disintegration and the basic and fundamental problems of the people cannot be solved. While organising the widest possible resistance to the authoritarian party, the trade union movement must continue more towards its goal of basic democratic change in society leading to the goal of the

socialism.

Policing the Wages

Comrades,authoritarian drive against the people is first of all seen in the drive against the freedom and liberties of the working class. The ESMA is followed by 3 new bills to suppress the trade union movement. This is preceded by unleashing of terror against the trade union struggles in U.P. and Haryana.

Behind this stand the calculated design to attack the existing standards of workers, to lower the wage bill, to pass on the burden of the crisis on them. The Government forcibly propagates that the wage standards in organised industry in India are very high.

It is in this background that the Government has started its attack on working class wages. It has started policing the wages. It has declared Section 144—declaring that wage increase above 10% is illegal.

The Bureau of Public Enterprises has issued the following directions to the Public Sector managements; obviously they will be followed in the Private Sector also.

They comprise.

1. No wage increase can be given at the existing level of productivity. All future wage increases must be linked with corresponding increase in productivity.

2. There will be no retrospective effect in future wage agreements. Hence all agreements will be effective from the date of signing of the agreement.

3. The effective period of the agreement should be 4 years.

4. No more than 10% of the wage bill can be increased as a result of the agreement and this includes fringe benefits.

5. The rate of D.A. will not exceed Rs. 1.30 per point.

This is a virtual lathi charge. It means that in the best possible agreement for 4 years to come the workers will have to be satisfied with 10% increase on the present wage. That too if a corresponding increase in productivity takes place and there is absolutely no provision against erosion through a rise in the cost of living except the fixed miserable Rs. 1-30 per point.

Besides there is no retrospective effect. This is to make a provision for cheating by indefinitely prolonging the existing agreement. All that the management has to do is to refuse to come to a new agreement so that the old continues and when a new agreement is reached, there is no provision for asking the management

to compensate for the loss. Trade Unions are fully aware how negotiations and disputes are prolonged for years and the only check against it is provision for retrospective effect. Now that is to be removed.

The trade union movement denounces this proposal to link increase in wages with productivity. It reveals the real face of the much advertised wages and incomes policies of the Govt. which can be now described as a policy to deflate the wages of the workers and inflate the profits of the employers.

This means that despite increased productivity the real wage of the workers will continue to go down.

Gains of Production

The workers have increased their productivity in the past but the gainers have been the employers. The loss has been entirely of the workers. Despite increased productivity an inevitable law of capitalist society presses down the workers' wages to the barest minimum. This has been the experience of India also.

The National Labour Commission (Labour) found that production per worker went up by 63% between 1952 and 1964. But the real wages of the workers in the same period remained either static or declined. The prices of essential commodities also went up in the same period. The gains of the productivity went into the pockets of the employers.

It was recently admitted in the Parliament by the Government that between 1960 and 1970 productivity in India went up by 28% while the real wages declined in the same period. Let it be further remembered that increased production by workers has led to loss of jobs in many industries. The statistics of Tea, Jute, Cotton Textiles and Engg. Industries show reduced employment following increased productivity.

The productivity year unilaterally announced by the Prime Minister has this meaning. It demands forcible extraction of more work from the workers in the interest of capitalists. It is also part of the drive to attract Multi-Nationals and other foreign concerns in India with the offer of cheap labour, carrying out part of the assurances given to the I.M.F.

That increased productivity is to be extracted from an unwilling working class and not secured through its willing consent is clear from the way the Labour Minister called a Conference on Productivity without caring to secure the participation of the majority of

the trade union centres.

All major trade union Central Organisations except the INTUC boycotted the 15th June Meet. But the Labour Minister refused to discuss with them and he is satisfied with the co-operation offered by the management and the INTUC. This certainly fits in with official design.

Ideological Propaganda

This call for greater productivity, this appeal to the Central Trade Union Organisation and workers' participation in the management, it should not be forgotten, is part of the Government's ideological propaganda to isolate the trade unions and workers from the rest of the society, at a time when the workers are forced to fight for their demands and are in need of public support. Having unleashed inflation through deficit financing, the Government is now falsely propagating—that only if the workers were to work more, prices will come down and society will get relief. But the Govt. is unable to explain why sugar prices have not fallen despite record production of sugar this year and why there is no relief for the common man.

The Trade Union movement must answer this propaganda and take the people into confidence. The trade union movement and the working class do not shirk their responsibilities to run the wheels of production and serve the needs of society. They have repeatedly declared their desire to accept joint participation on terms of equality, with full rights to the workers' representatives to examine the balance sheets and the finances of the concern, to examine the supply of the raw material, their quality and with equal powers to take decision on the question of production and discipline inside the concern. The trade Unions are prepared to discuss norms of production and payments and give the agreed norms of production for agreed wage settlements.

Our experience however teaches us that the management in public and private sectors are not only opposed to genuine participation of workers in running the factories and solving the problems of productivity, they victimise workers when they expose corrupt practices of officials, use of substandard materials, which rapidly impair the capacity of machinery. Management's call for production drive is only a call for greater exploitation of workers to inflate the profits of the employers. The workers are prepared to serve the society. But the employers and the Government want

them to serve the interest of capitalists.

Strikes & Lockouts

The year that has passed since our General Council meeting has seen a big tussle between the trade unions and the employers and the anti-labour policy of the Govt. By 1981, the influence of Indira Govt. began to wear out and the strike struggles of the working class showed a rising curve.

The number of mandays lost in 1981 went beyond 25 millions, 4 millions above the 1980 figure, though it was lower than the 35 millions figure of 1979. The number of mandays lost in the public sectors almost doubled in 1981. Official reports admit that in these struggles, our CITU was in the fore front and led more actions than any other organisation.

End of 1981 and the first half of 1982 saw some of the most prolonged and bitterly fought actions of recent times.

The Bombay Textile Strike which has lasted for nearly 6 months takes the lead in these prolonged battles. But besides it there have been prolonged strike of State Govt. employees, of electricity workers (Rajasthan, UP), Hinustan Ferodo in Bombay and others.

The following figures about mandays lost through strikes and official lockouts are significant :

	Man Days lost (in 000)	
Year	Due to strikes	Due to lockouts
1978	15,423	12,917
1979	35,804	8,050
1980	12,018	9,907
1981	15,658	10,806

Except in 1979 atleast 40% of the total man days lost are due to lockouts. But the Govt. and its spokesmen generally talk about man days loss due to strikes only. In the last 3 years, the percentage of man days lost due to official lockouts is increasing. This is a counter offensive of the employing class to bring the workers into submission.

The trade union movement must devise new methods to fight this lock out offensive. In West Bengal 17 Jute Mills are already closed. It is estimated that 65,000 badli workers have also been thrown out of work. We must devise proper means in consultation with other organisations to meet this attack which threatens to increase.

Badli Workers

Notwithstanding plethora of legislations and boastful signing of ILO Conventions, lakhs of workers in factories and concerns are treated as temporary workers, badli workers with no right, no job security whatsover.

The Bombay Textile strike is partly due to this question of Badli workers. Thousands of young workers working in textile mills have absolutely no security and they took a prominent part in organising the strike.

The CITU must give prior attention to this problem as it affects thousands of workers who come fresh into the labour market.

All this enables the employers to escape their legal obligations, cut down wages and gather enormous surplus from the labour of temporary workers. This can happen only in an ex-colonial country set on the path of capitalism with pre-capitalist survivals in tact.

Violation of Conventions

The Government of India has been violating ILO Conventions one after another. To earn the certificate of progressivism abroad, it signs conventions which it takes no time in breaking. It attacks freedom of organisation. It indulges in unfair labour practices when it itself victimises office bearers of trade unions or permits private employers to do it. No wonder the Labour Minister Tiwari asked for freedom to repudiate ILO Conventions recently. He made this plea on behalf of underdeveloped countries.

Unemployment

The registered unemployment is apporaching the two crores figure. The educated unemployed constitute a substantial part of the army of the unemployed. Has the Government any policy to arrest the growth of unemployment ? No. On the contrary its policy contributes to the growth of unemployment driving lakhs to streets without jobs and tens of thousands to seek the shelter of gulf countries.

Under its rule hundreds of concerns have been closed throwing out of work tens of thousands of people. Its drive for productivity has led to direct retrenchment,of suppression of new recruitment once again contributing to the growth of unemployment.

Besides in the hunt for cheap exports at competitive prices and increased production, electronic computers and job killing devices are being introduced on a massive scale.

Health of the Working Class

The health of the working class is another casualty under the present rule. Legal provisions are violated. Surveys of villages where Mining Workers live reveal undescribable conditions which cause disease and ill health among these workers. There is hardly any provision for giving them medical relief, though vast sums have accumulated in the coal mines welfare fund. The advertised ESI scheme is also proved to be a scandal. Tall claims are made on behalf of the scheme but facts reveal that it ill serves the needs of the employees.

Social security has to be all embracing. It must (a) cover medical care (b) sickness benefit, (c) maternity benefit, (d) invalidating benefit, (e) old age benefit, (f) survivors' benefit, (g) benefit in respect of occupational injuries and diseases (h) unemployment benefit, (i) family benefit.

But the ESI Act covers only a very small part of social security and that too in the most niggardly way.

Working Women

Comrades, it is a matter of some satisfaction that some of our unions are giving earnest attention to the problems of women workers.

Our Trade Unions must fully support the women' struggles against traditions and customs dowry etc., and protest against crimes committed against them—sexual and other crimes. Similarly, it is a responsibility of our union to champion the demands of women workers and enable them to participate in the policy making bodies of the trade unions. We must realise that the working class itself is not free from feudal attitude towards women and our trade unions must fight against it.

19th January Strike

Last year has no doubt seen a revival of the urge for trade union unity for united mass action for whcih the CITU has been working patiently. The developments show both the potentialities of trade union unity as well as present weakness.

The 19th January Strike not only showed unprecedented trade union unity, it showed the power of a United Working Class, of a united trade union movement to unleash mass democratic action of other sections and contribute to greater unity of the people in the struggle against authoritarianism.

The decision of the orgainsed trade union movement for united

action, the certainty that the call will be responded to by lakhs of workers, evoked support from the opposition political parties and led to the participation of wide sections of the people including the peasantry. The strike became a complete bandh in many places drawing into the common action tens of thousands of shopkeepers, hoteliers, teachers, students, lawyers and other professionals.

The demands raised by the strike were significant and conformed to be international trend of merging of the working class demands with the demands of democracy and the demands to maintain the living standards of all sections of the downtrodden.

By combining the demands of the working class with the pressing needs of the peasants and the agricultural workers, with the demands of the suffering people against fleecing prices, the trade unions took initiative to unite all sections of people who are facing a miserable existence under the bourgeois landlord rule.

This consciousness has to be carried forward—the process of trade union demands merging with the general democratic demands, the process of trade unions coming out as champions of the peasantry and the agricultural workers has to be carried forward. If carried forward consistently. It will result in an important political developments, placing initiative in the fight against authoritarianism, with the working class.

The strike also revealed the weak side of trade union unity. It did not get response from the Railway and Central Govt. organisations including Defence Organisations. The reformist leaders of these organisations could not make up their mind to join the strike though many of them had earlier supported the call and also decided to join it. In West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala these sections by and large joined the common action.

It is necessary that the Central Unions and Federations hold a dialogue with the leaders of these organisations making them aware of the great harm done to the trade union movement by their policies. Above all, it is necessary to make an ardent appeal for unity and common action to the mass of the Central Government, State Governments, Railway and Defence employees to fight the authorities shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the working class, to fight unitedly for the common demands of the workers and the people.

The existence of several trade union organisations and their differences reflect the inner struggle in the trade union movement for

a line based on class struggle, a militant line of trade union unity, a line of alliance with other democratic forces to fight the bourgeois-landlord class rule. The formation of the CITU reflected this struggle.

It will be found that two contradictory currents have been influencing the trade union movement. The separatist current, isolationist current, officially patronised and sustanied by illusions spread by reformist leaders; the current of growing unity arising from the experience of the working class and maturity of the trade union movement.

The growing strength of the latter has led to a great degree of cooperation between several central organisations including at some times the INTUC in negotiations and protests. This change has been taking place in the last ten years.

The emergency period openly divided the working class. The INTUC and AITUC leadership fell in line with the ruling party while the other trade unions opposed the attacks launched by it against the working class. They demanded the withdrawal of the CDS Scheme, the banning of strikes and other anti-working class measures.

The situation again changed and all the trade union centres combined to oppose the Industrial Relations Bill of the Janata Government. Since then though the INTUC has again returned to its policy of supporting the Government, all other trade unions centres and federations are coming together showing a greater urge for unity. This is due to several factors. The crisis of the economic system has exposed all sections of workers to attacks. The inflation, the policy of deficit financing, the uncontrollable rise in prices again are common issues which can be fought only by the united struggle of the working class and cannot be settled by a single central organisation, without support from others. The Government did try to split the ranks of the workers by annoucing productivity-linked bonus to railway workers and others, thus undermining the claim to bonus as deferred wage. But the effect of this manoeuvre cannot last long. The Government now demands a moratorium on strike and demands for three years in exchange for some fringe benefits.

Comrades, all these show that despite the vacillations and hesitations of section of trade union leadership the economic situation calls upon the working class and its organisations to unite and fight the offensive against it. The CITU works on the basis of this

economic reality and endeavours to overcome the temporary obstacles created by the reformist action. The CITU at the same time notes that the struggle for unity must lead to the acceptance of class struggle in practice and giving up of the ideology of class collaboration. This internal struggle is helped by the growing experience of unity and the practical measures that have to be adopted to meet the present offensive. There will be greater need of trade union unity in the coming days in view of the Government's anti-labour policy and the need of the capitalist class to pass on the burden of the crisis to the shoulders of the workers.

Comrades, the urge for the trade union unity and the united struggle is shaking today reformist strongholds. Many of you perhaps are not aware that everything is not well with the INTUC and that a section had split away from the parent organisation disapproving its policies and joining hands with CITU and other members of the National Campaign Committee. Though the existing top leadership of the INTUC is committed to loyally supporting the official policy, still there cannot be any unanimity because at the base, there is lot of discontent and disillusionment with the official policy.

Considering the need for greater unity in the existing situation, our CITU must again reiterate its call for a Confederation of Central Trade Union Organisations where the policy decisions will be taken unanimoulsy and which will function as a forum of continuous discussion of problems facing the trade union movement. It is only through constant discussion and mass action that the desired unity can be achieved. The CITU should now make some concrete proposals regarding Confederation and hold consultation with the leadership of other organisations.

Comrades, the coming days will be the days of great stress and storm for our own movement. We are living in the midst of a world wide crisis of the capitalist system accompanied by the inflationary rise in prices and unprecedented unemployment. In the United States of America unemployment now exceeds 10 millions, a figure not reached even in the 1930 recession. In the advanced capitalist countries of Europe also millions are unemployed. The condition of the employed and the unemployed gets worse every day because of continued inflation which defies control. The economic crisis in our country is deepened by our dependence on the western world.

The Government denies that there is any recession. But the closure of industries, sickness in industry, as it is called, mounting unemployment and the narrowing of market, all point out that our country is passing through economic recession. To get out of the situation the Government of India is borrowing one loan after another from the western countries and the International Monetary Fund. As a price of these loans India has to accept imports from these recession hit countries and also invite investment of their capital with promise of high returns of profits. This means that the Government of India is being forced to place cheap Indian labour at the disposal of foreign capital and Multinationals accompained by imports from these countries though they may threaten the existence of our industries and the jobs of thousands of our workers. Let us hope that our trade union movement and the leaders of trade union organisations will realise the common danger and respond to our call for urgent unity.

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War And Working Class

THE giant peace movement in West Bengal, the big peace demonstration in all States starting with the call of the CITU to observe 1st of September as anti-war day and ending in the mammoth peace rally under the auspices of six political parties on 4th October, constitute the first stirrings of the Indian people to size up the danger of a nuclear world war.

It is not accidental that in all these rallies the working class is playing an important role. It is again not accidental that the left parties especially the CPI(M) and the CPI are heading these protests and have shouldered the responsibility to organise them in all states.

Tens of thousands have rallied in different States and listened to the danger of nuclear war and the indictment of U.S. Imperialism as the nuclear incendiary.

Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Vijayawada, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Trivandrum and several other State capitals saw massive rallies. In Andhra peace rallies were held on 1st September in tahsil after tahsil.

Role of Bourgeois-Landlord Parties

A significant point to note is that in this crisis facing the peoples of the world, the bourgeois-landlord parties of India, opposition as well as ruling, have not moved at all. They continue as if the war danger does not exist, as if the world is not threatened with a carnage, as if the freedom and liberty of India is not threatened.

The Government sometimes raises its voice against the danger to peace, but it is only a formal protest. The ruling party does not approach the masses or throw its weight and resources to rouse the people against this world danger. Its two superpowers theory and its unwillingness to expose U.S. imperialism paralyses the fight against war. The other bourgeois opposition parties—the Congress(S), the Janata, the Lok Dal or the DMK or AIADMK in Tamilnadu—seem totally unconcerned with the fate of the world and our country. They concentrate on immediate manoeuvres to better their position in the electoral battle. Such narrow selfishness is the hallmark of bourgeois parties. Long ago Marx pointed out in relation to the Indian village community :

"We must not forget the barbarian egotism which, concentrating on some miserable patch of land, had queitly witnessed the ruin of empires, the perpetration of unspeakable cruelties, the massacre of the population of large towns, with no other consideration bestowed upon them than on natural events, itself the helpless prey of any aggressor who designed to notice it at all." (Marx & Engels' Selected Works Vol 1 Page 492.)

It is unfortunate that such egotism is being repeated again.

The BJP which is vocieferously advocating its claims to be considered as the alternative to the Congress(I) is silent on the issue. They were not silent when President Brezhnev visited India and did not forget to take a demonstration in protest against Soviet steps in Afghanistan to counter imperialist plans of intervention. But now with the world on the brink of war due to U.S. imperialist policies with the organisation of Israeli aggression against Lebanon and massacre of Palestinians with the connivance of Reagan administration, the Party is silent. It does not ever protest against U.S. designs. Delicate ideological and other ties bind it to the USA and its misdeeds. This indifference of the bourgeois-landlord parties to the world danger, and the simultaneous activisation of the working class and the masses to fight the danger reveal two different outlooks.

Role of the Working Class

The working class since its birth has developed an international outlook, with deep feelings of solidarity for its class brothers and toilers in other countries. Its advanced sections, trained by Marx and Engels and Lenin always brought their international outlook to judge the foreign policy pursued by their governments and

decide their stand on war and conflicts among nations. National chauvinism masquerading as patriotism was alien to this outlook. It was always based on solidarity for the common cause of socialism and helping forward the world working class movement. It is not just pacifist but based on the context in which war was being fought and character of each war, or different character of a particular war for each of the participants.

The First International

In the Inaugural Address to the International Working Men's Association (First-International) in 1864 Marx formulated the Association's attitude to matters of foreign policy in the following words. "If the emancipation of working classes requires their fraternal concurrence, how are they to fulfil that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing on national prejudicies and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure?" The foreign policy aimed at by the International was defined in these words. "Vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the laws paramount to the intercourse of nations."

As subsequent events showed, this was not a call for a pacifist or just anti-war attitude.

Franco-Prussian War

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 put to test the international out-look of the working class. This was considered in the context of the European situation and developments.

The Paris members of the International issued a manifesto to "the workmen of all nations" which said "once more on the pretext of the European equilibrium, of national honour, the peace of the world is menaced by political ambitions. French, German, Spanish workmen, let our voices unite in one cry of reprobation against war. Brothers of Germany, our division would only result in the complete triumph of despotism on both sides of the Rhine." Workmen of all countires! whatever may for the present become of our common efforts, we, the members of the International Working Men's Associastion, who know of no frontiers, send you as a pledge of indissoluble solidarity the good wishes and salutations of the workmen of France."

At the same time in the first Address of the General Council, the International Working Men's Association declared "on the German side, the war is a war of defence, but who put Germany to the

necessity of defending herself? Who enabled Louis Bonaparte to wage war upon her? Prussia!" Marx did not forget to expose the rulers of Germany. But at the same time he pointed out to the objective fact that on the German side the war was a war of defence. Dealing with this war Lenin points out in his Socialism and War— "In the Franco-Prussian War, Germany plundered France but this does not alter the fundamental historical significance of that war, which liberated tens of millions of German people from feudal disunity and from the oppression of two despots, the Russian Tsar and Nepolean III" (P. 300, Vol. 31.)

In the case of neither the French nor the German working class it was just an anti-war position in the abstract. The two segments had to take into consideration the character of the war as it affected them.

The German working class therefore responded to the French workers' appeal in the following words of a resolution passed at a meeting held at Brusmick. "We are enemies of all wars, but above all of dyanastic wars." With deep sorrow and grief we are forced to undergo a defensive war as an unavoidable evil, but we call, at the same time, upon the whole German working class to render the recurrence of such an immense social misfortune impossible by vindicating for the people themselves the power to decide on peace and war and making them masters of their own destinies." (P. 193, Vol. 2, Selected Works. Marx & Engels.)

The General Council warned the German working class "If the German working class allow present war to loose its strictly defensive character and to degenerate into a war against th › French people, victory or defeat will prove alike disastrous. All the miseries that be fell Germany after her war of independence will revive with accumulated intensity". (P. 192, ibid.)

Correct Understanding

A pacifist or just anti-war attitude has never been the characteristic of Marxist understanding in relation to war. Marxist-Leninists have understood and applauded the progressive character of certain wars and worked for the victory of the side that stood for progress. Lenin writes, "The Great French Revolution ushered in a new epoch in the history of mankind. From that time down to the Paris Commune i.e. between 1789 smf 1871, one type of war was of a bourgeois progressive character, waged for national liberation. In other words, the overthrow of absolutism and feudalism, the

undermining of these institutions and overthrow of alien oppression, formed the chief content and the historical significance of such wars. These were, therefore, progressive wars, during such wars, all honest and revolutionary democrats, as well as all socialists, always wished success to that country (i.e. the bourgeois) which has helped to overthrow or undermine the most baneful foundations of feudalism, absolutism and the oppression of their nations... It is only in this sense that socialists have always regarded wars 'for the defence of fatherland' or 'defensive' wars as legitimate, progressive and just. For example, if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britian or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be 'just' and 'defensive' wars irrespective of who would be the first to attack". (P. 299-300, Vol. 21.)

In such wars Communists adopt a partisan attitude and work for the success of the progressive side.

Imperialist War

In Lenin's times, however, the struggle of imperialist powers for partition of the world had already begun. The first world war which arose out of these rivalries was described by Lenin as an imperialist war, a war among world's robbers. There was no progressive side in this war, the task of the international proletariat was to fight its own Government not to support it in the name of defence of the fatherland, work for the defeat of one's own imperialist Government and establish peace without annexations. Lenin denounced all those who supported the imperialist war as traitors to the cause of socialism. Leading the Russian proletariat on revolutionary lines, the SDP under Lenin's guidance worked for an end to war and succeeded in overthrowing the Czar and later on leading the proletarian revolution.

In the first world war the reformists and revolutionaries were divided on the question of war, the former supporting the war, the later taking a Marxist attitude, opposing the reactionary war and working for a revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist government. Here again the working class did not take simply a pacifist attitude, a no-support to war attitude, but assessed the social significance of the war for partitioning of the world—and directed its fire against the warmongering Governments. "Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbarous and brutal. Our attitude towards war, however, is fundamentally different

from that of bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) and of the anarchists... We Marxists differ from both pacifists and anarchists in that we deem it necessary to study each war histrorically (from the standpoint of Marx's dialectical materialism) and separately." (Lenin P. 299, Vol. 21.)

Socialism Brings a Change

Obviously with the rise of the Soviet Union, the first Socialist State in Soviet Union, the situation changed. International solidarity, proletarian internationalism, were now connected with the defence and maintenance of the young Socialist State against attacks from the imperialist coalition. The war-weary working class of Europe discharged its international responsibility and forced the imperialists to withdraw from their interventionist efforts against the new Socialist State.

During the entire period before the Second World War and especially since the rise of fascism in Germany the international situation was marked by a conflict of two policies—the policy of disarmament and peace advocated by the Socialist State and the policy of rearmament and evasion of peace and, later on, of war preparations by the imperialist powers. The international working class and the progressive forces supported a policy of peace among nations advocated by the Socialsit State.

Obviously with the rise of the Soviet Union, the capture of power by the Nazis in Germany brought the question of collective security to the fore. The Socialist State and the international working class called for collective security against Nazi war perpetrators—an alliance of all countries opposed to fascist war plans.

The Nazis were preparing for a war against the Socialist State and the working class could not just take a pacifist attitude, an attitude of neutrality by blaming both. It has to be a partisan, concerned with the defence of the revolution.

Attitude to Second World War

In judging the character of the Second World War the international working class movement took distinct attitudes in its two phases.

The first phase was the war between Germany on one hand and France and Britain on the other. It was correctly understood as conflict among imperialist powers for domination. It arose because the British plan of egging on Hitler against the USSR had failed for the time being.

The second phase was Hitler's war against Soviet Union. This was an attack against socialist revolution and the progress of the world. It was correctly described as people's war and the international working class movement worked solidly for the defeat of Hitler and success of the anti-fascist alliance.

The outcome of this correct understanding was the emergence of one-thrid world as socialist world, the collapse of the old colonial system and the change in the balance of class forces in favour of the forces standing for freedom, peace and socialism. All this is necessary to remember to-day when India's working class is called upon to uphold the banner of proletarian internationalism in circumstances extremely critical to the socialist world and the future of freedom and socialism. All the more so because all kinds of pacifist, neutralist stands are preached by bourgeois leaders or opponents of the socialist camp, or anti-Soviet elements masquerading as extremists in politics. The Indian working class with its weak proletarian consciousness is likely to be misled by them.

The Present Context

The character of the war that is being prepared must be fully understood. It is being organised by U.S. imperialists and all those who talk about two super powers are hyprocrites who equate an imperialist power with a socialist country. The Naxalites in particular help U.S. imperialism by describing the Soviet as a Social Imperialist power, the intention being that there should be no partisan attitude towards the Soviet Union. This outlook, like the two super powers myth, only aids the imperialist to neutralise millions in our country when they should be actively fighting the war plans directed againt a socialist country.

The war is being organised by the US imperialists against a socialist country. All the weaponry are concentrated against the Soviet Union. The deployment of pershing and cruise missiles in Europe is intended to have a direct hit against the Soviet territory from the German soil. The aim is to destroy the Socialist States and all the gains of the world working class movement and return to the old balance of forces with imperialism dominant all over the world. The aim following the destruction of the Socialist power is to restore the old colonial system with US domination supreme all over the world. The latter aim is already being pursued through agents like Israel in West Asia with attempts and massacres to

subjugate the Arab people, it is seen in Chile, in Salvador—all over the Latin America, in South East Asia. It is seen in the establishment of naval nuclear bases in the Indian Ocean.

Arming of Pakistan

The attempt to intimidate and subjugate India is seen in the military build-up in Pakistan and encouragement given to its military dictator to develop atomic weapons. The USA war plot directly affects Indian independence and is a constant source of danger to it. In pursuance of this policy Reagan has now announced his intention to finance political parties in other countries, parties which toes the U.S. line.

Task before the Working Class

The unleashing of war against the Soviet Union is to be the beginning of war against the labour movement of the world and the freedom of all countries. If this is forgotten, and the urgency to defeat US war plot is not realised, one cannot be called a worthy member of the international army of the proletariat.

To frustrate this attempt to beat back the attack by rousing millions is the task of India's working class as that of the rest of the world. Only by distinguishing between friend and foe and concentrating on the exposure of the latter can we really unite our protest with the rest of the world.

Devastating Destruction

The second characteristic of the war is that unless it is prevented it will not only lead to unparalleled destruction and suffering, it may destroy the entire world. With unprecedented weapons of destruction there is not going to be any victor or vanquished.

This is so because the US imperialists have devoted all their energies to manufacture more and more destructive weapons in their insane drive for world domination and destruction of socialism.

The atom bomb dropped by the US imperialists on the Japanese city of Hiroshima in 1945 killed 145,000 people in a single day. Every building house and tree was burnt to ashes with several thousands wounded.

Three days later another Japanese city Nagasaki was destroyed by another atom bomb resulting in the death of 75,000 people and

wounding an equal number.

But the destructive capacity of present day weapons, of which there are now several thousands, exceeds hundred times that of the earlier bombs. Cities like Moscow, New York, London, Paris, Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi can be razed to the ground, with the millions put to death in a few minutes.

This is the prospect which the world is facing. True to their selfishness the US imperialists have invented a new bomb—the Neutron bomb and Reagan has sanctioned its mass production. The neutron bomb does not destroy property but human beings. It suits the property worshippers and profiteers most who have no value for human life, but desire appropriation of profit-making property.

The unleashing of these weapons threatens directly and indirectly the existence of the human race. The population of countries not involved in war, living hundreds of miles away from the theatres of war, will not escape death and destruction. Radiation and poisoned atmosphere will spread havoc throughout the world. This was not so in other wars—inspite of the terrible suffering they inflicted on the people.

Rally all People

This makes it possible to rally all peoples—combatants and non-combatants—proletarians and non-proletarians—all over the world to make the fight against war a fight of the peoples of the world. This is why millions are today joining the peace movement in Europe and the USA to stave off this disaster and isolate the war mongers. Never before could the movement against war get such a broad base as it is getting today.

US Imperialists Responsible

Once again who is responsible for this impending disaster. It is the US imperialists and none else. It was the USA that manufactured and dropped the first atom bomb against a defenceless people. It was the USA that threatened the USSR utilising its possession of the bomb.

The US was the first to build nuclear submarines, intercontinental bombers, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and began to equip missiles with multiple war-heads. It also started producing neutron weapons on a large-scale.

Soviet Union Fulfils its Duty

The Soviet Union would have failed the world and its own people had it not taken adequate steps to arm itself against this growing nuclear arsenal of the imperialists. Today its defensive capacity stands as a barrier to US world domination and as a strong deterrent to war. On the Soviet side nuclear armament is a defensive preparation to meet the onslaught of the imperialists and save the socialist world.

This is seen in the stand it took from time to time on the arms race. On several occasions it made proposals for the mutual renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons; it called for putting curbs on the production of such weapons, for an end to nuclear weapon tests. It called for establishing nuclear free zones. It further called for agreement not to use nuclear weapons against countries not possessing them and not permitting their deployment on their territory. And finally the Soviet Government made a declaration before the world that it will not be the first to use the nuclear weapon. The peoples of the world expected a response from the USA Government but their was no response, on the other hand there was an assertion that the USA will not give-up the advantage of a first nuclear strike. The U.S. Secretary of State stated last April that the USA could not afford to pursue a policy of refraining from the first use of nuclear weapons, for this would deprive the west of the opportunity—to counter Soviet superiority in conventional arms.

Difference in Social System

What is the reason for these diametrically opposite positions of the two countries and the Governments. It is the difference between the two social systems—the socialist and the imperialist and the inherent laws to which they are subject to.

The socialist system based on production for satisfying needs of society and devoted to eradication of poverty and freeing society from crisis and unemployment needs every resource to build productive power and diverts resources to defence and military only when compelled to do so. Its economic development does not depend on looting foreign markets, conquering other countries, but on the expansion of standard of living of its own people and developing mutually advantageous trade relations with other countries. War and military expenditure are a diversion for it of

resources meant for building the prosperity of its people.

For the imperialist countries when economic crisis and unemployment are chronic—in the USA more than a crore of people are unemployed to-day—the crisis situation is to be solved by unfair trading with backward countries, capturing world markets, exploitation through multinationals and finally territorial aggrandisement against others. War is a constant companion and necessity of imperialism.

In the present situation therefore the Soviet Union comes forward as a power and country standing for world peace and therefore secures the partisanship of millions all over the world.

The Soviet Union was born in the struggle against first imperialist war, in the struggle for peace. One of the first decrees of the Socialist State was the decrees for peace, promising peace to the people of Russia and withdrawing from war.

And since its birth the Socialist State has proclaimed peaceful coexistence of different social systems as part of its foreign policy.

All this strengthens the working class in exposing the two super powers theory, in exposing those who equate the Warsaw alliance with the aggressive imperialist NATO bloc.

November Revolution—Red Salute

On the 7th November the working class of India while saluting the November Revolution and the working class and people of the Soviet Union, must raise high the banner of proletarian internationalism and express its determination to fight the war plots of U.S. imperialism. A heavy responsibility lies on the shoulders of the CITU unions. They have to act as the spearhead of this movement for peace. The consciousness of the grim situation and the working class responsibility towards it is very thin among India's workers. Trade Union organisations which normally co-operate with the CITU on questions of daily demands do not share the CITU's understanding about war and peace and keep their masses away from this vital struggle. The section under the influence of the INTUC is equally kept away from this world-shaking struggle. The September 1 demonstrations were mainly organised by the CITU and AITUC, with co-operation from some left organisations. The gigantic demonstration in West Bengal no doubt represented the united voice of the trade union movement in the State. The 4th October demonstrations in Delhi and elsewhere were again organ-

ised mainly by the left parties and the trade union centres led by them. The CITU therefore has to face the task of drawing India's entire working class in the struggle for peace and make the millions of people in our country speak unitedly against the war. That will be a fitting response to the tens of millions in Europe and the USA, in the Socialist world and elsewhere struggling for peace. Let the World movement be assured that the CITU and our working class is seized of the question and is marching in tune with all peace lovers to fight war and save the world from a nuclear holocaust and nip in the bud U.S. conspiracy against the Soviet Union.

The Working Class, Vol. 12, No. 3, November 1982

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Seamen's Strike

The three days' strike of Indian seamen from November 25 to 27 was an unprecedented event. This was perhaps the first time, certainly since Independence, that Indian seamen organised a nationwide strike, bringing the ports to a standstill.

In alsmost all the ports of call in India, particularly in the ports of Calcutta, Bombay, Cochin, Tuticorin, Madras and Vishakhapatnam, and the ports of call abroad the strike was total. Shipping activities came to a standstill except for exempted ships like Indian ships carrying food supplies, ships staying at anchorage points and outside the port jurisdictions. Taking advantage of this a number of vessels from Bombay started moving towards Jamnagar so that the concerned seamen would remain out of the jurisdiction of the strike call. Despite these gimmicks the strike was nationwide and should rouse the authorities to give serious consideration to the demands of the seamen.

The strike call was given by the CITU-affiliated union-the Forward Seamen's Union of India-and its success marks the rapid advance made by the organisation because of its consistent championing of the interests of the seamen. The Forward Seamen's Union had to fight at each step the obstacles created by the recognised organisation. It had to meet at each step the goonda attack and its organisers had to risk their limbs and lives when they approached the seamen. The NSUI, an affiliate of the INTUC(I), a favourite of the Government and the ship-owners, holds the

monopoly of recognition and uses it to obstruct all united actions of seamen in defence of their interests. Infact it never gives call for action to the seamen. The INTUC(I) union is a party to a discriminatory wage agreement which fixes three different rates of wages and denies Indian seamen the minimum wage-scale according to ILO Convention.

The response to the strike in all ports despite the opposition of this recognised union shows the wide appeal of the CITU union. The strike secured solidarity response from the waterfront workers in the ports of Australia and New Zealand where seamen from Indian ships struck work. The port and dock workers of these ports refused to cross the picket line and help in loading and unloading work.

The seamen constitute a very important and strategic section of India's working class. That is why every effort has been made by the Government of India to keep them secluded and isolated, without any real freedom for the trade union movement. Because of the methods of recruitment, large-scale corruption involved in securing jobs, the seamen are at the mercy of unscrupulous persons enjoying the status of trade union leaders. Gangsterism thrives in this atmosphere. The recognised union is allowed to secure compulsory contribution for the union from every seaman. The Forward Seamen's Union is fighting against these evils and is enabling the workers to rear a Union of their choice in which they will be deciding its policies and taking decisions of their own free will.

The trade union movement of our country has neglected this section and paid no attention to this strangulation of trade union freedom by the Government and the shipowners. The widespread three-day strike of seamen in Indian and foreign ports shows that the seamen have started their fight. This calls for the direct and continuous support of all unions.

When India was enslaved, Indian seamen were treated as inferior by foreign companies and paid less wages than their foreign counterparts for the same type of work. A seaman was told that since his country was enslaved, he himself was a slave, an inferior being, whereever he worked. This inferior status of the colonial days continues today after more than three decades of Independence.

And the shame of it is that the Congress(I) Government of the country is a willing party to it. It has agreed that Indian crew on

foreign ships be considered as crews of convenience and given less wages. It has agreed to supply cheap Indian labour for exploitation by the foreign companies. The seamen are protesting against this national humiliation and demanding that they be given wage according to ILO Convention, the same that is given to any foreign seamen on foreign ships, The entire trade union movement and the democratic forces all those who have some sense of national self respect left, must denounce the Government for agreeing to this discrimination against Indian seamen and this national humiliation.

The seamen have many long-standing and burning grievances. Lack of regular employment for nearly forty to fifty percent of the work force is their biggest problem. This can be seen from the following figures.

Year	*No. of jobs*	*No. of registered seaman*
BOMBAY		
1980	15811	25908
1981	15563	25856
1982	13800	25500
CALCUTTA		
1980	4996	10845
1981	4555	10539
1982	3806	10064

It will be seen that the number of jobs has decreased in both Bombay and Calcutta in the last three years. Since 1975, they have decreased rapidly. In 1975, the number of jobs available in the port of Bombay was 18,802. In 1982 it was only 13,800. The corresponding figures for Calcutta are 1832 and 3806.

The result is that seamen have to remain unemployed for 36 to 40 months. This means four to five months of unemployment for every month of employment. During this period they have to exist on a pittance of unemployment allowances which bring only starvation and misery to their families.

One of the demands of the seamen for which they struck work relates to the implementation of the recommendations of the Admiral Nanda Committee. It is now a regular practice with the Government of India to appoint a committee to stave off working

class action and then refuse to implement its recommendations. The appointment of an official committee is nothing but a time killing device.

The Nanda Committee recommended, among other things, a scheme for financial assistance to unemployed seamen and rules for minimum manning scale of seamen for efficiency. The implementation of these recommendations is urgently necessary considering large-scale unemployment and the declining number of jobs due to retrenchment etc. But the Government of India refuses to move. The Shipping Corporation, a Government concern, is not prepared to give any relief to the seamen and competes 'with private and foreign owners in exploiting the seamen.

The other demands put forward by the Forward Seamen's Union relate to abolition of the casual system of employment to Indian seamen throughout the year, unemployment allownace from sign off to sign-on period, minimum basic wage of $115 per month as fixed by the ILO, recognition of union through secret ballot, yearly wage increment and 20 per cent bonus, tonnage-wise manning scale, nationalisation of the shipping industry.

By their three-day strike, the seamen have put before the people their urgent demands and exposed the revolting conditions of work imposed on them. Their struggle is for decent living conditions, and trade union rights. They are demanding regular employment and above all they are fighting against national humiliation and racial discrimination by foreign companies.

The entire trade union movement must support this struggle and help the seamen to realise their demands.

The Working Class, Vol. 12, No. 5, January 1983

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Presidential Address

General Council Meeting
Hind Motors, January 21—23, 1983

Comrades, at the outset, it is with great sense of sorrow and grief that we mourn the loss of Com. Promode Das Gupta, member of the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) and Secretary of the West Bengal State Committee of the Party. For years Promode was at the head of the CPI(M) and had the vital task of leading the West Bengal Unit of CPI(M) and the great mass movement of the State. He was one of the main architects of the successive defeats of the Congress(I) in West Bengal and guided the Left-front in that State. Devoted to the cause of rearing a genuine working class party based on Marxism Leninism, Comrade Promode spent all his energies in organising such a party and training young cadres to build it. It was under his stewardship of the West Bengal CPI(M) that the trade union movement led by CITU continued to develop and can now be considered as the strongest and well organised section of the CITU. The consciousness created in the struggles has enabled the working class of West Bengal to inflict repeated electoral defeats on the Congress(I) while scoring great successes in their immediate struggles. Com. Promode's passing away is an irreparable loss to the working class movement and it will take a long time to fill the void created by his departure.

I deeply mourn the passing away of Com. Brezhnev who occupied the most important position in the International Communist movement as Secretary of the CPSU. He was also the President of the USSR, the great socialist country which has done so much to

change the face of the world. During his tenure of Office as Secretary of the CPSU, Brezhnev played a great role in bringing new successes to Socialist planning and ensuring widespread prosperity and well being for the Soviet People. His contribution to the development of the other socialist countries was also great and during his stewardship a large number of socialist countries were knit together in common mutually beneficial economic activities. Indo-Soviet friendship also developed further when he was at the helm of affairs of the Soviet Union. It is embodied in many economic agreements between the two countries and finally in the Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship which strengthens our country against imperialist manoeuvres. Com. Brezhnev will also be remembered as a great fighter for the World Peace, a Statesman who used all his power to save the world from a devastating Nuclear War and tried to safeguard the safety and peace of millions of people. His passing away is a great loss to the world communist movement.

Victory of Tripura Left Front

Comrades, in the midst of a worsened economic situation, the attack of divisive forces in Assam, in Punjab and communal and other forces in the rest of the country, the mass of people though often victims of diversionary politics continue to press forward in the struggle against the anti-people policies of the Congress(I) Government. An outstanding event is the decisive defeat of Congress(I) party in the States of Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Karnartaka. On behalf of CITU I warmly greet the victory of Tripura Left-Front headed by the CPI(M) against the Congress(I) and its secessionist ally. The Congress(I) allied not only with the secessionist tribal wing but also with the reactionary organisations like Anand Margies and Amra Bangalies. But the electorate inflicted a decisive defeat on it. The Left-front in Tripura has shown how to protect the unity of the country, advance the democratic rights of the people and keep the different constituents of our people together on a democratic and secular basis. The Left-front is given a decisive mandate despite the campaign of murder by the secessionists and unleashing of goonda gangs by the Congress(I) Party. This is the second time in the last year that the Congress(I) Party has been defeated decisively in an open electoral battle by the left-forces headed by CPI(M).

Defeat of Congress(I)

The people's discontent against the corrupt rule of Congress(I), against its anti-people policies and against the distress caused by the economic exploitation reached such a stage that it resulted in an unprecedented and humiliating defeat of the ruling party at the hands of a new party Telugu Desam. The people of Andhra, the rural masses have expressed their strong disapproval of the Congress(I) rule and they expect that the new administration will remain watchful of their interests. While we welcome this rejection of the Congress(I) at the hands of the people of Andhra we cannot but express our concern at the way the working class centres of Andhra have voted. Despite the many united campaigns and the joint strikes and demonstrations on several issues the working class failed to elect trade union leaders with left and democratic outlook and was carried away by the general wave of Telugu Desam. The trade union movement, therefore, must continue its vigilance and while offering its readiness to help the new administration to solve the problems of the people, it will continue to move unitedly wherever the interests of the people are not protected.

Equally startling have been the developments in the Karnataka elections where the Congress(I) has lost its majority and a new Ministry headed by the Janata Party has taken over the administration. Once more the people of Karnataka who had experienced corruption, repression, attacks on democratic rights and economic distress under the Congress(I) regime have repudiated that party.

In Karnataka a number of trade union leaders have been elected with the support of the Janata Party. They will no doubt continue to exercise vigilance on behalf of the working class and the people while supporting the ministry to overcome the evil-effects of the previous administration. Both in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in distinction from Tripura the working class and the trade union movement have governments which are not left and which have no distinct class programme like the left-front governments of West Bengal and Tripura. This may create difficulties in the future but the working class should remember that these new ministries embody the mass discontents against Cong(I) mis-rule.

These election results are of great political importance for our country and they are likely to set in motion a chain of events leading to further erosion of Cong(I) influence among the people and the disintegration of that party, because it is quite clear that the

illusions about the Cong(I) which brought it back to power in 1980 have worn out. Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka which for 30 years stood by the Congress Party have now repudiated it. The bastion in the south has collapsed—Kerala Ministry living only on the mercy of the communal and casteist organisations. It is significant that the south which stood firmly by Mrs. Indira Gandhi during the post-emergency electoral upheaval has now deserted her banner. It is also very significant that with her growing isolation from the people Indira Gandhi stoops to ally herself with any reactionary secessionist force as in Tripura or Kerala.

This is the time for the trade union movement to take common counsel and pull its full weight against the Cong(I) and help the Left & Democratic forces to advance further and consolidate themselves. The experience of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka shows that if the Trade Union movement and the working class is not active and conscious in the democratic struggle the discontent of people centres round parties other than left parties. The initiative of the United Trade Union movement is necessary to ensure that in the coming critical days when the masses will be leaving the Cong(I) and searching for a new leadership, their discontent should be channelised towards the Left. Without this the masses will be oscillating between parties whose class outlook is not different.

Further Attack on TU Movement

Comrades, the year that has passed shows growing attacks on the workers and the trade union movement. While the Govt. spokesman denied the existence of the recession, closures lock-outs, shut-downs, lay-offs and prolonged strikes all leading to starvation and unemployment dominated the situation.

The callous attitude of the Govt. was seen in its vindictive policies towards the Bombay textile strikers, two lakhs in number who have been holding heroically for twelve months in defence of their organisation and minimum demands.

This year that is beginning offers no respite. Both internal and external situation portends further attacks on the trade union movement which it is not yet fully prepared to meet.

World Capitalist Crisis

India's economic plight is worsening further under the impact of world situation, the world economic recession which shows no sign of abating.

The continuing economic recession has imperilled the econo-

mies of a number of countries who are dependent or like India closely tied to the economies of the advanced capitalist countries. Some of these countries are threatened with bankruptcy, with the masses saddled with the burden of foreign debts. India herself is in similar position with the well being of the working class and the masses threatened with new erosion.

The world capitalist economy which entered a period of crisis 7 years back shows no signs of getting out of it. The latest report of the ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT which embraces 24 advanced capitalist countries including USA, Japan, Australia and the European Countries, presents a dismal picture of the Economic situation. It gives quitous to the forecast of the capitalist economy turning the corner and predicts further prolongation of the crisis.

According to earlier expectations 1982 was to be a bridge year to normalcy. But the expectations got aborted as by the middle of 1982 the economy of the capitalist countries continued to be slugish, recording a fall in GNP and a continued fall in the world trade.

It is estimated that at best Japan's GNP may rise by 3-4 per cent by the middle of 1984. By mid-83 USA's total output of goods and services will be only slightly above what it was at the beginning of 1980—3.5 per cent growth over two years. In 1982 production of USA declined by nearly 2 per cent while the West-European economy lay flat with the slowest growth rate.

The Governments of these countries acting in the interests of monopolies proclaimed that they would fight the crisis by counteracting inflation. Inflation was declared to be the main-enemy and anti-inflation measures were declared as the remedy to curb the crisis and restore normalcy. Interest rates were raised, money supply and credit curtailed. In effect these measures were steps to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the working class and the people.

In the USA inflation rate dropped from 12.4 per cent per annum two years back to about 6 per cent in 1982. It was 8.9 per cent in 1981.

But it brought no relief to the working class and the people. The anti-inflationary measures led to a tremendous rise in unemployment. In the USA by September 1982 unemployment rose to 10.1 per cent of the labour force with 11.8 million Americans out of jobs. This was the highest unemployed rate since may 1941 when joblessness rate reached 10.9 per cent of the labour force and the

number without jobs was 5.7 million. The September unemployment figure is the highest since the great depression of 1930 which the capitalists try to forget and which gave way to World War-II. But the last word is not yet said. Unemployment continues to mount. Lay-offs continue at 200 thousands in a month. By December the unemployment rate had already mounted to 10.8 per cent and it is expected to rise further with at least 12 million people out of work.

The younger generation of whites and coloured people has to bear the main burden of this unemployment. According to the economic report of the US President submitted to the Congress in the early months of 1982, in the early 1980, the number of unemployed amongst coloured population almost doubled and among young people aged 16-19 it increased 150 to 170 per cent.

In Britain during the years of Conservative rule unemployment doubled by the beginning of 1982 reaching the figure of 3 million. The unemployed formed 20.7 per cent of the gainfully employed population. West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and all the countries of Europe now boast of lakhs of unemployed. The total unemployment in Europe now reaches 18 million. Nearly 30 million people in the world of advanced capitalism are without jobs.

The anti-social and predatory character of state monopoly capitalism is seen by its wasteful expenditure on war-preparations, on forging of genocidal weapons of destruction to launch an aggressive war against the Socialist community. The US where the unemployment is highest leads this aggressive campaign instead of using its financial resources to fight unemployment and restore the economy.

The crisis is pervading the entire capitalist world and all developing countries pursing the cpitalist pth have been drawn into its vortex. The process of exploitation of these countries by the Western Powers, their dependence on loans has now reached a stage at which these countries as well as their creditors are threatened with bankruptcy. The total debt of the third world countries is estimated at 500 billion dollars. Unable to pay it back because of the crisis and foreign exports many of these countries demand further loans from their bankers. The latter no longer feel safe to advance new loans. At the same time they are afraid to stop all loans lest the debtors might fail to pay, leading to their own bankurptcy.

The crisis has put a number of developing countries at the mercy

of the imperialist creditors who are now in a position to impose enslaving conditions on them. It enables a country like USA to pass on the burdens of its crisis to the debtor countries. Even in this perilous situation the USA is intent on forcing the sale of its goods on these people, for about 40 per cent of America's exports go to developing countries and one out of 8 US jobs depends on exports. The plight of the developing countries is due to their dependence on the capitalist countries. With advent of the recession exports have fallen and the developing countries are unable to pay their debts or maintain internal development and employment.

Even the prosperous oil-producing countries are in a tight corner. Fall in oil prices and exports have wiped out the earlier enormous surplus: The heavy prices charged for imports has erroded the surplus further.

Impact of IMF Conditionalities

India is in the same plight as these developing countries, unable to maintain its economy without heavy loans from the foreign banks. India is therefore not in a position to manoeuvre against its internal crisis. The conditions imposed by the IMF transfer the burden of Western crisis to the Indian people. They work havoc with Indian employment, industry and income at the disposal of the people. They are directed at securing Indian exports at cheap prices and flooding Indian market with unwanted foreign goods and machinery curtailing Indian production in the name of curtailing inflation. The story of the last two years is one of attack after attacks against Indian jobs and of lowering the return of the peasants labour.

How many workers know that the policies imposed by the IMF to help the landing countries have meant the export of unemployment to our country and loss of jobs for thousands. The liberalised import policies following the IMF loan has led to dumping of foreign goods affecting the functioning of some Indian Industires. There have been justified complaints from some industries, that they experienced recessionary conditions following foreign dumping. This liberal import was justified with raw materials with the ultimate objectives of increasing production, reducing inventory and strengthening the base of export promotion. All that it did however, was to cut Indian jobs or creat difficulties in the way of normal functioning of the industries. The Government could not escape seeing the consequences of liberal imports and had to

constitute a high powered committee to formulate a new export-import policy for the year. The dumping became so blatant that the Govt. of India passed a bill in October, 82 empowering it to take anti-dumping action.

Dumping Obsolete Technology

It should also be noted that there is dumping not only of goods also but obsolete technology unwanted in the advanced countries. And certain selfish capitalists are importing this technology to make a fast buck accepting humiliating conditions of collaboration. Let me quote the following from The Times of India: "The new policy has rightly stressed the need to import technology on a selective basis. As things are, it is being literally bought by private and public sector companies enmass. On an average 400 to 500 agreements are signed by them each year. Far to many of these fetch the country outdated technology which the exporters discarded years ago. Indian companies that adopt them are not perturbed in the least because in the sellers' market that they operate, they are sure making a kill with whatever they produce. As depressing is the humiliating conditions that the exporting firms impost on the Indian companies by which they make sure that the latter continue to depend on them. They would not be able to get away with it where the Indian companies in a position to develop upon the technology they import.... The tregedy is that the Govt. seems to be conspiring with them to maintain the existing state of affairs".

Demand Management Policy

The so-called demand management policies insisted on by the IMF and followed by the Govt. of India have again contributed to a further worsening of the economic situation, characterised by slow down and recession. What does the policy amount to. The restriction of credit and money supply, high interest rates and increased rates of taxation. Initiated in the name of fighting the speculative demand the measures were really directed to curb the demands of the denunded people already reduced to semi-starvation by the rising prices. In the name of curtailing the money supply and demand the wages of workers were sought to be frozen or the workers were offered marginal improvement— the 10 per cent all inclusive increase offered by the Bureau of Public Enterprises. So far as the un-organised workers were concerned they were to be sent to the starvation —hell in the name of demand management.

The credit restriction and high rate of interest could not so much affect the big capitalists. Their main blow fell on the smaller producers whose workers were also ill organised and were unable to protect their jobs.

Reduction of Food Subsidies

The IMF demanded lowering of food subsidies and making food grains more costly to the common people. How it was achieved during the year that have passed can be seen from the following figures of retail prices of essential commodities in Bombay compiled by the Research Bureau of the Commerce.

Item	*Quality*	*Rs. per Kg.*		*Percentage valuation December 16, 1982 over a year*
		December 16, 1982	*December 18, 1981*	
Rice	Average	6.00	3.80	57.9
Wheat	Average	4.60	3.90	17.9
Jowar	Average	3.00	2.30	30.4
Gram Dal	Average	5.50	6.00	—8.3
Tur Dal	Average	8.00	6.00	33.3
Milk per Litre	Buffale	6.00	5.40	11.1
Tea	Average	26.00	23.00	13.0
Coffee	Average	20.00	17.50	14.3
Kerosene per Litre	Average	1.70	1.66	2.4
Sugar	Average	4.50	6.00	—25.0
Groundnut Oil	Average	15.60	14.50	7.6
Vanaspati	Average	17.00	15.00	13.3

This is demand management and fighting inflation as per the directive of the IMF.

The terrific burden of this demand curbing fell on the rural poors and workers in unorganised industries. It is no surprise that inspite of the one year textile strike in the major textile centre of Bombay, it has not created any shortage of cloth in the market or appreciably reduced the stocks with the mills. The rural poors had absolutely

no purchasing power left to buy the cloth in the market. It is no surprise either that merely 500 people have already died of cold in Northern India. The agricultural worker is left completely defenceless inspite of the minimum wages Act. If he dares protest his houses are burnt as in Bihar and elsewhere.

Collapse of Labour Laws

In the cities also the workers in unorganised industries are not protected under the Minimum Wages Act and they have to bear the full burden of the demand-management policies. These workers to whom the minimum wage Act applies are virtually treated as bonded labourers in the cities including the capital. Recently in Delhi a petition was filed before the Supreme Court against the violation of the Minimum Wages Act by certain contractors who were given work by the Government in connection with the Asiad. It is interesting to note that in the affidavit filed by the Government they showed that they had filed prosecutions against the employers for not providing certain amenities like latrines etc., but not for failure to pay the minimum wage. It was also found that the violation of the important Labour Laws was treated as a joke by the Magistrate and the Supreme Court had to make the following observations:

"It is apparent from the particulars given in this Annexure that the prosecutions launched against the contractors were primarily for offences such as non-maintenance of relevant register, non-provision of welfare and health facilities as fist-aid box, latrines, urinals etc. and non-issue of wage-slips. We donot propose to go into the details of these prosecutions launched against the contractors but we are shocked to find that in cases of violation of Labour Laws enacted for the benefit of workmen, the Magistrates have been imposing only small fines of 200 rupees there about. The Magistrates seem to view the violations of Labour Laws with great indifference and unconcern as if they are trifling offences undeserving of Judicial severity. They seem to overlook the fact that Labour Laws are enacted of improving the conditions of workers and the employers can not be allowed to buy off immunity against violations of labour laws by paying a paltry fine which they would not mind paying, because by violating the labour laws they would be making profits which would far exceed the amount of the fines'.

This speaks of the collapse of labour legislations and its farcial implementation leaving the unorganised worker completely de-

fenceless against the Govt. and the employers.

Grim Economic Situation

Comrades, let me now turn to present a picture of the grim economic situation facing the country and the working class. 1982 was declared to be the productivity year by the Prime Minister but it turned into opposite. It seems that things that the Prime Minister says and does turns to its contrary. When she talks about Secularism, she visits one temple after another making a show of her piety. When she talks about National Unity and Integration she sanctions alliance with secessionist and communal forces as in Tripura and Kerala. And now when she talks of Productivity Year, it turns out to be a year of prolonged strikes, lockouts, closures and slowing down of rate of economic growth. Today the country is faced with widespread famine conditions in several states with the rural poor being starved to slow death. Alongwith this there is a general break down of electricity production. There is a 100 per cent power cut in Tamil Nadu which has brought down the entire industrial machinery to a stop. Power cuts in Gujarat, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have been so frequent during the last year that jobs and productions have been substantially affected. The Govt. through its publicity agencies proclaimed that power generation has increased by 7.5 per cent in 1982. But instead of more power there was shortage leading to chaos in production. The responsibility for this break down has to be borne by the Central and Cong(I) Governments. The breakdown in energy supply reveals the poor quality of Cong(I) planning and does not hold out hope for the recovery of economy.

The working class has had to bear the main burden of these energy break-down because it had to put up with lay-offs and closures.

The situation in the rural areas is already grim and it is not likely to be relieved much by the Rubi harvest. The Kharif production is low and that means, the tens of millions of the rural poors will have no purchasing power to sustain the production in cities. This together with the industrial conditions obtaining in 1982 show that the working class has a grim year to face and unless it wakes up in time it will be unable to meet a ruthless offensive against job and wage standards which is imminent.

The Recession

According to a recent survey the Engineering Industry is losing Rs. 1000 Crores a month. It is able to utilise less and less capacity. It was able to utilise 70 per cent of its capacity in April, by September 1982, it could utilise only 60 per cent of its capacity.

In a number of industries the recessionary conditions have affected production. Textile machinery, Textiles, Fertilisers, Tractors, Caustic Soda and papers and Steels are Industries where stocks are accumulating and production is falling. The tractor manufacturers had to bear a 37 per cent fall in their sales.

By July the Fertilizer Industry had accumulated stocks running to 7.7 lakh tonnes.

The Textile Industry production fell by 3.9 per cent in yarn and 20.4 per cent in cloth during January-June, 1982, compared with the last year. Special steel products started declining from October, 1981. By June, 1982 stocks increased to 50 thousand tonnes.

Production of cotton yarns in 1982 was 11 per cent lower and cotton fabrics declined by 29 per cent.

Despite the prolonged Bombay Textile Strike the sold and unsold stocks of all varieties of cloth held by the textile mills at the end of 1982 were 0.65 lakhs bales and 0.91 lakhs bales respectively compared with 0.62 lakhs bales sold and 0.87 lakhs bales of unsold cloth at the end of October 1981.

The production of Jute Textile at 10.63 lakhs tonnes in 1982 was 7.9 per cent lower than that of 11.45 lakhs tonnes in 1981.

In certain other industries the production figures show certain rise but they are below the targetted figures and in these industries also stocks are rising.

The recessionary conditions in India not only manifest in declining the production in many industries but also in a failure to utilise more than 50-60 per cent of the full capacity.

Restriction on jobs

The year that had passed was a year of closures and lock-outs, and therefore, of less productivity. The growth rate of industrial production has come down to 4 per cent. The current year does not offer any relief from this situation as neither the policies of the Govt. nor the employers promise to offer any relief to the workers and the people. The Govt. is bent upon raising the taxation on the common man and often resorts to various subterfuges. It has now become a part of its policy to impose taxation on the people when the Parliament is not in session. Instead of security of jobs it is

embarking upon a policy of more and more restriction on jobs. In L.I.C. the employees are faced with a introduction of Micro-Computers. Similar measures are being introduced in the Nationalised and Private Banks. Many industrial concerns have been encouraged to get part of their work done through computers. Pressed to export cheap, the Govt. is encouraging modernising processes in textile and other industries which threaten to deprive tens of thousands of workers of their jobs.

This is being done with vengeance in the Bombay Cotton Textile mills which now threaten to keep tens of thousands of workers permanently unemployed. The same attack is bound to be introduced in other exporting industries because Indian exports will not maintain their market unless they are offered at internationally competitive prices i.e. by cutting labour costs.

Offensive against Wage

Besides this there is a general offensive against wages, the Govt. and Public Sector leading the resistance to increase in wages and salaries. The public sector autorities are dragging on negotiations for new agreements in Steel, Coal and other Sectors with a view to impose the directives of the Bureau of Public Enterprises on the Unions. The Central Govt. continues to increase the work-load on their departmental employees and has virtually stopped new recruitment in various sectors. Punitive measures like transfers, diese non and out-right termination of service are resorted to by the Heads of some Departments to curtail the activities of employees. The private employers encouraged by the policies of the Govt. resist every demand of the workers and whenever strikes take place police repression is unleashed and goonda gangs are used to terrorise the workers.

Patronisation of INTUC

The Government itself continues to create further unrest in industry by patronising the INTUC even where it has no backing of the workers thus denying the right of the workers to have an organisation of their own choice. The Govt. has refused to accept the demand for recognition of unions through ballot because it goes against the interests of the INTUC. Its anti-labour legislations like the ESMA has invoked comments from the ILO but it has no intention of changing its attitude. On the other hand in complicity with the INTUC and a number of paper organisations it intends to impose on the workers a new Industrial Disputes Act. with a view

to curtail the right to organise, the right to strike and the right to form an organisation of the worker's choice. Continued repression, strengthening of anti-working class legislation and concerted offensive against jobs in the name of modernisation and export drive—these constitute the basic elements of official policy towards labour. In passing it may be noted that the Labour Deptt. of Govt. of India and its Labour Ministry have absolutely no locus standi in determining either the labour policy of the Govt. or its attitude and stand on current disputes. These are the monopoly of the employing departments and the Labour Ministry has the same position in the Govt. as Labour has in society.

Fight Unitedly

It is these policies that the united working class has to fight in the coming months if it is to maintain its living standards. It is a batttle against the effects of the crisis and the policies of the Govt. which pass the burden of the crisis on the working class. In protecting its interests the working class and the T.U. movement will have to give up the self-centered character of their struggle, defend the people and the peasants and give a much broader shape to their movement. The time has come to realise that without supporting and drawing the rural mass in the common movement the Trade Unions have very little chance of succeeding in their objectives.

The economic levers being in the hands of the Central Government, the people and working class of West Bengal could not escape the consequences of recession. Yet the West Bengal Ministry stood by the workers and people and did everything to protect the workers interests. It refused to use any repressive machinery against working class protests, stood by the fighting workers and threw its weight on the side of the working class to frustrate many a design of the money barons.

The forth-coming struggle requires much wider unity of the T.U. movement. We are happy that the N.C.C. is in a position to strengthen this unity. The unity it has brought about in Public Sector industries like Steel, Coal and other has to be strengthened and should be a precursor of much broader unity embracing all sections of workers and employees. Only with this unity we will be successful in meeting the looming offensive.

The Glorious Struggles

We congratulate the Textile Workers of Bombay on their prolonged resistence which has drawn admiration from all sections of

workers. They have made history by their strike prolonging over a year. There has been no instance in recent years of 2 lakh workers maintaining their solidarity for more than a year in face of starvation, repression and police intimidation. Here is a mass of workers, Harijans, non-Harijans, Hindus, Muslims, Christians—all holing together with a unique sense of unity. This is what is called class solidarity.

We congratulate our Forward Seamen Union for its successful organisation of the Seamen's strike. This should be considered to be an important event for the militant trade union movement and CITU should do everything possible to help the fighting seamen to win their demands. We strongly condemn the high-handed attitude of the Shipping companies and the attitude taken by the Govt. The Coal-Mine workers recently organised a successful one day strike facing severe repression. They are again going on strike for three days in support of their demands. The emergence of Coal workers as a fighting contingent of the T.U. movement is again an event of great importance to the advance of their movement. We also warmly welcome the fighting spirit and growing unity developing among the public sector workers. The CITU expresses solidarity and sympathy with the RMS employees who are being subjected to new hardships by the P & T Deptt. The changes that the department seeks to introduce are highly objectionable, will lead to delay of postal mail and impose work-load on the employees. But this is exactly how the official policies now move in the direction of attacking the living conditions of the employees.

The Authoritarian Drive

Comrades, while we are busy to meet the immediate offensive against our living conditions we cannot forget our duty towards the democratic forces in the country, The Congress(I) Govt. while talking of democracy, is introducing by stages, dictatorial measures. The people in three states have given it a rebuff from which it is not likely to recover. At the same time it continues to pursue some such measures as the Bihar Press Act which is nothing but a negation of the freedom of press. We join our voice with all those who have denounced this blatant attack on freedom of press and we congratulate the CITU Unions in Bihar for lending their full support to the agitation for the withdrawal of the measure. The entire CITU must throw its weight on the side of the democratic forces who are opposing the Act.

Fight the Divisive Forces

Comrades, our CITU meetings and conferences have repeatedly warned the people against the danger of divisive forces who seek to undermine the unity of the country. Of late these forces are more in evidence with secessionist slogans, with slogans like Khalistan. These forces play upon certain democratic demands and at the same time try to divert the discontent into either separatist, secessionist or communal channels. It is the basic duty of the CITU and its trade unions to fight these forces, maintain the class unity of the working class and strengthen the sense of all India unity.

Our comrades in Tripura deserve special congratulations because they have precisely frustrated the game of the divisive forces to divide the people of Tripura in the Bengalis vs. Tribals. Their victory is all the more important because Congress(I) had entered into an alliance with secessionist and other divisive forces.

Our comrades in Assam now are entering into an electoral battle where they will be waging a struggle for unity of the country and the unity of our class. In the last three years our trade unions there have fought heroically against the divisive and secessionist forces. They together with other Trade Union organisation and left parties have upheld the banner of National Unity. Many of our comrades have suffered, some have been murdered and beaten, others have lost their lives but we know that their sufferings and martyrdom will not be in vain. The CITU must give them all possible help in the present electoral struggle so that the forces of Indian and Class Unity come out successful.

Struggle Against War and for Peace

Comrades, the international situation continues to be grim and the war clouds continue to gather. US imperialism continues its aggressive war preparations and constitutes the main source of nuclear war to the world. It is in no mood to accept the genuine offers for peace made by the USSR though all peace loving people have welcomed it. The months that have passed have also shown that the forces of peace are strong and if they maintain their pressure the US imperialists can be curbed in their aggressive designs. It is therefore necessary for the workers of India, the CITU unions and the people as a whole to strengthen the voice in defence of peace and against the US designs for war. The widespread dem-

onstrations that our unions have organised at the call of CITU on 1st September did constitute a good beginning in our struggle for peace but only a beginning. We were very much strengthened by the massive March for Peace organised by the CPI(M) and CPI in Delhi in which our unions also participated. We must continue this struggle further and draw ever increasing number of people in the struggle for peace to frustrate the US designs of war against the USSR.

The Fifth Conference

Comrades, the main business of this session of General Council is to take decisions regarding the preparations of our conference in Kanpur which is meeting in the middle of April this year. We have to decide the question of representation of unions so that we are in position to restrict the attendance of number of delegates to 2,500 and not more. This is to be done because experience shows that it is very difficult to organise a larger conference and meet the demands for accomadation etc. That means too heavy a burden on the local organisers and too big a strain on the economic resources of one state. The General Council must also consider the grim economic situation and its recommendtion to the conferences on how to tackle it. The conference, besides, will have to decide questions regarding T.U. unity and how to broaden it. It will have to study our experience in the recent months and united front agitations and develop appropriate policies for the future. I am confident that in our discussions you will give as much thought as possible to these questions, so that our conference session is able to give guidance on immediate problems facing our common trade union movement.

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Death Centenary of Karl Marx

THE death centenary of Karl Marx is being celebrated all over the world to pay a fitting tribute to the founder the Communist theory, the man who in collaboration with another great genius—Frederick Engels—unfolded the theory of historical materialism, the laws of soical development and proclaimed the historical role of the working class in the struggle against capital, in the battle for changing the social order.

The working men all over the world will honour the memory of this great teacher of theirs who taught them the alphabet of revolution and socialism and watched and guided their faltering steps during the infancy of their movement. His theory soon became a material force arming the working class with a revolutionary arsenal to battle against capitalist exploitation. Carried forward and enriched by Lenin, it revealed its gigantic transformatory character, changing the face of the world within a few years.

The battle for socialism is already won in one-third of the world. Soviet Union, People's China, Viet Nam, Korea, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and other East European countries—all proclaim that their success was due to the invincible teachings of Marx and Engels further elaborated by Lenin. In the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engles gave the working class its great battle cry—"Workers of the World Unite. You have nothing to loose but your chains. You have the whole world to conquer!"

This inspiring call for proletarian internationalism has contin-

ued to guide the working class movement since then. It called upon the working class to fight all unjust and exploitative wars launched by the capitalist class. Today it calls on the working class to fight against the U.S. preparations of nuclear war against the USSR, which is a conspiracy against the people of the world, and defend peace.

Marx analysing the laws of capitalist society in his monumental work Capital, saw the inevitable collapse of capitalism and the necessity for society to make a transition to socialism. He taught the working class that their exploitation and misery, the misery of all toiling humanity will not end without ending private property in all means of production and socialising them. That is how socialism has succeeded in one-thrid of the world, freeing the people from the scourage of poverty and unemployment while the capitalist world continues to suffer from recession, closures and unemployment.

Marx taught the working class that the objective of socialism cannot be achieved without a social revolution, without deposing the capitalists and other possessing classes from political power, without the working class taking political power in its hands. The working class must always act in alliance with other toilers to ensure success. To organise the working class to wage its battle for emancipation, he declared that it was necessary to form a distinct political party of the working class. A resolution of the International Workingmen's Association passed at the instance of Marx says, " In its struggle against the collective power of the possessing classes the proletariat can act as a class only by constituting itself a distinct political party, opposed to all the old political parties formed by the possessing classes."

Independent political parties of the working class—The Social Democratic Parties—were formed in Europe. The leadership of these parties—except in Russia soon strayed away from Marxist teachings and were unable to discharge the revolutionary responsibility to lead the battle for socialism. The correct guidance given by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party brought about a successful sociallist revolution in Russia. In other countries new parties—Communist Parties firmly adhering to Marx's teachings had to be formed. These Communist Parties led the successful socialist revolutions of the post second world war period. The Communist Parties based on Marxism-Leninism eschewing all deviations like

revisionism or sectarian adventurism represent the heritage of Karl Marx and Engels today.

Karl Marx was an active revolutionary and organiser of the working class movement. He was the founder of the First International organisation of the working class—The International Working Men's Association. He guided its policies, rectified the mistakes of the young movement and gave personal advice to workers of several countries.

He paid attention to all aspects of the awakening working class movement and attached great importance to the developing trade union struggles.

Marx criticised the narrow-mindedness of some trade union leaders—the British trade union leaders—and while recognising the importance of the struggle for immediate economic demands asked the unions to look beyond and participate in the general social and democratic movement of their times . "Too exclusively bent upon the local and immediate struggles with capital, the trade unions have not yet fully understood their power of acting against the system of wages slavery itself. Apart from their original purposes, they must now learn to act deliberately as organising centres of the working class in the broad interest of its *complete emancipation*. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction. They must look carefully after the interests of our worst paid trades, such as the agricultural labourers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances."

It almost appeas as if Marx is laying his finger on the present day weaknesses of India's trade union movement. The indifference of organised unions to the interest of the unorgainsed workers, above all the agricultural labours of our country—is patent. Also there is lack of wholesale participation in the democratic and political movements and upheavals of our time. The danger from imperialist conspiracies against the country's freedom is hardly realised and consciousness of internationalism is weak.

Overcoming these weaknesses our trade unions should throw their weight behind the left and democratic forces fighting the Congress(I) rule, above all they should develop close alliance with the peasantry and agricultural workers to clear the way to socialism and end of all exploitation.

The Working Class, Vol. 12 No. 7, March 1983

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Issues before the coming CITU Session

THE CITU session at Kanpur will be meeting in circumstances which are very different from those prevailing at the last session. For one thing the danger of war has intensified beyond measures and all the energies of the world working class and the peoples of the world are required to prevent this nuclear holocaust. The objective of the imperialist aggression is the USSR, the objective is to destory the achievements of socialism, the achievements of a century of the world working class struggle.

Capitalist Crisis

The session besides will be meeting in the midst of the most intensified and prolonged crisis of the world capitalist system which is also an element in the preparation of war. More than 30 million people are unemployed in the advanced capitalist countries while the military budgets of the bigger ones go on mounting, billions being spent on armament.

The years preceding the crisis and the years of crisis have strengthened the hold of multinationals on the economies of the crisis-ridden countries. The crisis finds a number of Third World countries in a precarious position. They are unable to bear the burden of foreign payments. They have borrowed beyond their capacity. This provides an opportunity to the imperialists to further their neocolonialist designs to penetrate and dominate the economies of these countries.

Rising Struggles

In all capitalist countries the workers are increasingly resisting the burdens, embarking upon more and more extensive struggles—some of which extend beyond national frontiers.

Rising consciousness of these struggles is reflected in increased scale of actions—actions now taking place on national and international scales—merger of working class actions with general democratic action in defence of peace, against racialism, terrorism, for the rights of young people and women. Organised workers in their strikes are putting forwards demands which go beyond the purely economic framework and contain elements of a democratic alternative to the socio-economic policies of the ruling classes.

The instability which this has introduced can be seen from the fact that during the last ten years there have been 80 governmental dissolutions in advanced capitalist countries—the Governments being unable to run their full term under the constitution.

Struggle Against Multi-nationals

In these countries the fight againt multinationals is getting intensified and there have been strikes embracing the workers of multinationals in different countries.

In all the Western countries there is a strong urge for trade union unity and international solidarity. The intensified struggle against multinationals has added to the urge for unity and international solidarity.

The trade unions' struggles against monopolies in these countries is having widespread political repercussions helping the mass of people to join in a common combination to fight the rule of Statemonopoly capitalism and the grip of monpolies over the State.

Third World Countries

In the Third World many countries are ruled by dictators and trade union activities are either banned or severely restricted. But due to the increased burdens of foreign debts and the economic situation the trade unions succeed in organising increased resistance. Along with traditional forms of strikes the workers resort to seizure of factories, "chess-board" strikes, when work is closed in various sections of industries in accordance to a definite schedule, work to rule and so on.

Inevitably the trade union movement of all Third World countries has to take up the fight against imperialist designs and multinational penetration of their countries. In all Third World countries

the trade unions are waging an incessant struggle to end the colonial wage system and improve the living standards of the working class. And many of them are realising that without liberating the peasantry of their country from pre-capitalist exploitation the working class cannot radically change its own living standard. This is the background in which the CITU session is meeting. The background also shows that the problems facing the CITU and the Indian trade union movement are similar, and unless the changed character of the situation is understood the CITU will not be able to meet its responsibilities.

The CITU of course has been taking note of the changing situation and the new problems and steering its course to meet them. But it cannot be said that the union and all State Committees are aware of the new problems and the change in forms of activity that is necessary to meet them.

Struggle Against War Danger

Take the question of the deteriorating international situation with intensification of the war danger. The CITU from the beginning based itself on proletarian internationalism. Nevertheless it is clear that we have been lagging in vigilance as the danger started increasing. We of course always warned the unions and the working class against U.S. designs. But the battle was not carried to the mass of workers, a campaigning effort to change their consciousness was not started. In Bangalore we raised our voice asking all unions to observe Ist September as anti-war day and there was very big response from West Bengal, Kerala and Andhra. But since then for the most part our activity has stopped. We have organised a symbolic demonstration and nothing more. Our unions have not paid continuous attention to the problem and campaign. Unless we make it a live issue at least to our own mass the battle does not even start.

Our task is not only to galvanise our unions. As a leading body of the trade union movement our task is to win over the entire trade union movement to fight the war and its imperialist inspirers.

Here come our real difficulties. Even the National Campaign Committee constitutents are not united and of one opinion in fighting against war. The BMS the HMS have their own ideas about who is responsible. If they plunge into activity their main target will not be U.S. imperialism, but the USSR. Only the AITUC and UTUC are left with us. The INTUC leadership does not believe in

any international outlook and considers questions of war and peace as outside the purview of the trade union movement. This should explain the gravity of the situation and the extensive character of the task before us. This is no time to act as a small propagandist group. The CITU session will have to consider this question and devise measures to orientate the CITU unions as well as the entire trade union movement towards organising the working class against war and for peace.

Crisis in India

The crisis of capitalist society has affected India and India herself is in throes of recession, though this is denied by the Government. In the latest Economic Survey of India Government admits that this year industrial production will increase by 4.5 per cent only compared with 8.6 per cent growth in 1981-82 and 4.0 per cent in 1980-81. The Survey observes "The lower growth in the current year compared with last year relfects sluggishness in output in several industries which achieved peak output levels during the previous years." The closure of jute mills throwing thousands of workers out of jobs, prolonged lockouts, lay offs and strikes are mere palpable evidence of the malaise from which the economy is suffering.

The Survey draws the picture of overproduction and stock-accumulation in the following words. "Industries like agricultural tractors and commercial vehicles faced a situation of excess supply...As a result considerable inventory build up took place particularly in the first half of the current year. Excess supply was also witnessed in industries like caustic soda and soda ash. The textile strike in Bombay mills also seemed to have snowballing effect on other user industries like man-made fibres and yarns. In paper industry also there was significant increase in stock... The excess supply in fertilisers could be because of the staggered purchases by the farmer..."

Production of saleable steel by the main plants declined by 2.8 per cent in the first half of 1982-83 in constrast to sharp increase in output by 13.7 per cent during 1981-82... Steel indsutry suffered in recent months from lack of demand by engineering industries like railways wagons, commerical vehicles, agricultural tractors etc.

In April-August1982 the strike in Bombay textile mills alone led to a loss of 48.7 million man day.

By 1981 the number of large sick industrial units increased from

382 to 421. The number of jobseekers on the live register of the Employment Exchanges rose from 17.2 million at the end of August 1981 to 19.0 million at the end of August 1982. Monthly average vacancies notified during January-September 1982 at 68.9 thousands were 6.4 per cent lower than the average of vacancies notified in the same period last year. The average monthly placements during January-September 1982 at 38.7 thousands were also lower by nearly 6 per cent than 41.8 thousands to the corresponding period of last year.

Offensive on the Workers

The mass of peasantry and agricultural workers were simply ruined during this period. Such is the picture of the crisis experienced by the workers and the trade union movement through lockouts, lay offs, prolonged strikes etc. Question is how effective has been the workers' resistance, how effectively has the CITU countered the attacks? Lockouts and retrenchments deprive thousands of their jobs. Their families are part of the common people. How far have we succeeded in raising public opinion against a lockout as an anti-social act? Didn't our form of struggle make it a question between worker and his employer with society and public opinion standing on the side-lines? The year that has started is going to see an intensification of the offensive against jobs and earnings. The economy is in a perilous condition. The IMF loan, the need of increased exports arising from balance of payments difficulties, the increased imports under the IMF loans which are already affecting Indian concerns, all are leading to a greater job-offensive in pursuit of cost-reduction. Mechanisation, modernisation, automation preceded by closures or mass retrenchment, these loom large.

Effective Forms of Struggle

One of the problems before the CITU session will be how to develop proper forms of struggle to combat the offensive. It can be no body's case that forms of struggle require no change, that the working class has no need to change its tactics when the capitalists change theirs. It is pertinent to recall what Lenin said in relation to combating lockouts. "The fact that some capitalists resort to lockouts (mass dismissals) against the strikers confronts the working class with new tasks. It is necessary to take careful account of the economic conditions of strikers in every area, every industry, and every particular case, find new forms of struggle (such as stay in

strikes) to counteract the lockouts, and replace political strike by revolutioanry meetings and demonstrations." p. 457 collected Works, Vol. 18.

In this connection Lenin further elaborated how in times of social turbulance the form of resistance changes from economic to political strikes. "The interdependence between the economic and political strike is thus quite obvious, no really broad, no really mass movement is possible without a close connection between the two; the concrete expression of this connection consists, on the one hand, in the fact that at the beginning of the movement, and when new sections are just entering it, the purely economic strike is the prevalent form, and on the other, in the fact that political strike raises and stirs the backward sections, generalises and extends the movement and raises it to a higher level." P. 415 Vol. 16.

The CITU Confernece will have to study the experience of the past and think of effective forms of struggle to combat the new offensive. it will have to review the efficacy of previous struggles, heroically fought no doubt.

The general indifference and failure to secure more democratic support for strikes etc. has to be rectified.

Unorganised Labour

The organised trade union movement, including the CITU unions have developed a failing which may prove injurious and damaging to the entire movement. The years since the last Conference of the CITU have witnessed a spurt in the activities of workers in unorganised industries who have hardly any legal protection—most of them working without any provision for D.A. The minimum wage legislation which is supposed to guarantee a miserable wage is also not observed in practice. This section driven to desperation is easily capable of being used by reactionaries. In fact efforts are already afoot to make use of them against the organised movement. If the trade unions do not pay attention to this widespread section they will be damaging the movement by alienating a section which is militant, heroic and has become a strong contingent of the common movement.

Agricultural Workers and Peasants

In this year of death centenary of Karl Marx it is pertinent to recall the following: "They (the trade unions) must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades, such as the agricultural labours, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They

must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of downtrodden millions."

A dangerous weakness of India's trade union movement is its isolation from agricultural workers and the mass of peasants. This is bound to be fatal in a country where the agricultural workers and peasants form the overwhelming majority of people.

All trade unions including CITU unions, are to a greater or smaller extent guilty of this weakness. Some efforts are made to overcome it no doubt. But it is an evil built-in in the trade union consciousness since early days under the influence of the bourgeois leaders. They opposed every activity of the trade unions except acting for their own demands. For the rest they must await signal form bourgeois leaders.

This outlook still grips a major part of the trade union movement—outlook of isolation of the movement. The CITU Conference will have to first clear its own stables before it can take steps to cure the movement of the disease.

Working Women

Another failing of the trade union movement is the total neglect of the women workers and their demands. It is a matter of shame that when thousands of women are being retrenched and thrown out of jobs, there is hardly a ripple of protest or action from the CITU and other unions. The trade union movement is not a preserve of men. Yet all kinds of hypocritical excuses, born out of fedual outlook, are to be found to explain away the neglect of the problems of working women, failure to draw them as active contingents of the working class. The trade unions in other parts of the world have started fighting against this deviation. But Indian trade unions lag behind. Reactioanry forces are already active in India to penetrate the ranks of working women neglected by the organised trade union movement. However some organisations of employees have started paying attention to the problem and that is good. The CITU started the fight for working women at its last conference. A full review will reveal how far our unions have advanced in this direction.

The New Young Entrants

The Government and the employers are adopting new tactics to break the solidarity of the workers. They discriminate against the young entrants who are kept temporary for years. By and large

there is a tendency to neglect the special demands of this section and concentrate on general issues which for the most part benefit permanent workers long in service. The young and militant section often gets frustrated, looses faith in the common movement and becomes a plaything of anarchist individualist outlook. This phenomenon is developing because of the crisis and the politics of the Government. It also partly explains the rise of upstart leadership. The CITU will have to take note of this development and call upon its unions to pay special attention to the new young entrants.

The Confederation

The CITU has persistently worked for unity of trade union movement. Its efforts have earned a measure of success with the formation of the National Campaign Committee. The activities of the Committee, the 19th January strike, the three day strike of coal miners are all important steps in the direction of strengthening unity. A thorough review however is necessary to find out how far our common activities have helped to shape official policies and ward off attacks, how far the consciousness of the participating workers has been enhanced. The ambit of the National Campaign Committee is restricted at present. It is obvious that the further demands on trade union unity cannot be met by the National Campaign Committee as it is constituted. It is necessary to secure the active involvement of federations and employees' organisations who have been supporting the call of the Campaign Committee. The CITU at its last Conference gave a call for a Confederation of Trade Union organisations for exchange of opinion and discussions of common problems. Both the proposals of expansion of National Campaign Committee and Confederation must be seriously discussed by the CITU Conference.

A common blue print on the economic situation outlining policies to deal with the crisis, unemployment and efficient management of industries in the interest of the people will go a long way to introduce cohesion in the movement and inspire the confidence of the people.

CITU'S Independent Activities

The experience of the CITU in relation to trade union unity and common action shows that success cannot be achieved without the initiative and independent activity of the CITU. This aspect will have to be stressed and examined at the Conference.

This is all the more necessary because after all the united

struggle along with others has certain limitations laid by the different ideologies of the parties. These are already noted in connection with anti-war agitation. It is because of these that unless the CITU's independent activity increases, the intervention of the trade union movement on the democratic issue affecting the people, in economic issues like protecting the people from high prices and fighting the authoritarian danger and defending democracy cannot be ensured. More and more the trade union movement has to turn to these tasks and assert itself as a leading force in the struggle for democracy and socialism. The CITU has to examine its activity on this test.

Support to Left Front Governments

Certain trade unions and leaders excel in slandering the left front governments of West Bengal and Tripura—the advanced outposts of democracy. These governments constitute the achievements of the working class and democratic movement. Support to them and the left forces has to be developed by the CITU among other sections of workers. Without this the struggle for democracy cannot be carried on successfully.

Danger From Imperialism

It has been noted that in a number of Third World countries the trade union movement is taking the challenge of imperialism. In India the situation is otherwise. A great part of the trade union movement does not even acknowledge the existence of imperialism and danger arising from it to our country. The IMF loan, the imperialist conspiracies to divide the country are all unnoticed by them. The CITU's efforts in the common trade union movement must move to put the imperialist danger before the workers.

And finally since the last Conference a new and dangerous development compromising the future of the people and the working class movement is the challenge of divisive forces encouraged by U.S. imperialism. The communal, caste feelings are roused to split working class and people's unity. Assam and Punjab show the danger of secessionist forces supported by U.S. imperialism. The CITU has to take serious note of these developments and devise ways to see that the entire trade union movement is in the field to combat them.

The Working Class, Vol. 12 No. 8 April 1983

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Presidential Address

5th Conference of CITU
April 13-17, 1983, Kanpur

Comrades,

On your behalf I pay homage to the memory of our leaders and comrades who are no more with us.

You will join me in mourning the loss of Com. Promode Das Gupta, the outstanding leader, member of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Secretary of the West Bengal Committee of the CPI(M). We also mourn the loss of another outstanding and distinguished leader of ours, Com. A. Balasubramaniam, member of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Secretary of the Tamil Nadu State Committee of the Party and a foremost leader of the CITU.

With equal sense of grief we mourn the passing away of Com. L. Brezhnev, who was President of the USSR and was the Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and occupied the most responsible position in the world Communist movement. His incessant struggle for peace will be always remembered by people of all countries. During his stewardship the USSR registered new strides in economic advance. Indo-Soviet Friendship also continued to develop and was finally embodied in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship which strengthened our country in the fight against imperialist manoeuvres, pressures and conspiracies.

Since the last eventful Conference of our organisation we have lost a number of our members and leaders of the CITU; many of whom fell victims to police bullets and died martyrs' death; we

remember their sacrifice and pay our homage to their memory.

Welcome

Comrades, on behalf of you I warmly welcome and greet our fraternal delegates from abroad. We have in our midst the representatives of the trade unions of the Soviet Union, of People's China, of the World Federation of Trade Unions and Yugoslavia.

We have always urged the Government of India to develop friendly relations with all Socialist countries. Unfortunately India-China relations got soured for a time. We are now happy that steps for normalisation of relationship are being taken.

Comrades, we would have very much liked to have amongst us a representative of the trade union movement of Pakistan. It is neither their fault nor ours that none from Pakistan is attending our conference. You know the situation. Gen. Zia can attend the Summit in India and discuss problems of the Third World. But the trade unions of Pakistan are not permitted to attend workers' Conference in India. But that is what is non-alinged amended by Martial Law.

I warmly welcome fraternal delegates from our sister organisations in India.

Crisis of the Capitalist World

Comrades we are meeting in the midst of an unprecedented crisis of the capitalist system. It has been most-prolonged and protracted crisis and every few months the spokesmen of the capitalist world announce that something is turning up. But the crisis continues. More than 30 million people are unemployed in advanced capitalist countries who are making every effort to transfer part of their difficulties to the Third World including India. Above all the imperialists expose the predatory and barbaric character of their system when they spend billions of dollars on genocidal weapons to ease the crisis situation. The imperialists can find no other way of getting out of the crisis except spending huge resources of lethal weapons.

Marx's Analysis

In the centenary year of Karl Marx's death what Marx wrote about capitalist society is being fully borne out. Concentration and centralisation of production, constant crisis, destruction of productive forces of society, constant growth of the reserve army, intensification of the contradiction between the social process of production and private method of appropriation leading to social burst up and class battles—all intensified by the existence of the socialist

world—are all there to assert the soundness of Marx's analysis and conclusions.

The great progress of the socialist world, its economic advance, planned economy again corroborate what Marx said about the socialist society and human progress under it.

A century has passed since the death of Karl Marx, the great founder of the Communist doctrine. His teachings have been tested on the anvil of history and have proved their triumphant transformatory character. All the socialist revolutions of the world acknowledge that their success is due to the revolutionary teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Marx, analysing the laws of capitalist society in the monumental work Capital, saw the inevitable collapse of capitalism and the necessity for society to make a transition to socialism. He taught the working class that their exploitation and misery, the misery of all toiling humanity will not end without ending private property in all means of production and socialising them. That is how socialism has succeeded in one-third of the world, freeing the people from the scourage of poverty and unemployment while the capitalist world continues to suffer from recession, closures and unemployment.

Marx taught the working class that the objective of socialism cannot be achieved without a social revolution, without deposing the capitalists and other possessing classes from political power, without the working class taking political power in its hands—the dictatorship of the proletariat. The working class must always act in alliance with other toilers to ensure success. To organise the working class to wage its battle for emancipation, he declared that it was necessary to form a distinct political party of the working class. A reslution of the International Workingmen's Association passed at the instance of Marx says, "In its struggle against the collective power of the possessing clases the proletariat can act as a class only by constituting itself a distinct political party, opposed to all the old political parties formed by the possessing classes."

The Danger of War

It was Karl Mark who gave the working class the inspiring call to unite its international strength, raise the banner of proletarian internationalism and fight the unjust offensive war waged by the capitalist ruling classes.

The heritage of proletarian internationalism gets added signifi-

cance today when the world is facing the danger of a nuclear war by US against the USSR, against the peoples of the world. To prepare for war the imperialists are spending billions of dollars on production of weapons of mass destruction. They intend to place these weapons in space so that death and destruction can rain on any country which dares contradict the dictates of the USA. They seek to place new destructive missiles in Europe so that the soil of USSR can be directly reached. They have only developed weapons which can destroy in a few minutes cities inhabited by millions of people.

The pentagon's projected budget of 1.6 trillion dollars over the next five years amounts to one billion dollars a day during the period. Its most recent battle call is "come and do business with us". We must denounce the Reagan administration's war thrust and raise our voice of protest against this drive.

Peace efforts by USSR

The forces of peace have been tremendously helped by the concrete proposals made by the USSR to stop the armament race and gradually eliminate the production of nuclear weapons. The unilateral declaration by the USSR that it will not be the first to use the nuclear weapons has been hailed by the international working class and all the peace loving forces. Comrades, we must fully endorse the appeal of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Central Committee of the CPSU, which says "We call for a quick and fruitful completion of Soviet U.S. talks on limiting and reducing strategic arms and on limiting nuclear armaments in Europe and the earliest conclusion of an agreement on armed forces and armaments reduction in Central Europe; we propose coming to an agreement without delay on a complete and a general nuclear test ban so that no more new kinds and types of nuclear weapons may be developed. We call for the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons."

But the imperialists are in no mood to listen. They refuse to reciprocate and are bent on plunging the world into a nuclear holocaust.

Struggle for Peace

The people of Europe, the people of the USA, fighting for peace all over the world are fighting the war danger. The popular pressure increases every day and is capable of turning the tide of war.

Comrades, proletarian internationalism, responsibility to our people, and to the people of the world demand that the entire trade union movement should actively intervene and expose and isolate the war mongers and join their voice with the working class and the people of the world to prevent a nuclear war.

We observed 1st September as anti-war day and later on participated in the mammoth peace demonstration on 4th October last year in Delhi organised by the CPI(M), CPI, RSP, Forward Block, D.S.P. and Peasants' and Workers' party. In Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura there were huge mobilistaions. All this was good but only the beginning.

But it has to be recognised that the trade union movement of our country under the influence of diverse ideologies is hardly playing its part in this gigantic struggle against human genocide. We ourselves have been somewhat lagging behind. But situation is still worse with some of our partners in the trade union movement. All the constituents of the National Campaign Committee are not agreed on the war danger and its sources. Some act as if imperialism does not exist. In the anti-war propaganda our partners are at best the AITUC and the UTUC. In short the consciouness about internationalism and war danger is extremely weak. It is our duty to activise all our unions and the workers behind them. But they are only a part of the working class. It is our responsibility to draw in the working masses of other Central Organisations acting as the spearhead of the anti-war movement. We must warn the workers that an outburst of war will not leave Indian hearths and homes unaffected and that indifference may lead to annihiliation or enslavement.

Comrades, you will join me in wishing success to the fighting people of Palestine in condemning the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and denouncing U.S. imperialism for lending support to Israel. We all support the struggle of the people of Latin America against dictatorship and U.S. intervention and the struggle of the African people for freedom against aparthied. Our sympathies are with the people of Namibia, repeatedly cheated by Western imperialist powers.

Non Aligned Conference

Comrades, the non-aligned Conference which met in our country, last month was an important international event. Every meet of the non-aligned nations becomes an occasion for pressure and

counter pressure by opposing forces, forces for progress and forces of reaction. There were forces in our country like the BJP who in the name of genunine non-alignment wanted a tilt in the reactionary direction. There were forces from outside the country who would have liked to promote dissensions and differences and undermine the unity of this powerful force. But the growing conflict between interests of imperialism and Third World countries, economic situation, the war danger, the common indebtedness of the Third World countries, the inability of the imperialist powers to bribe some and play them off against others and finally the rising crescendo of popular anger in a large number of countries against the imperialists, brought the nations together and dissidents had to express themselves in a low key.

There was no doubt some unrealistic talks about two super powers, failure to distinguish between the imperialists aggressors and the Socialist countries. Nonetheless, all progressive forces should endorse the call of the summit against war and armament, its call for peace and disarmament. All must equally endorse its call for immediate steps to succour the debt ridden countries and for a new economic order. All also should endorse the call for closer economic relations among the Third World countries.

Role of the Government of India

The Government of India did well to maintain its position on Afghanistan, Kampuchea, and Diego Garcia and the Indian Ocean. This did reflect anti-imerialist national interests of the country. At the same time it has to be realised that the three decades of Congress rule have deadened the anti-imperialist consciousness and the resolution and results of the committed world hardly produce a ripple among our people. The major part of the working class itself will be very little affected by it. Unless anti-imperialism is made the property of the masses, the common people, the real strength of non-aligned movement will not be felt. How many heads can afford to do it? We have seen that while the Indian Government is free to talk about Diego Garcia, it is silent on the imperialist conspiracies inside the country. It is clear that unless our country's growing economic dependence on the West is stopped and the heritage of pre-capitalist relations in the rural areas is done way with, the country will be unable to realise the full fruits following from the policy of non-alignment.

Nonetheless the Summit marked an important stage in the prog-

ress of the non-aligned movement. It emphasised the need of the inner unity and gave a rebuff to the disruptors. It at the same time is a warning to the imperialists that the world is rapidly awakening to their manipulations and the days when situation could be easily manipulated through pliant rulers are coming to an end.

Struggle Against Multinationals

In the advanced capitalist countries the fight against the multinationals is getting intensified and there have been strikes embracing the workers of the multinationals in different countries. The struggle against the multi-nationals has added to the urge for unity and international solidarity. The trade union movement in our country is not yet conscious of the pernicious role of the multinations. F.M.R.A.I. the organisation of the pharmaceutical field workers have made some strides in the struggle against the multinationals in the drug industry. We should take steps to educate our ranks so that the struggle against the multinationals can be carried forward properly.

The Election Results

Comrades, in the midst of a worsened economic situation, the attack of divisive forces in Assam, in Punjab and communal and other forces in the rest of the country, the mass of people thought often victims of diversionary politics continue to press forward in the struggle against the anti-people policies of the Congress(I) Government. An outstanding event of the beginning of the year is the decisive defeat of Congress(I) party in the States of Tripura, and Karnataka. On behalf of CITU I warmly greet the victory of Tripura Left-Front headed by the CPI(M) aganist the Congress(I) and its secessionist ally. The Congress(I) allied not only with the secessionist tribal wing but also with the reactionary organisations like Anand Margies and Amra Bangalies. But the electorate inflicted a decisive defeat on it. The Left-front in Tripura has shown how to protect the unity of country, advance the democratic rights of the people and keep the different constituents of our people together on a democratic and secular basis. The Left-front is given a decisive mandate despite the campaign of murder by the secessionists and unleashing of goonda gangs by the Congress(I) Party. This is the second time within an year that the Congress(I) party has been defeated decisively in an open electoral battle by the left-forces headed by CPI(M).

The people's discontent against the corrupt rule of Congress(I), against its anti-people policies and against the distress caused by the enconomic exploitation reached such a stage in Andhra Pradesh that it resulted in an unprecedented and humiliating defeat of the ruling paty at the hands of a new party Telugu Desam. The people of Andhra Pradesh, the rural masses have expressed their strong dispapproval of the Congress(I) rule and they expect that the new administation will remain watchful of their interests. While we welcome this rejection of the Congress(I) at the hands of the people of Andhra Pradesh we cannot but express our concern at the way the working class centres of the State have voted. Despite the many united campaigns and the joint strikes and demonstrations on several issues the working class failed to elect trade union leaders with left and democratic outlook and was carried away by the general wave of Telugu Desam. The trade union movement, therefore, must continue its vigilance and while offering its readiness to help the new administration to solve the problems of the people, it should move unitedly wherever the interests of the people are not protected.

Equally startling have been the developments in the Karnataka elections where the Congress (I) has lost its majority and a new Ministry headed by the Janata Party has taken over the administration. Once more the people of Karnataka who had experienced corruption, repression, attacks on democratic rights and economic distress under the Congress(I) regime have repudiated that party.

These election results are of great political importance for our country and they are likely to set in motion a chain of events leading to further erosion of Congress(I) influence among the people and the disintegeration of that party, because it is quite clear that the illusions about the Congress(I) which brought it back to power in 1980 are wearing out. Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka which for 30 years stood by the Congress Party have now repudiated it. The bastion in the south has collapsed, Kerala Ministry living only on the mercy of the communal and casteist organisations. It is seen that with her growing isloation from the people Indira Gandhi stoops to ally herself with any reactionary secessionist force as in Tripura or Kerala.

This is the time for the trade union movement to take common counsel and pull its full weight against the Congress (I) and help

the Left and Democratic forces to advance further and consolidate themselves. The experience of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka shows that if the Trade Union movement and the working class is not active and conscious in the democratic struggle the discontent of the people centres round parties other than left parties. The initiative of the United Trade Union movement is necessary to ensure that in the coming critical days when the masses will be leaving the Congress(I) and searching for a new leadership, their discontent should be channelised towards the Left. Without this the masses will be oscillating between parties whose class outlook is not different.

The Secessionist Threat in Assam

Comrades, another election has been held and the Congress (I) has won with a thumping majority and drawn the world's ridicule on itself. I am referring to the Assam elections, with its trail of blood, arson, massacre of incocent people, with toilers set against the toilers. Neither the former accursed Brtitish Government of this country nor the Czarist Government of Russia had succeeded so well in their programmes.

The lessons from the blood curdling story of Assam must be fully mastered by our trade unions if the unity of the country is to be preserved. What is happening in Assam? It is said that the main question concerns the foreign nationals who have entered Assam from Bangla Desh, it is said that the main question is to remove the names to those foreigners from the electoral role so that the people of Assam can have a free and fair elections uninfluenced by foreign vote.

The question of foreign nationals is no doubt there. But it has been deliberately exaggerated beyond proportion to seek other ends. What is demanded now in the name of settling the foreign nationals issue is eviction from Assam of all non-Assamese speaking Indian nationals, all those who have been residing in Assam for years or who under the Indian law acquired Indian nationality. This is a clever move to deny Indian nationality in Assam to eke out a separate existence for Assam in the name of fighting influx of foreign nationals. The pose of the agitators is that they are fighting for the rights of Indian nationals in Assam for protecting the country against foreign influx. But the reality is that they want to drive out all non-Assamese speaking people as foreign nationals.

This a clear secessionist threat to India without the Indian people realising the danger. The bourgeois newspapers sustain this game of deception and cheating and a number of bourgeois opposition parties also join in it. Feelings of animosity are being created among toilers, among people speaking different languages. Assam is a composite State consisting of people speaking Assamese, Bengali, of tribals, Nepalis and others. There are Bengali Muslims and Hindus in a large number. A large number of the former have come to Assam nearly half a century back from East Bengal (now Bangla Desh) which was a part of India then. They were famished peasants searching for land. After partition and the Bangla-Pak war a large number of panic-stricken persecuted Hindu Bengalis came to Assam as refugees and in due time earned the status of citizenshhip. There was also an international agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Bangla Desh that all those who have come from Bangladesh after 1971 would be taken back to Bangladesh. In view of this it was proposed to the agitators that 1971 should be taken as the cut off year and citizenship rights of those who came to Assam after that year should be investigated. Their names should be removed from the electoral role in case they are without citizenship right. They may be deported outside India or to other States. Also it was proposed that every measure should be taken by the Government to prevent further infiltration.

This was a fair proposal to ensure the rights of all Indian Citizens in Assam. There should have been no difficulty in accepting it and solving the problem of foreign nationals. But this was outright rejected because the agitationists want to clear Assam of all minorities mainly of Bengalis-Hindus and Muslims.

It was therefore correctly proposed that people's verdict should be sought. The alternative was continuation of President's rule i.e., Indira Rule.

This was the time for the agitationists to demonstrate their mass strength among the people at best.

But the agitationists knew that they did not have complete control over the Assamese speaking people also. Large sections of the people led by left parties were opposed to their game of disruption and secession. They therefore decided to boycott the elections and enforce their boycott by means of terror tactics and a campaign of minority-baiting and anti-Indian hatred. These people later on with the least compunction tried to internationalise the

issue, appealed to the non-aligned summit and sought foreign help against the Indian people and unity. They were supported by bourgeois opposition parties like the BJP, Janata and Lok Dal. What kind of democracy these parties represent when they openly oppose elections and the verdict of the people? Normally these parties are extremely vociferous in professing loyalty to democratic principles. But in Assam they openly opposed the rights of the people to decide issues. Which democratic principles they follow when they support a section to veto the people's right to vote? The farcical polling in the elections in a large number of constituencies was a result of terror and not the voluntary and willing boycott by the people.

The elections though constitutionally necessary have not altered the situation. The agitationists continue their secessionist activities. They can be fought and checked only by the united opposition of the democratic masses of Assam—the Assamese speaking people and Bengali and other minorities. The Congress(I) Government will never succeed in coping with this challenge by means of administrative measures.

Large sections of Assamese-speaking people are backing the agitation. They are the victims of chauvinist demagogy. Like the rest of India under the capitalist path, the people of Assam, Assamese speaking tribals, Bengalis all are suffering from poverty, unemployment. Thirty years of Congress rule have not brought about any improvement. Their anger is now being diverted into anti-unity and anti-minority channels—a lesson to the working class and India's democratic forces. The working class should realise that the chauvinstic agitation is also directed towards undermining its class solidarity and unity not only in Assam but all over India. This is not the first time that chauvnistic and regional appeals based on linguistic fanaticism is made to divide the ranks of the workers. In Assam it has gone to extreme lines pitting toiler against toiler.

The U.S. hand

This situation is being fully exploited by U.S. agencies who seek to weaken and disrupt India. The Indira Congress, the BJP, the Janata, the Lok Dal and the bourgeois press have combined in a treacherous conspiracy to conceal the U.S. hand in this affair. But it was known that the U.S. Ambassador to India was taking a special interest in Assam, paying frequent visits to the State, and

holding secret confabulations with the leaders of the movement. It was also known that financial resources were supplied by foreign agencies to the movement.

A USIS document entitled Project Brahamputra dated June 1, 1979 and which was intercepted recently shows how the U.S. agency was working for promoting secession in the area. It states "With the agreement of the States Department, the Special Operation Research Office of George Washington University has asked the U.S. outfit in India for help in conducting sociological research in the Eastern State of India including Sikkim as well as Bhutan, whose aim is to throw light on public opinion in these regions to establish in what measures the present states remain acceptable or whether their indication for the formation of a new State is a current problem". Christian missions were also involved in secessionist activity. In 1978 Dr. Cunwell, associate of World Baptist Alliance called upon missionary societies to promote secessionist sentiments to propagate Christianity. The Ambassador of Thailand also toured Assam suddenly remembering that eight hundred years back his countrymen had reached Assam to found the Ahom dynasty. The special ties which binds the Thailand Government to the USA are well-known. Thailand is foremost in opposing the Hem Semarin Government to protect the aggressive interests of the USA.

And last comes the notorious document circulated by Jean Kirkpatrick the U.S. ambassador to U.N. It contains the following observations so that no one is left in doubt about U.S. intentions: "India's weakness lies in its many unresolved domestic and international problems apart from endemic poverty. There is a noticeable growth of separatist movement to the extent that there is a real possibility of Balkanisation of India which would destroy its influence in the Third World and elsewhere".

Role of the Ruling Party

Did the ruling party take the people into confidence to combat this danger? Did it warn Indian democratic option about the evil hand behind the Assam happenings. Did the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties warn the people against the impending danger. Did the bougeois press which parades its freedom and objectivity stand by the nation to rouse the people against this game of a new partitioning of India.

All these agencies let down the people. The ruling party is the

biggest criminal. Its economic and class policies drove the people of Assam to desperation and threw them in the chauvinist net. Instead of mobilising its influence to fight the chauvinist trend it did nothing except taking administrative measures, police repression, firing etc. In order to secure votes it openly appealed to communal sentiments and contributed to incendiary riots. The Congress(I) party and the bourgeois-landlord Government at the centre have proved themselves incapable of defending national unity, of keeping the country together. The anti-imperialist sentiments expressed at the non-aligned conference disappear into thin air when it comes to fighting the imperialist conspiracy at home. If the ruling party decided to appeal to the people against secessionist chauvnism, to mobilise democratic opinion, the struggle for unity carried, on by the left forces and parties of Assam would have been strengthened. But, for Congress(I), better liquidation of national unity than the strengthening and advance of left forces. To the many crimes of economic policy and authoritarian attack against democracy Indira Gandhi has added the crowning crime—growing liquidation of all sense of national unity.

The Bourgeois Opposition Parties

Nothing excels the criminal opportunism of the BJP, the Janata and Lok Dal. The BJP and Janata went on wrecklessly supporting the AASU chauvinism, serving U.S. designs and certifying that this secessionist struggle was a struggle to discover Assam's identity, of course in company with U.S. agencies. They supported every obstructive move of the chauvinists, they would not condemn the murder of Bengalis, Muslims, Hindus, etc. The BJP declared that all Muslims in Assam are inflitrators i.e., aliens. To keep true to its anti-Muslim communalism, they screened every act of terror practised by the agitationists. Not one of them uttered a word of condemnation against the inhuman Nelli massacre in which hundreds of Muslim peasants were killed. They all think it was a good opportunity to secure electoral advantages for the future. Of such stuff are these parties made.

Voice of the Left

The section that remained loyal to the country and did its patriotic duty was represented by CPI(M), CPI other left parties, Congress(S) and the CITU, the SFI, the Kisan Sabha and other mass organisations like the AITUC. The CPI(M), CPI and other left parties and their mass organisations carried on an incessant fight

both among the Assamese speaking people and the Bengalis and other minorities to keep the democratic forces together and defend national unity. Several of our CITU comrades, workers and trade union leaders have been killed. Several of our young SFI members have been murdered for the crime of supporting popular verdict through elections. Several members of other parties and mass organisations have gone through the same ordeal. These incessant efforts were bearing fruit both among the Assamese speaking and minority sections. The elections would have shown the great strides made by the forces of unity and exposed the claim that the agitationists have exclusive sway over the Assamese speaking people. This development was not to the liking of the agitationists, the U.S. agencies, the opposition bourgeois parties of the Congress(I). The terror helped them all to stiffle for the time being the voice of national unity, the voice of the left.

Comrades, we must all express our warm appreciation of the patriotism, courage and integrity of our comrades from Assam who true to the spirit of the working class defend the unity of the country, the unity of the toilers, the unity of the class. Risking life and limb they held the banner of India's unity, exposed and unmasked the USA designs and have laid the foundation for victory of democratic forces in Assam.

The Punjab Imbroglio

I have dealt with the Assam question at length because it is a sinister political development deserving the attention of the working class. A development of an equally sinister type is to be seen at the Punjab and we again find the Congress(I) Government tinkering with the problem, allowing the situation to get worsened. Here again the extreme wing openly preaches a separate sikh state carrying the U.S. impress of balkanisation of India. But the leaders of the agitation are presenting their demands as demands for greater power to the state and even the Government seems to be agreeable to discuss it. But it is dragging its feet and diverting attention on minor question. Certain genuine issues are mixed up with communal appeal and instead of checking the latter and settling the former, the Government is making concessions to the latter and dragging its feet on former. Instead of settling issues like Chandigarh and transfer of certain areas on the basis of language as the deciding factor, the Government has made concessions to communal demands like broadcasting of Sikh prayers on the All

India Radio. For the rest the Government is playing one State against another thus passing on the initiative to the extreme Sikh reactionaries.

Tripura shows the path

In contrast, see how the Left Front Government of Tripura led by the CPI(M) has protected the unity of the people. The Left parties and Government in Tripura deserve special congratulations because they have frustrated the game of divisive forces to divide the people of Tripura into Bengalis vs. the tribals. Their victory is all the more important because the Congress(I) had entered into an alliance with tribal secessionists and reactionary organisations like Amra Bangali and Anand Margis.

Other Divisive Forces

Apart from these secessionist forces, our country is plunged with other divisive forces—the heritage of the past. Hindu communalism—a wanton appeal to communalism not based on any genuine grievances; appeal to minority separatism which succeeds because of the discrimination practised against the Muslim minority the caste oppression, and harijan atrocities which offer a golden opportunity to the ruling party to divide the toilers by offering reservation in jobs to the extremely backward sections—every weapon is used to divide the toilers, disrupt class unity and with it all sense of national unity.

Task of the Trade Unions

It cannot be said that our trade unions are aware of this danger, are aware of the fact that large sections of these people are already showing their indifference to trade union organisations. Unless the trade unions recognise this reality, take into consideration that large sections of workers have vital problems other than the ones relating to the common problem of defending the economic conditions, their appeal will cease to be all-pervasive. They will have to yield ground to sectarian and sectional organisations. In Indian conditions the worker is not free from feudal social discrimination on the ground of caste or religion—this fact our trade unions must grasp in conducting their activities. At the same time the logic of class struggle enables all those sections to rise above old divisions and stand shoulder to shoulder facing starvation and misery. I am referring to the glorious example of Bombay Textile Workers who have maintained their solidarity for more than a year—a mass composed of diverse caste, and divisions but acting like a class.

This is what the workers are capable of in all parts of India if the requisite practice and guidance comes from the trade unions.

Fight Against the Authoritarian Rule

Comrades, the fight against the Congress(I) authoritarian rule also to be carried on in the midst of most grim circumstances. We all must congratulate the democratic forces whose united resistance has barred the enactment of the notorious Bihar Press Bill till now. The press, the united resistance of all opposition parties supported by the agitation inside the Parliament and outside have made their pressure felt. The Bihar Chief Minister was forced to declare that the Bill was dead. Our CITU unions, especially in Bihar participated in this agitation to make it a success. A similar notorious Act has been enacted in Tamil Nadu by the AIADMK Government and it is high time that agitation is launched to secure its withdrawal.

The drive of the authoritarian forces against the people continues. More and more power is being concentrated at the centre creating a crisis in the relations between the Centre and States, Anti-working class legislation is being passed and more anti-labour acts are on the anvil. Above all there is no appeal against police brutalities, rapes of women, murder in police custody. Every misdeed of the police is being hushed up. The socalled rule of law is hardly in existence. Courts are being packed with "committed" judges. Inside the Cabinet the supreme leader holds all power in her hands. Collective responsibilty of the Cabinet is long ago dead. Behind the facade of Parliament dictatorship measures are being adopted. For years organisational elections are not held. The disruption in the organisation, its alienation from the people, the economic crisis, make reliance on arbitrary measures a necessity for class rule. This is the dangerous trend. The trade unions have to fight and for this purpose join hands with all other democratic and oppositional forces who are interested in stemming the tide of authoritarian rule.

Support the Left Front Governments

Comrades, the left front governments of West Bengal and Tripura form the advance democratic outposts in the struggle. For five years they have worked for the common man and widened the base of left forces among the people. In the recent elections they increased their voting strength inspite of recessionary conditions, the breakdown of energy and drought conditions in the States and

the riots in Tripura. This is a real measure of their success with the people, the confidence they have earned. That is because these governments followed a policy of throwing their weight on the side of the workers and the common people and refused to lend to the capitalists the services of the Government machinery. The economic levers being in the hands of the Central Government the people and the working class of West Bengal could not escape the consequences of recession. Yet the West Bengal Ministry stood by the workers and did everything to protect the interests of the workers. It ensured freedom of strike to the workers and helped them to frsutrate many a design of the money barons.

Parliament Denuded of Power

In a parliamentary democracy people control the Government through the power of purse exercised by the Parliament, the elected representatives of the people. But in India the Parliament has been deprived of this power and is reduced to a ridiculous position. Just before the budget the Government raised additonal resources of nearly Rs. 1,300 crores. A five per cent increase in the auxiliary customs duty was increased to net Rs. 200 crores. By withdrawing excise duty exemption available to stainless steel scarp the Government expected to collect another Rs. 200 crores. By raising the price of petroleum products the Government made provision for raising Rs. 800 crores. Not satisfied with this, just on the eve of the budget the government in pursuit of its policy of protecting the poor raised postal and telegraphic tariffs to net Rs. 70 crores. Thirteen hundred crores of rupees were raised outside the budget, while for courtesy's sake Rs. 716 crores were proposed to be raised through the regular budget. Justifying the rise in postal rates without consulting the Parliament, the Communication Minister shamelessly quoted a British regulation of 1893. But all this is not accidental. This belittling of the Parliament, of the opposition, is part of the relentless drive of Congress(I) and its leader towards an authoritarian presidential form of Government. Issue of ordinances, affecting the rights of the people, or economic policies on the eve of the session of legislature or Parliament, has been a developing practice under the Indira regime. Concentration of all power in the hands of the inner Cabinet i.e. Indira Gandhi herself is going on reducing every other instrument of the Constitution to play a subservient role.

The Anti-People Budget

The mass of workers in our country take hardly any interest in budget which affects their economic conditions and well-being. They are therefore unable to anticipate its attacks and beat them off. This year's budget offers the prospects of growing inflation, high prices, shrinking incomes and jobs. There is a massive increase in taxation this year. Including the increase in railway fares and freights it amounts to Rs. 2,500 crores. Through one device or another the burden will be passed on to the common man, including the working class. The increase in railway fares of daily commuters will prove a crushing burden to lakhs of workers and employees who have to travel daily for their jobs.

But this is not all. The budget leaves as uncovered deficit of Rs. 1,555 crores in the wake of a deficit of nearly two thousands crores for the preceeding year. During the years that have passed there was an increase of nearly 15 per cent in money supply, while agricultural production has declined and there might be negative increase in per capita increase. This itself will generate price pressure. And this year's deficit financing will definitely force the prices up with the workers and employees forced to fight against erosion of their wages.

The budget has no provision to fight unemployment to lessen its growth. It seems that the Finance Minister and Indira Government are unaware that millions are unemployed in India and their number swells every day.

The budget opens the prospect of a bleak economic situation, of pressure of prices, of increased unemployment and economic deterioration and erosion of workers' wage. The budget could have been influenced to some extent at least if the trade union movement had unitedly worked to press its policy on the Government.

Mark, while almost every section of the people is being attacked the Finance Minister does not forget to give relief to the affluent landlord lobby—the capitalist farmers and rich landlord interests.

The Government has now made agricultural land totally tax free. Mr. Mukherjee says: "Our experience is that the valuation of agricultural land leads to administrative difficulties and litigation. The yield from the levy has also not been significant over the past several years. Moreover, after the abolition of wealth tax on agricultural land, including plantations, their is little practical justification for continuing the levy of estate duty on agricultural land."

There is no reason why after ensuring the exemption of the smaller holder from such levy, the estate duty should not have continued on the affluent sections the big landholders who have hardly any income tax to pay. They are so influential that they had made it impossible to realise the levy. And now Government advances that as an excuse to withdraw the levy. A Government which searches the pocket of the poorest section for any conceivable levy, allows the landlord sharks freedom from taxation.

Unemployment

Comrades—The entire trade union movement must actively move to secure immediate relief for the unemployed and compel the Government to embark upon policies which would effectively check the growth of unemployment. The Government has been making bogus claims about plans to combat unemployment, It advertises its Rural Employment schemes and othr projects. Of course so far as the urban areas are concerned it does not even advertise any scheme. The Sixth Five Year Plan claims that it would meet the job demands of all the new entrants of labour—another Congress (I) claim on par with the claim to fight poverty—but facts prove the contrary. The Economic Survey (1982-83) shows that the number of job seekers in the live register of the Employment Exchanges rose from 17.2 million at the end of August 1981 to 19.9 million at the end of August 1982. The average monthly placements during January-September 1982 were 38.7 thousand compared with 41.8 thousand in the corresponding period last year. The slow growth of employment can be seen by comparing the figures of the last few years. In 1975—the year of emergency rule—employment in public sector was 128.83 lakhs and employment in the private sector was 68.08 lakhs, total amounting to 197 lakhs. In 1981 total employment in organised sector was 229 lakhs comprising of 155 lakhs in the public sector and 73.95 lakhs in the private sector. This was a growth rate of only 2.3 per cent per year. Compare it with the 14 per cent growth in registered unemployment in one year from (August 1981 to August 1982)—a jump from 17.2 million to 19.0 million.

The Sixth Five Year Plan makes boastful claims and promises-jobs for all new entrants. It claims that its scheme will provide 34 million new jobs in the course of five years which will be sufficient to meet the increase in the labour force defined as persons of fifteen years and above in the same period. Even if this fact was achieved,

it would still leave a backlog of 21 million —(which itself is an underestimate).

The continuous and rapid rise in unemployment figures shows that the Planners and the Government have totally failed to tackle the situation. That they have no plan what soever inspite of boastful claims and wasteful expenditure of public money.

Where are these jobs seekers to get jobs. Not in organised industry, not in modern industry, but in overcrowded occupations from which people are fleeing in thousands. :"The major employment generation activities are to be found in agriculture, rural development, village and small-scale industries, construction and public adminstration and other services." (p. 154) that is mostly in industries with low paid and sweated labour. So scattered are these industries that no one will know whether any increase has taken place and to what extent.

The planners repeat again that agriculture must be further overcrowded. " At the present rate of growth the organised sector can provide only four to five million regular jobs in the course of the Sixth Five Year Plan. This would still leave large number of absorption in agriculture, small scale sector and other unorganised industries."

Another document however spells out the truth and says reliance for jobs on agriculture and other sectors means lack of security and underemployment. "The bulk of the labour force is in the unorganised sector with a preponderence of self employment, since the absorption capacity of the organised sector is extremely low. In fact the trends in recent years indicate that only about 12 per cent of the increase in labour force is absorbed in the organised sector. The remaining members of the labour force will have to seek employment in agriculture and other sectors and in non-farm activities chartered by a high degree of under-employment and self employment(self-employment in present day condition is often self-employment and self-starvation).

So the 19 milllion who have foolishly registered in the Employment Exchanges must go back to the village and find employment. The educated unemployed are also told to do the same thing. In particular they are asked to shun all employment and become self-employed. The number of educated unemployed, matriculates, graduates and above at the beginning of 1980 was estimated at 3.87 million. To meet the total demand for jobs from this sector during

the Sixth Plan 6 million new jobs are required. But who will give them these jobs? The Planning Commission says they must provide jobs for themselves. Self-reliance and self-employment! "The increase (in employment in unorganised sector) from year to year has been around 0.8 million. Even if it is assumed that in future increase in the organised sector is wholly taken by educated persons alone we find that there will not be enough room for the educated persons unless they are diverted either into self-employment or the absorptive capacity of the organised industry is increased substantially. The second alternative does not seem to be feasible leaving us the option of self-employment as the major mode of employment." No wonder with this kind of planning unemployment increases every year.

The rise of registered unemployment to 19 million shows the colossal character of the problem and the trade union movement has to mobilise its full strength to organise the unemployed and secure from the Government immediate relief and a plan to provide work.

Rural Employment

In this connection it is necessary to expose the tall claims made by the Government in connection with its programme of rural employment. The National Rural Employment Programme under the 20-Points programme is intended to provide employment to the unemployed in the rural areas. The target is to provide 300 to 400 million mandays per year. It is claimed that 267.1 million mandays of employment were provided in 1981-82 and the target for 1982 is 331 million mandays. It should be noted that Government underestimates the extent of unemployment in rural areas. Estimates place the figure at 45 million.

Even if the sponsorers of 20 points programme succeed in reaching the target how far will it affect the massive figures of unemployment ? It will mean employment throughout the year for a million and half people at the most that is at best for three per cent of the unemployed.

It is known that the schemes under the bourgeois-landlord rule cannot reach the full benefit under them to the masses. Corruption takes away a large part of the expenditure leaving large number of expected beneficiaries high and dry.

The Rural Employment Growth scheme of the Maharashtra Government was highly praised by the World Bank, accepting the

exaggerated claims made on behalf of the authorities. It said: Over five years from 1973 to 1978, Maharashtra Rural Unemployment declined by 21 per cent etc. But recent revelations show that corruption has been so rampant that such claims are difficult to entertain. It is quite possible that statistics about relief, mandays created etc. are fake and forged by corrupt officials. This was disclosed when the Collector of Dhulia (one of the districts of Maharashtra), a rare honest and courageous official, made a sample survey and estimated that there was corruption to the extent of Rs. 87 lakhs in this district alone. The Congress(I) men and Ministers combined to hound out the official and get him transferred to another district. But so big was the scandal that the State Government had to appoint a Committee. This Committee with Congress(I) majority tried to screen the real state of affairs and underestimate the extent of corruption. According to the Collector there was corruption to the extent of 87 lakhs out of a total expenditure of 5.5 crores.

The Congress(I) dominated committee had to admit that there was misappropriation of wages to the tune of Rs. 10.90 lakhs. It was found that the Superintendent of Police of Dhulia District had ordered police stations under his jurisdiction not to record complaints of corruption in the Employment Guarantee Scheme without his permission. It was also noted that the transfer of corrupt officials called for by the Collector was done in a deliberately slow manner. What chance has any employment scheme under such circumstances?

The policy of the Government in connection with providing employment to rural and urban unemployed is an eye-wash. In the coming days the number of unemployed will increase because of this bankrupt policy. and further because of the recessionary conditions.

Housing

Comrades—along with unemployment the workers and employees are faced with the prospect of finding residence in the city slums. For a large number of them decent rooms, flats etc outside the slums are barred. This is what the Sixth Plan document says: "Of the total urban population, nearly a fifth is estimated to constitute a slum population. In 1985 the magnitude of such population is estimated to be about 33.1 million." This is some progress. Go to the slum those sluggards and be self-employed—

this is the call of the planners.

What is the housing programme for these 33 millions people? The Government has made a promise of 26 lakh houses for them, the rest is left to the private sharks. The planners know that the private source will not do anything to provide housing for the poor. What return will they get with land prices continuing on the rise? Therefore on to the slums. How this situation puts the ordinary man at the mercy of gangsters and speculators can be seen from the following from the Times of India dated 12.3.1983. "Slum lords in Bombay are in big business. During the last three years they have made as much as Rs. 36 crores selling accomodation in unauthorised colonies. They make as much as Rs. 20,000 from a three square metre rooms."

The housing question has now become a major question for the workers and employees in cities, towns, mining and plantation areas. The deterioration in housing conditions, the enforced existence in slums, the dilapidated condition of the houses provided by the employers all constitute an attack on the existing living conditions, a deterioration in the quality of living. In the towns and cities the Government employees and other workers are demanding increase house rent allowances in view of shortage of residential accommodation. In Plantation areas, in spite of Government aid the plantation owners refuse to provide housing for the workers. They are treating the workers in the same way as the British Planters used to do.

A concerted attack on this conspiracy to drive the workers to slums and sharks must be organised by the trade union movement.

Productivity Year—Lockouts

Comrades, the Prime Minister declared last year as productivity year and the results have been disastrous for the country. Was the Prime Minister unaware that the country was passing through a period of intense attacks against the workers and the employers were using unscrupulously the lockout weapon to bring down production and bring the workers into submission?

The last two years have proved night-marish for the workers who had to fight prolonged battles for their livelihood and jobs. The number of mandays lost in industrial dispues in 1981 went beyond 25 million, 4 million above that of 1980 figure though it was lower than the 35 million figure of 1979. Official figures admit that the CITU was foremost in leading these struggles and led more

actions than any other organisation.

The 1982 figure surpassed all previous figures recording a loss of 62 million days. Excluding the Bombay Textile Strike the loss was 43.38 million days.

This by itself does not represent the sufferings and misery of the workers. In recent years lockouts are being increasingly used by the employers with the help of the Government. There is a systematic attempt to starve the workers into submission.
The following figures reveal the story.

The Mandays lost (in 000).

Year	*Due to strike*	*Due to Lockouts*
1978	15,423	12,917
1979	35,804	8,050
1980	12,018	9,907
1981	15,658	10,806

Except in 1979 at least 40% of the total mandays lost are due to declared lockouts. The productivity year of Indira Gandhi turned out to be a lockout year for the workers. But the Government and its spokesmen never cease to talk about strikes only—covering the lockout misdeeds of their master.

The trade union movement must devise new methods to fight back the lockout offensive. In West Bengal 17 Jute Mills are closed and it is estimated that 65,000 badli workers have also been thrown out of work.

Workers' Participation in Management

Comrades, you will be surprised to learn that the productivity year of Indira Gandhi also announced the demise of Workers' Participation in Management. Workers participation was included in the first 20-Point Programme. The second 20-Point Programme has quietly dropped it, to ensure success for the productivity year. You will remember that the first 20-Point Programme was intended to divert attention from the Emergency and the only point of interest to the workers was this proposal for workers participation. Of course the Government had absolutely no intention to introduce any scheme of participation. The Government concerns and public and private sectors all were united in their opposition to it.

The CITU, fully realising the mismanagement of public and private sectors alike, the monstrous corruption that is rampant, the use of substandard materials and linkage of some officials with

anti-socials, proposed to participate in management on terms of equality. The workers were prepared to discharge their responsibility to society. But who wanted their cooperation? Not the vested interests when they were locking out one factory after another; not the Government which was mercilessly suppressing one strike after another. And now the proposal is withdrawn. Unlimited hypocrisy thy name is Indira Government.

Repression

Comrades, we must denounce the barbaric repression directed against the striking workers. In these years our strikes had to face unheard of repression in Congress(I) ruled States. Illegalisation of strikes, mass arrests of workers, prohibition of meetings, prohibition of picketing, brutal lathi charges, police firings killing workers, terror against working class with the help of goonda gangs and rapes of wives of workers—these are the instruments of Congress(I) Governments to subjugate the workers. Our workers have bravely withstood this medieval terror and often forced the employers and Government to retreat. They had to wage a tireless fight against repression to protect the right of organisation and in thousands they stood together. We all must rise to be worthy leaders of this great fighting army of Indian Workers.

We all must offer our warm greetings to CITU leaders and workers of Kanpur for their glorious struggles in this period against terror, lockouts and repression. An insane authority wanted to plant its own stooges on the workers as leaders and withdraw the recognition of CITU unions. The J.K. Rayon and Jute workers of Kanpur waged a heroic battle for months under the leadership of CITU and recreated the old fighting spirit of Kanpur. May they continue to display the same unity and courage and bring fresh laurels to our organisation. It is strange that many interntional organisations, devoted to the cause of the workers, seem to be toally ignorant about the happenings in India. You rarely come across an indignant protest against this repression from abroad. Our CITU should see to it and that all international organisations are properly informed about the ordeals which Indian workers are passing through. Only under the left front government of West Bengal and Tripura the workers rights are protected, right to strike is ensured, the repressive machinery is not used against strikers and the weight of the Government is thrown on the side of the workers.

Offensive Against Wages

Comrades, we have noted on several occasions how through the Bureau of Public Enterprises the Government is trying to police wages and make the workers bear the burden of inflation and crisis. Encouraged by the Government the private employers are now in the field demanding withdrawal of bonus and whittling down of D.A. A paper jointly prepared by All India Organisation of Employers and Employers Federation of India demands that "Bonus and D.A. should be abolished and a minimum wage for a particular region should be the subsistence wage fixed for agricultural workers". Naturally the author of the paper blinks the concept of needbased wage which require to be looked into very carefully. Also that neither assurance of proper living conditions, and performance of work should have anything to do with wage. The wage should be the residue left after satisfying the appetite of capital in every way, the level of productivity, national income etc. "The capacity of industry must take into account the need for building resources for keeping the assets intact and in an uptodate condition, payment of annual dividends, necessary for attracting sufficient capital for the growth and development of industry." This leaves nothing unsaid. Never before any employer's organisation was so blatant in its claims to exploit. But the encouragement and confidence is born out of the Government policy and the Bureau of Public Enterprises.

This certainly foreshadows an offensive on wages in one form or another aided and abetted by the Government and the CITU unions will have to forewarn the workers and be ready to fight it if the employers desire to launch it.

To facilitate the offensive against wage and living conditions the Government relies on enacting a number of anti-trade union Bills to stiffle the growth of fighting unions, to strangulate the right to strike, to interfere with the internal matters of unions and finally through arbitrary recognition and patronage to pliant unions tie down the workers to machinations of corrupt and venal leaders. It is known to all of you that the Government has refused to accede to the demands that recognition of unions be decided by the free ballot of concerned workers.

Draconian Laws

Since Indira's return to power series of anti-trade union bills have been prepared. The National Security Act providing for

preventive detention was passed and was used against striking workers and trade union leaders. The Essential Services Act banning strikes in all socalled essential services was passed and being used to ban strikes including strikes of teachers. These measures virtually re-enacted the provisions and bans obtaining during the emergency. An ILO Committee has opined that ESMA constitutes too much interference with the freedom of trade union movement. Four other bills have been introduced attacking trade union rights, right to strike, right to organise unions. The Industrial Disputes Amendment Bill, the Hospital and other Institutions (Settlement of Disputes) Bill, the trade Union (amendment) Bill and the Payments of Wages Bill all are directed towards one aim—attacking the freedom of the trade union movement including the freedom to strike. The total effect of all those Bills put together is complete ban on strikes by certain sections of workers, and virtual extincion of the right for all others. This is a part of the authoritarian drive against the democratic rights of the people.

The Conference must give a clarion call to all our unions and all other organisations to fight and defeat these Bills with the help of all democratic forces inside and outside the Parliament and mobilise all opposition parties in the Parliament for this purpose. A major attack is being planned by the Government and it must be defeated.

Comrades, our activities, our united actions, our struggles are having their effect and making it extremely difficult for the employers and the Government to push through their attack. Such actions as the 19th January (1982) strike, the three day coal miners' strike, the strike of Indian Seamen have immensely strengthened the resolve of the workers to fight official measures and designs.

Weaknesses of Struggles—New Problems

I do not wish to deal here with our struggle for trade union unity. A full report on our work for trade union unity will be made in Com. P. Ramamurti's report. I wish to turn to some of our weaknesses and new problems on which the Conference must opine.

Satisfied as we may be with the militant role played by our unions in defending the workers' interests and our initiative and persistent struggle in building trade union unity, we have also experienced set-backs. Sometimes we seem to loose initiative in the daily struggle, it passes off to non-political leaders professing no political ideology but making a show of militance. The CITU or the

State Units concerned have not analysed this phenomenon and taken any steps to meet the situation arising out of it. Bombay and Maharashtra are classic instance of this phenomenon. But it is to be found in other centres and is likely to be repeated in future also.

At one time Madras saw the same spectacle but our comrades were able to win back initiative step by step and reassert our position. Their experience if it is reviewed may be of great help to us.

Comrades, from what I have said earlier it is clear that there is very little intervention of the CITU and its unions in the political developments of the country. Despite the laudatory role of the CITU unions in Assam, the support of CITU unions and the masses led by them to left forces and parties in West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala, the CITU intervention in fighting forces of disintegration-secessionists, communalists-casteists for issues common to the people, fighting measures like Bihar Press Bill has been minimal if any.

Situation is much worse if the role of country's trade union movement is taken. The voting in industrial centres of Andhra Pradesh like Hyderabad in recent elections reveals this weakness, with mass of workers voting for non-left parties.

The trade union movement will be reduced to a purely sectional movement making the workers a plaything of reactionary forces if this weakness is not removed.

In a number of Third World countries the trade unions are directly taking the challenge of imperialism and fighting the imperialist conspiracies against their country. In India the situation is otherwise. A great part of the trade union movement does not even acknowledge the existence of imperialism and the danger arising from it to our country. The IMF loan, the imperialist conspiracies to divide the country go unnoticed by them. Even our own propaganda needs to be increased many times before it can prove effective among our followers.

Notwithstanding the warm feelings of friendship and admiration among our workers for the workers, peoples and Governments of Socialist countries the USSR, Peoples' China, Vietnam, Korea and others, consciousness about international events, danger of war, is very weak. This weakness has to be removed.

Effective Forms of Struggle

The years that have passed have been years of crisis, lockouts

and strikes.

Question is how effective has been the workers' resistance, how effectively has the CITU countered the attacks? Lockouts and retrenchments deprive thousands of their jobs. Their families are part of the common people. How far have we succeeded in raising public opinion standing on the side-lines? The year that has started is going to see an intensification of the offensive against jobs and earnings. The economy is in a perilous condition. The IMF loan, the need of increased exports arising from balance of payments difficulties, the increased imports under the IMF loans which are already affecting Indian concerns, all are leading to a greater job-offensive in pursuit of cost-reduction. Mechanisation, modernisation, automation presided by closures or lmass retrenchment, these loom large. One of the problems before the CITU session will be how to develop proper forms of struggle to combat the offensive. It can be nobody's case that forms of struggle require no change, that the working class has no need to change its tactics when the capitalists change theirs.

The CITU Conference will have to study the experience of the past and think of effective forms of struggle to combat the new offensive. It will have to review the efficacy of previous struggles, heroically fought no doubt.

The general indifference and failure to secure more democratic support for strikes etc. has to be rectified.

Unorganised Labour

The organised trade union movement, including the CITU unions have developed a failing which may prove injurious and damaging to the entire movement. The years since the last Conference of the CITU have witnessed a spurt in the activities of workers in unorganised industries who have hardly any legal protection—most of them working without any provision for D.A. The minimum wage legislation which is supposed to guarantee a miserable wage is also not observed in practice. This section driven to desperation is easily capable of being used by reactionaries. In fact efforts are already afoot to make use of them against the organised movement. If the trade unions do not pay attention to this widespread section they will be damaging the movement by alienating a section which is militant, heroic and has become a strong contingent of the common movement.

Agricultural Workers and Peasants

In this year of death centenary of Karl Marx it is pertinent to recall the following : "They (the trade unions) must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades, such as the agricultural labourers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of downtrodden millions".

A dangerous weakness of India's trade union movement is its isolation from agricultural workers and the mass of peasants. This is bound to be fatal in a country where the agricultural workers and peasants form the overwhelming majority of people.

During the year when the working class was facing lockouts, the peasants and agricultural workers were being ruined. There was hardly any consciousness about this and the responsibility of the trade unions.

All trade unions including CITU unions, are to a greater or smaller extent guilty of this weakness. Some efforts are made to overcome it no doubt. But it is an evil built-in in the trade union consciousness since early days under the influence of the bourgeois-leaders. They opposed every activity of the trade unions except acting for their own demands. For the rest they must await signal from the bourgeois leaders.

This outlook still grip a major part of the trade union movement—outlook of isolation of the movement. The CITU Conference will have to first clear its own stables before it can take steps to cure the movement of the disease.

Working Women

Another failing of the trade union movement is the total neglect of the women workers and their demands. It is a matter of shame that when thousands of women are being retrenched and thrown out of jobs, there is hardly a ripple of protest or action from the CITU and other unions. The trade union movement is not a preserve of men. Yet all kinds of hypocritical excuses, born out of feudal outlook, are to be found to explain away the neglect of the problems of working women, failure to draw them as active contingents of the working class. The trade unions in other parts of the world have started fighting against this deviation. But Indian trade unions lag behind. Reactionaary forces are already active in India to penetrate the ranks of working women neglected by the organised trade union movement. However some organisations of

employees have strarted paying attention to the problems and that is good. The CITU started the fight for working women at its last conference. A full review will reveal how far our unions have advanced in this direction.

Let me quote the latest information available.

The Indian Express of March 16 contains the following despatch. "According to the Energy Ministry Records there were more than 30,000 women workers under the Bharat Coking Coal Limited coking coal mines in Bihar in 1973. By 1979 their number dropped to 16,000 and by 1982 to 12,000.

"Secondly to give respectability to its anti-worker policies, the BCCL has also introduced a voluntary scheme giving the job opportunities to the younger male dependents in lieu of the parents' job. Here also the female members of the families have been barred. A notice issued by one of the General Managers in 1979 said if a woman worker gives her job the company will employ her son or son-in-law or husband in piece-rate underground loading job. The prohibition against employing women in underground work is now used to deny them jobs when the company is going in for open caste mining.

The New Young Entrants

The Government and the employers are adopting new tactics to break the solidarity of the workers. They discriminate against the young entrants who are kept temporary for years. By and large there is a tendency to neglect the special demands of this section and concentrate on general issues which for the most part benefit permanent workers long in service. The young and militant section often gets frustrated, looses faith in the common movement and becomes a plaything of anarchist individualist outlook. This phenomenon is developing because of the crisis and the policies of the Government. It also partly explains the rise of individualist leadership. The CITU will have to take note of this development and call upon its unions to pay special attention to the new young entrants.

Severe Drought

Comrades, an unprecedented drought gripped several states last year which has bleaked the prospects of crops this year also. The drought severely affected the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka. In Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and other states there is acute scarcity of even drinking

water. In addition to this Orissa and Gujarat were affected by floods and cyclone also. Near famine conditions haunt the people in many areas. The peasantry and the agricultural labourers have been left at the mercy of the landlords and unscrupulous traders. We must denounce the Congress(I) Government for its utter failure to meet the situation and its callous unconcern to the sufferings of the people. I congratulate the Left-Front Govrnment and the working class of West Bengal for rising to the occasion to give succour to the suffering people and the rural masses. I call upon the CITU unions to realise their class responsibility and raise their powerful voice to force the Government to rush sufficient foodgrains and take adequate rural employment programme and give relief to the suffering people.

The Confederation

The CITU has persistently worked for unity of trade union movement. Its efforts have earned a measure of success with the formation of the National Campaign Committee. The activities of the Committee, the 19th January strike, the three day strike of coal miners are all important steps in the direction of strengthening unity. A thorough review however is necessary to find out how far our common activities have helped to shape official policies and ward off attacks, how far the consciousness of the particiapting workers has been enhanced. The ambit of the National Campaign Committee is restricted at present. It is obvious that the further demands on trade union unity cannot be met by the National Campaign Committee as it is constituted. It is necessary to secure the active involvement of federations and employees' organisations which have been supporting the call of the Campaign Committee. The CITU at its last conference gave a call for a Confederation of Trade Union Organisations for exchange of opinions and discussions of common problems. Both the proposals of expansion of National Campaign Committee and Confederation must be seriously discussed by the CITU Conference.

A common blue print on the economic situation outlining policies to deal with the crisis unemployment and efficient management of industries in the interest of the people will go a long way to introduce cohesion in the movement and inspire the confidence of the people.

The urgency to intervene in the labour and economic policies of the Government should be fully realised. This cannot be done

unless the full strength of the labour movement is mobilised and the movement develops common understanding. The trade union movement must also express its united will to help in managing the affairs of the economy and industry on the basis of equal status. It must declare its willingness to do so to the Indian people and let them know that it is the Government and the ruling classes that came in the way of labour discharging its responsibility to society. Such a call on behalf of the united trade union movement will help the trade unions to overcome their self-centredness and recognise their obligation to society the rest of whom consists of the oppressed and exploited peasantry.

Some people are worried about how the office bearers etc. of the Confederation will be elected and so on. Com. Indrajit Gupta, General Secretary of the AITUC also has written a letter to the CITU seeking clarification. The details can be worked out provided there is agreement on the necessity of trade union orgnisations coming together. The name does not matter. If the purpose could be served by any alternative form we will be satisfied. But there must be genuine attempt to bring all organisations who have a say with the workers, who are vitally interested in the unity and cohesion of the trade union movement and who do not indulge in cross firing within the movement itself and specialise in attacking progressive and left forces.

CITU's Independent Activities

The experience of the CITU in relation to trade union unity and common action shows that success cannot be achieved without the initiative and independent activity of the CITU. This aspect will have to be stressed and examined at the Conference.

This is all the more necessary because after all the united struggle along with others has certain limitations laid by the different ideologies of the partners. These are already noted in connection with anti-war agitation. It is because of these that unless the CITU's independent activity increases, the intervention of the trade union movement on the democratic issues affecting the people, in economic issues like protecting the people from high prices and fighting the authoritarian danger and defending democracy cannot be ensured. More and more the trade union movement has to turn to these tasks and assert itself as a leading force in the struggle for democracy and socialism. The CITU has to examine its activity on this test.

Certain trade unions and leaders excel in slandering the left front governments of West Bengal and Tripura—the advanced outposts of democracy. This has to be countered. These governments constitute the achievements of the working class and democratic movement, support to them and the left forces has to be developed by the CITU among other sections of workers. Without this struggle for democracy cannot be carried on successfully.

Strengthen the CITU

Comrades, it goes without saying that the tasks outlined cannot be fulfilled without strengthening the CITU, including the mass membership of the CITU unions, functioning them democratically and making the CITU the foremost central organisation. May the efforts of all of you be directed towards this goal so that the working class the trade unions of our country are able to discharge their contemporary responsibilities.

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On Foundation Day

THE foundation day of the CITU comes within a few weeks of the fifth session of the CITU held at Kanpur. The day reminds us of the important decisions taken by the conference and our responsibility to carry them to the workers.

The CITU constitution proclaims adherence to internationalism. The presence of fraternal delegates from AUCCTU, from the Trade Union Federation of Peoples' China, from the Confederation of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia, from World Federation of Trade unions and from Sri Lanka, reminded the delegates of their responsibility to the international trade union movement.

The danger of nuclear war hangs over the world, threatening the lives of tens of millions of our working class brothers. The US imperialist by their aggressive preparations against the USSR are planning a genocidal attack on the workers of USSR and other socialist countries.

The war once started will imperil the lives of millions in France. West Germany, England and several other countries.

To be true to our profession of internationalism the voice of India's workers must be raised against this diabolical war plan of US imperialist.

The USSR is doing utmost to save the world from the war disaster. It has already declared that it will not be the first to use the nuclear strike. The danger so would have receded if Reagan has reciprocated to this unilateral offer. But Reagan is bent on war and

refuses to give any such assurance. It should be clear to every one that the source of war is Reagan i.e. U.S. imperialism and all talk about two super powers being responsible for the war danger is plain deception.

The appeal of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union has tremendously helped the peace fighters of the world. It reflects the earnest desire of the socialist Soviet Union to protect the world from the havoc of a nuclear war. The appeal says "We call for a quick and fruitful completion of Soviet-US talks on limiting and reducing strategic arms and limiting nuclear armament in Europe and the earliest conclusion of an agreement on armed forces and armament reduction in Central Europe: We propose coming to an agreement without delay on a complete and general nuclear ban so that no more new kinds and types of nuclear weapons may be developed. We call for the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons."

India's workers and the CITU unions must fully endorse this appeal.

The foundation day calls on all to study deeply the decisions of the fifth conference and be prepared for new battles and new forms of struggle. The economic situation is rapidly deteriorating. The manipulated wholesale price index has started rising and the government's claims to have held the priceline are collapsing. This claim was never true regarding prices of consumer goods at retail level as they were rising all the times. But now the wholesale index has risen by 10 per cent within the last 12 months. The Government is preparing to meet the situation with new anti-labour bills. It has resorted to plain cheating in relation to the demands of the Central Government employees. The appointment of pay commission is nothing but a device to postpone for years settlement of the employees demands. The refusal to settle the Bombay Textile strike and the free hand given to the mill-owners to victimise tens of thousands of workers are part of the same policy to suppress the workers and make them the scapegoats of recession. The CITU unions must take a lead in combating these attacks and do everything to unify the fighting ranks of the workers. The National Campaign Committee represents only a part of our struggle for unity. This unity must reach the grass root level in all industries, must be made more widespread and broadbased to be an effective instrument to combat official policies. The CITU conference reiter-

ated the call of a confederation of Central Trade Union Organisations and Federations. The confederation if agreed to will be a big step in the direction of all-in unity. To began with, it may only be a forum for exchange of views. But it will definitely strengthen the urge to have a common understanding to meet the increasing attacks on labour, a common understanding on how to combat anti-labour policies of the Government.

The question of forging the unity of trade union movement in action is one of the most important tasks before the CITU, a task which can not be fulfilled unless the CITU unions take initiative and develop their independent activities all along. The task cannot be achieved unless the CITU develops increased strength among the mass of workers. The CITU session itself felt that the membership of CITU unions did not represent adequately its influence and strength, that a widespread membership drive must be organised and utmost initiative should be taken to conduct and lead struggles and mass actions. It is true that last year the CITU led more struggles than any other organisation. That is good. But much more needs to be done if the CITU is to fulfil its role as the initiator and the leader of the struggle for unity. Let the foundation day see CITU unions firmly set on the task of strengthening the CITU and achieving all-in unity.

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Against War

THE CITU calls upon all its unions, all its workers, its State and District Committees to protest on 1st September against the nuclear war plans of US imperialism.

The CITU will protest in association with such other trade union organisations which are prepared to fight the war danger and US plans of aggression.

The CITU, AITUC, UTUC, TUCC and Rastriya Mazdoor Congress have issued a joint call asking the workers to demonstrate unitedly against the US plans for a nuclear holocaust.

Never before in the history of the world was such a conspiracy hatched against humanity, against all countries against all peoples. For the destruction unleashed by the nuclear war will spare none. Waring and non-waring countries, Eastern and Western hemispheres, countries and peoples who have nothing to do with the war will be either directly destroyed by nuclear blasts or killed by radiation.

Moscow and Washington, London and Paris, Delhi and Calcutta can be destroyed in a minute.

It is a war which not only threatens the soldiers, the active combatants, it threatens wholesale devastation of civilian population, the worker in the factory, the peasant ploughing his field, the housewife doing her house chores and the childern playing in the tanks and attending schools.

Never before in the history of the world was there such a demo-

niac and selfish class as the present day US imperialists.

The CITU calls upon India's working class, all progressive sections to raise their voice of protest and join their hands across the seas with their brethren in Soviet Russia, and in Europe and the USA to stop this march of nuclear destruction.

The war plot is a challenge to the internationalism of the working class, those who have the honour to hold the Red Flag. It calls upon the working class of India to intervene in time to save the lives of millions of workers in other countries who are threatened with direct destruction by the USA.

The war that is organised is not just war of one country against another. It is a war of US imperialists allying with British and other imperialists against the Socialist Soviet Union—a war to destroy a hundred years' conquests of working class in blood.

It is a war of imperialists to impose permanent slavery on the world working class and to restore the global domination of the US.

As a result of widespread destruction the US imperialists hope to impose servitude on countries like India. The Diego Garcia base, the rapid deployment force, the arming of India's neighbours are part of this conspiracy.

Millions in Europe and elsewhere will be protesting against the war preparations. We must join our voice with them. Along with them we must demand that there should be no deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe. These are being placed to directly attack the USSR and they are intended to make nuclear war inevitable.

The Soviet Union finally holds the banner of peace and offers several proposals to save the world from war and millions of lives of the common people. The working class of India hails these proposals and fully supports them.

It is the privilege and duty of India's working class to rouse the people to the danger of war. It is the duty of CITU workers to carry the message to workers of other organisations. Let the voice of our working class ring clearly in defence of socialist achievements, against the US imperialists.

No planting of missiles in Europe
Freeze all nuclear weapons
Down with nuclear war-mongers
Working class unity will win
Peace must triumph.

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Denounce U.S. Provocation

ON the 1st of September the working class of the world organised huge demonstrations to defend peace and avoid the calamities of nuclear war.

In India at the call of CITU, AITUC, and other Central Trade Unions, and the CPI(M) and CPI, the workers held rallies, organised demonstrations and protested against the U.S. imperialist plans to unleash a nuclear war.

The voice of Indian workers joined with the voice of the peace fighters and workers in other countries to denounce war and protect peace. There were gigantic demonstrations in Calcutta, West Bengal and huge rallies in Andhra Pradesh, all over Kerala, apart from innumerable rallies and meetings in Bombay, Madras, and several industrial centres. But precisely because the workers all over the world are succeeding in organising peace struggle everywhere, in all centres including the USA, the American imperialists are resorting to deliberate and crude provocation to side-track attention and befuddle minds of the people.

The deliberate violation of the Soviet air space by a South Korean airliner which continued to fly over Soviet territory for 2·5 hours, and which refused to heed to the warning signals to land down were all part of a U.S. plot to put the blame on the Soviet and launch and anti-Soviet drive. The loss of 269 lives is now blamed on the Soviet Government. People's regret and sorrow for loss of so many lives is exploited to slander the Soviet Union and fan fires of war.

But what is the truth? The Soviet had to shoot down the plane when its espionage mission had become clear. After violating Soviet air space for two hours the plane made an effort to sneak into a strategic area for espionage photography. All the while it was in contact with the Japanese and U.S. ground station who knew that the plane was in Soviet air space. They did not warn it because they had sent it. The plane was also accompanied for a time by a U.S. spy plane. The story gets complete when it is realised that the the South Korean Government is puppet of the USA and on earlier occasion also South Korean plane was used for espionage purposes. The U.S. authorities knew that no Government can tolerate a foreign plane to carry on espionage and photograph it military installations. And yet they deliberately sent the Korean plane to do the job. The responsibility for the death of more than 200 people lies with the Reagan war gang.

But the USA and its racist imperialist allies Britain, West Germany and Japan, having organised the provocation, are now using this nefarious affair to justify their arms drive.

But the world is not fooled so easily. Bit by bit the press in these countries has put the pieces together, and challenged the U.S. version. The world now realises that it was a crude provocation organised by the CIA.

The U.S. efforts to isolate the USSR are failing. The non-aligned countries like India and others have refused to accept the U.S. story, though they regretted the loss of lives. All the imperialist Governments joined hands to slander the Soviet. They enacted the farce of a Security Council meeting to condemn the Soviet Union to conceal their own crime. Only by applying pressure on certain reactionary regimes of Third World countries, they could get the requisite majority. It is no surprise that Martial dictator Zia's Government supported the U.S. resolution in the Security Council. He requires U.S. help to crush his own people. Peoples' China refused to support the resolution.

All these imperialist countries further decided to cancel Soviet air flights to their countries. But here also all did not follow the U.S. lead with equal zeal. Some cancelled flights only for a few days. All this was meant to fix the guilt on the Soviet Union. Not satisfied with this the USA struck on a new provocation to ban the flight of Soviet Plane carrying Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to New York to attend the U.N. meeting. This was open violation of the

agreement entered with the U.N. But what does Reagan care? He requires diversion of the people—the U.S. people from peace movement to finance his war programme and deployment of missiles in Europe.

But this time the U.S. imperialists perhaps overshot the mark. The entire world—the third world countries and progressive masses in all countries are shocked by this banning of Gromyko's plane. The provocation became clear. The U.S. imperialists knew that the authoritative voice of Gromyko will reach the people through the UNO and the truth will be known to millions. It also knows that this provocation will create further tension helping a war atmosphere.

The full significance of these development must be properly understood. All the major imperialist powers—the USA, Britain, West Germany, Japan are rallying together to form a coalition to oppose the Soviet Union and go ahead openly with the programme of deploying cruise and pershing missiles in Europe. This rally of imperialist countries to stem peace and increase armaments constitutes a menacing development in world politics—a development threatening the lives, freedom and independence of millions.

This uncruppulous combination is prepared to use any provocation to achieve its aims. It had no compunction in sending 250 Korean passengers to death to achieve its nefarious game. The fact that it is in need of such inhuman provocation on the one hand shows the dangerous international situation and on the other that the imperialists realise that without diverting the attention of the people they cannot achieve their aims.

The provocation is intended not only to slander and isolate the USSR, it is a move against the forces of peace to mislead and divide them, a move to alienate their sympathy from the Soviet Union whose concrete proposals for peace, for reduction of armaments have been welcomed by the peace movement. Fear of peace forces, fear of the people is the main reason behind this provocation.

What do the imperialists seek to achieve through this slander campaign? They want freedom to deploy missiles in Europe. They demand arms and missiles superiority over the Soviet Union so that they can any day launch a nuclear attack against it. And for this purpose in the coming months they want the peace movement to be disrupted. The Soviet Union while replying to the crude slanders has correctly placed the responsibility for the Korean airliner incident on the CIA and said that the compensation for loss of

lives should be secured from the U.S. authorities.

The Soviet Union has also made it clear that while it stands for reduction of nuclear armaments and wants all nuclear weapons be destroyed, it will never accept arms superiority for the imperialist countries. To accept such a position is to let down the defence of the Socialist countries. All must welcome the Soviet stand and its refusal to yield to Western blackmail.

In their preparation for the drive for war the U.S. and other imperialists are starving their own people by millions; throwing them out of jobs, driving them to suicide and murder. In the USA 10 millions are unemployed, in the U.K. 3.5 millions, in the advanced capitalist countries 30 millions are unemployed. Instead of spending money to give relief to the unemployed, to restructure the economy to create new jobs, the imperialists are spending billions on nuclear arms, missiles, satellites and what not. This is what imperialism is.

At the same time these imperialists have started a war against the liberty and freedom of smaller nations. The U.S. has sent armed forces to Lebanon to crush the people there and help Israel to swallow part of Lebenon. The USA is openly intervening in Nicaragua, Salvador and conspiring against Cuba. It is at the same time pouring armaments in Pakistan, F-16 planes, Harpoon missiles to be used against Indian people—India's workers and peasants. The plot of enslavement is quite clear. Arming of the USA and its allies is not only to fight the USSR, but to enslave the whole world.

Such is the world situation. The imperialist powers led by the USA are combining to isolate the Soviet Union, to secure arms superiority over her and prepare for an aggressive attack against her. They seek to destroy the achievements of Socialist revolution—a system without unemployment, poverty and crisis. They thereby want to make the world safe for capitalist exploitation and finally for imperialist enslavement. It is the armed strength of the Soviet Union that stands as the biggest obstacle to enslavement of third world countries. To destroy this strength is the imperialist plot to unleash a nuclear world war and sacrifice the lives of tens of millions.

But their plans cannot succeed so easily. Already their provocation and the trade methods adopted by them have exposed them before the world. The lie did not take much time to be detected. Their attempt to divert the attention of the people are failing. The

peace forces, seeing the provocation, are bound to redouble their endeavours to defeat plans for deployment of missiles in Europe and press for disarmament. Inside the USA itself the people are getting angry over huge war expenditure, unemployment and economic conditions. The voice of peace forces is getting stronger.

To bring success to the struggle for peace, to frustrate the war plan and deployment of missiles in Europe it is necessary that people of all countries raise their voice in protest. Weakness in any one country only helps the warmongers.

But compared with the vast multitude who have not heard of the war danger, they were a small force. Even the major part of the working class is not seized of the danger. The Congress(I) party leaders sometimes talk of the war danger but care is taken by them not to mention the USA as the war plotter.

The bourgeois opposition parties act as if there is no danger to world peace. They ignore the piling up of nuclear armaments, the aggressive nuclear stand of the USA and the peace stand of the USSR. Nuclear war which threatens to kill millions over the world, which will affect millions of Indian people, is no concern of theirs. All of them glibly talk of non-violence. But they will not open their months to speak against it. These parties besides do Indian opinion against it. These parties besides do not accept that nuclear war is an instrument of U.S. imperialism out to establish its global domination—domination of the world including India. In fact some of them openly talk about two super powers equating Socialist Soviet Union with imperialist USA.

This is a dangerous situation which leaves our people unaware of the war danger and paralyses Indian intervention for world peace. It prevents the working class and people of India from doing their duty to themselves and to the peoples of the world faced with the massacre of millions. It is clear that the bourgeois parties will not mobilise the mass of Indian people against the war drive of the imperialists. But the organised working class can do it using its own strength to rouse and mobilise the people. The good work done on September 1 must be carried further and vigorously pursued. All our State Committees and unions in cooperation with other trade union organisations must wage a relentless campaign against the war danger and uphold the peace proposals and efforts of the USSR. The entire working class, the entire strength of the

organised trade union movement must be rallied in support of peace and Soviet peace proposals. Our unions must also expose the provocation started by the U.S. and its imperialist allies and assure the world working class that Indian workers have understood the deceitful game and are exposing the enemies of peace. If the trade unions carry on un-remitted struggle and use their full mobilising capacity, the entire country will soon learn about the war danger and come out as an active force in defence of world peace. The cry "Workers of the World Unite" means today unite for peace, unite against war, unite to defeat the attack of the imperialists against the socialist world.

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7th November, 1983

ON Seventh November the CITU and the working class of our country send their warm fraternal greetings to the working class and people of the USSR. Seventh November symbolises the first triumpth of the working class against the capitalist order which decrees exploitation for the working class and the toiling people.

On that day in 1917 the working class of Russia under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party headed by Lenin organised a successful revolution and overthrew the regime of the capitalists and landlords. On that day came into existence the first State led by the working class and committed to end all exploitation.

Since then the working class of the world celebrates this day as a day of international solidarity and revolutionary inspiration, calling on all contingents of the international army of the working class to end the capitalist order and establish a socialist society free from class domination.

Superiority of the Socialist System

The day has also been observed to enumerate the great victories of socialist reconstruction of society in the Soviet Union during the last six decades. They announce the superiority of the socialist system which is free from poverty, economic crisis, exploitation and unemployment in contrast to the world of capitalism and private property.

No wonder within a few decades of the first epoch-making victory, several other victories were secured and the world saw the

emerging of the socialist camp embracing one-third of the world. Today on 7th November 1983 the contrast between the two camps the two social systems is sharper than ever. The capitalist countries are going through the worst economic crisis of the system with 30 million people unemployed, with a growing onslaught on the standard of living of the working class and the common man. In the midst of this situation the rulers of the imperialist countries are spending billions on armaments, preparing for massacre of millions. They starve their own people, they reduce them to destitutes, they cut all social welfare measures, they impose joblessness on millions to satisfy the demands of war preparations.

In contrast though the Socialist countries are forced to divert part of their resources to defence, they have freed their people from the scourge of unemployment and poverty and continue to ensure them a growingly higher standard of life, from depredation of inflation, rocketting prices and underhand methods to deflate the earnings of the common people.

U.S. Conspiracies for War

However, this year when we celebrate 7th November and offer our greetings to the working class and the people of Soviet Union our minds are not able to focus attenion on the achievements in economic advance secured in recent years. We see war clouds gathering round the Soviet Union, we see the plottings of imperialists powers to unleash war and express our concern and indignation at these conspiracies.

Chagrined by their failure to undermine the Polish Socialist regime, hemmed in from all sides by the deteriorating economic situation and afraid of the growing popularity of socialist ideology in all countries, the U.S. imperialists are hatching their war plot against the Soviet Union.

The provocation let loose by war monger Reagan, the American President, following the shooting down of a South Korean Airliners, on an espionage mission in Soviet air space underlines the gravity of the international situation.

The shooting down of the espionage plane was used not only to slander the USSR, but to disrupt the growing peace movement. The diabolical plot and the propaganda let loose after its success and the provocative steps following it—Resolution of the Security Council, blaming the USSR, banning entry to Gromyko's plane and preventing the Soviet Foreign Minister from participating in

the U.N. meeting, reveal the intense war preparations of the USA and the unscrupulous lengths to which it is prepared to go in pursuit of its war designs. This is the big danger which our people and our working class must see and combat.

The line of U.S. and imperialist propagandists in connection with the Korean airliner incident must be noted. They conveniently screen the fact that the airliner was deliberately violating Soviet air space for two hours. Ignoring the fact they hypocritically raise the question of safety of civil aviaton. Does safety of civil aviation mean that any civil aircraft has the right to violate other nation's air space for hours and refuse to land when ordered? The imperialists in fact are demanding that spy civilian planes sent by them should not be touched, other nations have no right over air space. This is said by the same imperialists who justify in the name of the security of their countries, deployment of their armed forces thousands of miles away from their shores. Will the U.S. tolerate a civilian plane from a small country like Hungary or Bulgaria violate its air space for hours and fly towards strategic installations to collect information? Can India or China for instance tolerate the same?

For Global Domination

The U.S. imperialists are out for global domination. War is an instrument of achieving this objective. They are wantonly intervening in Central America, in Nicaragua, El-Salvador and attacking the people of these countries fighting for freedom and democracy.

They are intervening in Lebanon and helping Isreli aggression against that country.

They are building a naval base at Diego Garcia which will be a source of danger to India and several other countries. They are furiously arming Pakistan and its military dictator to create tension and war between the two countries.

The provocation was organised when the peoples of the world were agitated over the U.S. plan to deploy in Europe Pershing and Cruise missiles targetted at the USSR. The purpose of stationing these missiles in West Germany and elsewhere is to bring the USSR under a threat of direct attack from these countries. This is Reagan's reply to the USSR's declaration that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons. This is Reagan's counter strike to Soviet proposals to reduce all nuclear weapons, to freeze them immediately with

a view to destroying them.

Reagan and his imperialist allies are keen on deploying these genocidal missiles by December 1st. To counter the opposition of peoples of Europe, of West Germany, France, England, Reagan manipulated the the airliner incident.

Bunkum Theory of two Super Powers

There are enough dupes and fools in India as elsewhere who think that the war is being organised on both sides; that both sides are to be blamed for piling up of armaments. They, misled by pro-imperialist propagandists and bourgeois opportunists, talk of two super powers. They forget that the two countries—called super powers—the USA and the USSR represent two different social systems. The USA represents the imperialist capitalist system for whom war is necessary to keep itself alive; the USSR represents the socialist system which has no interest in war, and which considers war as a danger to its progress and therefore does its utmost to avoid it. It is forced to spend on defence because it is threatened by imperialist aggression.

Soviet Decree of peace

The socialist revolution in Russia was won with the slogan : end the war, the cry of peace among nations and peoples. This was during the first world war (imperialist war) when huge armies were confronting each other and the major imperialist countries were busy organising mass carnage.

On the morrow of the revolution, the new working class government published its decree on peace drafted by Lenin. It said, "The Workers and Peasants' Government created by the Revolution of Octobr 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers, Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just democratic peace.

"By a just or democratic peace, for which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all the belligerent countries—are craving—, by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations(i.e. peace without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities."

This was announced when war was still raging against Russia and the imperialists were slaughtering people to secure colonial conqests.

The decree spoke not only against war, but also against the enslavement of colonies by the imperialists. It spoke for the freedom of enslaved people like India. Since then the Socialist State has consistently stood for peace and aganist wars of aggresion, while it supported wars of national liberation.

Knowing that with its emergence the world saw two social systems based on antagonistic principles and realising that this will be used by the imperialists to launch a war to eliminate the new system, the Soviet Union offered peaceful coexistence as the basis of its foreign policy towards the capitalist States. Throughout its existence of more than six decades the Soviet Union firmly adhered to this policy of peaceful coexistence, protection of world peace. There is no parallel in human history of a State so firmly proclaiming and protecting peace among nations. Only a Socialist State led by the working class could do it. Had the ruling classes in capitalist States listened to the voice of the Soviet Union there would have been no Second World War which caused huge destruction and led to an enormous loss of life, beside imposing untold misery on the common people.

War the Constant Companion of Imperialism

The rise of fascism in Europe and the over-running of Germany by Hitler clearly pointed to the war danger. The fascists led by Hitler were bent on war at all cost. They could have been checked and frustrated had the other powers like Britain, France, USA combined with the USSR to checkmate them. The USSR therefore called upon these powers to build collective security against fascist aggression. For years it struggled to achieve the objective and called for protecting peace. But the British, French and USA imperialists continued to support Hitler and encouraged his plans of aggression against the USSR. They made the second world war inevitable.

This experience after the rise of the first Socialist State shows that peace is a necessity for socialism and the socialist system which are free from exploitation of man by man; while war is a necessity for and constant companion of imperialism, of the capitalist system based on exploitation of nations and the working class and working people.

Today also the same picture is seen in international affairs. While the Soviet Union and all socialist countries ardently strive for peace, the U.S. aided by its imperialist allies is working for a genocidal war.

Imperialism is a blood thirsty system. It cannot exist without shedding the blood of millions and millions of people. In the first world war they killed lakhs of people. In the second world war many times more were killed. And in the nuclear war they are preparing they intend to kill tens of millions in a few minutes.

Such a blood thirsty system was never in existence before. The only power that can stop the war maniacs from pushing along the war path is the power of the working class and the people. No war can be launched if the organised working class of advanced countries maintains its international solidarity and refuses to be victim of national or bourgeois chauvinism. In war the first casuality is the solidarity and international unity of the working class. That is where the vital role of proletarian internationalism comes in.

Struggle for peace

Today the fight for peace, for avoiding war is being carried on by vast sections of people in Europe, the USA and elsewhere along with the working class. If the working class everywhere including India stands firmly by the banner of proletarion internationalism, of peace, the fight for peace will be invincible.

In Europe the peace forces are getting more determined than ever with prospect of deployment of new missiles by December this year. In England on October 5 the annual conference of the British labour Party overwhelmingly declared for a unilateral nuclear disarmament, Report appearing in the *Morning State* (London) says "Unconditional unilateral disarmament was overwhelmingly reaffirmed as Labour Party's policy in a stinging rebuff to the hard right. Delegates stood firm in support of the party's programme for peace, leaving labour committed to scrapping Cruise, Trident and polaris and closing all nuclear bases when it comes to office. The conference cheered Ren Todd of Tansport and General Council Workers' Union when he said it was time Britain stopped being an aircraft carrier for the U.S."

By reaffirming its policy despite the electoral setback it had received the labour Party Conference has voiced the feelings of the working class and peoples of the world, their urge for peace and nuclear disarmament. But the Governments of the imperialist countries, like the USA, Britain and others represent the interests of the multinationals who dictate economic and foreign policies to them. To bolster their interests in the midst of recession they spend billions of dollars on armaments cutting down social security

expenditures and employment opporunities for the workers. Instead of spending these vast sums for bolstering employment, they spend them on acquiring destructive weapons.

Profit—the Motive Force of Capitalism

In the USA the nunber of unemployed exceeds 10 million. In the advanced capitalist countries put together the number of unemployed exceeds 30 millions. Yet these are the countries whose Governments are preparing for war to sacrifice millions of lives of their honest workers, because war and war production are more profitable to the multinationals than production of jobs and necessaries of life. Guns are better than butter and jobs. It is known that for every one person employed in war industry, many more can be employed for the same amount of capital in other industries. But that is not porofitable for the big capitalists.

U.S. Rejects Soviet Peace Proposals

That is why the U.S. imperialists are rejecting one peace proposal after another put forward by the USSR and insisting on having nuclear superiority for themselves so that they can start aggression any time they want. They describe this demand for arms superiority as zero option.

The socialist state proposes peace, is prepared to agree to mutual guarantees for peace, but the imperialists state rejects these offers and does not change its stand on the drive for war.

The USSR has declared that it will not be the first to use a nuclear strike. It has assured the common people of the world that the Socialist State would go to the utmost length to save the world from war. Its declaration is hailed by the peace loving masses all over the world. All that was necessary to save world peace was a similar assurance from the U.S.

But the U.S. President and administration refused to give such an assurance. They belittled the importance of Soviet declaration and refused to respond. They made it clear which side stood for war and exposed the propaganda talk about two super-powers and the hypocrisy of those who blamed both sides.

The USSR not only made the offer in relation to nuclear strike, it also said that it was ready for destruction of all nuclear weapons and for ban on their production. But the U.S. refuse to take notice of this offer and goes on adding to its arsenal such dangerous weapons as Neutron Bombs, Pershing and Cruise missiles.

The USSR also proposed that pending agreement on total de-

struction of weapons and ban on their test, there should be parity or balance of such weapons between the two camps (Warsaw and NATO) so that neither side lives in fear of the other and peace is maintained. The U.S. imperialist and allies not only did not respond to this offer, they made claims for nuclear superiority for themselves.

Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the CPSU and the Supreme Soviet have made an appeal to the Parliaments and Legislatures of all countries to support their peace proposals. The appeal says "A durable, dependable and lasting peace is the first and most compelling need of all people, of all nations of all human kind.

"The need for peace is of particular importance when countries have weapons that can destroy human civilisation and all life on our planet and when the threat of war, which apparently pushed back in the 1970 has again to mount and international tension is mountingly increasing.

"We the authorised representatives of the Soviet people, solidly declare that in keeping with the Leninist policy of peace and international cooperation, the Soviet Union will do all in its power to avert war.

"We reaffirm that in accordance with the commitment it has undertaken the Soviet Union will not be the first to use nuclear weapons and once again call upon other nuclear powers to undetake a similar commitment.

"We declare that the Soviet Union is prepared on a basis of reciprocity with the United States of America, to freeze its nuclear arsenal."

"We call for a quick and fruitful completion of Soviet Union-United States talks on limiting and reducing strategic arms and limiting nuclear armaments in Europe and the earliest conclusion of our agreement on armed forces and arms reduction in Central Europe."

"We propose coming to an agreement without delay on a complete and general nuclear test ban so that no more new kinds and types of nuclear weapons may be developed."

"We call for the prohibition and destruction of Chemical weapons." Thus speaks the voice of socialism, the voice of the international working class.

All those who do not heed this voice, those who talk of two super-powers, equate Warsaw Pact Socialist countries with NATO

Alliance, directly or indirectly promote the cause of U.S. imperialism. They abet it to go to war against the USSR and plunge it in a world nuclear disaster.

The Naxalites and their ilk in other countries abet this game of aggression against the USSR.

The fascist hordes of Hitler tried to drown the socialist revolution and its achievements in blood. The Soviet Union defeated the attack but had to pay immense price in blood and materials. Its success, however, changed the balance of forces in the world, sounding the death knell colonialism. It announced the emergence of the socialist camp.

Protect the Working Class State—Fight US War Designs

Today again the same challenge is being prepared to destroy achievements of socialism and re-enslave the countries which have achieved freedom from imperialism, to re-enslave the working class which has emancipated itself from the yoke of capitalism. Where do the Indian workers and people stand in this gigantic struggle which will determine the fate of the world and even its existence? What is our cry "Workers of the World Unite" worth if our movement it unable to create a terrific pressure on the imperialists to desist from war against the working class State?

Proletarian internationalism, loyalty to freedom, democracy and socialism demand that India's working class aided by its people should throw its full weight behind the peace forces, against the U.S. designs for war, exposing at each step every provocation of U.S. imperialism and its allies.

Already there are powerful forces in all countries. Workers and other citizens are protesting against war, pressing their governments to join the call for disarmament and abjuration of nuclear weapons. The Goverments of imperialist countries are shaking under their pressure. If the voice of India's millions join their voice, if India's working class and people seriously undertake a crusade for peace they will contribute to turning the balance against war mongers. The good work started since September 1st last which led to huge peace rallies must be pursued with greater vigour.

On Seventh Novermber all our State Committees and all CITU unions will express solidarity with the USSR, its working class and people in the struggle for peace waged by them. They will support and popularise the peace proposals of the CPSU and Supreme Soviet and express their firm determination to fight for world

peace.

Our State Committees and unions will denounce the war designs of the U.S. and its imperialist allies who have now formed war bloc for purposes of aggressions.

On Seventh November our State Committees and unions will recall how the Socialist Soviet Union has stood for peace in its existence of six decades, and how it is doing everything possible to save the peoples of the world from the horrors of a nuclear war.

On Seventh November we join our voice with millions in other countries to protest against war. Together with them we work for the defeat of those who plan to deploy cruise missiles in Europe by December.

The Working Class Vol. 13 No. 2 November 1983

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Presidential Speech

Working Committee Meeting of CITU
Jamshedpur, November 30-December 2, 1983

COMRADES, we are meeting for the first time since our Fifth Conference.

Our meeting should have been held earlier but usual events crowded one after another and we could not keep to the schedule.

It is unfortunate that death is taking away from us our valuable comrades, leaving us forlon and desolate. You all will join me in expressing our grief over the passing away of Comrade M.R. Vekataraman, an outstanding Marxist-Leninist, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and a great revolutionary fighter who guided the working class movement in Tamilnadu for years. May his memory remain ever green in our minds inspiring us.

You will join me in honouring the memory of all our workers and leaders who fell victims to brutal repression of the Government and the organised goondas in several States, Gujarat (Kandla), Bihar, Haryana, U.P. , Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan (Kota), all have again experienced the terror of administration, to facilitate the attacks of the employers. They have also again experienced the murderous attacks of goondas and hirelings. It is unfortunate that sometimes such attacks come from members and supporters of rival organisations bringing grist to the mill of the employers and supplying the Government with the excuse of trade union rivalries. The gruesome story of murders of our CITU comrades in Modinagar in U.P. is the direct result of adoption of gangster methods by

the manipulators of a loosing organisation. We honour the memory of our comrades who were murdered because they stood by the CITU and would not renege even under threat of death. The CITU has developed and got steeled by the martyrdom of our cadres, our workers in factories. We send our warm greetings to our comrades who have been unjustly detained in jail and we ask all our unions to demand their release.

Comrades the same grusome story is repeated in Kalta near Rourkela in Orisa. Unable to meet our growing strength among the miners and steel employees by genuine trade union work, those who have vested interest in a rival union, organised a cowardly attack against our leader Comrade Ananta Raut. Failing to get him they attacked his house, assaulted his family members and killed his five year old child. We cannot find words to condemn this dastardly and inhuman outrage against an innocent child. Those who did it and those who hired them alike are criminals deserving the maximum punishment under the law.

We express our sympahty for Com. Raut and his family and appreciate the courage with which they have faced the tragedy. It is the uncommon courage of our comrades like Raut that steels our workers and cadres and make CITU synonym for sacrifice in the cause of the workers and revolutionary steadfastness in face of the great odds.

International Situation—Danger of War

Comrades at our fifth conference we noted the growing danger of war and the worsening of the international situation. Last six months have been further deterioration leading to arms race and increased danger of war. The situation is created by the determination of U.S. imperialists and their European allies to site new missiles in Europe which can directly reach deep inside the Soviet territory. Armed with these weapons of aggression the USA in the name of negotiations demands nuclear and military superiority over the USSR. It, therefore, refused to take into consideration the missile power of both France and Britain which constitutes 20 per cent of the nuclear power of the NATO war camp.

Soviet Peace Proposals

The USSR has made several concrete proposals to ease the situation and avert the danger of war for the peoples of the world. It made a unilateral declaration that it would not be the first to use the nuclear strike. The people of the world expected that response

would come from the Governments of Europe and the USA. They refused to respond and say they would not be first to use nuclear strike.

As late as October 5 this year the Soviet Foreign Ministers Andrei Gromyko submitted two resolutions—one for condemning the nuclear war and the other advocating nuclear freeze—for inclusion in the agenda of the 38th Session of the U.N. Assembly. The first resolution says "The General Assembly expressing the concern at the growing threat of nuclear war which can result in the annihilation of the civilisation on earth, calling attention to all States and peoples to the conclusion.....that it is impossible to limit the deadly consequences of a nuclear war, if it were to be started, and that there can be no winners in a nuclear war—

(1) Resolutely, unconditionally and for all times condemns nuclear war as being contrary to human conscience, and reason as the most hideous crime against the people, as the violation of the foremost human right—the right to life.

(2) Declare as criminal acts the formulation, enunciation, dissemination and propagation of political and military doctrines and concepts designed to substantitate both the legitimacy of the first use of nuclear weapons and generally the admissibility of unleashing of nuclear war.

The second resolution urges all nuclear weapons states to agree to freeze...all nuclear weapons in their possession and not to deploy nuclear arms of new kinds.

Calls upon the USSR and the USA, which possess the largest nuclear arsenals, to freeze in the first place their nuclear arsenals, and simultaneously, their nuclear arms on a liberal basis by way of example to other nuclear States. Believes that all other nuclear weapons States should subsequently and as soon as possible freeze their nuclear arms".

The imperialists of course did not respond to this clear offer to relieve the world of the nuclear war, remove the atmosphere of fear and suspicion between nations.

Besides, the USSR made concrete proposals to scale down armaments gradually step by step and proposed to solve the problem through negotiations at Geneva. It made an offer to scale done its missiles in Europe provided other side also agreed to an equal reduction. It said that in the absence of elimination of nuclear weapons and a process of mutually agreed nuclear disarmament,

needs of security of concerned nations can be best served by accepting the principle of parity in arms and not disturbing the present military equibilrium. Deployment of new U.S. missiles like Cruise and Pershing, it said, was nothing but an attempt to establish military superiority and it would not allow it. It therefore offered again to agree to mutual reduction to missiles if new weapons were not deployed in Europe. But the U.S. imperialists in their aggressive mood refuse to respond and are determined to pursue their drive for nuclear agressive war against the Soviet Union and Socialist countries.

Preparation for Defence—Responsiblity to Socialism

Today therefore the USSR is faced with the question of defending herself when the U.S. imperialists are plotting their agreessive designs and preparing for nuclear supremacy. It would be a complete abandonment of all responsibilities to socialism, to the USSR itself, if adequate and effective steps are not taken to meet the challenge and the aggressors are not made aware that severe deterrents await them. The leaders of the USSR have not failed in this respect. While they worked strenuously for peace, for reduction and diminution of nuclear armaments, they took note of what the imperialist were doing, of their piling up of armaments, and ensured that there was not laxity in their capacity to defend their country. The defence capacity of the socialist camp has been a strong deterrent restraining the war mongers who want to reshape the world to suit the needs of imperialism, to the global ambitions of U.S. imperialists. On May 28, 1983, the Soviet Union Government declared that in case the new American missiles are deployed in Europe it will have to take retaliatory measures, to consider the decision on the unilateral moratorium on deployment of medium ranges missiles in European zone, to carry out measures for deploying additional means for creating counter balance to the growing nuclear weapons of the USA and other NATO countries in Europe, take measures with the view of the territory of the USA itself.

This of course is necessary and fully justified. The war mongers and agressors cannot be conceded weapons supremacy. That will be just helping the imperialists against the socialist system. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the entry of new missiles in Europe will signify a qualitative change in the military strategic situation and leave to the USSR no other choice but to take retali-

atory action.

The working class of the world and people of all countries will hail this statement of the USSR which shows that the imperialists cannot cow down the socialist world. The statement besides shows the extreme gravity of the situation. The socialist camp and the Soviet Union do not lightly talk about retaliation unless the situation is getting out of hand. It is, therefore, a call to the people of the world, including the people of India, to intervene in time, bring into action the force of public opinion against the imperialists and curb the nuclear adventurers.

War Against the Socialist System

The working class of India, our trade union movement must understand what is at stake. The war that is being prepared is not a war between two superpowers—but between two social systems. The U.S. imperialists and their European allies, now aided by Japan, are out to destroy the socialist system—the achievements of the world working class during the course of a struggle lasting over more than hundred years. They want to restore the socialist world—one-third of the world—to capitalist and imperialist exploitation and turn the workers and peoples of these countries into their slaves. They seek to restore the situation obtaining before 1914 when there was not socialist country and the entire world lay at their feet. They seek to restore the old colonial order and destroy the freedom and liberty of countries who have come into their own after the emergence of the socialist camp. They consider this camp to be the main deterrent in their way of global domination. Imperialism cannot change its character. It seeks repartitioning and redistribution of the world at the expense of the freedom of millions of people. The war will thus be war for destruction of socialism, for enslavement of the world including India.

And for this the imperialists are prepared to slaughter millions and millions of people—in their country as well as in other countries. Some of them openly say only 100 million Americans will die in a nuclear war. There will be enough Americans left to enjoy the fruits of a nuclear war.

Our trade unions and working class has to face the reality and play its role in countering this danger to humanity, to freedom and socialism. Our exposure of the war mongers and our struggle for peace must be immensely strengthened and full support must be lent to the peace proposals of the USSR. We must realise that the

U.S. imperialists and their agents do everything possible to mislead public opinion. You are all aware how in their unscrupulousness they organised the South Korean air-liner incident to get a propaganda advantage. This provocation can be compared only with Reichstag fire provocation for Hitler. The entire world has condemned the cowardly American attack on tiny Grenada under the plea of a search for armed Cubans. And now in Labanon they openly act as an occupying power to help the Israeli aggressors. The U.S. imperialist are on a rampage and every provocations and war move of theirs must be exposed.

Role of the Ruling Party

This is a task before all patriotic and democratic forces. The ruling party which appropriates to itself the monopoly of patriotism and democracy however thinks otherwise. It does not criticise the despicable and provocative role of U.S. Imperialism in creating a bellicose war atmosphere. The Resolution on International Situation passed by AICC Session in Bombay nowhere mentions U.S. imperialism. It resorts to talk about the super powers. It says "The discourse among the Super Powers on the great and abiding issue of peace is no longer based on grounds of reason. The conflicts, actual and practical abound. Plausible to be within the grasp of world organisations. Tensions proliferate crisis threatens human civilisation." Who is doing all this—both super powers—the people are told.

You will not educate the people about the real source of danger, though you may issue statements on peace as Smt. Indira Gandhi does. The war is not going to be prevented, peace cannot be protected by a few conscience raising statements of the leader of the ruling party. To save it the intervention of the people is required and this is precisely the Congress(I) does not do by concealing the real source of war danger.

However formal support for peace is better than no support, than support for war. The struggle for peace in India will be ten times more difficult with a Government committed in the opposite direction.

India Being Surrounded

The same imperialist power—the USA—having failed to get India into its net, is busy supporting reactionary dictatorships in neighbouring countries, dictators who are hostile to India, who seek to divert the discontent of their people into anti-India channel.

The game of the imperialists is quite clear. It is to hold a permanent threat of hostility and war from across the broder, and pressurise India to give up its non-alignment policy, give up its friendship with the USSR and join the bandwagon of the US imperialists, compromising Indian independence and sovereignty.

The induction of military weapons in pakistan, the supply of F 16 Planes followed by Harpoon missiles is nothing but preparation for military hostilities started by the US with the aid of a pliant dictator. On the other side is Ershad, the Bangladesh dictator, who threatens to stir hostile atmosphere on the question of a border fence to protect illegal immigration from Bangladesh into this country. And there is the Hindu King of Nepal whose Government is also adopting and anti-Indian posture to create a wall between India and Nepal. Nepal no doubt has certain genuine grievances against its neighbour, but they are now exploited to create distrust between peoples which facilitates the imperialist game of setting one people of the sub-continent against another. And finally the Buddhist Lanka whose President openly denounced India during the massacre of Tamil minority in July-August and called for help from imperialist forces—the USA and Britain. The Sri Lanka part of Trincomalee is already controlled by the U.S. Navy and is virtually a U.S. naval base, only a few miles from India.

The autocratic, dictatorial regimes surrounding India are becoming a threat to India's independence and the freedom of their own countries. The democratic and working class movement in India is therefore vitally interested in the advance of democracy in these countries so that both the dictators and the imperialists are checked.

Vital importance therfore attaches to the courageous struggle of the people of Pakistan against the military dictator. The success of the popular movement release forces of liberation throughout the subcontinent shattering the bases of all dictatorships and strengthening the democratic forces in this country.

But Zia is suppressing the people with the utmost brutality. Men, women, children are attacked, arrested, jailed and flogged. Many are killed in Sind which is the storm-centre of the struggle. This is how common people—all Muslims—are treated in an Islamic State which professes to follow the teachings of the Koran. The cry of Islamic brotherhood and Islamic State in the mouth of the ruling classes is a hypocritical cry to keep the people divided and

deny them their basic rights. The rapes and atrocities in the former East Pakistan, the formation of Bangladesh and the present movement in pakistan all prove it. Appeal to the people in the name of religion—Hindu, Muslim, etc—is reactionary appeal to disrupt the unity of the toilers against common exploitors, of the international working class against capitalist exploitation.

If in Pakistan the people's anger has boiled over, people in other neighbouring countries are not quiet. In Bangladesh several parties have demanded end of the Martial Law, restoration of the parliamentary system and elections and are embarking upon mass agitations to force sanctions for their demands. In Nepal the hoax of a panchayati raj is being seen. People's voice is penetrating through the iron wall or partyless panchayati democracy and the handpicked Ministry finds it difficult to cope with the rising discontent. Both the Muslim dictator Zia and the Hindu autocratic King of Nepal are equally opposed to political parties, i.e., they are opposed to any popular organisation giving systematic expression to popular demands, shaping policies on behalf of the people and organising them. They want the people to be without organisation and leadership so that they cannot unite against the regime easily. Representing the class interests of a narrow section, unable to tolerate democracy in their countries, these regimes tend to rely more and more on foreign economic help from the West and come under its influence.

The people of Sri Lanka have gone through a traumatic experience. Here the reactionary class Government of Lanka could not solve the problem of the Tamil minority nationality on the basis of justice and equality. It ended in massacre of the Tamils under Government aegis, large-scale looting of the people and murders in jails.

Overwhelmed by these uncontrollable events Jayewardene, the Sri Lankan President summoned the help of imperialists to fight his own countrymen. To rouse chauvinism he also raised a scare about Indian invasion, making it appear that he was seeking U.S. help to protect Sinhalese freedom against Indian interference.

Inability of Bourgeois-Landlord Governments

The turmoil in Pakistan, the happenings in Sri Lanka and popular discontent and attack on democratic rights in countries like India all originate from the same cause—the inability of the bourgeois—landlord Governments of the Third World countries

to solve the economic and social problems of their people, their inability to maintain the democratic rights of the people and the system of parliamentary democracy, and further, their inability to solve on the basis of democratic norms, problems of minorities and nationalities of their countries.

Centre-State Relations

In India also the problems of Centre-State relations has come to the forefront. Under the capitalist path urgent economic developments of States is not possible. Assam suffers from this backwardness. Besides, under the Indian Constitution the State Government has very little power. Without a thorough agrarian revolution in the country and power in the hands of the people, the way cannot be opened for a rapid and equal economic development of all the States. In the absence of this realisation, advocates of regionalism and separatism succeed in misleading the people. It is not realised that division of the country into small independent States will only help imperialism to enslave them.

From almost all States the demand for equal status is coming forth. It has not taken a disruptive form. It raised the necessary and correct demand for restructuring of Centre-State relations. There is a general demand to reduce concentrated. power of the Centre and its monopoly of economic resources. It is at the same time agreed that the Centre must be a strong Centre capable of discharging its responsibility for defence and other vital responsibilities. The working class must support the demand for more powers to the States combined with adequate powers for the Centre.

In the internal battle for democracy, in the fight against authoritarianism, left forces headed by the CPI(M) have inflicted retreats on the Congress(I) in West Bengal. The big victory in the panchayat elections in West Bengal despite differences in the front and the victory in the Agartala Municipal election have strengthened the Left forces in the country.

Worsening Law & Order Situation: Corruption

The rapid deterioration in the internal situation is marked by a growing collapse of law and order threatening the life of ordinary citizen. Dacoities, murders, rapes take place in increasing numbers, with the administration overcome by a creeping paralysis of inaction. The will to move against anti-socials seems to have been lost. On the other hand when it comes to dealing with the struggles of the people, of the working class, the same administration is over-

active with a zeal which can be spared for better causes. I have already referred to the terror which the CITU cadres have experienced in the last few months.

Corruption has become the badge of the ruling party. It is all pervasive in that party and no one seems to be an exception. The beef-tallow scandal, though—some people are using it to rouse religious passions, has something to do with the spread of corruption in the Congress(I). As a leading daily in its editorial has said, the person concerned with the scandal is a financier of the Congress(I) party. This adulteration of people's food goes on unchecked under Congress(I) regime. Equally full of stench is the Karnataka affair concerning an attempt to buy over an independent supporter of the Janata Government. But this is no surprise. The ruling party is corroded by corruption and inner factionalism. There can be more disgraceful than factional conspiracies to set up and bring down ministries. It is extremely unfortunate that at this critical juncture in world history India is ruled by a party whose leaders excel each other in selfishness and corruption and are devoid of all sense of responsibility to the nation.

In this selfish atmosphere the Punjab problem becomes more and more grave every day giving scope to the anti-national forces to sow the poison of division. No wonder that the Assam situation also has not ruturned to normal. It will not so long as the ruling party relies only on administrative measures and takes no steps to counter the feeling of alienation and bitterness and educate the people.

The Holocaust in Sri Lanka

The atrocities on Lankan and Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka sent a wave of shock and anger throughout India. A bankrupt bourgeois-landlord government was holding the minority as hostage for its own failure and misdeeds and directing the anger of Lankan people against the minority. But it was a question between Tamil minority and the Lankan Government only. Other conspirators were waiting on the side lines. The USA which virtually controls the Trincomalee base would have been happy to enact a Grenada in Sri Lanka. The Government of India judged the situation correctly and intervened with the intention of restoring peace. There were of course certain foolish voices who wanted India to take steps which would have raised the national feelings in Sri Lanka and hastened the arrival of the USA on the scene. This would have meant

enslavement of Tamils and Lankans and danger of India's freedom. We must congratulate the Communist Party of Sri Lanka and other Left parties for raising their voice of protest against the attacks on minorities and standing firmly by the unity of the working class and unity of Sri Lanka. It is in the interest of Tamils and Lankans both that the unity of the country is preserved. It is at the same times essential that guarantee of equality and equal treatment be assured to the Tamils and proper constitutional provision be enacted for the purpose.

We do hope that with the help of India Government's representative Mr. Parthasarthi, a satisfactory solution will be found to restore amity and friendship between the Tamils and Lankans and the common people belonging to both communities will be able to devote their attention to the urgent tasks facing them—the task of defending Lanka's freedom and unity against U.S. conspiracies and the task of expanding the economic and democratic rights of the people. It is obvious that there cannot be a full and final solution of the problem under the present Government and economic system. But any solution which restores mutual confidence between common people and helps them to unite in the struggle for common advance and social change should find ready acceptance at the present time.

Divisive Forces

Comrades, we must denounce the communal killings in Punjab organised by socalled extremists but who are in reality anti-national secessionists encouraged from abroad. The repeated murders of innocent people belonging to one community at the hands of desperadoes belonging to another, are intended to create communal holocaust in the Punjab. It is a tribute to the people of Punjab that they have foiled this dastardly plot. But the enemies of the nation are busy all the time to create an Assam-like situation in this border State. We have already mentioned how the selfish policy of Indira Government is passing the initiative to the anti-national sections.

But these murders also show utter helplessness of Akali leadership. They have every time condemned them but at the same time shown their inability to prevent them. Have they not sufficient authority with the mass of Sikhs who follow them to brand the murderers as enemies of the people, to isolate and paralyse all their mischief. The leaderslhip must draw proper lessons from its own

experience. Whatever may be the justice of your demand, if in fighting for them you appeal only to one community, gather its support with the aid of religious authority, the initiative passes into the hands of the extremists communal wing. The Akali leadership must take steps to heal the wounds and restore communal harmony in the punjab.

The Punjab and Assam are a sharp reminder of the intense activities of the divisive forces in the country. It has to be recognised that the assault of these agencies have intensified during the last six months, clashes and conflicts over processions, places of worship etc. are taking place. It appears as if some agencies are only looking for an excuse to organise communal riots. In this atmosphere attempts backed by large-scale disbursement of money are made to rouse revivalism and orthodoxy, to intensify the feeling of separatism between the various religious communities. The Hindu Ektamata and several other calls are not the product of sudden concern for ancient heritage. They are planned instruments to annihilate all sense of national unity and solidarity.

Comrades, the working class with its all-India consciousness has to fight against these forces. If the ruling party and the Government are unable to check this attack, if they abandon this responsibility, we cannot abandon ours, we cannot satisfy ourselves only blaming the Government.

The Price Rise

Our people and the working class had to undergo further suffering in the last six months. The rise in prices and the cost of living index have deflated the hard-earned incomes of the people and the workers. The all India Consumer Price Index of industrial workers (1960-100) rose by 13.4 per cent in 1981-82. In this same period wholesale price of rice rose by 22 per cent and wheat by 9.8 per cent, pulses by 4.4. per cent, fruits and vegetables 11.2 per cent, milk and milk products 3.4 per cent and other food articles 47.2 per cent, tea by 58.2 cent, edible oil rose by 10.2 per cent. Commenting on this rise in the six months between December 1982 and June 1983 the Annual Report of the Reserve Bank of India observes "in this phase the index also rose in respect of cereals, pulses and edible oils which would have a long term impact on the price level. It is this feature that is of significance in the immediate outlook for prices". In short be prepared for continuous rise in the coming months. One can imagine the havoc done to retail prices and the extent of

suffering of the common people.

We are now facing double digit inflation. The purchasing power of the rupee fell to 18 paise by August this year. The All-India Consumer Price Index has been continuously rising without check. These facts are known and their impact on the life of the people is deeply felt.

But the ruling Congress(I) party does not own responsibility for this situation. It wants the people to believe that the mischief was started with the Janata Government and the Congress(I) has organised a magnificient rescue operation to save the Indian people. Listen to the Congress(I) satisfaction noted in the AICC resolution on Economic Situation passed in Bombay "The AICC(I) notes with satisfaction the steady recovery affected the national economy after the disastrous years of Janata Party rule which cluminated in a decline in the national income by 5 per cent, an unprecedented rise in prices of 21.4 per cent, an all time low capacity utilisation... Against this dismal background, the Congress Government in the subsequent three years through its effective policies backed by participation and support of the people at all levels, was able to achieve a growth in national income at an average rate of 5 per cent, contain the inflationary situation and restore the health of the infrastructure."

Only the jesters at the court of Delhi could make such claims and get excited over them in face of more than 2 crores of registered unemployed, prospects of a double digit inflation and the growth rate in the net national product in real terms of between 1 to 2 per cent in 1982-83 in contrast to the higher growth rate of earlier two years. All this reveals only callousness towards the suffering people and shows that the ruling party has no remedy other than making false propagandist claims.

Depressing Purchasing Power

The price phenomenon, the continuous fall in the purchasing power of the monetary unit is embedded in the credit and monetary policy of the Government, in its resort to deficit-financing. It is a device to transfer the burdens of the capitalist path and its crisis to the workers and the people. The workers cannot hold their standard of living, cannot prevent its deterioration unless they unitedly fight against this policy, against the budgetary policies of the Government and defeat them. While the Congress(I) Government claims that it has succeeded in raising millions above the

poverty line (the AICC resolution on Economic Situation claims that 120 millions have broken through the poverty line), it seems that the Indian people are consuming less and less cloth. The per capita consumption of cloth fell down from 16.44 metres in 1965 to 14.76 metres in 1981 and 13.50 metres in 1982. (The last two are years to which the AICC resolution refers with particular satisfaction for Congress Government's performance). What else could happen when the common man's purchasing power was drastically cut because of rising prices and has to be diverted mainly to meet the inflated prices of food and other essential articles. No wonder than that inspite of the colossal loss of production due to the prolonged textile strike of Bombay workers, stocks with mills continue to rise. The total stocks with the organised sector of the cotton textile industry rose from 162,000 bales in August 1982 to 202,000 bales by August 1983—a 25 per cent rise. This accumulation of stocks has taken place despite the estimated loss of 1300 million metres due to the Bombay strike.

The situation worsened further in October. Yarn stocks with mills went up from 27.4 million kg. in May this year to 31.3 million kg. in October. The accumulated stocks with mills have gone by as much as over 100 million metres from 249 million metres to 353.3 million meters between May and October. Dussera and Diwali brought no improvement in offtake. It is reported in the press that there are signs of distress sales by mills in view of the persistent demand recession.

The Loot by Bombay Millowners

The evil effects of Government policies, of increased inflation have been multiplied by unscrupulous and profit hunting methods and outlook of the Bombay millowners. They for sake of profit, tried to starve into submission two lakh workers, prolonged the strike and inflicted an enormous production loss on the country. When dacoits loot a bank and decamp with a few lakhs of rupees it becomes a sensation. But when moneyed barons inflict a loss of Rs. 1200 crores on the country and the people it is not taken note of, or the blame is passed on to the workers. The Bombay mill owners must be condemned for their anti-social outlook and behaviour, for holding the country to ransom. They have shown that they cannot be trusted with the management of the industry. This applies to the mill owners in other centres also. They cannot be trusted with the management of production of cloth which is a vital necessity for the

people.

Nationalise the Entire Textile Industry

All trade unions, all central trade unions must demand immediate nationalisation of the cotton textile industry. This is a demand which is now directly related to the security of workers' jobs and the interests of the people.

In Bombay most of the mills have stopped the third shift and in Ahmedabad 15 per cent of the looms have been sealed. This growing offensive can be met only by ending private ownership of the industry. The CITU supports the take-over of 13 sick textile mills of Bombay pending their nationalisation. The reasons detailed in the Ordinance for take-over throw light on the unscrupulous character of the management and their inefficiency which led to waste of assets piling of debts and loss of productive power.

The Ordinance says "by reason of mismanagement of the affairs of the textile undertakings—their financial condition became wholly unsatisfactory even before the commencement in January 1982 of the textile strike in Bombay and their financial condition has therefore further deteriorated", it futher says "certain financial institutions have advanced large sums of money to the companies owning the said undertakings with a view to making the said undertaking viable", it further add "further investment of very large sums of money is necessary for reorganising and revitalising the said undertakings and thereby to protect the interests of the workmen employed there in and to augument the production and distribution at fair prices of different varieties of cloth and yarn so as to subserve the interests of general public—pending acquisition it is necessary to take over the management of the said undertakings."

Thirtyfive thousand workers were employed in these mills and they were jobless for the last 20 months. The take over opens prospects of immediate jobs for them. The millowners had no intention of opening the mills. The millowners had paid liabilities amounting to Rs. 270 crores including Rs. 130 crores from banks. The investment of the owners was only Rs. 12 crores. Under these circumstances there was no need to offer any compensation. This is one of the crassest instance of mismanagement and unscrupulousness and gives us an insight into the functioning of the private sector and its morality. It will be correct to say that the private ownership of big concerns is nothing but the organisation of the

underworld at the top of society.

The millowners and the Federation of Chambers have raised a howl over the measure. What else was expected on them? They have been quick to point out that the 103 mills that the National Textile Corporation runs now have shown a total carry-forward loss of as on July 1983 in excess of Rs. 432 crores. They argue that with this bleak record why should the Government rush to take charge of other mills.

Workers' Paticipation with Equal Status

Here the Government is at its weakest spot. It is not in a position to give a convincing answer, though it is there. The experience of take-over and nationalisation, to running the Public Sector shows that these undertakings cannot be run efficiently under a bureaucratic management and without the participation and cooperation of the workers concerned. It is idle to think that the mills taken over now or the 103 mills under the National Textile Corporation will be run efficiently to serve the people without inviting the cooperation and participation of the workers on equal terms in their management. The CITU has repeatedly urged such participation where workers and management have equal responsibility to run the concern. But this is anathema both to the Government and the private sector.

May we quote Dr. Manmohan Singh, Governor of Reserve Bank of India for the benefit of the private sector and the Government. Addressing the National Productivity Council the Governor said "workers' participation in decision-making processes is increasingly being accepted as a superior alternative to autocratic management patterns where all decision making powers are concentrated in the hands of a few individuals at the top of the heirarchy—It is therefore, essential that our entrepreneurs develop an effective long range perspective with regard to industrial relations. Any such perspective must recognise that the workers want to be involved and consulted, that trade unions are an essential element of the institutional structure of a democratic policy and that, therefore, their influence on public policies cannot be wished away—in a democracy" (RBI Bulletin March 1883).

Nationalisation of the Jute Industry

The jute industry of West Bengal has perhaps a record worse than that of the Bombay mill magnates. Nationalisation of the industry has become urgent in view of the scandalous mismanage-

ment and the loss of jobs inflicted on thousands of workers. This urgent need is accepted by all in the State. All Central Trade Unions including the INTUC have demanded nationalisation. The State Assembly which gets sharply divided on every issue with the left front parties and the Congress(I) sharing opposite views, has adopted a unanimous resolution calling for the nationalisation of the industry. An All-Party delegation from the State recently submitted the demand to the Prime Minister. Very rarely has there been such unanimity on the question of nationalisation of an industry. The need is felt by all parties, all organisations. But the Centre refuses to move. It spreads its protecting wing over the private management.

What is the record of this management? It was revealed recently at the Labour Ministers' Conference that there was a significant drop in the number of strikes from 43 in 1981 to 29 in 1982 but the number of lockouts at 115 remained nearly the same when compared to 117 lockouts in 1981. There are at present 19 jute mills employing about 63,400 workers which are either under lockout or closed.

The employers refuse to implement the settlement arrived at a Tripartite Conference. The State Government have informed the Labour Ministers' Conference that the IJMA is not agreeable to implement the recommendations regarding grades and scales of pay and changes in workload as per tripartite settlement of 1979. The Associastion is not agreeable to any increase in wages at present. They are also not prepared to concede other demands made by the Central Trade Unions. No wonder all the trade Unions have unitedly given notice of strike in the industry by January next.

All our trade unions must support the demand for nationalisation of the industry and campaign for it among the workers. They must bring pressure on the Central Government to fulfil this demand which has the support of all unions and all political parties including the Congress(I) in West Bengal.

Government's Refusal for Nationalisation

Comrades, The Government of India pursues a different policy. Instead of following take over by outright nationalisation it resorts to denotification, handing over the concerns to the private owners and leaving the workers to their mercy. The West Bengal Labour Minister Com. Krishnapada Ghosh recently complained against delay in promised nationalisation of cencerns and unilateral deno-

tification of others. In his speech at the recent Labour Minister's meeting specifically mentioned the delay in nationalisation of NRM and Incheck Tyres which the Central Government had earlier agreed to. He also asked the Government to rescind its decision of denotification of several concerns.

Lockouts

Comrades, At our 5th Conference we noted the increasing use of lockouts to break down workers resistance and compel them to submit to the dictates of the employers. The anti-social character of lockouts is self-evident. The ownership of means of production in the hands of a small coterie is used to starve thousands into submission and reduce democratic and fundamental rights to a farce. The right to earn, live by one's labour is challenged and needed production is withheld from society to satisfy the profit lust of a few magnets. This offensive still continues and in the first five months of this year the number of mandays lost through lockouts exceeded those lost through strikes. The following figures appearing in the press are significant.

Number of Mandays lost (in Millions 1980-1983)

Year	Strikes	Lockouts	Total
1980	12.00	9.90	21.90
	(55)	(45)	(100)
1981	21.20	15.30	36.60
	(58)	(42)	(100)
1982	15.60	17.70	33.40
	(47)	(53)	(100)
1983	4.90	5.30	10.1
(January-May)	(48)	(52)	(100)

(Figures in brackets show percentage to total).

[Excluding mandays lost due to textile strike in Bombay.]

In 1982 and the first five months of 1983 more than 50 per cent of the loss is due to lockouts. The Bombay strike was prolonged because it was virtually turned into a lockout and the loss in 1982 through lockout is much bigger.

The official statement submitted to the Labour Conference therefore has to accept "a shift in the pattern in the last two years with lockouts accounting for a higher show of total mandays lost than strikes.

But there is a tendency to show that the production loss due to lockout is much less than that due to strike. The official memoran-

dum observes "Analysis of production loss due to strikes and lockouts show the losses on account of strikes have consistently been more than losses due to lockouts. In substantiation of this the memorandum presents the following figures which make strange reading.

Production loss due to Strikes, Lockouts (1980-83) Till May in Rs. Crores.

	Strikes	Lockouts	Total
1980	172.51	124.53	297.54
1981	465.11	163.66	628.76
1982	123.69	51.01	174.69
1983 January-May	26.11	20.37	46.49

In 1981, 42 per cent of mandays lost was due to lockouts but the corresponding loss production is 26 per cent, in 1982 mandays lost due to lockouts are 53 per cent, but the loss in production is only 29 per cent, Were the lockouts confined only to low-valued goods and strikes in high priced goods.

Industrial Sickness

The mismanagement of the economy and its growing collapse leading to waste of productive power of society and loss of jobs for the workers is seen in the increasing number of sick industries—official euphemism for recession and mismanagement. The Annual Report of the Reserve Bank of India 1982-83 gives the following figures. It says that the provisional data on sick units with credit limits of Rs. 1 crore and above showed that the number of sick units in this category at the end of June 1982 was 439 involving aggregate bank credit of Rs. 1728.40 crores as compared to 422 units with aggregate outstanding bank credit of Rs. 1429.29 crores at the end of June 1981. Of the 439 large sick units identified by banks, viability studies in respect of 374 units have been completed; of these 320 have been considered as potentially viable, which means the rest 50 or so—will have to close permanently. As at the end of June 1982, banks identified 26,973 small scale sick units including aggregate bank finances of Rs. 393.67 crores as compared to 22,360 sick units involving aggregate bank finance of Rs. 321.53 crores at the end of June 1981. Of these 5316 units were considered by banks as potentially viable and 14,576 units non-viable which again

means they must close. This is a picture of recession, mismanagement and bankruptcy. Sickness is spreading in an epidemic form in small-scale units. During the last year it has increased by nearly 20 per cent. And a majority of these are destined to go out of production. Society must step in to stop this rot. All these industries can be put on their feet if the workers are taken into confidence and the owners share with them the responsibility of the management. Nationalisation of big sick industries accompained by workers' participation in management, timely help to small-scale units to be run with the help of the workers will rehabilitate all the sick industries and save enormous productive power from going waste.

Secret Ballot

Comrades, the recent Conference of Labour Ministers' revealed again the opposition of the Congress(I) rulers to allow the workers to choose their own representatives in negotiations with the employers. Going against the wishes of the workers and contrary to all democratic norms the employers and the Government extend their patronage to an organisation of their choice—generally belonging to the INTUC. This anti-democratic practice of the Government and the employers was fully revealed during the prolonged strike of Bombay textile workers who repudiated the INTUC union and formed a new one to represent them. But it did not secure recognition. The CITU has repeatedly called for recognition through ballot so that agreements entered into with the union will have sanction of the workers. But the Government has refused to accept the principle. It does not allow the State Governments to adopt this democratic methods for choosing the bargaining agent.

No wonder then that the West Bengal Labour Minister had the following to say in this question at the Labour Ministry's Conference. "We all along have been of the view that in a democratic system the most appropriate methods of selection of bargaining agents is the method of secret ballot. As we are connected with this, the State Legislative Assembly has very recently passed the Trade Union Amendment Bill, 1983 wherein provisions have been made for selection and recognition of bargaining agents. Where there can be no consensus, in a democratic system, individual states should be allowed to make their own provisions and make a beginning instead of continuing a constant dialogue which has gone on for more than a decade, without a solution." We all congratulate the Labour Minister and the Left Front Ministry for adopting this bill

and incorporating a basic right of the workers in it. But will the Government of India give up its dog in the manger policy? Did they not kill a previous bill. All this calls for a drastic change in the Centre-State relations.

Surge of United Struggles

Comrades, We have pursued with greater vigour our efforts to strengthen trade union unity, our CITU alongwith several other organisations organised a massive bandh—in West Bengal in September. It was a mighty protest against the policies of the Central Government and voiced the demand for a restructuring of Central-State relations. Our Chatkal Mazdoor Union has succeeded in uniting all jute workers unions for an indefinite strike against the IJMA which has refused to implement the agreement reached in tripartite consultations in 1979 and rejected other urgent demands of the workers.

In kerala we have been all the time in the field for united actions of all unions and all Central organisations. We have succeeded on many occasions to secure the participation of the INTUC unions on some issues. We helped by other unions, have been continuously fighting the reactionary policies of the employer and the Karunakaran Ministry. Kerala like West Bengal showed repeated succeesses in expanding the framework of united activities.

In Tamilnadu also the CITU has again succeeded in drawing together several unions and organisations in the fight against the policies of the MGR Ministry. The AITUC, CITU, the DMK Unions and others have made common cause on several occasions to protect the workers rights from the depredations of illconceived legislation of the MGR Government. It is necessary to broaden this unity and give it a more stable base in the State. In all other States our unions are pursuing this line and achieving success.

We have reason to congratulate ourselves on the fruits of this unity. You all know that the Federation of Steel workers and the Federation of Coal Workers affiliated to the CITU have succeeded in reaching satisfactory wage agreements with the authorities. The agreements secured many of the urgent demands of the workers and raised the basic minimum wage in the industries.

The agreements were products of hard bargaining and negotiations. They would not have been possible without the firm and united stand of all Central Trade Union organisations including the INTUC. The coal negotiations proved specially difficult and the

unions had to give a call for a strike. The INTUC also supported the call. However better counsels prevailed with the authorities and the demands of the workers could be properly settled.

The settlement of wage negotiations in steel, coal and other public sector industries, in the midst of a serious economic situation, is a tribute to the strength of workers unity and common feeling.

It must be recorded at the same time that some settlements (as in Bangalore) which were arrived behind the back of the CITU and other organisations by breaking the spirit and strength of unity have gone against the interests of the workers and roused their anger. Such kind of collusion between one section of the trade unions and management is disruptive of unity and it will not potect the influence of the organisation concerned.

The Central Government has agreed to extend bonus to all its employees. Perhaps some sections are still to be covered by the agreement but the principle of bonus for all employees has been accepted. This is an important advance for the Central Employees movement. The Confederation of Central Government employees made strenuous efforts to unite all sections, the other federations backed its efforts, agitations were carried on focusing on the demand and the employees have won it. This unity must be preserved and consolidated.

Frankly speaking we do not like the extreme compartmentalisation and departmentalisation in the C.G. movement. Many still think too much in terms of their own department, their specific demands often allow the authorities to divide the employees. We do hope that a new sense of unity will soon emerge overcoming sectional and departmental outlook. It is quite clear that the Central Government has its own plans and designs in granting the bonus. It has plans for increased workload, reduction of staff etc. so that what it gives with one hand it takes back with the other. The C.G. employees movement will no doubt exercise vigilance over these moves.

Comrades, the General Secretary's report tells us about the Second Convention of National Campaign Committee. Com. P. Ramamurti our esteemed leader has written an article in the Working Class explaining the importance of the Convention and the tasks arising from it. It is not necessary to add to what they have already said. It no doubt consolidated further advance in our

struggle for trade Union unity. We welcome its decision to call Working Women's Convention, and also its call for a Convention against lockouts.

It is clear from our experience that the appeal for unity, joint action is reaching wider stratas and larger organisations. In times when the working class is under a furious attack of lockouts, closures, retrenchment, it is difficult to resist the call for unity. We once more stress our call for confederation of all trade Unions to discuss common problems, promote unity and prepare a blue print for economic management of society so that our people are spared of the present misery. We cannot ignore the growing destitution of our agricultural workers and peasants under present conditions and must do everything to relieve their distress.

We congratulate the left front ministries of Tripura and West Bengal on all that they have done and are doing to protect the interests of the workers peasants agricultural workers and employees in the midst of the present crisis. We congratulate them on their excellent record in protecting and expanding the democratic rights of the people in the midst of the worst provocations organised by the Congress (I) followers. We consider them as advanced outposts of democracy which must be fully supported and protected by all our unions, our CITU, the entire trade Union movement.

Marx's Teachings

Comrades, in this year of Marx Centenary it will be apt to remind ourselves of what Marx said about the tasks of the Trade Unions.

"Too exclusively bent upon the local and immediate struggles with capital, the Trade Unions have not fully understood their power of acting against the system of wage-slavery itself. They therefore kept too much aloof from genuine social and political movements. Of late, however, they seem to awaken to some sense of their great historical mission, as appears, for instance, from their participation, in England, in the recent political movement...."

"Their future-apart from their original purposes, they must now learn to act deliberately as organising centre of the working class in the broad interest of its *complete emancipation*. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction. Considering themselves and acting as the champions and representatives of the whole working class, they cannot fail to enlist the non-society men in their ranks. They must look carefully after the

agricultural labourers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstance. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions."

The Working Class Vol. 13 No. 5, January 1984

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The Peace Convention

THE peace convention which met in Delhi on 8th and 9th March expressed the urgent and the growing desire of the Indian people to fight the danger of nuclear war. It was called by eight political parties. Twenty four mass organisations—trade unions, student and youth organisations and women's organisations participated in the convention bringing support of the masses behind them for the sacred task of defending world peace. The CITU was an active participant and it was led by Com. P. Ramamurti, Vice President.

Never before perhaps was there such a widespread mobilisation of political parties and mass organisation, to protest against the imperialist plans to plunge the world into a destructive war. Earlier the left parties had organised a massive demonstration in the capital. Following it the CITU and AITUC responding to the call of the World Federation of Trade Unions succeeded in mobilising rallies of workers in all states, West Bengal and Kerala witnessing huge mobilisations. But the March Convention extended the fight for peace beyond the workers and their organisations. The CITU and its unions must warmly greet the decision of peace convention and do every thing to carry them forward. The working class shares a special responsibility to oppose war and defend peace. It is international in its outlook. Its war cry is solidarity and unity of the workers of the world. War sets workers of one country against another and massacres their unity and solidarity.

But the fight for peace cannot be carried on effectively by the

working class alone. To be effective and successful it must become the common concern of the entire Indian People and this is what the decision of the Convention and their sponsoring by the political parties will help in achieving.

In India the fight against war is not taken seriously by a major part of the Trade Union movement. Even the CITU and the AITUC which have a common working class outlook to the problem can not say that they have discharged their task to their satisfaction. In this situation the initiative taken by several political parties should help them to strengthen the fight for peace.

The Declaration adopted in the convention correctly states: "The World faces the grim threat of nuclear war endangering the very existence of humanity, a war which wherever it starts will soon engulf the whole globe including our country.

Nuclear weapons, if unleashed, will in minutes destroy cities like Washington, Moscow, Calcutta, Delhi & Bombay. Never was a more destructive war diabolically planned by the imperialists.

It is a war which not only threatens the soldiers, active combatants as the earlier wars did, it threatens wholesale destruction of civilian population—the worker in the factory, peasant ploughing his field, housewife doing her house chores and the children playing in the parks, or attending schools. It is these which are its targets along with the factories and workshops, houses and buildings.

The Declaration therefore correctly stresses "If nuclear war breaks out, no country can remain safe, as it will completely upset the climate, ecology and the living conditions of humanity....the whole earth will be enveloped by a radio-active cloud, temperature of our planet will sharply come down, protective layer of ozone will be destroyed, making our planet uninhabitable for human beings and any kind of life."

The speakers at the Convention, coming from various political parties, placed responsibility for the war danger on the U.S. administration. Not one used the phrase dear to the ruling party—two super power. Most ridiculed and lambasted it. Shri Jagivan Ram, Shri Sharad Pawar, and others stated, it was wrong to equate the U.S.S.R. with the U.S.A.

None but the dishonest and the hypocrite can talk of two super powers where one country stands for peace and the Govt. of other stands for war and produces nuclear weapons, unendingly.

The grave situation have arisen because, as the declaration says, "in defiance of world public opinion including the countries of the Western Europe and U.S. itself, and rejecting all constructive proposals of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact Countries, Reagan Adminstration in collaboration with its NATO allies has installed Pershing and Cruise missiles in West Germany, Italy and Great Britain. These missiles can reach targets in the Soviet Union and Socialist Countries of Europe in few minutes' time".

The missiles have been brought on the door steps of the U.S.S.R. not for purpose of peace but for aggressive war. U.S. imperialists do not conceal that they seek to destroy socialism—the achievement of the working class over the last hundred years, destroy working class states that have abolished crisis and unemployment in their country. Simultaneously the U.S. imperialists seek to re-enslave newly liberated countries and establish their domination over the world.

The U.S.A. launched a cowardly attack on Grenada it is preparing for an attack on Nicaragua. In Lebanon, it has directly intervened with its marines and naval might and nearer to our country it is intervening in the Persian gulf. In contrast the Soviet-Syrian communique issued on March 13th said "Internal settlement in Lebanon is only possible on the basis of preservation of the unity, territorial integrity, independence and Sovereignty of the Country".

The Declaration points out "our own national security is in great peril, as a result of massive arming of military regime of Pakistan, building up military bases on Pakistan territory, increasing militarisation of the Indian ocean and placing of nuclear arms in the Diego Garcia base".

While the imperialists plan for a human genocide, the U.S.S.R. puts forward proposals for peace to avoid the danger of destruction of humanity. The U.S.S.R. made several proposals to ease the situation. It made a unilateral declaration that it would not be the first to use the nuclear strike. But the U.S.A and the Governments of Europe made no response.

Besides, the U.S.S.R. made concrete proposals to scale down armaments gradually and proposed to solve problems through negotiation. It made an offer to scale down its missiles in Europe provided other side also agreed to an equal reduction. Development of U.S. missiles like Pershing and Cruise in Europe, it said was

nothing but an attempt to establish military superiority and it would not allow it. It again offered to agree to mutual reduction of missiles if new missiles were not deployed in Europe. But the imperialists refused to respond.

In Octoberr last year, the U.S.S.R. placed in the 38th Session of U.N. Assembly two resolutions—one for condemning nuclear war and the other advocating nuclear freeze.

This is how a socialist country—socialist system, fights for peace, for saving of the working class and peoples of the world from the horrors of war.

Finding that the U.S. imperialists were determined to pursue the path of nuclear aggression, the Soviet Govt. last May declared that in case new missiles are deployed in Europe, it will have to take retaliatory measures, to carry out measures for deploying additional weapons for counter balance to the growing nuclear weapons of the USA and other NATO countries in Europe, take measures with the view of the territory of the US itself.

This of course was necessary and fully justified. The working class and progressive forces of the world felt assured by this declaration which showed that the imperialists cannot cow down the socialist world.

Our Working Class and trade unions must realise the grave situation and play their role in countering the danger of the humanity, freedom and socialism. The working class of other countries, of Europe, the USA, is already in the field mobilising millions of people in the struggle for peace. The peace movement today is the biggest solidarity movement of the international working class and of the peoples of world.

The CITU, its, trade unions and the mass of workers must hail the initiative of the convention to take the question of peace to the millions of our people. This is what is required in India, so that our people play their role in these times critical for the destiny of human race. The working class efforts to protect peace will now get immense strength and the trade unions should throw their full weight to approach and rouse the people.

The national covention pledged to build up a most powerful campaign throughout the length and breadth of our country, through mass mobilisation, demonstration and convention to demand: halt to the nuclear arms race, give up the policy of generating tensions and unleashing military confrontation in vari-

ous parts of the world.

The CITU, its State Committees and its unions must support this programme and take a lead in ensuring its success. The full strength of the working class in cities must be mobilised in its support.

The National Convention has decided to observe 13th April throughout the country in defence of peace. All CITU unions with their mass following must participate with others to make this a grand day expressing the decisive voice of the Indian People in diapproval of nuclear war.

Working Class Vol. 13 No. 8, April 1984

The Delhi Declaration

We address this appeal to the people of India, irrespective of their political and religious beliefs, to all those who want peace and defence of the country.

In defiance of world public opinion, including of the countries of Western Europe and the U.S. itself, and rejecting all constructive proposals of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries, the Reagan administration, in collaboration with its NATO allies has installed Pershing-II and Cruise missiles in West Germany, Italy and Great Britain. These missiles can reach targets in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries of Europe in a few minutes' time. This has forced the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries to take appropriate counter measures to protect themselves. It is a qualitatively new dangerous situation, the world being pushed to the brink of a nuclear war. The world faces the grim threat of a nuclear war, endangering the very existence of humanity—a war which, wherever it starts, will soon engulf the whole globe, including our own country. It needs to be realised that if a nuclear war breaks out, no country can remain safe as it will completely upset the climate, ecology and living conditions of humanity. Scientists have stated that even if a part of the present stock of nuclear weapons are exploded the whole earth will be enveloped by radio-active cloud, the temperature of our planet will sharply come down and the protective layer of ozone will be destroyed, making our planet uninhabitable for human beings and any kind of life. Is humanity doomed to this terrible fate? Is such a war inevitable? No, not at all.

The responsibility for dragging the world to the brink of a nuclear war rests solely on the Reagan administration and its NATO allies. The Soviet Union, the non-aligned movement and the Warsaw Pact countries have been consistently pursuing a policy of peace and peaceful coexistence. They have been offering proposals to curb the arms race. The Soviet Union has even declared that it would not be the first to use the nuclear weapon.

The U.S. administration, on the other hand, has refused to heed the voice of reason and has refused to give the promise not to be first to use nuclear arms. In fact, it is even preparing to make outerspace an arena of nuclear conflict, as also preparing for a biological and chemical warfare.

Over six hundred thousand crores of rupees are being wasted on the manufacture of nuclear and other armaments, while hundreds of crores of people in the underdeveloped countries are affected with undernourishment, poverty and disease. Moreover, in the advanced countries themselves, including in the USA, social welfare schemes are being cut

in order to enhance the expenditure on nuclear arms. Even if 10 per cent of this military expenditure is cut down, it will go a long way in helping the needy people in the underdeveloped world. Hence, it is all the more necessary to fight against the arms race.

The US imperialists have simultaneously stepped up their aggressive activities and military conflicts, including direct military intervention, in various parts of the world. This is seen in their invasion of Grenada and their constant threat to invade democratic Nicaragua and Socialist Cuba and directly intervening in El Salvador to subvert the popular resistance movement against the fascist regime. Along with Zionist Israel, with whom the Reagan administration has established a new strategic alliance, the US imperialists are actively intervening in Lebanon with the ultimate aim of liquidating it as a viable entity by partitioning it, as well as attacking the Syrian positions and threatening it with dire consequences. The imperialists have a firm strategic alliance with the white-racist regime of South Africa, directed against the heroic freedom struggle of Namibia, as well as against the progressive regimes in Angola nad Mozambique and other front-line states of the Southern part of Africa.

Our own national security is in grave peril, as the result of massive arming of the military regime of Pakistan, building up of military bases on Pakistan territory, increasing militarisation of the Indian Ocean, placing of nuclear arms in the Diego Garcia base, bolstering up of reactionary regimes around our country, building up of the Rapid Deployment Force for direct US military intervention against the countries of this region. The US imperialists are thereby trying to blackmail India into giving up its policy of non-alignment, peace and anti-imperialism.

Thus, the US imperialists and their allies are not only threatening world peace, but also the security of our own country which is playing a very important role in the worldwide struggle for peace and against war.

In this critical situation, the anti-imperialist and democratic movements of Pakistan and Bangladesh are of great significance. The victory of these movements will not only restore democracy in those countries, but also ensure our own security as the leaders of these movements stand for friendship with our country.

This Convention hails the fact that the desire for peace is universal, even within countries which themselves produce nuclear weapons and in those where they are deployed. It is a matter of great hope that people in European and the US, in fact all over the world, irrespective of political and religious beliefs and opinions, are manifesting in huge demonstra-

tions against war and for peace.

In our own country, mass rallies and demonstrations, meetings and conventions are taking place in various forms in different states to highlight the danger emanating from the aggressive designs of the imperialists headed by the Reagan administration.

In such an extremely grave situation for humanity and our own country, let us all rise to the occasion and firmly strengthen our bonds of common solidarity with all the peace-loving forces the world over—to bridle the imperialists and save our beautiful world from a nuclear holocaust.

India, with its powerful anti-imperialist and democratic traditions, has a special responsibility in the present dangerous situation for the world and for our own country.

Therefore, we urge upon the Government of India to stand firm against the aggressive global strategy of US imperialism and its allies for world domination and for the preservation of peace and protection of our country's security.

In such an extremely grave situation for humanity, this National Convention pledges to build up a most powerful campaign through the length and breadth of our country, through mass mobilisation, demonstrations and conventions to demand: Halt to nuclear arms race; give up the policy of generating tensions and unleashing of military conflicts in various parts of the world.

. The National Convention decides to observe a day throughout the country in defence of peace and national security and for solidarity with the people fighting against imperialist aggression.

Let us act NOW!

* Ban Nuclear Arms! Save Humanity from Nuclear Destruction!
* Defeat US Aggression Against Countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America!
* Down with the Racist Aggressive Regime of South Africa!
* Down with the Israeli-US Imperialist Aggression Against the Arab Peoples!
* Make the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace!
* We Shall Defend Our Country's Security and Integrity!
* Extend Solidarity with People of Pakista, Bangladesh Fightign for Restoration of Democracy!
* Unite with People of the World Fighting for Peace!

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May Day 1984

THE celebrations to observe the death centenary of Karl Marx ended only a few weeks back. Throughout the world millions listened to the message of Karl Marx who more than anyone else is responsible for revolutionising the shape of the modern world. Millions listened to his teachings on proletarian interationalism and solidarity which ended with the call in the Communist Manifesto "Workers of the World Unite."

This call in the midst of the existing international situation, which is full of tension and confrontation no doubt struck a deep sensitive cord in the minds of the workers and the people. For what else could the people think of when they are being surrounded on all sides by annihilating nuclear weapons?

The year of Peace Struggles

The year 1983 therefore saw an increasing rallying of workers and common people for peace, against the nuclear war. In fact the process of growing concern and desire for common action was growing rapidly in the last three years because of the emerging danger of war.

Masses of workers which was hitherfore indifferent to the danger, who were deliberately kept away from the peace movement by reformist leader working in collusion with the Governments of Western countries began to break away from them, from their restrictions and threw themselves in the struggle to prevent war.

Leaders of trade union organisations spreading the threat of

Soviet danger, social democratic leaders voicing the imperialist slogan of the security of the Western world, organisations professing principles of Christianity combined with anti-Sovietism—all are being forced to fall in line for defence of peace. The mass concern and mass pressure have been too much for these leaders and organisations to continue their earlier tolerance of war preparations.

Not that these leaders and organisations have given up their earlier hostilities to the Soviet Union, nor are they prepared to condemn U.S. imperialism or its war policies. They still talk of two super powers, would hold the USSR more responsible but yet they have to sing peace tune and oppose armament to be in line with the people.

These developments, the growing rally of the people to oppose war are in response to the aggressive actions of U.S. imperialists and their friends.

Soviet Union—the Target

The warning came with the intention to deploy missiles in Europe to overawe and intimidate the USSR.

The deployment of missiles in Western Europe led to a dramatic change in the situation compelling many to change their positions and recognise the imminent danger of war.

These missiles of immense destructive power can reach deep into the Soviet territory within 6 to 7 minutes.

They have now been deployed in Great Britain, Federal Germany and Italy with some other countries waiting to site them. Only Holland and its people seem to resist and every pressure is being brought on them to fall in line. France has its own missiles for the same purpose.

Difference of the two System

This was the imperialist response to the peace proposal of the USSR—its offer to ban all nuclear weapons, its unilateral declaration not to be the first to use nuclear strike and its commitment not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries.

The difference between the two systems stood out in sharp contrast. The imperialist system the most blood-thirsty social system is based on unleashing a nuclear holocaust, driven by economic desperation and the advance of the forces of democracy and socialism.

The socialist system whose interests are identical with the inter-

est of the mass of the people require peace and friendship among countries for advance and works ceaselessly to spare the humanity horrors of the nuclear war. This was a fine example of international solidarity and consideration for human welfare which only a system which has abolished exploitation of man by man can show.

Defence Measures by USSR

With the danger of a threatening attack the USSR took quick steps to protect itself. The U.S. and its allies were told that the socialist state could not be blackmailed by these imperialist deployment of missiles, that it would not concede superiority in weapons to the imperialist camp.

The USSR told the imperialists it would defend itself and withdrew from the Geneva negotiations and made it clear that meaningful negotiation can be resumed only if the US withdraws the newly deployed Pershing and Cruise missiles from the soil of Europe.

Warning to USA

The USSR further warned the Western powers that it was withdrawing all self-imposed bans on placement of weapons and was going to take steps to see that its weapons matched the weapons introduced by the imperialists. It further told that it would take steps to deploy its weapons taking into consideration the territory of the USA itself. The USA leaders should know that the war would recoil on them and they are mistaken to consider the USA as haven of safety.

War Against the Socialist System

The entire progressive world, the world of labour and freedom hailed this decision of the USSR. It showed that the Socialist countries were in a position to defend themselves and the world. But the imperialists would not listen and continued the deployment of missiles. In March they placed these missiles in Itlay in addition to England and Federal Germany.

The people of European and USA now see that unless they are able to check this war charriot of their ruling classes their very existence is threatened. That is why those who stood aloof only a few months back have to come out in the streets to back the peace efforts.

The progressive forces, the advanced working class movement in various countries and the democratic movements now see that what is being planned is a counter-revolutionary war against the

socialist system.

US for Global Domination

They also see that the aggressive designs of US imperialism have global domination as their aim. The US imperialists with their rapid deployment force policy of establishing nuclear bases to threaten Third World Countries-Diego Garcia etc. is designed to intimidate India and other countries. They do not conceal their aim of dominating the Third World countries. The dastardly and cowardly attack on Grenada, the invasion of Lebanon, the US role in Salvador, the threat to Nicaragua, the conspiracy against socialist Cuba are all seen by the people as expression of the policy of global domination. Defying world opinion the US imperialists continue their game of intimidation and aggression. On April 20 more than 30,000 US troops will be conducting a sea and land air exercise in the Caribbean for 17 days. The exercise will cover places in the Caribbeans, the gulf of mexico, the Atlantic ocean and Guantano Cuba. The announcement of this exercise came at a time when Nicaragua accused the United States of preparing a military invasion of the country.

In our sub-continent also the U.S. is pouring military aid for Pakistan dictator and angling for naval bases in Trincomalee and Chittagong harbour. Every device is being used to surround India with dictatorial regimes and arm them with sophisticated weapons.

Socialist Countries Lead the Peace Struggles

The working class and people of the world have become more aware of this challenge and are growingly united in a fraternal bond to save the world to save the humanity.

The centralised lead and action for rebuffing war of course comes from working class of socialist countries, from the peace policies of Soviet Union and other socialist states. Yuri Andropov stated this truth when he said in August, 1983, "We in the Soviet Union, leaders and millions of rank and file, consider it to be our task of topmost priority to try to prevent the dangerous development of events, to strengthen peace which we very much need in order to carry out our plans on internal development to improve the life of the people."

This has inspired the peace-fighters elsewhere. The Soviet trade unions and the World Federation of Trade Unions have set the pace for the advance working class sections of the world.

Struggles all Pervasive

But vast masses were still under social democratic reformist influence. But they would no longer ignore the danger and one by one the barriers began to fall.

The British Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party of Great Britain have taken a forthright stand against nuclear war. The T.U.C. now considers the anti-war struggle as a central trade union activity. The 113th Congress of the T.U.C. (1981) approved by an overwhelming majority vote a resolution in support of unilateral disarmament. On October 5, 1983 the annual conference of the British Labour Party overwhelmingly declared for unilateral disarmament. The Morning Star of London dated October 6 reported "Unconditional unilateral disarmament was overwhelmingly reaffirmed as the Labour Party's policy in a strong rebuff to the hard right. Delegates stood firm in support of the Party's programme for peace, leaving Labour committed to scrapping Cruise, Trident and Polaris and closing all nuclear bases when it comes to office. The Conference cheered Ron Todd of Transport and General Workers Union when he said that it was time that Britain stopped being an aircraft carrier to the U.S."

War Advocates Isolated

The growing urge for peace had its effect on the decisions of the Social Democratic Party Congress of Federal Germany. A Special Congress of the Party which met in November last year began with a resolution opposing the stationing of the new U.S. medium-range system in the Federal Republic. The draft resolution was proved by 385 delegates, only 13 including several former Ministers voted for the missiles.

Helmut Schmidt, Vice-chairman of the party and former Chancellor opposed the resolution but to no avail. The issue was already decided by the rank and file delegates who had started taking an active part in the peace movement. The unions which formed the main base of the S.D.P., had already come out against missiles. The initiative from below in local conference and area gatherings had already committed the party to oppose missile deployment.

Considering the fact that the top leadership of the SDP was responsible for the policy of setting missiles in the country, this decision of the conference marks an important development isolating the war advocates in the party and placing the initiative in the hands of the peace defenders.

The West German Trade Union organisations followed the same course. Till 1980 the leadership of the German Trade Unions (AGTU) was blindly following the Government's armament policies. The leadership of the organisation asked the trade unions not to collect signature for an appeal for peace which was signed by 5 million people.

But within a year the situation changed. The workers and people had marched ahead. An Extraordinary AGTU conference adopted a proposal stating that "Peace is the paramount condition for trade union activities, the basis of social and cultural progress and social security in many parts of the world. Therefore the struggle for consolidating peace is the central task of the trade union."

Strike Actions Against War

Naturally this led to big mass actions in support of peace in which peoples from all walks of life participated, with the working class and its trade unions leading. These actions increased and the working class brought into operation the specifically proletarian weapon—the strike. This led to the spectacular 5-minute General Strike on October 5, 1983 with 8 million people participating in it. The General Strike was held under the slogan "It is 5-minutes to 12, stop the mad arms race". This was the first General Strike since the formation of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Last year strikes in defence of peace, to protest against war were organised in a number of countries in Europe. There was a 15 minute General Strike in Belgium; 5 minutes strike in Denmark and a huge protest action in Finland. Massive political demonstrations for peace were seen in France and other countries.

In Japan the General Council of Trade Unions which is the largest Federation in the country called upon its unions to observe October 1983 as the month of anti-war activities.

Unprecedented Struggles in USA

In the United States itself the mass of people and the working class are supporting the peace struggles in ever increasing numbers. The process started in June, 1981 when despite the stranglehold of the reactionary AFL CIO leadership unions participated in a massive march in New York in which a million people took part to protest against the escalating arms race and for disarmament.

Observation of the Communist Party of USA

Recent developments have been well summed up by Gus Hall,

General Secretary of the Communist party of USA in his report to the Party Congress last November.

"Never before in U.S., history have seen such a great number of Americans expressing oppositions to the Government's war policies. The four hundred thousands who marched in Washington on August 27 are the most determined and conscious of the tens of millions who oppose the Reagan war policy.

"A clear majority of our people favour a complete freeze in nuclear weapon's testing, production and deployment, as was also shown in the numerous referanda across our country.

"The millions who took part on Labour Day actions throughout the country came out against Reagon's policies including his policies of war.

"The mass demonstrations against the U.S. invasion and occupation of Grenada on November 12 express the outrage and mounting fear of nuclear war if the Reagan war moves continue.

"20 International trade unions have taken a solid stand against the Reagonite policy of aggression in Central America.

"The October 21-24 days of protest against deployment of Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe were sponsored by all the major peace organisations in 300 major cities.

"And in spite of unprecedented efforts, led by the Reagan and the mass media, to incite hysteria over the Korean spy plane provocation the majority of the American people remained firm in their opposition to the Reagan policies of war and peace".

CITU Hails the Struggles

The organised trade union movement throwing its weight in the cause of peace constitutes an important development in the struggle against war. The struggle for peace is the biggest proletarian movement for solidarity, a massive expression of proletarian internationalism.

The working class of India under CITU welcome this growing unity and express their determination to act by spreading the peace struggle in India.

The Years of Capitalist Crisis

These years of peace struggles have also been years of economic crisis, years of economic sufferings for the working class of capitalist countries. Unemployment has reached 30 million and there is no possibility of drastically reducing it in the near future.

The main burden of crisis and its recovery is borne by the

workers. In the USA in these years with mass unemployment (16 per cent in industry) and the threat of loss of jobs the workers were forced to accept wage-cuts and increased work-loads. The hourly output per worker rose by 5 per cent. More than 25 per cent of the agreements concluded in the last 2 years provided for wage-cuts upto 50 per cent in some cases.

In his C.D. Desmukh memorial lecture delivered recently in Bombay, Prof. Galdor said in relation to Great Britain "The rise in unemployment from 1.2 million to 3.2 millions that is 2 millions or 8 per cent of labour force in 2 years, together with numerous closures of factories, actual or threatened has undoubtedly weakened the trade union power and has contributed to the slowing down of the rate of increase in wages in recent settlements. This however is a consequence of mass unemployment due to recession."

But the monopolists and the state continue their offensive. Trade union rights have been under attack in Great Britain and elsewhere during these years. Besides taking advantage of the crisis situation the big monopolists continue to strengthen themselves by concentrating more capital, more resources in their hands through mergers and various other devices notwithstanding the anti-trust laws in some countries.

Crisis in USA

The Xinhua News Agency reported on March 15 "the biggest merger in the corporate history of the United States happened one week ago when standard Oil of California signed an agreement taking over the Gulf Corporation for 80 dollars a share—a 13.3 billion dollar transaction.

Then on March 12 Mobil announced it had agreed to buy superior oil for 45 dollars a share and 5.7 billion dollars in all.

The two mergers, subject to Government approval under the anti-trust law, came only 2 months after Texacos acquisition of Getty Oil for a bid of 10.1 billion dollars. The Take-overs hanged a Damocle's sword over the heads of the employees concerned. One Gulf employee said to reporters. "They left two healthy companies merged and throw thousands of people out".

Struggle against Economic Crisis

In the midst of these difficulties and attacks the working class had to carry on its fight to safeguard its rights and standard of living. And it has to wage a heroic struggle demanding unity, re-

sourcefulness, flexibility in choosing forms of struggles.

The latest instance of working class unity in defence of its economic well-being was witnessed on March 24 in Rome. About 5 lakhs 50 thousands demonstrated, backed by the Communist Party and the General Labour Confederation, poured into Rome from all parts of the country in more than 4,000 coaches and 35 special trains. The marchers denounced a governmental measure to freeze the system of linking wages to the cost of living index that is dearness allowance which would affect the welfare of some 20 million workers and employees.

But demonstrations and protests have not been the only weapons. The aggravation of the situation between capital and labour, the onslaughts on lockouts, retrenchments and dismissal led the trade unions to choose subtle and flexible forms of struggles and keep the fight on.

Against Militarisation of Economy

In the first place the trade unions in raising their demands could not exclude the question of militarisation of economy and the expenditure on the defence budget. The diversion of used resources for bolstering war expenditures was depriving lakhs of their jobs. In these countries the loose talks of sharing the benefits of technological revolution indulged in by the reformist leaders has been found to hollow and has only facilitated the job robbery.

The trade unions had to combat the harmful effect of these defence expenditures. In the course of the crisis it was revealed that the transnationals operated with common designs against the workers and in many cases unless the strength of the workers was mobilised in an international plane the struggle was becoming difficult.

Struggles for Economic Demands Linked with Peace Struggles

Thus while raising issues of immediate importance the trade unions in the advanced capitalist countries had to raise policy issues of vital importance to the whole nation. The economic struggle for immediate demands now got linked up in the question of war and peace.

Flexible forms of Struggles

To meet the offensive in the concrete condition of mass unemployment, lockouts and closures the working class and trade unions adopted flexible forms of struggles. Factory meetings and

demonstrations were preceded by short-term stoppages for few minutes in entire economic sectors. Simultaneously the working class entered upon the militant actions of occupying factories and running them. A paper-making factory in France has been in the hands of the workers for three years. The Paramount Shoe Factory in Tokyo suburb has been occupied by the workers for three years and there is no interruption in production or sale of manufactured goods. And last September the Shipbuilding workers of West Germany seized the state-owned Hamburg shipyard, one of the biggest yards of the country.

Strikes Rip the Capitalist World

The question of what we call as dearness allowance has led to huge strike wave in Belgium. Demonstrators protested against the cancellation of the sliding scale of wages and salaries which compensate them against price rise and cancellation of bonuses and overtime. They also protested against cuts in education and health allocations under the Parliamentary mandate of emergency powers.

In Italy there have been strikes in January, February, April, May and June. In January 5 million workers participated in the strike. On August 27, 15 million factory and office workers participated in a general strike.

The French working class has to act under different circumstances. Here the Government is led by the Socialist party and it is backed by the Communist Party. The programme to combat the effects of the crisis and protect the interests of the working class and the people has been drawn by the two parties and the Government and the trade unions. It is being attacked by the monopolists. The General confederation of Labour the leading trade union organisation of the workers has put forward concrete measures which include outflow of capital abroad, broadening the participation of workers collectives in deciding on dismissals and raising taxes on large companies and properties.

In England the T.U.C. has taken the challenge of the Government to restrict trade union rights. It will be seen that the working class of advanced capitalist countries has been engaged in a two-fold battles, fight against war, fight against unemployment and crisis. It has achieved growing unity and fought militant battles against the ruling classes.

Tasks of the Indian Working Class

The CITU and the working class must wish them success in these two-fold struggles.

In this background May Day this year brings to our mind the task that we have to discharge. We are all aware that our trade unions and the trade union movement as a whole have yet to take up the vital question of war and peace. This weakness has to be growingly overcome if India's working class has to do its minimum duty to the world working class and people of the world.

While we have started on the road, while some of our constituents like West Bengal and Kerala CITU Committees are bringing the issue before the mass of workers, other forces are also now entering the field to help us. The peace conference of political parties held recently in New Delhi gives us an opportunity to carry the issue to the mass of the people. All our unions must quickly seize the opportunity to rouse both the working class and other sections of our people. The lack of international consciouness of our working class arising from bourgeois and reformist influences must be combated steadily enabling our working class to emerge as an active and powerful contingent of the world peace army.

Onslaught on Workers

The year that has gone saw us heavily engaged in battles defending the rights and the well-being of the workers. We can say that the trade unions and workers kept the fight on despite repression and victimisation. Our workers and trade union leaders were repressed by the Government many were sentenced to long-term of imprisonment, many others were brutally attacked by hired gangsters—their wives and children not escaping assasins' attempts.

Many successes were scored. Repression apart, tens of thousands were locked out, thrown to the wolves. The total number of mandays lost due to lockout according to the latest official figures was 9.99 million in 1980, 15.38 million in 1981 and 17.75 million in 1982. One can imagine the colossal suffering and misery imposed on our class. A major part of this misery was shouldered by West Bengal. Bengal's share of mandays lost due to lockouts was 4.43 million in 1980, 8.5 million in 1981 and 13.32 million in 1982.

The United Struggles

Against this monstrous offensive and the intensified unemployment the CITU and its unions carried on a ceaseless fight. The CITU continues to develop trade union unity and the National Cam-

paign Committee has come to growingly represent the united voice of the movement.

Thanks to this growing unity which was maintained in negotiations with the Government, a number of beneficial and favourable agreements could be signed in Steel, Coal and other industries. In these negotiations the INTUC also stood side by side with the constituents of the National Campaign Committee.

It can be said that during the year that has passed we have scored new successes in relation to the unity of the trade union movement and we have succeeded in strengthening the atmosphere and our unity.

We find therefore all trade union centres including the INTUC unitedly working for the success of the Jute strike in West Bengal and all with one voice demanding nationalisation of Jute industry.

We also find again all trade unions centres including the INTUC unitedly working for the success of the Port and Dock workers' strike and maintaining the unity against Government's stonewalling.

The strengthening of the NCC and expansion of the urge for unity are important achievements scored by our fighting working class and the trade unions.

On this May Day we must resolve to make this unity still wider, all inclusive and give it a stable character through a confederation of all trade union centres and industrial federations. This is what the CITU has been advocating to ensure the mobilisation of the full strength of the trade union movement to combat official policies and advocate policies for running the economy in the interest of the people.

For Equal Status in Management

On this May Day the working class must realise that the time has come to demand an equal status in running the economy and industrial management. The huge unemployment, closures and lockouts combined with shortages and unutilised industrial capacity reveal the utter bankruptcy of private and bureaucratic management and official policies. The working class and our people have to undergo immeasureable suffering because of this monopoly of management in private hands. The workers demand in the interest of our country and our people that they should have equal status and rights in managing the affairs of the industry and economy.

Fight Against the authoritarian Government

The year since last May Day has seen India's workers locked in a continuous conflict with the athoritarian Government. In West Bengal and Kerala especially it was involved in a political fight with the ruling part at the Centre.

The workers of West Bengal, the CITU unions deserve full praise for their heroic defence of the Left Front Government, for rallying round it in increasing numbers to defeat the toppling game of Cong(I). The ruling Cong(I) party and its representatives degraded themselves when they resorted to indecent gestures and anarchic violence in the Assembly when they resort to all kinds of excuses to defame and slander the Left Front Government. They know it is a battle between the authoritarian forces and the advanced outposts of the democratic movement. Their effort to isolate the Left Front repeatedly failed because of the political vigilance of the workers and the people.

For State Autonomy

The intensification of the struggle between the Left Front and the Cong(I) party backed by the Centre is a feature of the last year. This has brought sharply before the people the question of Centre State relations as the major issue.

The concentration of resources and political power in the hands of the centre, the blatant discrimination practised against the Left Front Government of West Bengal and Tripura, the overdraft issue—all have become matters of concern amongst all democratic forces and calls for a radical change in the Centre State relationship.

While the workers of West Bengal and Kerala have more closely identified themselves with this important issue, in the rest of the country our unions and workers have yet to make the mass conscious of the necessity for a radical change in the Constitution to secure State automony.

The Left Front Government

For seven years the workers of West Bengal have had the advantage of Left Front Government headed by Com. Jyoti Basu guarding their rights and throwing the Government's weight on their side. The right to strike has been fully protected. Freedom from police intervention in industrial disputes has been guaranteed. The big Jute strike involving two lakhs of workers continues among conditions of utmost freedom never seen in any Cong(I) ruled state. Several wage and other agreements have been reached thanks to

the intervention of the Labour Minister.

But it cannot be said that this exceptionally favourable situation has been fully utilised by us to forge ahead with mass of membership, to isolate the Cong(I) completely from the working class, to make our unions overwhelmingly stronger than others. We cannot rest on our oars. It is a race against time. The forces opposed to the people are preparing to use every weakness of ours to turn the table against us.

United Struggles in Kerala

Our Unions in Kerala have registered remarkable progress in forging unity and have succeeded in unleashing one struggle after another against the policies of the ruling Cong(I) ministry. In a number of these struggles the CITU succeeded in uniting all organisations including the INTUC against the Cong(I) Ministry. It virtually brought the Ministry on the brink of a collapse. The latest achievement of our Kerala CITU is the total Electricity Workers' strike with all unions including the INTUC standing together.

Against Divisive Forces

In all states the CITU unions are fighting ceaseless battles for workers and taking all steps to strengthen the NCC and trade union unity. Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat are all engaged in forging wider resistance and expanding unity and fighting the divisive attacks that are coming from all sides. The rise of casteism, communalism and linguism requires strenuous efforts on the part of our unions to keep the workers united.

In Haryana, Punjab and Assam a continuous fight is being waged against communal and secessionist forces. The working class shows itself as the champion of national unity against forces of disruption.

Against Repression and RSS Gangsterism

In Rajasthan, Kota and Kanpur our unions have to face continuous persecution and victimisation at the hands of the employers and Government. It was a great act of courage that in Kota the working class could organise recently a complete and effective protest after many months struggles last year.

Many unions and comrades fail to realise the inhuman repression which our unions are facing in Cong(I) ruled states. In Kerala itself so many are being murdered by RSS gangs and others with the connivance of the administration.

The year that has passed has brought several issues of great

importance before the trade union movement. For one thing, a close rapport between the working class and the kisan movement is yet to be established. This of course is a fatal weakness.

Against Imperialist Conspiracies

But last few months have also seen ominous developments around the country. The country is being surrounded by reactionary dictatorship. Pakistan and Bangladesh boast of military dictatorship opposed to their own people and getting heavily committed to help from USA. The latter is pouring arms into Pakistan to create tension and pressure upon India. The aim is to create ground for open hostilities. The ruling class of Sri Lanka hunting the Tamil minorities, is also trading the same path and rousing anti Indian feelings to cover its compromise with the US imperialists. The latter are out for seeking a base in Trincomalee and Chittagong harbours as well.

These imperialist conspiracies around our country are accompanied by the encouragement given to secessionist forces in the country. The role of imperialist agencies in Assam has been fully exposed. They are also fishing in troubled waters in Punjab inciting secessionist and communal forces. The Akali leadership which off and on protests about its national outlook is becoming a helpless tool in the hands of communal forces. It shows that anyone who exploits communal appeal for immediate advantage must end as a tool in the hands of the enemies of the nation.

The divisive forces now encourged by imperialism flourish on a soil supplied by the bourgeois-landlord Indira Government. It again shows that a Government committed to defend the interest of the bourgeois-landlord classes can neither defend the unity of the country nor its freedom.

Accept the Challenges

The Cong(I) Government by its economic and political policies is bringing about a rapid disintergration of our country. To save itself it is again conspiring to impose the Presidential form of Government on the people. The recent Rajya Sabha elections have added to its strength in Parliament and it may attempt to force through a constitutional amendment to introduce a Presidential form of Government.

These are the challenges that have appeared in an intensified form before us. And, our trade union movement has to guard itself to meet them.

April 6, 1984

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The Working Class and The Divisive Forces

THE nightmarish happenings in the Punjab where killings were carried on for months with use of religious places for piling of arms and organising of crimes, the raising of the slogan of Khalistan, the gruesome happenings in Maharashtra following the Bhiwandi riots where the muslims were found without protection from the authorities, the spread of communal virus to certain parts of Bombay city affecting a section of the working class—all under line the new and menacing challenge faced by the working class.

It has to be recalled that in these most trying circumstances the CITU and its unions and workers in Assam, Punjab and Bombay kept aloft the flag of unity and did not allow it to be lowered. The workers of Punjab and Assam and Haryana and our unions had to face the most perilous situation, risk their life and limb to fight the attack of divisive forces and they discharged their responsibility without flinching and with courage and determination.

Challenge of the Divisive Forces

But the divisive challenge is spreading all over India and unless its causes are understood, its gravity is realised, the working class movement will not be able to combat it effectively.

The trade union movement of our country showed great advance in unity of the workers in recent months. The All India Port and Dock Workers' strike, the Bengal Jute Workers' strike the 48 hours Coal Workers' strike, united tens of thousands of workers irrespective of their caste and religion. They fought, together for

months braving the starvation and behaved as a class detachment which knew no differences in its ranks. This spirit of secular and class unity which should pervade the entire country, however, could not affect the counter-attack of the divisive forces. Its effect on India's poltical developments could not be felt at all. Because, the divisive forces were able to affect lakhs people over an entire state, as in Punjab, or thousands of people in Bombay. It is quite clear that the unity in trade union struggles alone will not change the situation and prevent destruction of national unity. Unless its unity begins to influence the popular mind, inspires thousands outside the trade union struggle to unite and overcome their religious and caste differences, it will remain a small island of unity easily submerged under an avalanche of disruptive and divisive forces.

Special Role of the Working Class

The Working Class and its unity has a special responsibility in saving the country's unity. It is the experience of history that the only class, which by its unity and consciousnes, can save the unity of a newly liberated country, is the working class. This is so because, in all newly liberated and backward countries complete national unification in thought and deed is not fully achieved. The economic backwardness of these countries maintain old parochial, communal and religious consciousness and separatism and after the forcible exist of imperialism and foreign domination, these inner differences often take precedence over national unity. The working class living in modern conditions, united in thousands in the factory can easily overcome the sense of religious, communal considerations and set an example. That is why in all newly liberated countries either the working class plays this role or the country gets ruined—a ready prey to imperialist domination. The working class of India has to play this role of defending popular and national unity overcoming religious and communal differences. If sections of the working class themselves become affected by communal virus, then the working class is doomed. Unfortunately, in India the workers themselves are swayed or neutralised by religious and communal considerations and stand paralysed before the attack of disruptive forces, when they should be in the streets to fight them back. This often happens in communal or linguistic riots where the linguistic or communal majority sits silent and does not fight those who attack its class brothers. The

working class and the trade union movement must fight against this paralysis and train itself to a secular class army out to defend its unity and the unity of the people. It must realise that the unity forged by it in its prolonged battles can be reduced to nothing if it fails to act as a class force and influence the people.

Champion the Cause of Minorities

In this connection the trade unions must quickly overcome some of their weaknesses in functioning which hamper the process of class unity. The working class and the trade union membership is composed of workers from all castes and religions. The workers coming from oppressed castes and minority community have disabilities and grievances in addition to the grievances common to all workers. Sometimes these are of greater importance to them in their daily life than the common trade union demands. They do not feel enthusiastic about the common movement if the trade unions do not champion their special demands. This is one of the reasons for low trade union membership from these sections. The trade unions must remove this weakness and ventilate the special griveances of these sections.

Lessons from Assam and Punjab

But the main question is has our working class and our trade union movement drawn proper lesson from the happenings in Assam and Punjab? The divisive, reactionary and communal forces in India have always organised communal riots to disrupt unity of the working class the democratic movement.

But the divisive attack in Punjab and Assam are of a quite different kind. They are specifically directed towards creating a secessionist movement, breaking the unity and integrity of India. The raising of the slogan of Khalistan, a separate Sikh state, apart from India makes it clear. In Assam the secessionists are pursuing the same course under an innocuous slogan of solving the foreigners' issue. It is of course wrong to charge the entire people of Assam or the Sikh masses of Punjab with being secessionists. But the sinister fact is that when these slogans are concealed either in religious or chauvinistic grab, the masses fall easy victims to them. They are not able to resist them politically and isolate the secessionists.

Imperialists Fomenting Secessionist Movements

Firstly, which are the forces that are directly interested in promoting and financing the secessionist movement? The Western im-

perialists—the USA and its agents want to weaken and disintegrate and dismember India so that they can enslave the country and exploit it. The U.S. hand in Assam agitation has been exposed long ago. The advocates of Khalistan are received by the highest dignitaries in the USA. Millions of dollars worth currency was found in the Golden Temple complex when the army entered it, according to news report. The CIA is known for planning dismemberment of India. In Britain the secessionists are allowed a free hand by the police and the Government to organise attacks on Indian establishments. Threat of murder are allowed to be broadcast over the BBC. In Australia members of an Indian delegation were allowed to be assaulted by secessionist Sikhs with the Australian police refusing to intervene. Such are the international supporters and promoters of secessionism. And it is known that they are using the military regime of Pakistan to further their purposes. Training camps for secessionist extremists were held in Pakistan to train them in murders, clandestine assaults and cowardly killings of innocent people. The Pakistan press throughout these months carried out vicious and distorted propaganda supporting the secessionists. And finally they have refused to send back for trail the hijackers of the Indian plane.

Attack on Integrity of the Country

It is no longer a question of communal conflict to be settled through usual methods, but a serious attack on the integrity of the country which all communities, all citizens of India must unitedly fight.

The same preparations to divide the Indian people and disintegrate the unity of the country are being made elsewhere, though they still appear in the grab of communal or linguistic rights or demands of religious bigotry.

Alienating Role of Hindu Communalists and Muslim Fundamentalists

The happenings in Bhiwandi and other places are part of the same conspiracy. The Hindu communalists—R.S.S., Ekatmata, Shiv Sena, by pouring poison against the muslims, by declaring the country to be a country only of Hindus are playing in a despicable manner the game of India's enemies. This propaganda is intended to create a complete sense of alienation among the muslim minority, so that they should have no feeling of commonness with the rest of the people.

This process of alienation is completed by the muslim communal organisations like the Jamait Islami and muslim fundamentalist organisations, some of whom like some Hindu communal organisations are plentifully supplied with finances from abroad.

The Muslim League pretending to defend the just grievances and demands of the muslim minority, only harps on muslim separatism and eggs on the process of muslim alienation and communalism. The end result of this communal appeal is to isolate the muslim masses from the common class and democartic struggle, and look for solution in separatism. The present day communal appeals are not just made for electoral purposes, for promoting riots for local cause, but for creating a ground for dismemberment and enslavement of India.

Linguistic Chauvinism Weakening National Unity

The other sources of divisive attack comes from linguistic chauvinism and separatism which does not recognise its ties with other parts of India and its responsibility for maintaining Indian unity. This chauvinistic appeal is more during elections, putting one part of the country against another. Several Cong(I) State Governments have made use of this weapon to avoid real remedies against unemployment and other economic problems. These Governments have issued orders not to register the names of the workers from other states in the employment exchange, thus attacking rights of common citizenship and creating a separate state within the state. The same effect of alienation is produced by compulsion on the minority to study the language of the majority in a state, or shutting off from job workers and people of other states by reserving a fantastic proportion of jobs for local people. All bourgeois-landlord parties for remaining in power adopt these means including the Janata Party.

The total effect of these shortsighted policies is to raise regional feelings and weaken the feelings of national unity.

India's enemies, the imperialists use these weaknesses in Indian consciousness, influence regional, local and religious feelings to fan these feelings and create a permanent wall to divide the States and the people.

State Patronage of Religion

The question arises why should the common man, the toiling people, fall victims to these viles and appeals of communalist reactionaries and the imperialists, why are they not able to resit

them and fight them back as common citizens of a newly liberated nation?

Here we come to the biggest indictment of the bourgeois-landlord rule, the rule of the Congress party extending over three decades since independence. In these thirty years the fellings of national unity and oneness has been corroded instead of being strengthened. The bourgeois-landlord state and the Congress(I) did not think it necessary to keep the anti-imperialist spirit alive and for years they had very little to say against the danger from imperialism. They did nothing to raise the consciousness of the Indian people to intensify national consciousness and basically fight the reactionary influence of religions and caste. On the contrary they encourged all religions and beliefs through state patronge, instead of keeping the state and Government completely separate from religion, which is what is meant by secularism. And they have not been found wanting in the use of communal and caste appeal during elections. Result is that communal virus has spread to the administration also. And after thirty years an ordinary citizen remains either a Hindu or Mulism or a Sikh. This influence, of religion, caste and superstition over the people is helpful to the bourgeois-landlord regime in promoting division among the people and the workers.

Class Selfishness of Congress(I)

Because of its class-selfishness, the Congress(I) regime pursues a policy which leads to the growing disintegration of the country and plays into the hands of imperialism. The more than three decades of Congress rule can be summed up as decades of disintegration of national consciousness and unity along with the growing misery of the people.

The criminal role of the secessionists and the opportunism of the Akali leaders which played into the former cannot hide the responsibility of the Congress Government in contributing to the present critical situation in Punjab. The deployment of the army and the events following it could have been avoided if the Central Government had negotiated the democratic demands put forward by Akali leadership and isolated the secessionists. But this did not suit the electoral interests of the ruling party. Therefore, extreme steps had to be taken and the mass of Sikh population had to be alienated. The Government could not have acted worse if it had been advised by the bureaucrats secretly in leauge with CIA

agents.

The Punjab Episode—a Sinister Development

The Punjab developments with the Sikh masses overwhelmed by wounded religious feeling and temporarily unable to realise the anti-national and treacherous character of the extremists led by Bhindranwale, constitute a big set back for the democratic and working class movement and danger to national unity. No one raises the question—should places of worship be allowed to pile up arms and use them for antinational purposes? The fact that the overwhelming number affected are not in a position to raise the question shows to what extent religious feelings have overwhelmed democratic judgement and got priority over national consideration. This is the role religion plays disruption of democratic and national values and their replacement by separatist considerations. Otherwise there should be no two opinions that a place of worship cannot be transformed into an arsenal and those who do it must be punished. There will be an end of freedom of this country if every temple, mosque or Gurudwara is allowed to stock foreign and illegal arms to carry on anti-people activities.

Collapse of Administration

The collapse of the Punjab administration, its failure to tackle the extremists is a sinister development. The same collapse was witnessed in Assam and forces from outside the state had to be sent to tackle the secessionists. The same collapse was witnessed in Bhiwandi and the army had to be called in.

This collapse shows that the local administration is growingly affected by consideration of localism, communalism local chauvinism and separatism and is growingly loosing all sense of democratic values and national consideration. On every occasion where such a divisive attack comes, it helps the divissive forces instead of combating them. Both in Assam and Punjab intelligence sources failed because they were working in league with the secessionists. This is the first stage of a final collapse.

Combat the Divisive Attacks

Such is the menacing situation facing the working class and the country. The organised trade union movement will be a pure hoax if it does not take this Problem seriously and combat these attacks on the working class and national unity. No other movement, no other class can see this danger so clearly and none can start the fight in a combined manner as the working class can do. Years of

prolonged struggle, united struggles of the workers belonging to all religions and all castes, struggles against privations and starvations have led the basic foundation for overcoming all other considerations and influences. The working class and its unions have to protect their unity in the first place and then launch a counter attack on the divisive forces to rescue the people from their influence. The advanced elements in the trade union movement and the working class must show in words and deeds that they are free from all bias in matters of religion and caste. That they are wedded to a secular and class outlook alone.

Rouse political Consciousness—Protect Working Class and People's Unity

In the coming days they will have to wage a battle for protecting working class unity, for backward sections of the working class are susceptible to divisive appeals in communal, caste or regionalist form. Despite the effort of reactionaries the trade unions do succeed in forging unity of thousands during strikes. But its unity based on immediate economic demands is not sufficient to counter the reactionary offensive. On the basis of this unity already achieved the working class must be roused politically to directly intervene against the attack of divisive forces as it does in Bengal during communal riots. The sinister meaning of this attack must be politically explained to the workers and armed with this the united strength of the trade union movement must plunge among the people to combat every manifestation of divisive attack. From protecting working class unity the workers must march forward to protect people's and national unity. That the hard task can be done and fought for has been shown by our CITU's Unions and workers in Punjab and Assam.

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Presidential Speech

CITU General Council, Jaipur, Sept. 28-30, '84

Comrades,

I offer my homage to the memory of the comrades who are no more with us. All of them fell fighting for the cause of the workers. Some became victims of goonda attacks while others fell victim to police bullets. I pay my homage to the memory of our Tripura comrades who were murdered by Congress(I) hired goondas.

Comrades, many others suffered imprisonment and police torture while defending the CITU and its right to champion the cause of the workers. We honour their valour and courage. I express my warm sympathy and solidarity with tens of thousands who are locked out and retrenched, with their families undergoing privations. Never before India witnessed so many thousands of families thrown to the wolfs and offered hostages to the economic crisis.

Pursuit of war by USA

Comrades the fifteen months since our Kanpur meeting have witnessed rapid and important developments in the national and international situation. The international situation is now surcharged with dangerous possibilities. The US imperialists intent on their nuclear war drive are pouring in hundreds of crusie missiles in Europe to aggress against the Soviet Union. Their NATO partners are adding this suicidal game though the people of these countries abhor war and demand peace. Through mighty peace demonstrations and other mass actions millions in these countries

have expressed themselves against the deployment of missiles in Europe and demanded their withdrawal. In the USA also the peace loving forces are condemning Reagan's war policy and peace has become an issue in the Presidential election.

The Soviet Union and the Socialists countries hold the peace banner firmly putting forward concrete proposals to save the world the horrors of a nuclear war. At the same time the USSR has warned the US imperialists that those who dare attack her will meet with the retaliatory action sufficient to cool their ardour for aggression. While the working class and people of the world highly appreciate the peace fight of the Soviet Union, some people in our country and abroad in their extreme foolishness refuse to distinguish between an imperialist power out for nuclear war and conquest and a socialist country intent on peace and indulge in talk about two super powers. Thereby they prettify imperialism and slander socialism.

The US imperialists have again exposed themselves by refusing to accept the Soviet offer for serious discussion on keeping the outer space free from nuclear weapons. The poisonous mind for Reagan was revealed to the people when in 'joke' he talked at outlawing the Soviet Union and ordered its bombing. The joke was duly broadcast in certain radio networks. It was a crude device to familiarise the people with the idea of a nuclear war against the USSR and revealed the innermost recesses of Reagan's mind. Recently Reagan sought to cover them by hypocritical talk about peace. India's working class and the trade union movement owe it to themselves that in this dangerous situation they take the fight against war in all earnestness, expose the US imperialist game of nuclear aggression destruction of Socialism and subjugation of the world and rouse our people.

All CITU unions must give full and grand response to WFTU's call to observe September 1, as a day in defence of peace and against war.

Greetings to British Coalminers

Comrades, we must send our warm greetings to the coal miners of Great Britain who are waging a courageous fight against unemployment and closure of pits. The Conservative British Govt. is resorting to every mean device, with which we are familiar in our country, to crush and defeat thestrike. Undaunted by the repression let loose against them, by the imprisonment of their leaders

and by police barbarities against themselves the British miners are fighting for months and we wish them success in the heroic struggle. We denounce the Thatcher Govt. for its anti-working class policies and its barbarities and are confident the British TUC and the entire working class will stand by the miners and ensure their victory.

India being Surrounded

Comrades, the developments in our sub-continent should cause concern to all those who price the freedom of our country and the freedom of our neighbours. The imperialists are intervening to stem the march of the democratic forces in all these countries to disunite the people and support the reactionary dictatorships. They support the reactionary forces in each country to fan the fire of chauvinism and create hostility between the neighbourers. In relation to India their game is to surround the country with a number of hostile and reactionary governments to bring pressure on her to change its policies and to attack the growing democratic urge of the people. They are therefore supporting the Pakistan dictator who has no backing of the people and giving him plenty of arms to be used any time against India. The supply of F-16 aeroplanes, the supply of Harpoon missiles and plentyful finance for acquiring defence materials are preparations for creating hostilities between the countries. It will be sucidal if the working class of our country fails to take note of these imperialist conspiracies and does not consciously fight them.

The same agencies utilise every opportunity to create bad blood between India and Bangladesh while they support the military dictator against the democratic movement in that country.

And now recetly the imperialists have succeeded in drawing in their net the reactionary Jayawardene Govt. of Srilanka with whose aid they are bent upon fanning hostile feelings between the people of the two countries.

The Developments in Sri Lanka

The CITU and its all unions have watched with great admiration the struggle of Tamils in Srilanka and have expressed their indignation and protest against the oppression and atrocities committed against them. To kill the defenceless persons in jail is a cowardly attack worthy of those who hire Israeli and British merceneries to fight the minority in their own country. But the danger is not only to the Tamils, it is to the entire people of Srilanka,

to their freedom and independence. Once you allow armed imperialist merceneries in your country, you find it difficult to push them out. But Jayawardene is determind to pursue this dangerous path, because he is afraid of relying on the healthy democratic instincts of the people of Srilanka. There are sufficient grounds to believe that Trincomalee is already under US control and some other strategic places will also be placed at its disposal. This is the inevitable result of relying on the imperialists to fight your own minorities.

Comrades, the army, navy and police forces in Srilanka do not seem to be under any control. Or perhaps they have been secretly given the license to murder anybody at their will. Otherwise it is difficult to explain how there could be naval shelling of a town in Jaffana or destruction of Mannar by the army. These brutalities practised by the Lankan army show to what extent the Jayawardene Govt. has gone in repudiating every norm of a civilised Govt. In fact the fighting Tamils in Srilanka are facing something worse than a military distatorship.

Comrades, we must all appreciate the courageous role played by the Communists Party of Srilanka and other left parties in this difficult situation and their fight for people's unity, justice to minority and against imperialist penetration. The ruling politicians of Srilanka are issuing provocative statements to create feelings of hostility between the peoples of our two countries. This suits the US imperialists from whom Jayawardene has sought help. This screens the imperialist penetration in Srilanka. Besides it helps the US designs to surround India with undemocratic and hostile regimes.

Comrades, we must warmly congratulate Tamilnadu State Committee and our trade unions in the State for the correct and courageous way in which they have handled the critical situation created by the repression of Tamils in Srilanka. Short sighted politicians and parties sought to exploit the genuine anger of the people to direct it into chauvnist channels which would have created permanent barriers between the people of the two countries and suited the imperialist designs. The Tamil problem in Srilanka can be solved only with the pressure of international working class opinion and the unity of the Tamil and Lankan democratic forces. Our unions all over the country must recognise this difficult situation and by their continuous support for the cause of Tamils they

Indian policies, have been steadily reducing imports from India. Indian exports to Europe were valued at Rs. 1368 million in 1976-77, they came down to Rs. 726 million in 1982-83. Indian exports to the USA were valued at Rs. 406 million in 1976-77, they came down to Rs. 114 million in 1982-83. Total Indian export to Europe, America and Africa were valued at Rs. 2622 million, they fell to Rs. 1345 million by 1982-83, i.e., by 50 per cent. The capitalist crisis, rising fever of protectionism and anti-Indian outlook, all contributed to this precipitous fall in exports.

The situation would have been impossible had not the exports to the USSR made up the loss. Indian exports to the USSR valued at only Rs. 383 million in 1976-77 rose to Rs. 1779 million in 1982-83. The result was that the loss in the exports to Western countries was more than covered. In 1976-77 total Indian exports including the USSR were valued at Rs. 3005 million; in 1982-83 they were valued at Rs. 3124 million. Linking with a crisis-free Socialist economy has paid dividends. Thanks to it exports have not declined and they are higher in 1982-83 than any previous year.

There is at the same time no doubt that the mill magnates with their inefficiency, incompetence and penchant for making a fast buck have contributed to the present plight of the industry.

The situation in some centres is not so bleak as it is presented by the mill magnates. The rapid rise in the number of powerlooms from 23,000 in 1951 to 600,000 is not totally unconnected with the patronage extended to them by some millowners. It is known that many mills often shut the weaving section and transfer their yarn to powerlooms to escape excise duty and in the bargain make huge profits. An important cause of the present state of affairs is the industry's refusal to attune itself to the domestic market which demands cloth at lower prices and which therefore affects their rapid profit-making capacity. This is an anti-social and antinational outlook. The textile magnates want to cater either to the foreign markets want to those who can buy high-priced man-made fibre cloth. The industry cannot survive on this narrow market. It has to depend on the domestic market composed of the mass of poor people. This solution must be imposed on the magnates to avoid lay-off, closures and lock-outs.

One of the persistent demands raised both by the Government and the employers is that of modernisation. In the first place modernisation of even a substantial number of mills will lead to a large

increase in production. Who will purchase it? Will the price of cloth be lowered and market expanded? Let me quote from an article in *Commerce:* "How do mills produce low-priced cloth with operations cost escalating so rapidly. Is large-scale modernisation the answer?"

"As opposed to industry expectation no radical improvement in technolgy can substantially help the industry as a whole since such expensive improvements pay for themselves only if they are used to produce fabrics which are highly expensive and confined to a minor elitist market—the narrow segment once again. Research findings have exposed the fallacies in the conventional argument that modernisation will enable production of cheaper cloth; instead that point to one singular conclusion—modernisation will not be cost-effective at the entire indsutry level. For instance, detailed techno-economic viability analyses for different types of high technology machines, which have a stress on high machine productivity and low labour complement through automation, have shown that they do not become viable economically under Indian conditions until the fabric price is Rs. 12 per metre (ex-mill). Secondly, modernisation would be highly labour-displacing; were the textile industry, the largest employer among Indian manufacturing sectors; to displace labour, there are bound to be damaging repercussions in the consumer market itself. The industry would only pull the carpet from under its feet."

The cry for modernisation is raised to tie the industry to foreign markets to earn profits and neglect the domestic market. And in the bargain they want to displace thousands of workers.

The same article indicts the management for its operational inefficiency. "Poor maintenance is one of the significant factors behind this latter situation. A considerable gap exists between the actual and potential productivity performance of any given machines, even obsolete ones. Inter firm data show that the scope for improving productivity in mills of the order of about 30 per cent on the average." Instead of tackling the problems concerning inefficient management, and orientating the industry to the needs of the people, both the Govt. and the employers care more for exports than for the basic health of the industry. When the industry is unable to thrive on the basis of the vast domestic market, it betrays the bankruptcy of the policy of the Govt. and the management. Besides, the management adopts unfair labour practices, keeps

young workers on temporary jobs for years, denying them both DA and bonus, and even entrusting work to contractors to escape the provisions of the labour laws. But this cannot save the industry as a whole. It intensifies workers' exploitation and at the same time does not meet the needs of the people.

Thanks to Congress planning which with every success makes the poor poorer and the management's selfishness and blindness which fails to see that the industry cannot maintain itself without orientating to the mass of the people, the textiles are seeing the worst crisis since modern textile production was started in the country. The crisis is far wider and deeper than ever the 1930 crisis.

In 1983, the number of cotton mills, spinning and composite, was 805. Of these more than a hundred have gone sick and taken over by the Govt. In 1971 only eight mills were taken over. Their number suddenly increased to 65 in 1972. But the Govt. did not move in to remove the basic causes of sickness. The 103 mills taken over by the Govt. do not end the story. Many more mills continue to close. In Bombay, after the last strike, more than 50,000 workers are on the street.

Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, M.P., U.P., West Bengal and seveal other states are witnessing closures and lock-outs. Rajasthan textiles are also complaining about loss of market. Twentyfour mills are closed in Gujarat and 14 in Tamil Nadu. In all 58 textile mills have closed down leading to loss of jobs for 73,000 workers. This figure added to those thrown out of jobs in Bombay will easily go to 125,000. Such is the depth and extension of the textile crisis, the main victim being the textile workers. The Govt. dared not prevent the managements from closing the mills as and when they liked. They could have refused sanction at least in certain States for closure on the basis of the existing law. And sometimes the Judiciary intervene and declares such laws void. In July the Lok Sabha passed the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill making prior Govt. permission compulsory for closure, layoff or retrenchment in any industrial unit. How will this affect the lockouts and clousre of 58 mills that are already there? This is the usual trick of cheating the people by passing a counteracting measure after allowing the capitalist offensive to reach its ojective. And one can be sure that on future occasions also the Act will remain a dead letter.

The Govt. itself has not proved efficient in managing the taken over mills. The same malady of inefficency, corruption and lack of

social consciousness dominate the taken over sector. The NTC management also seeks to run the mills without participation of the workers in management on equal terms. This is resisted because it will stop many avenues of illegal gratification now available.

In the couse of years the decentralised production, especially the powerlooms production, had made raplied advance. Total decentralised production is now ahead of textile mills production. Mill magnates often suggest that powerloom production competes with mill production because it has not to pay excise and other taxes. But as against this the mills have the advantage of large-scale economy. Why should the former go ahead and the latter fall behind?

It should be clear that the workers, the people and industry need not suffer if the industry is correctly linked with people's needs and supplies cloth at prices within the reach of the people. This also means that official policies which erode the purchasing power of the people must be defeated.

It is clear that the cotton textile industry cannot be allowed to ramain in the hands of private capitalists. They have ruined it and will continue to ruin it in pursuit of their self interest. Some Bombay millowners, for instance, want to dispose off their mills and make huge profits by selling the land of the mill. They want to pocket this unearned income running into crores of rupees and go in for new pastures. In the bargain they seek to deprive thousands of workers of their jobs.

Demand Nationalisation of Textile Indsutry

Nationalisation of the cotton textile industry is the only remedy in the present situation. The crisis has shown the bankruptcy and anti-social character of private management. But nationalisation with bureaucratic management will produce no results. The bureaucratic management does not in the least differ from private management except perhaps in the depth of its corruption. The mess that is made by the NTC is therefore everyone to see.

Nationalisation therefore must be accompanied by equal status for workers in running the industry and managing the concern. Without this neither the present profiteering outlook will be eliminated, nor the anti-social role of private capital. The CITU must therefore demand immediate nationalisation of the textile industry and the opening of all the closed mills.

The Govt. is opposed to nationalisation and is trying to aid the

industry by some financial concessions, loans and proposals for modernisation. All these are just devices which do not go to the root of the problem.

It is necessary that there should be substantial relief in taxation on cotton cloth. The spendthrift Govt. should not be allowed to earn millions out of people's nakedness. Such relief should be passed on to the consumers by lowering the cloth prices. The excise duty on cotton cloth in 1982-83 amounted to Rs. 124 crores, on cotton yarn Rs. 96 crores and the duty on all cloth including man made fibres was Rs. 700 crores. The Govt. of India has absolutely no right to lay such heavy taxation on this necessity of life next in importance only to food. A drastic reduction or abolition of this obnoxious tax major will definitly help people to buy more cloth.

The textile workers have immeasurably suffered from the crisis. The defence of their interests must be considered to be the supreme duty of all organisations. We should demand that the existing lock-outs and closures should be declared illegal and the closed mills should be reopened. We should demand that all those who have been locked out or retrenched should get unemployment wage till the factories reopen.

Trade Union Unity Requires Further Strides

Comrades, there is no reason to be completely satisfied with our achievement in regard to trade union unity. Though there has been certain notable developments and certain notable advance, the unity achieved falls far short of what is possible and required under the present circumstances. The offensive of lock-outs, closures, etc is so big and extensive that the trade union movement cannot claim that it has succeeded in giving a consistent fight against it, much less has it in any way succeeded in reducing its severity. The textile industry, the biggest industry in the country, constitutes a glaring example of the weakness in trade union unity. The movement has also not been able to check the offensive in a number of unorganised and scattered industries. Taking advantage of this the employers and the Govt. are forcing agreement linking wages with productivity. Recent months, besides, have seen increased attacks on the freedom and liberty of the trade unions. Arbitrary reduction from wages are made for going on strike. The Coal Authority of India by using an Act passed by the British Govt., the Payment of Wages Act, enacted when Indians had no fundamental rights, has confiscated a week's wages of thousands of coal workers for one

day's strike. The Patna High Court order calling for stay and declaring that the Act goes against the fundamental rights of the Indian people was, it seems, being disregarded, but perhaps later on better counsels prevailed. But the Govt. intended to use the Act on a wide scale. It is being used in several states.

The Govt. of India has banned the all-India coal miners' strike under the ESMA. The ESMA is being perenially applied to some industries and the right of strike is being virtually extinguished. The U.P. Govt. excels in extending the application of the Act to one industry after another to attack strike.

These attacks are bound to increase in future. Both for defence of the living conditions and the freedom of the trade union movement, it is essential that trade union unity takes many more strides forward and is able to draw increasingly large numbers of unions, central organisations and workers within its fold.

Approach Paper to Seventh plan

Comrades, now let me turn to the document on approach to the Seventh Plan. It sets before the people Indira Govt.'s policy to handle planning and the country's economy during the next five years. It determiners the scope for, employment in modern industry, the ways and methods to tackle the problem of unemployment, investment in modern industry, the Govt's plan regarding agriculture and peasantry and housing for workers dwelling in cities and rural areas.

The document published in the midst of a deep rooted crisis of the economy manifested in the massive rise in unemployment and joblessness and closure of industry and utter ruination of smaller concerns. It does not offer any respite to the workers and the people of India from the regime of high price, unemployment, slum dwelling and sweated labour. The same old promises are repeated and the same old methods are adopted which during every plan have thrust millions into deeper poverty.

So far as the figure of total investment is concerned it is estimated at Rs. 3,20,000 crores; out of this the public sector plan outlay would be Rs. 1,80,000 crores. This last figure comes very near to the total outlay in the public sector during all the previous plans put together.

But of what avail? All the previous plans have witnessed tens of millions being pushed below the poverty line. Besides with all the investments in the earlier period the targets and objectives in

relation to production could not be realised.

Even during the Sixth targets regarding steel, power generation, iron ore, coal, electronic goods and irrigation could not be achieved. Where physical targets cannot be reached what change is there for social targets despite profuse promises.

The Seventh Plan aims at a growth rate of 5 per cent in the economy. Can this offer any relief to the Indian people. The Sixth plan is expected to achieve a growth rate of 5.2 per cent slightly higher than the Seventh plan. What relief has it given to the people? In fact situation during the Sixth plan has worsened with lock-outs, increased unemployment and massive destitution in rural areas. It is futile to expect that the Seventh Plan can offer any relief from the present distress.

The Seventh Plan aims at a growth rate of 4 per cent per annum for agricultural production and 7 per cent per annum for industrial procuction. Is this rate possible for industry considering the miserable failure to use existing capacities in big and small industries alike and monstrous erosion of the purchasing power of the people which will continue during the plan years.

The document observes that within the framework of the declared principles—growth, equality and social justice, self reliance, improved efficiency and productivity—"the movement of social justice has to be faster and there must be a sharper focus on employment and poverty alleviation. Hence the Seventh Plan must emphasise policies and performances which will accelerate the growth of food grain production, increase the employment opportunity, and what is equally important, raise productivity."

The same wornout record—to cheat the people that increased production will mean a radical relief, a change in their social status. Experience shows that so long as planning is carred out within the frame work of the existing class i.e., with landlords, of social progress and increased production, there is no escape for the people.

The document goes on announcing high objectives but does not change the class basis of planning, does not dare attack the right of vested interest and have not the courage to suggest break up of the land monopoly. Therefore its promises will remain empty words.

The entire plan and its approach is dominated by the crisis of the economy and the pressures created by the results of earlier plans.

Years of borrowing from abroad and heavy taxation on the

Indian people and dependence on exports to Western countries, now in the midst of crisis, have put their imprint on the strategy of the plan. "The Seventh Plan has to take into account the prospect of considerably diminished flow of concessional financial assistance from abroad, sizeable date service obligations and a global environment where interest rates are expected to be high with only limited possibility of any sharp acceleration in the volume of export growth."

India's creditors—the IMF and the World Bank have been repeatedly demanding that India must restrain her ambition of industrial advance and cut her coat according to her cloth. This is precisely what is being done by the planners.

How do the planners propose to mobilise the financial resources? "The required resources have to be mobilised in a manner which minismise dependence on external source or in deficit financing which has a high inflationary potential. In order to do this the public sector will have to generate more internal resources through improvement in efficiency and productivity."

What chance is there for the public sector to meet the resources needed for planning and overcome reliance either on foreign indebtedness or on deficit financing? There is no chance whatsoever unless the bias in favour of a bureaucratic and corrupt management, in favour of an arrogant and anti-working class management is ended, and the bureaucratic public sector is placed under genuinely public management with the participation of the workers.

The public sector concerns are notorious for their mismanagement and inefficient organisation. Every year they inflict loss of crores of rupees on the state instead of contributing to its resources. The Central Govt. public sector during the 1983-84 incurred a loss of not less than 30 crores of rupees.

But the Govt. shows no desire to change. The CITU repeatedly declared that its trade unions and workers are prepared to discharge their responsibility in running the industry on the basis of equal status in management. But the Govt. has refused to response. For sake of appearances it has announced a new scheme of workers' participation which ensures no participation, no genuine responsibility for the workers. It is intended only to show international opinion that the Indian Govt. possesses a progressive outlook. But just as the earlier scheme was never introduced in the

public sector the current scheme also will not be implemented.

On this important question of workers' participation the approach document makes only a vague reference to workers' share in the management. "By planning to give the work force a share in the fortunes of enterprises through a share in the management and by improving industrial relations the Seventh Plan should aim at improved work ethics, great pride in work and reduce absenteeism; it should minimise the loss of working days and increase the man-hour productivity substantially"—all of course without participation of workers on equal terms.

These platitudes are accompained by contrary practices. To inspire the workers to make the public sector more productive the authorities are embarking upon intimidatory and confiscatory measures. The nationalised coal India is consficating eight day wages for one day strike under an obnoxious Act passed by the British enslavers. An arrogant bureaucrat who heads Coal India makes insulting statements about labour leaders and trade unions and says that he will not hold negotiation with the unions and will not call meetings of the Joint Negotiation Committee. The man is not kicked out either by the Labour Minister or the Energy Minister. The same person besides refuses to carry out in full the terms of a solemnly singed agreement. All this shows that the public sector is a completely bureaucratic sector and that neither the Govt. nor the Planning Commission has any idea of reforming it.

Besides it is known that in a number of public sector undertaking losses are incurred because of the use of substandard materials and other corrupt methods. The Nationalised Coal India itself has been charged with supplying substandard coal to the railways and electrical boards. The latter have charged that the substandard coal has damaged the capacity of the powerhouses to produce electricity and that in some cases the machinery itself has been damaged. But when the workers expose this corruption they are not appreciated but are victimised.

It is therefore futile to expect that the bureaucratically managed public sector will help in ending reliance on external aid and deficit finance. The Seventh Plan will have to increasingly rely on either costly foreign debts or huge deficit finance for securing the necessary financial resources. That means heavy debt payments for the country and rising prices spiral for the debts. Already the effects of current deficit financing are being felt by the people. Prices has

started shooting up in the last few months and the Finance Minister is unable to deny the rise. He however, tries to explain it away by saying that it is due to seasonal influences. There is no doubt that the accumulated effect of the Govt.'s deficit financing will inflict the prices further making the conditions of people utterly miserable. The Seventh Plan instead of alleviating the situation is going to exacerbate its discontent.

What is the direct result of all this? Development of modern big industry is to be checked. "This strategy outlined in the section on objectives of the Seventh Plan would result in the lowering of the capital output ratio. This is of great importance, if as is likely, there is a constraint of resources in real terms. The likely increase in debt servicing obligations in the next two years, the possible reduction in the additional resources mobilisation from the ill sector, and the balance of payments consideration would necessiate concentration on areas of low import requirement." That is there must be restriction on the development of modern and sophisticated industry.

The key note, the key excuse is utilisation of existing capacities. "The Seventh Plan has to lay emphasis on improved utilisation of capacity by pinpointing the factors responsible for the existence of idle capacity. Continued regular and intense monitoring of all major public sector enterprises and especially the capacity utilisation should be used effectively for the purpose." It is known that India's per capita production and consumption of vital commodities like steel, coal, electricity is one of the lowest in the world. Its capacity to produce these items is not large and yet there is under utilisation of capacity. Why? Have the planners thought of removing the basic cause of this under utilisation? It is nothing but the expression of economic crisis in the typical form of over production of the means of production. The over production is not in relation to the needs of the people but in relation to eroded purchasing power of the people during every Five Year Plan. Full capacity cannot be utilised unless this basic cause is removed. Instead of removing it and going for quicker industrial advance the capitalist path of planners leads to slow down in industry and further erosion of purchasing capacity and perpetuation of under utilisation.

Net result is that the workers, the young generation and the employees should look less and less to modern industry with

modern wage standards, for jobs. They must seek them in ill paid small industries.

Therefore there will be greater and greater emphasis on per capita increase in productivity, through imposition of heavier work load, or introduction of sophisticated means rendering large section of labour redundant. When you refuse to accept agreed norms of production and share management with the workers to fight corruption and inefficiency, to solve the promblem of production, increased productivity means only imposition of additional burden on the work force and its further alienation from production. The workers will be face to face with this attack on a big scale during the years of the Seventh Plan.

The approach document says "the Seventh Plan must emphasise policies and programmes which will accelerate the growth of foodgrain production, increase employment opportunities and what is equally important raise productivity." It says "the Seventh Plan must aim at a accelerated rate of agricultural development and self sufficiency in foodgrains and edible oils at higher levels of consumption. Special programmes need to be formulated and implemented during the Seventh Plan for effecting a breakthrough in rice output, especially in the estern region and some of the southern region States. Similar programmes are necessary to raise the output of oil seeds, millets and pulses".

All this in the first place shows that six successful five plans have not made India self sufficient in food grains and edible oil. The approach paper therefore has to emphasise the necessity of self sufficiency.

Secondly, all this targeted production with the rate of 4 per cent growth in agriculture—will it lead to a radical improvement in the conditions of the people with the present day one sided distribution of the food grains produced? At best it may relax the severity of present day scarcity of edible oils, etc. But it is futile to expect that the proposed rise in rice production etc will automatically increase the purchasing power of the rural masses and ensure a higher per-capita consumption of food. So long as the existing property relations in the countryside and the country as a whole continue, benefits of progress in food and other production will countinue to be monopolised by a tiny section of big property holders. It is a law of economics that the distribution of means of production decides the distribution of means of consumption among the people. In fact

the planners have now realised that economic progress does not automatically lead to economic well being of the people and social justice.

The key solution is change the distribution of means of production, property relation in land, etc. But this the planners would not accept.

This food programme if it is successful will at best continue the existing misery and maldistribution.

But the approach document assures that it is striking a new part and is integrating the food and agricultural programme with a programme for alleviation of rural poverty. "The core of anti-poverty programme lies in the endowment of income generation assets of those who have little or none of these. Hence redistribution, land reforms and security of tenures to the informal tenants have to be directly integrated with the anti-poverty programme."

This same promise is recorded in the sixth plan documents and without any result at the end of the plan. The reason is easy to see. The most obvious method of endowing income generation assets in rural areas on those who have nothing is to break the land concentration and distribute land among the landless. But this neither the sixth plan contemplated nor the approach document contemplates. In place it only suggests distribution of surplus land, the traditional cheating slogan of Congress(I) government. Here one may ask the question is the Indira Government at all serious about any substantial addition to the assets of those who have none? If it is why is Presidential assent being withheld for bills passed by West Bengal Legislature which ensure the same objective.

So one crucial part of the poverty alleviation programme collapses.

Like the sixth plan the new approach document claims to provide employment for lakhs of people so that they are taken above the poverty line. This is supposed to be a vital part of the seventh plan "Employment schemes will aim at the creation of durable assets, skill formation and generation of permanent and continuing employment with progressively increased income levels. In addition the scheme will continue to promote self employment in economically viable activities. This would shift a sizeable part of the rural population from agriculture to the secondary and tertiary sectors—a logical corollary of implementation of programme that

will increase rural income and rural employment will be the production of consumer items in rural areas with guranteed market arrangements. This would also revise a number of hand made and handicraft items.

Now every effort to give work to rural unemployed is welcome. Such schemes and plans have been there in the past also. The sixth plan also was supposed to create millions of jobs. But all these schemes have produced very little effect on the grim situation in the rural areas where unemployment continues to increase and assets are not built. In the first place only a part of the huge sums spent on the programme reaches the poor and produces jobs for them. A substantial part is sequestered by officials. The job creation claims have been exaggerated.

No doubt a few have certainly benefited. But this is far from tackling the unemployment programme and creating a new basis for economic advance.

The claim that the employment scheme will automatically lead to revival of handicraft, of establishment of new agro-based industries has no basis in fact. The handicrafts and handlooms and other small industries are in complete ruins. Tens of thousands small concerns are closed and million are unemployed. The claims that the employment scheme will repair these ruins and revive these industries is asking for the moon. As matters stand the employment schemes cannot be anything other than just relief work, affording some temporary relief but totally incapable of changing the life status of any section of the people.

The stress on self employing industry is a convenient way for the state to escape its responsibility for providing jobs. A few thousands rupees are to be given to some people mostly favourites in the name of self employment. This is the basis of the bank melas organised by the Indira Government. It is only intended to bolster the electoral prospects of the ruling party. Besides once you distribute the sums you can claim that so many lakhs have been properly employed. The objective of providing productive jobs for everyone who needs it is going to remain a distant dream.

While the approach paper declares the laudable objective of providing jobs for everyone who needs it does not seem to cover the two crores of unemployed in the cities, industrial unemployed workers. There is no reference to this section any where. All schemes of employment are mentioned in relation to the rural

unemployed. There is no mention of tens of thousands thrown out of jobs due to closures and lockouts and what is to be done with them.

On the contrary the employers and the government repeatedly talk about modernisation, computerisation and automation to prop up industry—all of which means further attacks on jobs. A recent statement emanating from the labour department of the Government of India gives a green signal to computerisation and removes the earlier restriction on the import and use of computers. It was accepted till now that computers should not be introduced without the consent of the trade unions concerned. Now it seems the trade unions are only to be informed and nothing more need be done.

The approach document claims to devote greater attention to rural housing, very good. But what about housing in the cities, housing for industrial workers? They are asked to live in slums. Slums will not go, only they will be improved and basic amenities will be provided. it was estimated that by the end of the sixth five year plan more than 30 million people will be living in the slums of Indian cities. No one knowns how many more millions will be added to this figure at the end of the seventh plan.

The approach document promises no relief to the people and the working class of India; on the other hand it holds out the prospect of further deterioration in the living condition of the workers and the people.

Fight Authoritarianism, Divisive Forces

Last two years have witnessed unprecedented developments in our country but the trade union movement has hardly noticed them and much less has it done to combat them.

The challenge of divisive forces has become menacing, with secessionist elements helped from abroad trying to break the unity of our country. The Government on the other hand is worsening the situation by resorting to administrative remedies only and adopting measures which assail the democratic rights of the Indian people. Shades of some thing worse than emergency are already there. The amendment to NSA, the Special Court Act, with the onus to the accused to prove his innocence, the provision to extend the Ordinance to any state, the abuse of Governor's powers in Kashmir to illegally dismiss the Abdulla Govt. and the misuse of his authority in West Bengal and Andhra, and finally the deployment of

armed forces in wide areas and during communal riots all portend a situation worse than the emergency. But the organised trade union movement has hardly done any thing to meet this attack. Unless it throws its organised strength to fight the authoritarian drive it will be guilty of letting down the Indian people.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi continues her authoritarian drive with the illegal and outrageous dismissal of the N.T.R. Ministry which continues to have the majority support in the legislature and among the people. This is the second illegal dismissal of a non-Congress(I) government within a period of few weeks.

This wanton and unscrupulous attack on the constitution and state democracy with aid of unscrupulous Governor proves that Srimati Indira is determined to extinguish all democratic norms and opposition and create a situation worse than the emergency. The entire people of Andhra are in revolt. The first protest led to killing of 14 people. The protest must continue. The entire working class and the CITU unions all over the country must join the portest. The illegally established Ministry in Andhra must be deposed and the unscruplous Governor must be sacked.

In West Bengal and Tripura the Central Government discriminates against the Left Front Governments of the two states in matters of financial resources, relief and industrial developments, and at the same time the ruling party gives licences to its followers to indulge in anarchy and violence in cooperation with any reactionary force.

The Government of India has robbed Rs. 2000 crores of all the states by refusing to implement the recommendations of the 8th Finance Commission this year. West Bengal alone has been deprived of about Rs. 300 crores and Tripura Rs. 46 crores. It is the duty of the working class and the people of the two states to defeat Congress(I) efforts at destabilisation. In the coming Parliament election the Congress(I) party must be defeated.

Dangerous is the challenge of divisive forces.

For the battle is not against an employer or even against the Congress(I) Govt. We and the Indian people are face to face with international imperialism which is now out for its old mission of subjugating peoples of other countries. And for this purpose it requires disunity and discord in the newly liberated countries, the weakening, partitioning and dismemberment of big countries like India before it can swallow them.

The experience of both Assam and Punjab proves this. If in Assam the seemingly innocuous demand for settling the foreign entrants issue was used, in Punjab there was an open appeal to religious fanaticism and secession with the raising of the slogan of Khalisatan.

The working class must take full note of the imperialist hand behind these appeals and movements. The USA's role in Assam has been already exposed. Its role in the Punjab developments stands equally exposed with the encouragement to spurious leaders of Khalistan by high U.S. dignities, the discovery of millions of U.S. dollars in the Golden Temple. Other imperialist powers like Britain do not leg behind in encouraging the Khalistanis. And the Pakistani Dictator Zia plays the same role. It was reported in the Press that special training camps for Khalistani commandos were organised in Pakistan.

The picture of conspiracy is thus complete. Anyone who either disposes of these developments as simply a distorted manifestation of economic discontent or discontent due to unequal treatment, etc. fails to note the deep rooted plan behind it.

These divisive forces are effective in misleading large sections because they exploit some genuine grievances or backward consciousness for their purpose. The backwardness of certain regions under the capitalist path, the uneven development, the mounting problems of unemployment and economic misery under the bourgeois-landlord Government are not seen as common problems to be solved by joint class struggle of the exploited sections of the Indian people, but are presented as injustice done to one particular region, community or caste. People steeped in caste or communal consciusness or suffering from regional outlook fall easy victims to these appeals, especially when they are going through some acute economic difficulty.

The imperialists are exploiting the weaknesses and backwardness that are inevitable under a bourgeois-landlord State in a newly liberated country. This ailiance of exploiting classes is neither able to push forward the economic development of the country, nor overcome the backward looking religious, communal and cast consciousness. Its policies maintain their existence and its is not unwilling to use them to divert the attention of the people from class and democratic battles. The utter bankruptcy of Congress rule is expressed in this. Its class policies are leading to the disintegra-

tion of Indian national consciousness.

Both Punjab and Assam have become running sores because the Congress(I) Party, guided by its limited class interests is unable to make a political bid for the masses and isloate the forces of secession and disruption. It cannot give a political battle to these forces. It must therefore rely on administrative measures and make the question of people's unity a law and order question.

In Punjab the isolation of the extreme secessionists and their political defeat was possible if the Congress(I) Government has heeded the voice of the CPI(M) and other Opposition parties to settle the demands which were in the interests of the people of Punjab as a whole. But this did not suit the electoral interests of the Congress(I) party and therefore considerations of national unity were sacrificed to the electroal needs of the Congress(I) party.

This, however, is inevitable. The bourgeois-landlord combination unwilling to uproot old land relations, is also unable to fight anti-national and fissiparous tendencies. This is the experience of all newly liberated countries.

That is why the working class and its organised trade union movement has to play a crucial role in the fight for the unity of the people and the nation, for national integration. Without this the country will rapidly lose its sense of oneness and unity.

Here lies a basic weakness of the Indian situation. The working class is neither vigilant nor even aware of the political developments and its responsibilities towards the people, the peasantry, the freedom of our country. Without this awareness of its responsibility the trade union movement becomes an exercise in protecting minor economic demands of the workers accompanied by utter blindness to the new dangers facing the country.

The trade union movement must overcome this weakness and rouse the workers to fight all divisive, communal and secessionist tendencies. The trade union movement, with its organised might, must lead the fight against the anti-national forces and by its organised intervention must inspire other sections of the people to take up the challenge. This is an urgent task facing the trade union movement in the new situation.

August 24, 1984

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Seventh November Greetings

ON the great epoch making day of Seventh November the CITU sends its revolutionary greetings to the working class, the trade unions, the AUCCTU and the peoples of the Soviet Union. The CITU calls upon all its State Committees and its unions to observe the day as a great international day in defence of peace, of opposition to the war plots of the imperialists against the USSR and the socialist world.

The Salvos of Liberation that were fired on Seventh November, 1917 announced the beginning of a new world, free from exploitation and poverty. The Promise was kept by successive generations of revolutionaries who remained loyal to the behests of Marxism-Leninism, to the aspirations and ideals of those who worked and sacrificed for the cause of the great revolution. The proof is seen in the contrast between the two worlds of socialism and imperialism. The former inspite of the restraints put on its developments by increased defence expenditure rendered necessary to meet the war plots of the imperialists, has forged ahead with its economic advance, prosperity and well being of the people. The latter has got deeply stuck in the mire of crisis, and inflated defence expenditure for genocidal weapons to find a way out of its economic impasse.

The USSR succeeded in abolishing unemployment half a century back. Today also everyone is provided with a secure job in the midst of a rapid advance of industrial and technological revolution. In contrast the advanced capitalist countries, the USA and its

western European partners, find themselves saddled with mass unemployment as a price for the advance of industrial and technological revolution.

The USSR is not affected by economic crisis as the capitalist are today. During the last five years its national income increased by 19 per cent compared with six per cent in the USA, and labour productivity increased by 14 per cent over the same period as against three-per cent in the United States.

While registering this continuous advance the USSR and its people also took care of the defence of the country, of the armed defence of socialism.

Surrounded by a hostile imperialist world, facing its economic crisis and intent on war plots, the USSR had to keep its defences in tact and warned the would-be attackers that they would meet with powerful retaliation. Had it not prepared itself to meet all eventualities, the imperialists would not have hesitated to unleash aggression till now. The imperialists, the USA especially have been feverishly working to secure overwhelming technical and military superiority so that they can attack without much loss to themselves. The USSR and its working class have spoiled this game matching technical advance by technical advance and aggressive preparations by effective defence preparations. They had to divert billions of roubles from economic constructions but they did it. All this had a salutary effect and the imperialist aggressors were warned that nuclear war will not be a one sided affair.

The recent rush of destructive missiles to Europe once again is meant to ensure arms superiority to the imperialists before launching aggression. The USSR has again foiled the game by warning that she would deploy cruises and other missiles in submarines cruising within striking distance of the USA and that the USA will not escape unhurt if it dares attack with its missiles stationed in Europe.

The USSR correctly insists that in the present conditions parity in arms strength is the only guarantee of peace and it should not be disturbed. But the USA not only refuses to withdraw the missiles but is also preparing for chemical warfare and space warfare. This vigilance regarding defence, this preparedness to meet the aggressive moves effectively has saved the world from the holocaust of a war. What stands today between peace and US attack on socialist countries is the Soviet deterent, the armed strength of the Soviet

Union. The strength of Soviet Union is a factor in favour of peace and the freedom of the Third World countries. India herself will not be able to protect herself against attacks from the well armed Pakistani regime without the friendship and help of the USSR.

It will be seen from this how reactionary is the outlook of those who indulge in talks about two superpowers.

The liberating role of the Soviet Union and its defence was seen in practice after the November revolution. By defending the revolution against internal civil war and external intervention of 1919 and 1920 the revolutionary fighters kept the door open for national liberation of people and their advance to Socialism.

During the Second World War when they faced the barbarous attack of the Nazi army the Soviet leaders and people did not forget their responsibility to the peoples of the world. Stalin the great leader and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the all union Communist Party addressing the Soviet People on July 3, 1941 said, "the goal of the patriotic war being waged by all peoples of our country against the fascist oppressers is not only to eliminate the danger hanging over our country, it is also to aid all European people groaning under the yoke of German Nazism".

Over 20 million Soviet people lost their lives in the anti-facist struggle. But their sacrifices unleashed vast forces of liberation throughout the world bringing liberty to millions of enslaved people. The historic victory of the Chinese revolution, the independence of India, the collapse of the colonial system were all faciliatated by the mighty victory of the Soviet army over Hitler's hordes.

While keeping its powder dry the USSR, a Socialist country does everything to avert war and spare the world's millions the horrors of nuclear destruction. As a working class state acting in solidarity with the workers of the world and the toiling people, it seeks imposition of peace on the imperialists as the best way of frustrating the war mongers. It knows that tens of millions, all innocent people in all countries will be done to death if the U.S. madmen succeed in their designs. It knows that a nuclear war may make the world uninhabitable for human being and end in the extinction of human race and civilisation just at a time when prospects of freeing millions from poverty are open and bright. It therefore exposes and opposes the diabolical war plans of Reagon and the U.S. administration and calls on all people to carry the

battle for world peace. That is why Soviet leaders make one proposal after another to protect peace. They have called for nuclear free zones to start with. On August 27 the Soviet President Konstantin Chernenko said that the Soviet Union stood for the establishment of nuclear free zones. He also called for battle field nuclear weapons to the withdrawn from Central Europe and for Europe to be rid of medium range and tactical nuclear weaponry altogether. Acceptance of these proposals will immediatly remove the main danger spots in the world and relax the 'international situation. But the U.S. and its European allies are not willing to withdraw the Pershing and Cruise missiles stationed in Europe. Withdrawal of these missiles occupies a central place in the struggle to avert war.

The USSR has assured the peoples of the world, the toiling millions of all countries, men and women of the globe, that it will not be the first to use the nuclear strike. Imperialist powers have not responded by giving a similar assurance, thereby revealing their treacherous intention. The U.S. in fact is preparing for a first strike and assuring its people that such a strike will lead to a limited nuclear war with danger and destruction only for one side.

All peace loving forces, all who prize freedom and democracy, hail the constant struggle for peace waged by the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, Everyone must be conscious and grateful that the USSR is fighting a battle for human survival through its struggle for peace. Both its struggle for defending itself and its efforts for averting war have a liberationist meaning for mankind.

On Seventh November while calling on the Soviet people to defend the country the Central Committee of the CPSU has not forgotten the peoples of Asia and Africa fighting for their freedom. The Seventh November slogans of the CPSU conveys its fraternal greetings to the peoples waging courageous struggle for stronger national independences and social progress; they include fraternal greetings to the fighters for freedom, democracy and socialism, languising in fascist prisons; they convey warm greetings to the people of Africa fighting against imperialism, colonialism and rascism. They call upon the peoples of the world to demand an end to the aggressive action of the USA against Nicaragua and to press for the liberation of Grenada from US occupation.

Asking all people to participate in the mighty struggle for peace the CPSU apeals to them to step up the struggle to remove the

danger of nuclear war, resolutely expose the aggressive intrigues of imperialism, militarism and revanchism, expand and rally the anti-war movement.

This initiative to protect peace and the freedom of other peoples can come only from a socialist state and the socialist system. On Seventh November we hail the mighty defence strength of the Soviet Union. We hail its principled efforts to save world peace, we hail its concern for freedom of all people and protecting the gains of socialism.

The workers and unions following the CITU must throw themselves heart and soul in the struggle to take the message of peace to our people and rouse them to frustrate the war plots of U.S. imperialism. International solidarity demands that India's workers should occupy front line position in defeating U.S. plans to disturb world peace, launch nuclear war and destroy the gains of socialism.

They should warn the people that the U.S. war plans are not directed only against the USSR, they are an instrument to achieve U.S. global domination to re-enslave countries of Asia and Africa. The hostility towards India which stands for peace and non-alignment and the incitement to Pakistan to develop enmity towards India are part of the war plan. India's freedom and integrity are inextricably linked with the success of the peace struggle.

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Assassination and After

THE assassination of Indira Gandhi at the hands of two Sikh security men shocked the people of India. It was denounced by all people who had not sold their conscience to the nation's enemies.

Millions were struck with grief at Indira's tragic end. They are boiling with just anger and indignation with this heinous crime.

This anger was being diverted by sinister elements including communal and local Congress(I) leaders against the Sikh community leading to widespread riots, arson, lootings and killings of Sikhs. Those who have indulged in this communal orgy have committed an abominable crime and are guilty of treachery to the country, of fulfilling the desires of India's enemies. They have committed as big a crime against the country as those who have treacherously assassinated India's Prime Minister.

No one with the least sense of justice and democracy and national unity can hold an entire community responsible for the crime of two of its members. No one can have the licence to kill innocent men, women and children because they belonged to the community as the perparators of the crime against India. This was a communal and cowardly war carried on against innocent people and it should be denounced by all.

The Congress(I) administration in Delhi and elsewhere totally failed to ensure safety for the minority. In Delhi for three days the city was handed over to the hoodlums to organise mass murders and arson. The whole of India was put to shame by this abominable

bias of the Congress(I) led administration. The same situation prevailed in some other Congress(I) states where also despite the declaration of curfew rioteers could freely move to carry on their nefarious business.

In contrast, riots and arsons were all scotched and curbed in Tripura and West Bengal ruled by Left Front Governments headed the CPI(M). The first signs of communal outbursts were met with firm administrative measures to protect Sikh minority and national unity.

Gruesome as the happenings were in Delhi, shameful and abomiable as they were, the people of Delhi by and large stood solidly by each other and protected national unity. In the affected colonies where arson and murders took place the Sikh and Hindu neighbours stood by each other protecting each other. This was the genuine expression of the spirit of national unity and solidarity of the Indian people built through years of struggle for national independence.

The mischief, the arson and murders were done by gangs coming from outside the colonies and incited and led in the main by local Congress(I) leaders and R.S.S. elements. The Hindus and Sikhs who stood by each other did great service to the cause of Indian democracy and national integration.

But who were the attackers and the mischief makers? They came from the nearby bustees, slums inhabitated by the lowest paid workers. They consisted of Municipal Safai workers, cobblers, workers working in low-paid industries and people who live a bare existence by their toil—the great crowd of have-nots that every city has got.

It is a matter of shame for the trade union movement that these sections of workers should be exploited for striking at another section of workers. They burnt scooters, taxis, and trucks and attacked taxi, truck and scooter drivers. They attacked charpai-makers, small shop keepers all part of the toilers belonging to their own class.

They indulged in the anti-national treacherous actions because their political anger over the murder of the Prime Minister was exploited by unscrupulous elements and diverted into communal channel.

But the question of questions is what were the organised trade union movements and the workers in organised industries doing?

There are thousands of Railway workers in Delhi organised under the recognised A.I.R.F. and N.F.I.R; there are thousands of Central Govt. employees organised under the P & T Federations and Confederations of Central Govt. employees. There are hundreds of L.I.C. employees known for their organisation and consciousness. These sections periodically hold dharnas and demonstrations at Boat Club and elsewhere to voice their demands. In their processions they declare "Jo hamse takraiga, chur chur ho jaiga"— a challenge to the Govt. There are thousands of textile workers who have conducted prolonged strikes under the joint leadership of several trade organisations AITUC, CITU and others.

Where were all these forces during the critical days when Delhi bled and burnt, when one section of toilers was killing another, when national unity and solidarity was being burnt to ashes and the imperialists were having a good laugh?

This is an indictment of the way in which the trade union movement in India is being conducted. The CITU has repeatedly warned the movement against being self-centered, devoting exclusive attention to immediate economic demands, against forgetting its responsibilities to the people and the nation. Those who seek to avoid all politics in the trade union movement really want the working class to forget their responsibility to democracy and the unity of the country.

Now the denudement has come. The working class of Delhi let down the people and left the Capital to the mercy of hooligans and disruptors of national unity. No doubt, the large mass of employees and workers remained faithful to each other, to their sense of unity and endeavoured to save the minority section at grave personal risk to themselves. The affected majority has asserted that it was protected by its minority neighbours. The R.B.I. employees and others did good work in rescuing and saving people.

But these acts did not go beyond what a person with minimum consciousness and sense of decency and common citizenship will do.

What was expected of the organised working class was direct intervention in the streets with all its strength to physically combat the roving gangs and save the situation. The police had failed. The gang had no fear. Only the organised working class deploying its class-conscious army could protect localities and quell arsons and killings.

Such organisation for joint defence was done by local people in some localities but they were exceptions. And there was hardly any organised working class behind it. Such working class intervention takes place in states and centre where the CITU and CPI(M) wields strong influence. In West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala and to an extent in Tamil Nadu the intervention of the working class is instantaneous and well-placed communal inciters and their followers have very little chance for mischief. In West Bengal and Tripura the working class and democratic masses intervened and helped the governments to snuff out the anti-Sikh riots.

This is the difference between a reformist line preaching economism, rejecting politics and a revolutionary line making the working class aware of its politcal responsibility to defend the people against communalism and secessionist reactionaries and imperialist conspirators.

The entire trade union movement including the CITU unions must learn from this bitter experience and draw proper lessons from this ghastly failure of the working class to behave as a conscious vanguard of the people.

The paralysation of the organised workers reminds one of Karl Marx's indictment of India's village communities and their egotism. Marx said, "we must not forget the barbarian egotism which concentrating on some miserable patch of land, had quitely witnessed the ruin of empires the preparation of unspeakable cruelties, the massacre of large population of large towns with not other consideration bestwoed on them than on natural events." Can the trade union movement escape condemnation for egotism?

Backward consciousness of workers and toilers becomes a danger to the nation and working class movement. The fault lies partly with the trade union movement and the way it is conducted. It neglects the low-paid workers in unorganised industries. Besides the movement confines itself mainly to immediate demands and does not educate the workers regarding their duty to the nation, to the people, their duty to protect national unity. It does not educate the workers regarding their duty to the nation, to the people, their duty to protect nationl unity. It does not educate the workers regarding the evil role of communalism and caste. Nor does it teach them about the danger from imperialism, from external forces, conspiring against the people of India and against India's independence.

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This leaves the workers open to the appeal of religion and caste and in time of crisis they are swayed away by these appeals to indulge in anarchy which facilitated the designs of the enemies of our country.

Communalists of all shades say that religion preaches love and amity. But in actual fact in the name of religion communalists succeed in orgnising mass murders and arson.

This is the role religious fanaticism plays. Unless the trade union movement exposes and fights it. the backward sections of workers will be repeatedly exploited for communal conflicts.

The working class and its trade union movement must fully grasp the why and wherefor of this murder politics. Since the Second World War murder is constantly used by the imperialists and reactionaries to remove leaders of Governments and people who come in their way. Leaders and heads of Governments of some Third World countries fell victims to the hired assassins in the years following the Second World War.

Aung Sang, the leader of Burma's liberation struggle was murdered by imperialist agents. So also was Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan. Sadat, Egypt's President was murdered by soldiers. Mujibur Rehman, leader of Bangladesh struggle and President was murdered by reactionaries. Mahatma Gandhi was murdered by reactionary Hindu fanatic. Solomon Bandarnayake, Ceylon's Prime Minister who was pursuing a policy of non-alignment was murdered—Indira is the last victim. It is quite clear that the imperialist agencies have been using this weapon to either disrupt the national liberation movement or disrupt the countries who pursue a policy which opposes their anti-freedom designs.

The culprits who organised the crime against India stand exposed before all. The cowardly firing was no doubt done by the security guards but the planners and their patrons can be found across the seas. Jagit Chauhan had uttered open threats of murder of Indira Gandhi and announced a monetary prize for it from London. These threats were repeatedly broadcast over the B.B.C. and the British Govt. refused to take any action. The same gangsters were welcome in the USA by high dignitaries and was given support for his Khalistan mission. All the while threats and plans of murder continued to be announced. In Australia and Canada open encouragement was given by these respective Govts. to these secessionist elements. Indian diplomats were assaulted with impu-

nity, the police which was present refused to take action. In Britain though Prime Minister Thatcher condemned murder through the B.B.C. she refused to take action against those who uttered these threat.

That the C.I.A. agencies openly plan murder was recently revealed in connection with their activities in Nicaragua. Recently a pamphlet entitled "Guidelines to Nicaragua Guerrilas" was exposed in American press. It gave guidelines how to organise murders of Ministers of Nicaraguan Govt.

In London immediately after the murder of Indira Gandhi, joyous demonstrations were held before the Indian High Commission but the British Govt. refused to take any action. The hand of imperialist agencies is clearly seen in this ghastly crime against India.

Our people and the working class are totally unaware that the imperialists are constantly planning against our country and its freedom. They are lending open support to the secessionist movement in Punjab. The CIA's role in financing and organising the secessionist agitation in Assam has been exposed in the Indian press. The CIA's declared aim is to dismember India so that she can be reenslaved.

Why are the imperialists plotting against India to dismember her? Why did the blow fall on Indira. Because they were angry that India pursued a foreign policy based on non-alignment and refused to join the imperialist camp. Consequently in international matters India's voice was always raised against war and in favour of peace. It opposed imperialist plans of war and aggression. India also developed friendly relations with the USSR and the other Socialist countries. The imperialists could not blackmail here by pouring arms into Pakistan because India had entered into treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union. At the U.N.O. India's voice was raised against direct acts of aggression and in support of the struggle of the people of Palestine, the African and other people struggling for freedom. In the present situation this policy of a big country like India turned the balance of forces in favour of peace and against imperialism.

The removal of Indira was designed to create conditions of destabilisation in the country, conditions of communal war and anarchy. The enemies of the country expect that destabilisation will continue to grow forces of disunity will gather strength and India

will be unable to pursue a policy of opposing imperialism on the world plane.

The imperialist game appeared to succeed with the gruesome riots and arson in Delhi, Patna and some other cities. But it really failed to acheive its objective. The imperialists would have been happy to witness a repetition of the 1947 partition days when neighbour and large areas of the country had to be handed over to the army with order to shoot and suppress anarchy.

The good sense and patrotism of the citizens remained despite their anger over the dastardly murders. Most of the states remained quiet with only minor disturbances. And even in Delhi and many other places the common people stood by each other, Hindus and Sikhs standing by each other the majority protecting the minority.

Imperialist agencies and the communal and secessionist forces are feverishly working to destabilise the unity of India. The assassination of Indira Gandhi was intended to release these forces and plunge the country in chaos and anarchy.

Simultaneously, the assassination was intended as a blow to divert India from pursuing a foreign policy of non-alignment, of opposition to imperialism, of supporting freedom struggle and friendship with the Soviet Union and Socialist countries.

In the post-assassination situation the united trade union movement has to wage a relentless fight to protect and strengthen India's foreign policy and to wage an equally persistent struggle against the communal and secessionist forces and imperialist intrigues to disintegrate the country's unity.

The working class cannot fail to see the great havoc done by Sikh communalism and secessionism. It has encouraged the imperialists to openly intervene and promote hostile steps and actions against India. It has given a big blow to Indian unity. The Akali leaders who played on Sikh communal appeal for short-term advantages have done incalculable harm to Indian unity and the struggle of the Sikh masses for economic emancipation.

The working class and its trade union movement must fight every form of communal appeal. Hindu, Muslim, Christian appeal in the name of religion plays the same disruptive and anti-national role.

This is the challenge which the working class of India has to meet. By forging its class unity, by uniting with all secular forces the working class must fight the design of disruption and destabilisa-

tion. It will have to wage a consistent battle against communalism and casteism in every form. Simultaneously through its organised strength it will have to protect the unity of the country and fight all secessionist and disintegrationist forces. The working class at the same time cannot forget the battle for internal democracy and the fight against the danger of one-party rule. While doing this it will have to put its full strength behind the defence and maintenance of foreign policy based on non-alignment and opposition to imperialism. To the extent that it succeeds in doing this it will completely foil the game of the imperialist who are out to weaken and disrupt Indian unity.

With the announcement of elections the working class and the trade union movement get an opportunity to intervene to political developments of the country and orientate its policies in the required direction.

The situation demands that the electorate chooses people and parties who are firm in their resolve to fight the imperialists and protect non-aligned foreign policy, who are firm in their resolve to fight communal and successionist forces, who are wedded to protect and strengthen democracy and are prepared to take effective steps to ensure the economic well-being of the working class and the people.

The ruling Congress(I) party cannot be trusted to meet these challenges. The opportunist policies which the Cong(I) has been pursuing for years have encouraged the growth of divisive, communal and secessionist forces. The Cong(I) openly allies with communal parties as in Kerala to secure momentary gains. It is destroying secular character of the admnistration as was seen in Delhi during the recent riots. It is unable to fight reactionary minority and secessionist movement politically and democratically as is seen from the aggravation of the situation in Punjab.

The ruling party cannot be trusted to defend and continue the non-aligned foreign policy. Though Indira continued the policy, over the years Cong(I) and its leaders have made the mass of people non-partisan regarding defence of non-alignment. The Cong(I) organisation has not yet used its mass influence to popularise the policy.

The working class must give its votes to those who stand to strengthen this policy and fight all attempts to drag India into the imperialist camp in the name of "genuine" non-alignment.

The ruling party cannot be trusted to protect democracy and the fundamental rights of the people. The Cong(I) party violates at every turn parliamentary norms and constitutional provisions in pursuit of its drive for one-party dictatorship. The illegal dismissal of the Abdullah Ministry in Kashmir and NTR minstry in Andhra Pradesh have revealed the unscrupulous length to which the party can go in dismantling democratic norms.

Concentrating all powers in the hands of the centre to bolster its monopoly rule the ruling party has exacerbated the centre-state relations and created a crisis in the relationship of the two constituents of the Indian state. It opens the field for regional and sectional appeals disrupting the country's unity.

Law and order under the Cong(I) regime have collapsed. The ordinary citizen lives in terror either of the anti-social gangsters or the police. The regime has passed anti-democratic measures like the NASA, ESMA and the Special Courts Act.

The mass of Indian people has suffered very much in the last five years in the Cong(I) rule. In several states, especially Bihar, the police and landlords carry on unspeakable atrocities against Harijans and rapes of their women. Deaths in police custody have become a common occurrence. Prisoners continue to languish in jails without a proper court sentence.

Economic miseries are multipled many times. The number of unemployed in the cities has reached beyond 20 millions. The rural unemployed exceeds double that number.

The condition of the rural masses of our country constitutes the biggest indictment of Congress(I) policies. The much advertised 20-point programmes in two editions has not retarded the rapid process of rural destitution.

India's traditional industries, like coir, cashew, handlooms are in complete ruins throwing tens of lakhs of workers.

Hundreds of factories have closed or gone sick. Two most important industries, the cotton textile and jute are in serious crisis and the Central Government has refused to accede the demand unitedly made by the trade union movement for nationalisation of these industries.

Thousands of small concerns have been permanently closed. Prices and cost of living index continue to rise forcing people to remain half-starved and ill-clothed.

The burden of foreign debts continue to rise, preempting ad-

vance in the well-being of the people. The grip of monopolies over the economy increases and also its profits. Foreign multi-nationals increase their exploitation of people and are spreading their tentacles.

The Cong(I) rule means all-round economic ruins. It will be a disaster for the country if the Cong(I) is returned to power. The working class and the trade union movement must mobilise all their strength to defeat the ruling party.

The CITU knows that for a complete radical change in the economic conditions of the working class and the people complete overhauling of the present economic system is necessary. There cannot be any radical change unless all foreign monopoly concerns are nationalised, unless Indian monopoly concerns also are nationalised, a radical land reform assuring land to the tillers is implemented, the strength of the public sector is increased and its management is carried on with the help of workers with equal status, unless the right to work is enshrined in the constitution, unless jute and cotton textile industries are immediately nationalised and steps are taken to ensure adequate and proper wage to the rural and industrial workers and a fair return for his produce is promised to the peasants. For this radical reform a different correlation of political forces with dominant voice for the workers and peasants is necessary. Situation is not yet ripe for this combination.

The working class therefore in their endeavour to defeat the Cong(I) must cast their votes for secular and democratic and Left parties who announce a balanced programme for relief to the masses who are firm in fighting communalism, secessionism and imperialist conspiracies, who are firm in protecting the unity of the country and non-aligned foreign policy and are wedded to fight the Cong(I) one-party dictatorship.

Only such a combination will enable the country to meet the challenges facing it.

All trade unions and workers must of course give priority support to the Left parties and their candidates. The Left parties are the most consistent fighters against imperialist conspiracies, against communalist and secessionist forces; they firmly support non-alignment and are in the forefront of the struggle against one-party dictatorship. They ceaselessly struggle to organise and lead the masses in defence of their economic well-being.

The Left Front Government of Tripura and West Bengal headed by the CPI(M) have shown how they protect the democratic rights of the people, how they defend national unity and fight communalism, how they protect the living standard of the people, against the attacks of the vested interests, the capitalists and the landlords.

The coming election is crucial for the freedom of the country. The people, the democratic forces must win it, denying the Congress the mandate to rule the country. They must defeat the forces of communalism and imperialism. The working class must play its role in this great battle.

The CITU puts before the electorate the following programme for immediate advance:

1. Vigorous implementation of land reforms; distribution of land to the tillers.

2. Check on price rise, strengthening of the public distribution system to distribute food grains at concessional prices to the people and take over of the wholesale trade in food grains.

3. End the policy of depending on the World Bank, IMF and multinational firms for "aid" in planning. Raise internal resources by better management of the public sector with the participation of workers with equal status and authority.

4. Nationalisation of foreign and Indian monopoly concerns. Nationalisation of the crisis ridden textile and jute industries and running them with workers' participation in management with equal status.

5. Ban on closures, lockouts, retrenchments; recognition of trade unions by secret ballot.

6. Need based wage for industrial and agricultural workers and middle class employees with Dearness Allowance to neutralise the rise in the cost of living and bonus as deferred wage. Full trade union rights to Central and State Government employees, abolition of police verification.

7. Right to work to be incorporated as a fundamental right in the Constitution ; unemployment allowance for the unemployed in urban and rural areas.

8. Withdrawal of NSA, ESMA, Special Courts Acts and other anti-trade union and anti-democratic measures.

9. Education to be removed from the Concurrent List and placed on the State List.

10. Removal of social inequality from which women suffer;

equal rights with men in all matters like services, admission to professions, equal pay for equal work, etc.,

11. Vigorous action against those who indulge in atrocities against the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward communities and women. Muslim and other religious minorities to be protected against Hindu revivlism and chauvinism. Firm measures against the spreading of communalism by Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian fundamentalists.

12. Democratic restructuring of Centre-State relation and more powers of the states.

13. Vigorous struggle for national unity and against the divisive forces of all types.

14. Strenghthen the foreign policy of non-alignment and vigorous support for world peace and fight against the danger of nuclear war.

15. Vigilance regarding the defence of the country and penetration of foreign agencies.

36

The Elections and After

The Indian electorate has given an undisputed victorty to the Congress(I) and returned it to power with overwhelming majority. Never since independence the ruling party got such a huge majority—around 4/5 of the seats. Neither Pandit Nehru nor Indira Gandhi could ever achieve such massive victory.

Of course this is not Rajiv's magic, but the sudden swing in favour of Congress(I) generated by the dastardly assasination of Smt Indira Gandhi. The mass of people did not identify the imperialist conspirators and turned their indignation against them, but they considered in the background of the secessionist challenge in the Punjab and her murder at the hands of Sikh security guards, that she died while defending national unity and fighting the disruptors of national unity.

This concern for national unity and the feeling that Indira died for it, made the people rally round the Congress(I) forgetting the misdeeds of the ruling party during the last 5 years.

All earlier indications and political developments suggested that the ruling party would loose heavily in the elections to the Lok Sabha. In fact the estimate of the ruling party was that it would be short of majority by at least 20 seats. The estimate made a few months before Indira's assassination was not officially owned, but it appeared in the press. That the ruling party was not confident of securing a majority was made clear when Shri Vasant Sathe, the Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers in the Indira cabinet advocated a change for the Presidential system under the plea that no

party was likely to get a majority in the coming elections.

This was not surprising. The economic situation, the unrelieved misery of the people during the last 5 years of Congress(I) rule, the closure, mounting unemployment, ever rising prices, the police atrocities, the growing support from among the bourgeois opposition parties for overhauling centre state relation coupled with the inner fights in the ruling party and its unbriddled corruption—all pointed to a rapid erosion of the influence of the ruling party leading to the conclusion that it would loose its majority in the Lok Sabha. However, certain contrary developments were also taking place. The activities of the Sikh secessionists in Punjab, the murder of innocent people, the open support given by outside powers—USA, Britain, etc., to the secessionist elements, all focussed the attention of the people on national unity and security. In this battle in the Punjab, the centre of stage was occupied by the secessionists and Congress(I) Govt. and the latter appeared to be the force fighting the secessionists. The entry of the army into the Golden Temple was considered by large sections as only a measure in defence of national unity and integrity and welcomed. This enabled the Congress(I) to check the growing erosion of its influence.

But the masses were vigilant. They did not commit themselves to the Congress(I). The same sections that applauled the Congress(I) govt. for its action in Punjab reacted uniformlly in a sharp manner against the dismissal of the NTR Ministry. The massive bundhs to protest against the dismissal were unprecedented political protests of recent times.

But this democratic vigilance were also getting submerged under concern for national unity. The replacement of civilan governments by the army in many parts of the country did not evoke protests because it was considered as exceptional measures taken to fight the menace of secessionism and protect the integrity of the country.

The turning point came with the assassination of Smt Indira Gandhi, which led to a qualitative change in the outlook of the mass of the electorate. The shock the assassination administered made them rally round the Congress(I) despite all the evils of its rule and took their mind away from the pressing problems of economic living and democracy. The sympathy the Congress(I) and for Indira's son generated by the murder was accompanied by concern for nationl unity and over destabilisation.

The sympathy wave turned into a huge election rally around the Congress(I) because the bourgeois-opposition parties the main contenders for replacing the Congress(I) could not provide a promise for national unity, stability or sterength.

In the first place the failure to unite, their interminable wranglings, their formation and reformation of parties—all sapped faith in their credibility to win and provide a suitable government.

But above all, these parties were totally out of touch with the prevailing dominant concern of the people—protection of national unity. Among the bourgeois-landlord parties only the Congress(I) took the issue and presented itself as the champion of national unity.

In this situation these opposition parties failed to develop any raport with the wide ranging sentiment for national unity and above all reckoned with the sympathy for the Congress(I) developed by the assassination.

They treated the assassination as an electoral inconvenience and ignored it. People's concern for unity, their fear of destabilisation all remained a closed book to them. People's anxiety over the arming of Pakistan by USA was not part of their consciousness. On the other hand when the Congress(I) leaders expressed their concern for national unity and concern over arming of neighbours some of the leaders ridiculed it, and asked the people not to attach any importance to such talks.

Thus the bourgeois opposition parties missed the issue which in the eyes of the electorate formed the central point of the election. The left parties were not in the running to form an alternate government. Only the bourgeois parties in their combination were contending for it and the electorate therefore swung to the Congress(I) hoping that it will protect the country's unity and save it from destabilisation.

It will be wrong to think that everything was just and fair in the elections. The ruling party did everything to violate the norms of procedure laid down by the Election Commission. It used official machinery to help the ruling party. Never before were mass-media, radio, television were so blatantly used to influence the electorate. Money power, muscle power, were also used over and above it in the state of Bihar and other states booth capturing and rigging was also used under police protection.

Some news papers have published photos of illegal stamping of

the votes in Shri Rajiv Gandhi's contstituency. Inspite of this it is unrealistic to describe the election verdict as a result of manipulation and rigging. The electorate gave its confidence to the Congress(I) thinking that it can be charged in the task of protecting unity and defending destabilisation.

It is because of this that the bourgeois-opposition parties have suffered heavy losses. Unless they understand the major cause of debacle they will not be able to restore their credibility in the coming Assembly elections.

So devastating are the effects of the wave that the BJP could return only 2 to the Lok Sabha having contested more than 200 seats, the DMKP only 3, the Janata Dal 10. Among these parties the Telugu Desam has the honour of routing the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh. The ruling party could secure only 6 seats out of 42. Here the Congress(I) could not capitalise on the sympathy and national unity wave because the people were full of anger towards the ruling party for its unscrupulous attack on the NTR Ministry in August last.

The electoral wave in favour of the Congress(I) can be seen from the voting figures. In Andhra Pradesh where it got only 6 seats it got 42 per cent of the votes compared with 56.2 per cent in 1980. In Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi it got more than 50 per cent of the votes cast. In some of the States there is a slight reduction of vote percentage as compared to 1980. For instance in Karnataka in 1980 it secured 56.3 per cent of votes and 27 seats while in 1984 it secured 24 seats with 51.5 per cent votes. Even with reduced vote the Congress(I) got more than 50 per cent in these states. The spectacular come back of 1980 was maintained and many more seats were won.

In Kerala the Congress(I) got 26.3 per cent vote in 1980. Its vote increased to 33.2 per cent in 1984. In West Bengal the Congress(I) increased its vote from 36.5 per cent in 1980 to 48.2 per cent in 1984.

It should not be thought that there was an absolute reduction of opposition votes everywhere. On the contrary in a large number of cases the opposition vote remained the same as before or even increased. But the Congress(I) vote increased much more with entrance of new vote and increase in the percentage of votes polled. It is obvious that, thanks to sympathy wave and people's concern for national unity, the Congress(I) was able to overcome the

erosion that had taken place in the last 5 years and rally the new entrants and youth under its banner.

It is equally obvious that the capture of 80 per cent seats exaggerates Congress(I) success. In an electoral system based on proportional representation the Congress(I) would have got 50 per cent seats or a little more. Its 80 per cent success in seats is due to the electoral system of the political parties and their influence.

In contrast to the bourgeois opposition parties the CPI(M) and the left parties have fared better. In Tripura the Congress(I) was defeated despite its alliance with the seccssionist TUJS and both the seats were captured by the Left front headed by the CPI(M). In West Bengal the Left Front headed by the CPI(M) had to wage an intense struggle. The Left Front captured majority of th seats 26, out of 42, the CPI(M) getting 18. The Congress(I) which carried everything before it in all the other states except Andhra Pradesh had to accept a second place in West Bengal.

There are praisworhty achievements of our people of Tripura and West Bengal, of the Left Front.

In both the states the Left Front allies, the CITU and mass organisations took care of the problems of national unity and put before the people a concrete programme to maintain and defend it. This together with the achievements of the Left Front ministries held a major section of the people together and gave a majority to the Left forces. The bourgeois parties face a debacle because they ignored the people's concern for unity, the Left held its own because it was one with the people in the struggle for national untiy.

At the same time the CITU and the working class cannot ignore the fact that both in West Bengal and in Kerala there are reversions and the Congress(I) has advanced its influence. The Congress(I) has captured 10 Lok Sabha seats from the CPI(M) in West Bengal and the party has lost 5 sitting seats in Kerala. In West Bengal in industrial areas the Left Front has suffered losses and important CITU leaders have been defeated. So also in Kerala. The Left-CPI(M) has secured only one seat in Kerala. It has 2 seats (one CPI(M) and 1 CPI) in Andhra Pradesh. Everywhere else including Tamil Nadu, the left has no representative.

It is obvious that the wave had its effect in West Bengal and Kerala. A big section of the workers and the people turned to the Congress(I) out of consideration for national unity. The Left was not in the race to form an alternative government. The vote there-

fore got centered on Congress(I) in preference to bourgeois opposition parties whose credibility was low.

The present prepossession of the people in favour of the Congress(I) cannot last long. The problems of economy and daily life of democratic rights, now swept under are bound to emerge and occupy the attention of the people and they will again face the bitter experiences of the past because there will be no change in the basic policies of the triumphant Congress(I).

The Congress(I) leaders assure that election promises will be carried out. But what promises have they made? The Congress(I) manifesto says: "The Congress(I) has raised workers' wages substantially in the last 5 years. The Congress(I) will ensure for the working class rising level of real incomes based on rising productivity, expand services for education and training and health, housing and cultural advancement of the workers; emphasise labour participation in management."

This is all the grand manifesto has to say about workers. Can anything be more farcical? There is no promise of full neutralisation against rising prices, there is no promise to defend and expand trade union rights, to assure union recognition, there is no promise to withdraw anti-strike legislation like ESMA. On the other hand there is an assurance that wages would be linked with productivity.

The CITU and the working class must also understand that efforts are being made by the imperialists to undermine and weaken our policy of non-alignment. One cannot take it for granted that the Congress(I) and its govt. will remain unaffected by these pressures. A vigilant CITU and working class must actively intervene and fight every vacilation and sharpen the anti-imperialist edge of our foreign policy and strengthen friendship with socialist countries.

The post election task lays heavy responsibility on the CITU and the working-class. They must systematically bear with the masses who have temporarily swung towards the Congress(I).

The CITU and our working-class should popularise our line of national unity and make them aware that we are firm fighters against secession, communalism and casteism. This will help them to overcome their present illusion and gradually draw them in the common struggle for democracy, living conditions and non-aligned foreign policy.

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The Trade Unions and Assembly Elections

THE trade union movement and the working class must unitedly face the Assembly elections in co-operation with the Left parties and Opposition secular parties. The Lok Sabha elections showed that the working class got divided and large sections out of concern for national unity rallied round the Congress(I) and its allies. The opposition parties were defeated and in the working class belt even the Left suffered reverse. Not that the working class completely swang over the Cong(I) in CITU dominated and Left-oriented areas, but a large section did vote for the Congress and together with other sections ensured its victory.

The CPI(M) candidates in two industrial seats of Tamilnadu were unsuccessful though they secured a big vote. In the industrial and urban centres of Kerala also the Left candidates were defeated by the Congress(I) alliance. In West Bengal in the industrial and urban belt of Howrah, Hooghly, Calcutta and 24-Parganas there were reverses nothwithstanding the fact that the Left Front ministry had protected the workers' interests and stood by them during the last seven years. A number of prominent leaders of the CITU were defeated in these belts.

The cause of these reverses in the strong areas of the CITU must be properly gauged.

It was pointed out in one of the documents of the CPI(M), "The rise in the consciousness of the workers despite our mass struggles and political agitations and battles has not gone beyond Left Demo-

cratic consciousness so far as our immediate followers are concerned. As for the vast mass of the workers, trade union activity for them has no relation with any political activity. They look upon the trade union as an instrument of achieving immediate economic demands and consider themselves free to follow the political party of their choice which means in practice any bourgeois party including the ruling party: (Tasks on the Trade Union Front).

It should not be surprising if a large section of this mass swing to Cong(I) in the situation created after the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi and influenced by the fear of destabilisation following it; no surprise if it thought that national unity can be entrusted to the care of the Cong(I) Government.

There are also some other causes which helped this swing. They flowed from the weaknesses of the trade union movement which the CITU has been pointing out and trying to rectify. The organised working class—the workers organised in trade unions form only a part of the working class in the industrial areas. There are other sections. There are the unemployed, the workers in the small and unorganised industries, and the young workers who have no trade union rights.

The trade unions neglect these sections. Their activities do not reach them, do not appeal them. They do not come forward to organise the workers in unorganised industries nor to carry forward struggle for the unemployed or the young workers. The trade unions also neglect the struggle for the rights and demands of women workers.

It was pointed out earlier, "The failure to link trade union with the demand for relief and other demands of unemployed has been a major weakness of our trade unions, alienating large sections of the new entrants to the labour market from the organised movement of the working class. If continued, this policy will have incalculable consequences doing the biggest harm to working class unity and solidarity". (Tasks)

In all advanced countries the trade unions have special department to deal with young labour entrants. It is necessary now in India that all our trade unions pay special attention to them otherwise the future for movement will be compromised.

"Manoeuvring against the crisis, the Government and the employers are now intent on eroding the provisions of labour legislations and depriving a large section of workers of their rights. The

young entrants in factories and concerns are the victims of these policies. The employers discriminate against the new entrants who are kept temporary for many years. In many places they are treated as contract workers, there is no provident fund, no gratuity, no E.S.I. for them.

"By and large there is a tendency to neglect the special demands of this section and concentrate on general demands which for the best part benefit permanent workers long in service. The young and militant section often gets frustrated, loses faith in the common movement and becomes a plaything of an anarchistic individualistic outlook. Their militancy get misdirected."

It is not surprising that in the context of this weak link of the organised trade union movement with these sections, they should be swept away by the national wave. That this should happen in the midst of a deep-seated economic crisis with widespread lockouts and closures, with a huge mass of unemployed on the streets for all of which the policies of the ruling party are responsible, underlines the one-sidedness and failure of the organised trade union movement.

There are reports from several states that by and large the organised following of the trade unions voted for the Left. But the unemployed, the unorganised and the youth in large number voted for the Congress(I) and its allies. This fits in with the noted weaknesses of the trade union movement. At the same time one should not fail to note that all sections to a greater or smaller extent were affected by the national wave and Cong(I) drew support from all of them.

The CITU should examine the election swing in the light of these weaknesses and find out what role they played in the Staes to affect the poll outcome. Without such an investigation our trade unions would be groping in the dark and liable to repeat the mistake.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its communique of January 19 says the following about the reverse in West Bengal:

"The Central Committee noted at the same time that to have denied the majority of seats to the Cong(I) in West Bengal was no ordinary achievement in the context of the tornado-like wave all over the country. The CPI(M) and its allies have also gained massive vote which showed the deep roots the Party has struck among the masses of West Bengal. The rural areas stood by the

Party, the effect of the Party's steadfast attention to the interests of the peasantry. The party was given a jolt in the industrial area which apart from other causes was particularly sensitive to the wave of national consciousness."

It further states, "Despite several measures taken by the Left Front ministry of West Bengal to defend the interests of the workers and other sections of the people, there were signs of erosions of our influence in certain sections of the people which were visible before the elections. The party lost three Assembly bye-elections to the Cong(I) in the last year. This erosion was noted earlier by the State Committee but its causes could not be completely eliminated. The economic situation, the closures and lockouts against which the State Government had hardly any remedies under the present Constitution were part of the additional factors. At the same time it was noted that some measures like the educational policies were not understood and appreciated by the people. The efficiency and performance of some ministries needed improvement in the eyes of the people. In the present situation it was inevitable that when some down trodden sections were protected, some others got aggrieved. The expectations roused among the people were out of proportion to the power of the State Government. It was also found that there was some loss of contact with sections of the people."

In Kerala the Left and Democratic Front lost all but three seats, yielding seventeen seats to the Cong(I) and its allies. But the LDF got no less than 40 per cent of the votes which speaks of the strength of the left parties and their allies among the people, and which is the result of the incessant struggle carried on by the front and mass organisations in the interest of the people. The national wave alone was unable to defeat us in Kerala. It had to be bolstered by reliance on communal and caste combination. The ruling party not only relied on these forces but helped their polarisation by conceding many communal demands.

It was becoming clear that progress of Left forces in Kerala was not possible unless breakthrough was made in the following of the communal and casteist parties and a new correlation of forces was brought about.

The appearnance of Hindu Munnani in this election is further evidence of the growing polarisation on communal lines. And it has affected the following of the Left also. The Hindu Munnani together with the RSS-led BJP polled more than 4 lakhs or 3.6 per

cent of the total polled. A good part of its votes in Trivandrum (1 lakh 10 thousands) seems to have come from that section which normally votes for the Left. It is all the more necessary to carry on a determined fight against communal and casteist forces and enhance the image of the Left as uncompromising secular forces.

While the CITU and its trade unions should consider how far these various causes affected their following in West Bengal and Kerala, they should also examine how far the weaknesses of the trade union movement affected the election results adversely.

Though these weaknesses cannot be overcome before the Assembly elections, they have to be remembered to have a proper approach towards all sections of the working class during the election campaign.

The working class must understand the importance of the Assembly elections. The massive majority of the Cong(I) in the Lok Sabha and weakened Opposition are developments dangerous for Indian democracy. If they are followed by similar majorities in the States they will easily lead to one party dictatorship under the protection of the Constitution. It is therefore necessary for the trade unions to be vigilant and help rally all the secular oppositional and Left and democratic forces to give a stiff fight to the Cong(I).

Understanding unity among the trade unions will help here. Their united voice will enable the Left forces to take the initiative to gather together all oppositional forces. Every effort should therefore be made by the trade unions to unite the strength of the working class which will facilitate the united rally of all secular and oppositional forces.

In these elections the question of national unity will no doubt be raised. The Cong(I) is bound to raise it and claim the confidence of the voters referring to the situation in Punjab and Rajiv's promise to solve them. The trade unions, the Left and Opposition parties cannot neglect the issue. Its neglect by certain parties has proved ruinous in the Lok Sabha elections. The trade union, the CITU and the Left Parties should patiently explain their stand, their criticism of Cong(I) policies and come before the working class as firm champions of unity and secularism and opponents of communalism, casteism and secessionist forces.

They will also have to warn the people against the dangers of imperialist conspiraces which led to the assassination of Smt. Gandhi. The arrest of more than ten persons connected with Prime

Minister's and Rashtrapati's Secretariat for spying activities has revealed the role of imperialist agencies in undermining the security of our country. It seems, everything connected with Government's decisions, defence plans, economic decision, steps in relation to Punjab and Assam and foreign policy decisions were all revealed to the enemy by a number of treacherous officers purchased by foreign money.

That these treacherous activities should go undetected for such a long time shows the rot that has set in the administration under Cong(I) rule. Obviously, when persons in the highest positions are not free from allegations of corruption and favouritism the bureaucrats draw their own conclusions and indulge in anti-national activities without much fear.

The working class will have to raise its voice in defence of the non-aligned foreign policy and rouse the vigiliance of the people for its maintenance and fight against any compromise.

In these elections attention will be concentrated on immediate economic issues which demand an answer from the ruling party. The performance of the Cong(I) state ministries in the last five years has not only been miserable, but has heaped untold sufferings on the industrial workers and the rural masses. The problem of unemployment has become intractable and insoluble. Sickness of industries has become a common feature of all industrial cities. Closures and lockouts have thrown out tens of thousands of workers on the streets. The chemical holocast in Bhopal is a sharp pointer to the disastrous policy of the Government to woo the multinationals whose sinister role in the third world countries like India was fully laid bare. The destitution in rural areas knows no limit. But the Cong(I) Government does not promise any departure from its policies of transferring the burdens of the crisis to the common man. The election manifesto of the Cong(I) does not answer any of these problems; brushing them aside it only talks of linking wages with productivity, a clear warning to the working class that offensive of increased workload and unemployment is going to be unleashed. There is no promise of granting recongnition to unions who really represent the majority of workers. The demand for deciding recognition by taking ballot has been rejected. All these questions will come in the course of elections and the trade unions must unitedly raise them and expose the anti-working class and anti-people policies pursued by the Cong(I)

Governments.

They must draw pointed attention to the fact that under the Cong(I) State Governments there is no relief for the unemployed through some kind of unemployment wages. The Cong(I) manifesto talks about relieving unemployment in the rural areas but has absolutely no plan to relieve the situation in the industrial cities. The trade union therefore must raise the demand for including the right to work as a fundamental right under the constitution and pending its eanctment demand immediate unemployment relief for the unemployed.

Raising these working class demands, raising the demands of the peasantry and agricultural workers, the trade unions should unitedly call upon the bourgeois opposition parties to lend their support to them and sponsor the 11-point charter adopted in the Calcutta conclave. This will ensure an effective unity of oppositional forces and enable all of them to give a stiff fight to the Congress(I) and scotch its plan of riding to victory.

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Looking Ahead

The jubilee session of Calcutta Corporation Workers' Union should be an occasion to review the progress made by the Indian Trade Union Movement in relation to its objectives and aims. It is all the more necessary because it seems that India's trade union movement has run into a vicious circle of struggle for wages, bonus, against victimisation and retrenchment without any basic change in either the consciousness of the worker or his political status in the country. This appears all the more striking in comparison with the progress made by the workers in certain neighbouring countries. For instance, in China, the working class of that country which had attained Independence almost in the same time as our country, is able to run the state and establish a socialist economy. Why this difference?

In China, the working class placed itself at the head of the freedom movement excelling all other classes in consciousness and spirit of self-sacrifice. But in India, it remained the camp-followers of the national bourgeois leadership and had to accept the rule of this class after Independence. Because of this, national bourgeois ideology still continues among a major section of the India's working class, as was seen in the recent Parliamentary and Assembly elections. The elections revealed that the Cong(I) which represents the interest of the bourgeois-landlord classes secured overwhelming support in working class areas defeating the candidates

even of the left parties. The question that one has to ask is, has this something to do with the way in which the trade union movement in our country is conducted and what is that the trade union movement is missing when it leads innumerable struggles of the workers. When I speak of the trade union movement, I am speaking in the first place of the entire trade union movement conducted and led by the CITU.

In general, the trade union movement of the country accepts the goal of socialism which really means end of exploitation not of the working class but the entire people of India, which also means that the political power should shift from the exploiting classes to the exploited classes. Is this objective at all present in the minds of the trade union leaders when they conduct various struggles? Are they conscious that they are fighting not only for a particular section of workers but are fighting for the entire masses of India? Are they aware that the freedom of the country which was won in the long and arduous struggle is still in peril and without the workingclass remaining extremely vigilant it may be compromised any day.

The answer to this question is that the trade union movement and its leaders confine themselves to the daily struggle and some inevitable politics arising from it, by-passing the main political issues which vitally affect the workers of the country and which are necessary to be raised if the consciousness of the working class in relation to its objectives is to be strengthened. The working class, it is obvious cannot redeem itself unless it redeems the people and therefore unless it takes a frontal position on national issues and issues affecting freedom and the well-being of country. Here a positive leading role of the working class which can be initiated and fulfilled through a concrete trade union activities and agitation is lacking.

Taking for instance, the vital question affecting the independence of the people viz. the question of protecting the national unity and integration. This is before the people in the sharpest possible manner in relation to Punjab where the slogan of secession and Khalistan is being raised for the last 2 or 3 years. The Government obviously was unable to solve the question. But did the working class and the trade union movement come forward to put their idea of how to maintain the unity and gather the affected Sikh peasants

into the common democratic struggle? Perhaps, this was hardly done. With secession slogan before the people, after the assasination of Smt. Gandhi large sections of workers, followers of left trade unions believed that the Cong(I) could protect the unity and gave it a thumping success, in the Parliamentary elections and partially in the Assembly elections also. In reality, this is big set-back for the forces of democracy, national unity and integration which could have been prevented if the working-class and the trade union movement had discharged the minimum responsibility which was in line with its declared objectives.

Apart from this lack of political vigilance there are other causes which deprived the trade union movement from beginning all pervading influence over the workers. It is common experience that while in times of strikes almost the entire number of workers working in a factory participate in the movement, their number is very much reduced in the absence of mass action and in times of elections they consider themselves free to vote as they like. This is because, the trade union activity does not extend to all the sections of the workers and because it is restricted to the wage and bonus which are the concern of permanent workers. The other aspects of the working class life, health, housing, its cultural requirements and education generally escape notice. Even Industrial safety is not very much looked after. All this leads to a narrow sections of the workers becoming permanent members of the union, while the others constitute the floating masses.

The membership of the most of our traditional unions which have a long period of existence does not exceed in big concerns 40% to 50% of the total numbers of workers. Normally 50% to 60% of the workers do not enroll themselves as members of the union. So far as the remaining are concerned, major part of them locally pay the union fees and is absolutely indifferent towards daily participation in the union activities. In the policy decision besides, wide participation of the workers is hardly ensured and the entire mass of the workers is not made to feel that it is they who are running the affairs of the union and its policies. Large section of workers like temporary workers, apprentices etc. at whose expense the management of the concerns are making huge profits are not protected by the unions. The policy pursued by the factory management is to pacify

to some extent the permanent workers, while reducing the others virtually to the status of a slave. Thus an extensive mass gets aliented from the trade union movement, feels estranged from the common organisation and even becomes a plaything of anarchist and individualistic elements.

In times of elections and political strikes it often plays into the hands of the bourgeois leaders and makes their task easy. The CITU has repeatedly noted that the trade union movement cannot discharge its responsibility of unifying the workers, unless it considers the vast masses of unemployed workers as an integral part of the class and takes steps to organise them. Today, in India the registered unemployed in the states number more than two crores. In West Bengal alone, perhaps they exceed four million. The trade union movement of our country has hardly done anything to protect their interests and draw them into the main stream of the common trade union movement.

In West Bengal, the Left Front Government on its own initiative introduced a major form of partial relief for their unemployed. But this also perhaps was not fully utilised by the movement for drawing the unemployed into the common stream.

The restrictive character of the trade unions and its appeal is seen from the fact that for the most part it neglects the vast mass of workers in unorganised industries. These masses often constitute a huge section in big cities and are preponderant in small cities.

The working class unity will have hardly any meaning if the trade union movements continue to neglect these masses. The direct effect of the negligence was seen in the recent parliamentary elections when it was activised to vote for the Cong(I) in the wake of the assasination of the Prime Minister. It should be seen that the neglect of the vast sections by the trade union movement is having a disastrous and overwhelming effect on a large section of workers. To vote for the Cong(I) after the experience of the Left Front Government and the benefits accruing from its existence shows inadequate political consciousness arising from a defective trade union work. It is necessary to overcome all these short comings which are proving dangerous not only to the trade union movement but also to the democratic movement in our country.

The existence of the Left Front Government in West Bengal should have created a tremendous urge for moving forward politi-

cally & carrying forward the achievements. This has not happened as yet. For that one must look to the defects in our consciousness and in our functioning. The Jubilee session of the Corporation workers' union should succeed in arming the workers with a new consciousness and new sense of responsibility so that they are better able to discharge the task that the trade union movement must discharge if it is to fulfil its role and move in the direction of its objectives.

This article was written on the occasion of Golden Jubilee Session (Mar. 29-30, 1985) of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Workers Union

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40th Anniversary of Anti-Fascist Victory

In the midst of hectic efforts of the US imperialists to unleash a nuclear war the 40th anniversary of the anti-fascist victory comes as a great source of inspiration.

Never before in human history man's desire and love for freedom was put to such severe test. Never before millions of lives were demanded as the price for preserving freedom. The people of the Soviet Union passed this severe test and turned the tide in favour of mankind's freedom. Their courage, sacrifice and suffering will be recalled on May 9 this year and will inspire the entire humanity to stand on guard and foil the efforts of present-day plotters against peace and freedom.

The mighty victory of the forces of socialism, peace and democracy against the forces of fascist imperialism opened a new era in world history after the great triumph of the October Socialist Revolution. It released a mighty wave of liberation struggles. As a consequence of the victory led by the Soviet Union the nations of Europe could breath freely in Peace, the Nazi war machine having been crushed by the heroic Red Army. The urge for freedom led to the nations of East Europe making a transition to socialism. The victory led to the rout of the forces of Japanese imperialism and ensured the victory of Chinese revolution ending up the emergence of Socialist China followed by the emergence of Socialist Vietnam and Korea. As a result one-third of the world became socialist. The balance of class forces changed in favour of the

working class and the people. The wave continued and facilitated the achievement of independence by India and other nations of Asia and Africa. The old colonial system collapsed and the face of the entire world was changed beyond recognition.

The Soviet people, the Red Army and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by Stalin were the architects of this grand victory. The Western allies played supporting role, the liberation movements in Nazi occupied territories especially France where the French Communists distiguished themselves made valuable contributions in blood and sufferings. And yet the main burnt had to be borne by the Red Army and the Soviet people. The courage of the Red Army, navy and air forces personnel, the military skill of the Soviet commanders and the precise and inspiring political guidance of the CPSU proved decisive in this titanic battle which was the first military confrontation in a gigantic scale between two social systems.

In more than three years of brutal warfare the Red Army smashed Hitler's war-machine, routed his forces and cleared the country of Nazi attackers. But it did not stop at its borders. It went in pursuit of the mortal enemy of freedom to deliver other lands from their bondage. Warsaw and Bucharest, Prague and Budapest, Sofia, Vienna and Berlin were liberated in quick succession. Even those lands where the Red Army did not intervene directly to rout the German forces understood its-contribution to their liberation. Charles De Gaulle the leader of the French said in December 1944, "The French know what Soviet Russia has done for them, and they know that it was Soviet Russia who played the main role in their liberation". In May 1945 U.S. President Harry Trueman said, "We fully appreciate the magnificant contributions made by the mighty Soviet Union to the cause of civilisation and liberty". In a message to Stalin, Churchil said in February 1945, "Future generations will acknowledge their debts to the Red Army as unreservedly as do we who have lived to witness the proud achievements".

Mao-ze-Dong wrote at the time, "The Red Army has come to help the Chinese people to expel the aggressors. This has never happened in the history of China before. The influence of this event is invaluable." Assessing the importance and effects of the great victory Kim-Il-Sung said, "The great victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War, the defeat of imperialist Japan by the Soviet army ensured the liberation of our country from prolonged colo-

nial domination and the way to a new free life for the Korean people."

Equally eloquent was the comment of the great German writer Thomas Mann after the banner of victory was raised over the Reichstag. He said, "That is a great hour not only for the victors but also for Germany, the hour the dragon was slain. The fearsome and insane monster called national socialism has expired, and Germany at any rate has been delivered of the stigma of being called a country of Hitler."

The total transformatory character of the anti-fascist victory was summed up later by a meeting of the world communist Parties in 1957 when it declared the post-victory period as a new epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism, and epoch when the international socialist system is becoming the decisive factor determining the course of world developments, an epoch of national liberation and socialist revolution, an epoch of rapid decay and disintegration of colonialism, an epoch of the collapse of imperialism, and the final victory of socialism and communism on a world scale.

In the year before the war the Western imperialist countries, especially France and Britain were egging on Hitler to attack the Soviet Union. They were encouraging his aggressive moves by making concessions after concessions. Their game was to embroil Hitler in a war with Soviet Union which they thought would weaken both especially the Soviet Union. They would then intervene to dictate terms to the USSR and cripple or destroy the socialist state. Stalin warned them that this plot will turn against them. The Soviet Union proposed collective security against Hitler. It asked Britain and France to join with USSR to check Hitler's aggression but Britain and France rejected the proposal for collective security.

The West European countries had to pay heavily for their refusal to accept collective security and their encouragement to the aggressors. Hitler suddenly turned against them and crippled them in a short time. Within a year of the declaration of the imperialist war the point of dispute was of redistribution of colonies between the power blocs—France and the rest of Europe lay prostrate before the march of Nazi armies. The resistance of the European countries crumbled one after another and there seemed to be no power, no army capable of offering resistance to the triumphant Nazi hordes. France and the rest of Europe went under

occupation of Nazi troops and England was awaiting its turn of invasion and attack. The loss of liberty of millions in Western Europe, their enslavement and massacre was the sequel of the policy pursued by imperialist powers the policy of anti-Soviet hatred and support to Nazi aggressors.

On 22nd June 1941 Hitler launched a perfidious attack against the USSR and started a war which was to end in his defeat and give a terrific blow to the imperialist system. The attempt to destroy socialism was to end in weakening the world capitalist system, its abolition over one-third of the world. But this end result depended on how the Soviet Union, the CPSU and the forces of the Red Army withstood and faced the responsibility history placed on them. Political misjudgement, military or diplomatic misjudgement, would have proved disastrous. Combination of military skill, political vision with clarity and diplomatic manoeuvring and flexibility were all required to lead this gigantic struggle. Its problems were many. Every effort was needed, high diplomatic skill was necessary to fully utilise the split in the imperialist camp and secure the support of powers nearly vanquished or threatened with attack by Hitler. Their hesitations and treachery had to be overcome while keeping the anti-Hitler coalition intact. For the least excuse they were prepared to stab the USSR in the back to ensure a terribly weakened Soviet Union in the course of the war. But help in supplies and military action from them was essential to shorten the war and save lot of destruction and losses.

Besides the new allies had their own reactionary ideas about the shape of the post-war world. They wanted to stregthen the system they represented and extend their domination over nations and countries overun by Hitler. They also aimed at establishing their supremacy over the countries neighbouring the USSR. The post-war world was to be the same as before the war except for the disappearing of the Hitler regime.

Such was the contradictory situation facing the Soviet Union on June 22nd. But the CPSU and Stalin mastered it and were successful in guiding the course of war consistently with its liberationist aimes.

On July 4, 1941 Stalin addresed the Soviet people over the Moscow Radio. His speech expressed the line of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Stalin talked about the liberationist significance of the war.

He said, "Our war for the freedom of our motherland will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for democratic liberties. It will be united front of the peoples who stand for freedom and against enslavement and threats of enslavement of Hitler's fascist armies".

The war was to be conducted not as a war between army and army, but between the foreign army and the entire people including its army. This was the great difference in the conduct of war in the Soivet Union and in other countries which Hitler attacked and subjugated. In those Western countries when their armies were facing the Nazi army the people had no role to play. In France in fact the panicky movement of the people in face of German invasion obstructed the movement of the French army. In England Churchil asked the people to stay put in their houses in cases the Germans invaded the country.

But Stalin gave different directives: "In areas occupied by the enemy, guerilla units, mounted and foot, must be formed, sabotage groups must be organised to combat enemy units, to foment guerilla warfare everywhere, to blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, and set fire to forests, stores and transports. In occupied territories, countries, conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy and all its accomplices. They must be tormented and annihilated at every step and all their measuses frustrated".

The order of the Day said, "The strength of the Red Army lies, finally, in that it does not and cannot feel racial hatred for other peoples, including the German people, that it has been trained to recognise the equality of all peoples and races, and to respect the right of other peoples. The German's racial theory and their practice of racial hatred have led all freedom-loving peoples to become enemies of fascist Germany. The USSR's theory of racial equality and its practice of respecting the rights of other peoples have led all freedom-loving peoples to become friends of the Soviet Union."

The casualities were colossal. In four months of warfare the Red Army lost 350,000 killed and 358,000 missing. The wounded numbered 10,20,000. The Germans lost 4,45,000 men killed, wounded and taken prisoners. This is sufficient to explain the intensity of the war.

The fate of humanity was being decided on the soil of the Soviet union. Everything depended on the course of military events. By

the autumn of 1941 German armies were surrounding Leningard, they had taken Kiev and were threateningly approaching Moscow. By October-November the Nazis launched a huge offensive to capture Moscow. They wanted to be safe in the capital before the onset of Russian winter. Powerful forces were thrown into the battle by the German High Command but they got bogged down before the valorous resistance of the Red Army and the equally valorous resistance of the volunteers.

Weeks of the resistance wore down the German army and eroded its morale. Its line of communications were endangered. Its casualities were colossal. Its capacity to launch an offensive and move further had been sapped. On December 6, 1941 the Red Army launched its offensive, supported by great number of tanks and planes. The Germans were in no position to meet this offensive. They beat a hasty retreat abandoning their weapons, equipment and supply trains. Fifty enemy divisions were smashed in offensive which recaptured 11,000 localities including over sixty big and smll towns and frustrated the German plans for the capture of Moscow.

By 23rd February 1942, the 24th anniversary of the Red Army, Stalin was able to announce, "In a brief space of time the Red Army dealt successive blows at the German fascist troops at Roster-on-Don and Tikhuin, in the Crimea and near Moscow. In the fierce battles near Moscow the Red Army threw back the enemy from Moscow and is still continuing to push him westward. The Moscow and Tula regions have been completely cleared of all Germn invaders."

The German defeat at Moscow was the first signal of turn of the tide. It smashed the myth of German invincibility and the German plan of invading Russian within six weeks. It led to important developments outside the Soviet Union. The enslaved people of Europe saw a ray of hope and felt a new urge to organise their resistence. Led by the Communists the freedom fighters in France, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czecholoslovakia, Greece, Norway and other countries took courage to strike at the enemy, destroy air fields and bridges, sabotage enemy transport and derail his troop trains. Across the borders peoples of defeated countries were now joining hands with the Red Army and the Soviet people in the common battle against fascism.

In all these eventful months of heroic resistance and huge loss

of life the Western powers were sitting on their haunches refusing to lift a finger and some of them still hopeful that the colossal destruction will exhaust the Soviet Union and they will be in a position to dictate terms to the socialist state—onerous conditions for help or dictatorial terms after the end of the war.

They repeatedly betrayed their promise of opening the second front in Europe, of sending their armies into France. They promised to do it in 1941. They did not. They promised in 1942 and 1943. They went back on it. They opened the second front in 1944 after the Red Army had driven the Germans from the Soviet soil.

But the nemesis was not slow to come. Japan which expected to attack the Soviet Union weakened by Nazi attacks and advance realised that Nazi victory was not ensured. She realised that Hitler's plan of vanquishing the USSR within eight weeks proved an empty dream. The failure to advance on Moscow made it clear that the war was going to be a protracted one and the Soviet Union had enough strength to give the same rebuff to Japan if she attacked her. There was no prospect of easy victory here. So the waiting Japan suddenly attacked the western powers who had become observers of the anti-fascist war.

On the 7th November 1941, a day after the Soviet counter-offensive started on the Moscow front, the Japanese treacherously attacked the main United States naval base at Pearl Harbour and destroyed or put out of commission the entire United States Pacific fleet, including eight battleships. By May 1942, within six months, the Japanese occupied Malays, Burma, the Philippines and Indonesia, spreading the war to Asia.

Having reaped the reward for their passivity the U.S. Government suddenly woke to the responsibility of fighting fascism. On January 1, 1942, a joint declaration was signed at Washington by 16 allied states including the USA, the USSR, Great Britain, China, Poland and Yugoslavia. The signatory states undertook to cooperate to defeat the fascist bloc and further agreed not to conclude a separate peace.

The battle of Stalingrad which ended in February 1943 marked a decisive turning point in the anti-fascist war. Hitler's defeat now appeared inevitable. Frustrated before Moscow, Hitler made a last effort in the summer of 1942 and launched a new drive. By then Hitler had committed 249 divisions on the Soviet front. By August 23rd German forces achieving a breakthrough reached the Volga at

a point north-west of Stalingrad. Stalingrad proved Hitler's doom. With unparalleled heroism the defenders fought back, now experienced armed forces foiled every move of the ememy. "The fury of the battle mounted, until over 2,000,000 men 26,000 guns and mortars, over 2,000 tanks and some 2,000 planes were disputing the possession of the city. More than 1,00,000 strikes were carried out by the German air force and something like 1,000,000 bombs were dropped in the course of the battle".

Having brought the enemy to a stop the Red Army launched its counter-offensive on November 19, 1942 and by February the battle of Stalingrad ended in complete victory of Soviet armies. Twenty two picked enemy divisions were smashed and over 90,000 officers and men surrendered.

The historic importance of the Stalingrad victory was well summed up by the paper Tribuna of Polish Workers' Party in the following words: "The defence of Stalingrad is the turning point of the war. It is there, at Stalingrad, that the fascist plans of conquering the world have collapsed. It is there at the Stalingrad front, that the courage of the Soviet soldiers, the heroism of the entire population of the city have become a symbol. A symbol of the insurmountable strength of the Red Army, of the invincible staunchness of the Soviet people, the invincible might of socialism". (Quoted from International Affairs, No. 12, 1984)

By November 7, 1944, on the 27th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Stalin was able to declare in Order of the Day No. 220: "The Red Army has restored freedom to tens of millions of Soviet people. The Soviet State frontiers which the Hitler hordes wantonly violated on June 22, 1941, have been restored along their whole length from the Black Sea to the Barents Sea.

"Thus the past year witnessed the complete liberation of our Soviet soil from the German fascist invaders.

"Having consummated the liberation of its native soil from the Hitler regime, the Red Army is now helping the peoples of Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia to break the chains of fascist slavery and to secure their freedom and independence".

Inspired by the successes of the Red Army people in a number of neighbouring countries were rising to fight the fascists and their stooge governments. In Rumania on August 23, 1944 Antonescu dictatorship was overthrown, a new democratic government was

formed which concluded an agreement with the allies and declared war on Germany.

On September 5, 1944 Soviet forces crossed into Bulgaria and on September 9 the communist-led Patriotic Front raised popular revolt against the reactionary ruling clique and set up a new government which concluded an armistice with the allies and declared war on Germany. The same happened in Hungary as soon as the Red forces entered the country to fight the Hungarian fascist forces. A new national provisional government was formed in December 1944 and it declared war on Germany. In Yugoslavia the Soviet forces rendered help to the People's Liberation Army led by Tito. By January 1945 Czechoslovakia was liberated and by February 1945, the Soviet forces fighting shoulder to shoulder with the First Polish Army chased the Germans out of Warsaw.

Now started a race for Berlin. The forces of the western powers who had overcome German resistance wanted to be the first to reach Hitler's capital. Hitler was awaiting them hoping to strike a deal with them at this late hour. But nothing could stop the Red Army. By April 21 it carried the fighting into the suburbs of Berlin and by 25th it completely encircled the city. There was fierce fighting all over the city. The German losses South-East of Berlin were 60,000 killed and 1,20,000 taken prisoners.

On the night of April 30 the flag of victory, the Red Flag was hoisted over the roof of Reichstag. On May 2 the Berlin garrison laid down its arms. Hitler and Goebbles committed suicide. On the night of 8th May, an act of unconditional surrender on behalf of Germany was signed at Berlin by the representatives of the German High Command. The war ended with the liberation of occupied Europe leading to revolutions in a number of countries and change over to a new socialist system.

The war in the Far East ended only a few months later. The Anglo-American combination was on the offensive but not yet confident of defeating Japan unaided. And they did not shrink from asking the USSR which had already experienced tremendous losses to join them in the fight against Japan. The Soviet Union fulfilling the agreement at Yalta declared war on Japan on August 9, 1945 and within a short time forced the Kwanting army to lay down its arms.

The Japanese surrender was only a question of days. But Trueman directed American planes to drop atom bombs on the

Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On September 9 Japan signed an act of unconditional surrender ending the Far East war and opening the door of liberation to several countries of Asia and ensuring the victory of the Chinese revolution.

The direct impact of the anti-fascist victory on the liberation struggles of Asian countries is often not seen. In fact imperialist scribes and bourgeois nationalist leaders of these countries are at pains to minimise the powerful freedom impulse given by the victory.

The Japanese defeat led to a massive liberation movement, and Burma, Indonesia, Malaya, Korea and Vietnam rose in revolt. They drove out the Japanese and made it impossible for the former enslavers, Dutch, British and French imperialists to establish their domination.

India was not exception. The end of the war, the victory against Japan and Germany led to revolts in the armed forces of India. The personnel of these forces, now imbued the patriotism and democratic ideals preached during the anti-fascist war, were not prepared to remain slaves. The rebellion of the Royal Indian Navy in the harbour of Bombay came as a final warning to Britain that India could not be subdued with the aid of the Indian armed forces. And behind the armed forces stood the people who though temporarily silenced in 1942 were far from being crushed and reconciled. They were held in check only by the Congress leaders. The British army, which had been asked to shed its blood to defend democracy against fascism could not be relied upon to re-conquer India. The British had to retire from India post haste compelled by the new situation following the defeat of the fascist forces. The victory besides led to the defeat of the Churchil Govt. in Britain and the return of the Labour Party to power. The Labour Party and the British T.U.C. were already committed to support Indian independence during the course of the war.

But these victories achieved by martial valour and military skill would not have suceeded in changing the face of the world and achieving the liberationist goals, had they not been backed by continuous political and dimplomatic struggle against the class policies of the Soviet allies—the USA and Britain. This was to be seen at the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences which could take proper decisions only aftera strong fight put up by the USSR.

All this should show how not only on the battle field but on the

diplomatic and political field the Soviet leadership led by the CPSU headed by Stalin had to wage a continuous fight to ensure the achievements of the liberationist aims of the war. It was a conscious fight waged by a party based on the proletarian outlook of Marxism-Leninism and firmly believing in the revolutionary processes of world history.

The victory of the war of liberation proved to be the biggest turning point in world history after the October revolution. But since then the imperialists led by the USA are making furious attempt to change the course of the world, and destroy the gains of the anti-fascist victory. The USA imperialists pursuing their dream of world domination and filled by intense hatred for socialism and freedom of the formerly subject nations, are doing their best to install reactionary regimes every where and above all organise a nuclear war against the USSR.

Reagan's plan for star war, his refusal to negotiate a halt to nuclear weapons and open support to agressors are part of the plan for world domination. The danger of nuclear war hungs over the world. The experience of the second world war, the agony and sufferings it entailed, the massacre of millions and the immense destruction it resulted in all, warns us to carry on a determined fight against present day war mongers the successors of Hitler. They call on all to wage a determined struggle for peace till the war mongers are completely isolated and paralysed. While honouring the Red Army heroes on the 40th anniversary of the anti-fascist victory, the voice against war, the voice for peace must be raised determinedly and Reagan's war plans completely frustrated.

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Trade Unions & Public Sector

This representative gathering of public sector workers is called to discuss many problems that affect the workers' interest and also concern their responsibility regarding the functioning of the public sector undertakings which are financed from the hard earned earnings of the common man. This latter aspect has become much more important since the accepted policies regarding the role of public sector are being repudiated from the highest quarter.

It may be said without contradiction that the trade union movement of our country by and large, has been busy with the first aspect, viz. defending the workers' interest, leaving the other national aspect to the management and the bureuacracy. Such an outlook leads to self-centredness and divorces the trade union movement from the problems facing the economy.

Attitude of Management

It was, however, inevitable that the workers should concentrate more attention on the defence of their immediate interests. The public sector management did everything to alienate the workers from the efficient functioning of the enterprise and treated them no better than the private owners. Standing Orders of these concerns are borrowed from the prison-rules of the country framed by the British. They are orders meant for bonded labourers. For every facility, for every improvement in conditions, the workers and their unions had to fight. The most glaring example of procrastination, prevarication on the part of the authorities, relates to the

settlement of the D.A. rate.

The authorities, besides, behave exactly like the private owners in their dealings with unions which have mass following, but do not agree to do their biddings. The favours shown to the INTUC really go against the rights of the workers to have the union of their choice. It is an attempt by the Government to impose its leadership on the workers. It is necessary to have smooth individual relations in the public sector. The CITU stands for this. The objective can be attained by deciding on the recognition of the union through secret ballot. It can be further ensured by referring every agreement which the union wishes to sign to a referendum of the workers. But you cannot expect this much democracy under the Congress(I) rule. The Constitution gives the right of vote to people to decide who should govern the country, but those who are elected on popular votes, refuse to give the same right to workers to choose their union.

Thanks to this attitude of the management, the complete bureaucratisation in management, the workers were repeatedly forced to spend all their energies in defending their rights and interest. The atmosphere in the public sector was no better than in the private sector. In the public sector it also appeared as if two hostile classes faced each other. This led to several strikes and battles and our public sector workers had to face repression and injustices that are as a rule inflicted on the workers of the private sector. I congratulate you on your many successes in these struggles. I congratulate the steel, coal and several other sections of public sector workers on their successes and victories in negotiations and conflicts.

The Fight for Unity

Comrades, in recent years we have consistently planned to set at nought the authorities' game of divide and rule. We have endeavoured to forge unity of the workers following different organisations. We have often succeeded in getting together all organisations for common action.

We have more often succeeded in uniting our ranks and including the INTUC in the common stand at the negotiating table. This consistent fight for unity is necessary, because in the public sector also the workers are divided among several certres and the cohesiveness of the movement is often lacking. We must therefore continue our struggle for extending and expanding our unity, and

in every organisation where we are working we must endeavour to see that the maximum force of workers is united under the organisation. To be able to do this we have to see that the union and its leadership function the union democratically, observe all democratic norms and enable the mass of workers to put their imprint on the policies and decisions of the union. The union cannot be reduced to a coterie of leaders managing thing over the heads of the mass of the workers. This is generally the practice of reformist leaders who are afraid of the judgement of the masses and who would draw their inspiration form the management. I think we have had enough of such leaders and organisations in the public sector undertakings, perhaps more so in Bangalore itself.

Divisive Tactics

While we are on the question of defending unity we must realise that greater and greater attempts are being made to divide the workers on regional, caste and communal lines. The more the unity of workers gets forged through united actions, the more the attempts made to divide them on caste and communal lines. You know what is happeing in Gujarat, where two massive sections of toilers and workers are arraigned into hostile camps over the question of reservation. Reservation is being deliberately used by the ruling party to divide the workers and make them fight each other. It is, of course, our position that in the feudal conditions of caste obtaining in India, reservation for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and certain other sections cannot be avoided for the time being. But it may be a fatal mistake on the part of the trade union movement if it does not campaign that reservation alone will not solve the basic problem of any backward community, and that common struggle and action of all toilers is absolutely essential to meet the problems of poverty and unemployment.

You all know how regional chauvinism is being roused by the Shiv Sena in Bombay, which wants to send out people from their State out of the city. This is the cheap way of getting access to backward sections and splitting the working class movement. Perhaps a similar kind of chauvinistic appeal was made in Bangalore during the days of the Gundu Rao Ministry.

While the question of reservation is the question of inner settlement and common understanding between the discriminated sections and others, the question of regional chauvinism and communal appeal are counter-revolutionary agencies to divide,

split and enslave the country.

You all know what has been happening in Punjab, where people are often misled in the name of Sikhism and Khalistan. The cry of Khalistan is an open secessionist demand to dismember India, the slogan which two years back was to be found in some secret U.S. clrculars. Communalism and regionalism play into the hands of imperialism to enslave the country. It is therefore the duty of our common movement to fight these divisive forces to maintain the unity of the working class and on that basis to contribute to the strengthening of the unity of India. If Indian unity gets disrupted, the entire working class and the people of India will be reduced to object slavery.

Normarlly it is the task of the working class of a country to fight the reactionary forces and show a model of leadership to the rest of the people for defence of national unity. This is what happened in Vietnam. This is what happened in China. Against the disruptive forces and disintegrating influences, the working class marshalled all its organisational forces, uniting itself, and inspiring the people to unite. But in India, it mut be admitted, the common trade union movement including the CITU, has not been very successful in leading this fight against divisive forces and defending the interest of national unity. How many of our unions for instance, have held meeetings and campaigned explaining the sinister significance of the Khalistan movement, and at the same time endeavoured to create a spirit of Hindu-Sikh unity? Had we done so, we would not have witnessed the shameful anti-Sikh riots in Delhi following the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi. A conscious working class would have intervened in the riots and channelled the protest against the U.S. imperialists.

Our trade union movement which repeatedly talks about Socialism and which works for Socialism, cannot ignore these challenges and content itself with only defending the immediate economic demands of the workers. That will be nothing but betraying the Indian people and the Indian peasants. It is necessary that the workers in the public sector undertakings and their unions who share this weakness with the rest of the movement, do everything possible to overcome it.

The public sector workers, like the rest of the working class, have fought against the policies of the Congress(I) Government and have suffered from them. And yet we find an overwhelming

section of private sector and public sector workers voting for the Congress(I) party during the parliamentary elections. What is the secret? This is the direct result of the pure economism practised by the trade union movement, to the neglect of political developments and the matured political events. The trade union movement has failed to raise the consciousness of the workers so that when any serious political issue comes before the people, they vote for the ruling party. One may say that the balance sheet of our trade union activities reveals a deficit account.

Functioning of the Public Sector

Now comrades, let me come to the second aspect of our responsiblity, viz, our attitude towards the public sector. As I have already said because of the attitude of the management the workers in the public sector concentrate mainly on their own demands. The way in which the public sector was managed, the corruption, the use of substandard materials, the favouritism, all of which marred the efficiency of the public sector, have been no concern of ours. The only instance where perhaps we have intervened was in Durgapur some years back, when we exposed the corruption of the way in which the British has built the plant and suggested positive measures to improve the efficiency of the plant. For the rest we have acted as if the way in which the public sector functions was no concern of ours. But this is a wrong attitude for the working class of a newly liberated country. The public sector in India cannot be compared with the public sector in Britain, for instance. There, both the public and private sectors are instruments of imperialism, of State monopoly capitalism. But in newly liberated countries, the well managed public sector based on strategic industries, is an instrument of defending the economy against imperialist depredations and growing dependence on imperialism. This is why in India, when the public sector started its activities in strategic industries, it was supported by the trade union movement and all progessive forces. In spite of a great deal of mismanagement, the public sector has been an instrument of defending the independence of your economy to a great extent.

It has been so because, in a large number of cases, it was directly helped by the Socialist countries. In fact, we would not have been able to build a few strategic industries if the help from the Socialist countries had not been available. This aspect of the public sector has not been properly put before the workers by the trade unions.

Today it is all the more necessary, because under the pressure of the imperialists, the World Bank and IMF, official policy is denigrating the public sector and giving more encouragement to the private sector. But the matter does not end there.

The denigration of the public sector is further intended to invite foreign multinational companies to help India in its technological advancement. The World Bank and foreign multi-nationals have always adopted a hostil attiude to India's public sector. They know that so long as it stands and expands, their efforts to penetrate into our economy will meet with obstruction. That is why they were always opposed to it and now with the recent economic policy of the Government, it seems that they are likely to achieve their ends.

It is necessary, therefore, for our trade unions to understand this danger and as a matter of policy come out in defence of the public sector, in strengthening it and its expansion. Simultaneoulsy, it is necessary for our unions to openly declare that provided they are given equal treatment, they are prepared to intervene and help in solving the problems of efficiency and proper management of the public sector. It is a matter of shame that a large number of concerns are not able to utilise even 90 per cent of their productive capacity; that hundreds of crores of rupees gathered from the common man's earning are being wasted by useless bureaucrats and corrupt officials, and that in spite of our productive capacity we have to import from abroad hundreds of crores worth of goods which we can produce here. The working class must take note of this and demand the right of participation in management on equal terms, so that the country can be saved. It should also assure the people that so far as it is concerned it knows its responsibility in carrying out the agreed norms of production and it will not fail in its duty to the people, nor will it allow the productive capacity that has been created form the toil of the common people, to be wasted. This is the matter which should be properly discussed in this forum and suitable decisions taken.

Our International task

Comrades, let me now deal with the weakness of our movement which is now being sharply underlined because of international development. You all are aware that today large section of world working class especially in Europe, are waging a continuous battle against the US imperialist plans of imposing a nuclear war on

the world. The US imperialists are organising this war against the Soviet Union, the aim being to destroy socialism and clear the ground for US world domination. The battle is not only against USSR but is against the gains of the working class and the freedom loving people of the world secured over a period of 100 years. The war, besides, is going to be the most destructive war in the world, which may even endanger the existence of the human race. In such a situation concern humanity as well as international solidarity demands that the working class of India should organise itself as an anti-war force in this world and joins its voice with the working class of Europe and America and the world peace movement to protect the peace and oppose nuclear war. But unfortunately we find that there is hardly any peace movement organised by our trade unions in this country. The National Campaign Committee which unites several organisations for common issue has not yet been able to give a call for defence of peace and opposition to nuclear war because large sections of trade unions do not agree on the source of this war and the real culprits organising it. But the CITU and the advanced working class must recognise that the war is being organised by the imperialists against the socialist world and the freedom loving peoples, that the aim is of re-enslaving newly liberated counteies like India. It is therefore our immediate duty to oppose the forces of war and rouse the working class to the sense of its international duty. We must admit that we have failed to discharge our responsibilities till now, but not at least we must firmly determine to move forward and join the peace brigades of the world. You all know perhaps that only a few weeks back the working class of the world and the freedom loving forces celebrated the 40th anniversary of anti-fascist victory. It was an event which gave a new turn to world history. Because of it one third of the world went over to socalism, that colonial order collapsed, the British empire ceased to exist and countries like India were enabled to secure their freedom. The anti-fascist victory, which is the victory of Socialist Soviet Union over the most aggressive force of imperialism, viz. fascism, changed the balance of powers in favour of the common people. Now once again another war is being organised to remove the gains of anti-fascist victory. We must all be aware what is at stake and fight the war mongers with firm determination. I hope our trade unions will devote serious attentions to this problem and do every thing in power to carry the

message of peace and opposition to war to every factory and every working class home. That will be giving lead to the entire people to join their voice in the fight against war and fight for maintaining world peace.

Presidential Address at the meeting of unions in Public Sector Undertakings held at Bangalore on May 27-28, 1985

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Presidential Address

Working Committee Meeting of CITU
Trivandrum, May 31, June 2, 1985

Comrades,

MANY events of international and national importance have taken place since we met last in September, 1984 in Jaipur.

Before I turn to the new changes that have taken place in the trade union movement I must refer to an important event which is directly connected with our CITU and its developing international contacts and relations. I am refering to the visit of the delegation sent by the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions, USSR at our request to discuss the international situation. On behalf of you I convey my warm thanks to the Soviet trade unions for acceding to our request. The visit of the delegation which consisted of Com. V.V.Kulik, Secretary of the Ukrainian Republican Council of Trade Unions and Com. Konstantin I. Tuzikov of the International Department of the AUCCTU was of great help to us to understand the depth of the war danger and the way in which Soviet trade unions and workers are meeting it. I convey my thanks to Comrades Kulik and Tuzikov for the warmth of their visit and their feelings of solidarity for us. I am confident that the relations between our two organisations will continue to develop as it should in our common interest.

Comrades, the last year, the year 1984, is recorded as a good year, as a year of economic recovery for the advanced capitalist

countries. The U.S. gross national product grew last year at 6.9 per cent which is the biggest incease rate during the last 33 years. Britain, fighting hard for economic recovery, saw 3.5 per cent growth in real gross domestic product, saw 3.5 per cent growth in real gross domestic product in 1983, the estimated growth rate for 1984 is 2.5 per cent despite the effect of the miners' strike. The economy of the ten countries of the European Economic Community grew by an average of 2.2 per cent in 1984, following a fall of 0.8 per cent in 1983. According to the Japanese Economic Agency, Japan's economic growth rate for 1984 will reach 5.3 per cent.

As is quite clear this much praised recovery is restricted and unevenly spread though it comes as a great relief to the leaders of the capitalist society. It speaks to what dire straites the capitalist economy has been reduced. The most optimistic spokesmen of the capitalist world are unable to maintain that the world economic recovery will be able to maintain the tempo of the last year.

World Bank President Mr. Clausen said in an interview with Xinhua in December last year that the world economic recovery will continue in 1985 but it is not expected to go on rising as in 1984. He expected that the growth rate of gross national product (GNP) of the United States will be less han in 1984 but those of the other countries of the organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) will be greater. Already the U.S. growth rate has come down to 1.3 per cent in the first quarter of 1985.

Economic recovery in capitalist pharaseology does not mean any relief to the workers and the people. In fact it means capitalist production increasing at the expense of the people and imposing misery on them. It denotes a sustained attack on the people's living standard and a steady rise in the profit of the monopolists.

Notwithstanding this recovery the unemployment rate in the USA did not decline. The rate at the beginning of the last quarter of the year was 7.4 per cent which meant that 8.5 millions of Americans had no work. Unemployment in EEC countries excluding Greece topped the 13 million mark during December according to the figures released by the EEC statistical office in January 1985. The December figure was the highest on record and represented an unemployment rate of 11.6 per cent compared with 11.1 per cent year earlier. The average unemployment figure for 1984 was 12.6 million or 5.7 per cent above 1983. Recovery indeed!

In January this year British unemployment rose sharply by

more than 1 lakh 21 thousands to a new record height of 33 lakhs 40 thousands according to figures of the employment department. The jobless in the country. Britain's unemployment rate is above the EEC average of 10.7 per cent and the average of the Western countries as a whole is 8.1 per cent.

In Japan the total figure of the jobless reached 1.61 million or 2.7 per cent of the labour force in 1984, the highest since the Government began compiling statistics in 1953. Both the unemployment rate and the total number of unemployed appeared to be small in Japan because people who work for 1 hour in any given week are considered as employed.

In India also we find claims of economic advance and recovery accompained by rising unemployment and closure of factories. The economic survey (1984-85) of the Government of India makes the following claims "To summarise, the sixth plan period is closing with highly satisfactory performance of the economy. The agricultural sector has performed well and has encouraged expectations of steady growth in the coming years.

Industial performance has improved though the scope for further improvement is considerable. The annual growth rate of the GDP over the sixth plan period is likely to equal the planned target of 5.2%. At the same time inflationary presssure have been contained and significant adjustments have been attained in the country's external account. These very considerable achievements have been secured in the face of unfavourable developments in world trade and payments".

The success of the sixth plan however reveals the same story that is revealed during the recovery year of the Western countries. In each year of the sixth plan registered unemployment increased by 10 per cent.

Year	Live register	Percentage
1980	162 lakhs	13.0%
1981	178 lakhs	10.1%
1982	187 lakhs	10.7%
1983	219 lakhs	11.1%
1984	235 lakhs	0.7.3%

This is how Indian recovery and the successes of the planned

years have been achieved. No wonder the economic survery is shy of giving year to year figures of growing unemployment.

The successful year of the sixth plan witnessed increase in the number of sick units, increased number of closures and thousands of workers rendered jobless because of sickness and closures. Closures due to causes other than industrial disputes numbered 349 in 1981, 206 in 1982, 226 in 1983 and 188 in 1984. The decreasing number of closures did not mean decrease in the number of those thrown out of jobs. Their number was 37,000 in 1981, 26,000 in 1982, 43,000 in 1983 and 71,000 in 1984. Every year of the sixth plan saw increase in number of sick units. Since December, 1979 the percentage of sick units increased as follows :

Year	Percentage increase in all sick units.
December 1980	9.0%
December 1981	9.0%
December 1982	111.6%
December 1983	33.2%

In this period the large sick units increased from 409 to 491 while the small sick units increased from 28,000 t0 78,000. The havoc done to the smaller units is in consonance with the law of capitalism. The workers' job and the small industry both must perish to restore the health of big capital.

Sickness has affected all major industries. Among the large indsutries the number of sick mill was 119 in cotton textile; 101 in engineering and electricals, 44 in sugar and 37 in jute. Uttar Pradesh is among the major states affected by sickness mainly because of the sickness in sugar industry.

The main brunt of sickness is borne by five states which account for 383 out of 491 sick concerns. Among them West Bengal tops the list with 112 sick units followed by Maharashtra with 100 units, UP with 54, Gujarat with 55 and Karnataka 29.

Sickness in jute industry in West Bengal continues unabated. In May this year 18 mills were locked out throwing out of work 70,000 workers. The closed mills further added to the number of jobless taking the total to 72,000.

The crisis extends to industries like coir, cashewnuts, handlooms, and others. Here again tens of thousands are out of job

without any possibility of alternative employment. According to the latest reports of the labour ministry out of 80,110 sick industrial units (large, medium and small) 7,409 units were considered by the financing banks as potentially viable while as many as 63,135 were considered as non-viable. Banks have yet to decide about the viability of the remaining 9,566 sick industrial units.

Non-viability means these thousands of small concerns cannot be revived, so much production capacity must perish and so many thousands of workers must join the ranks of permanently unemployed.

This is the havoc done by private capital to the economy. It has shown itself incapable of using the existing productive capacity. The mismanagement by both the Jute and Textile industries owners was long ago exposed and the trade union movement demanded their nationalisation and reorganisation. In West Bengal all trade union centres, all political parties including the Cong(I) joined in demanding nationalisation of the jute industry.

The Government not only turned down the demand, it has chosen this situation to give fresh encouragement to private capital and open new avenues for their exploitation and manipulation of the economy as we will see later.

Has the Government any policy to fight sickness, closures and lockout in the interests of the people and the workers? It is abandoning whatever steps it took earlier to hold sickness in check and keep the wheel of industry running. It now has left the field open to the law of market and pleads its inability to intervene under the excuse of non-viability of concerns. The days of takeover and nationalisation to save productive capacity and workers jobs seem to be over and government intervention in favour of workers is to be more and more restricted.

The running of a number of textiles units, the taking over of some other concerns are now considered as errors and burdens. It has to be noted that inspite of this change of outlook the government recently passed a bill to nationalise four tea gardens in West Bengal. But the shift of the policy is in the contrary direction. This was bound to be so because apart from running the concerns the Government did not change anything. It accepted the liabilities held by the management. It did not change the methods of management. It did not create interest among the workers for efficient running of the concern. And it did not seek workers' participation to

fight a common social evil arising out of private production. Replacing private capitalist management by bureaucratic management was not going to lead to any change. In fact in some instances official intervention was meant as a rescue operation for the owning capitalists rather than for the workers.

Last two years which witnessed growing sickness and closures saw less and less government intervention and now with the formally declared new economic policy in the budget the dissosiation of the Govt. from its responsibility to check sickness has become clear.

It seems that new the government is leaving the question of sickness to be decided by the financial institutions which means that the major part of sick industry will be written off as bad debt. At the same time the Labour Ministry professes concern for the jobs of the workers and talks of alternative employment. But that it is not serious in this respect, is clear from the proposal it makes in regard to textile workers. "One way of doing this would be through issuing powerloom permits to small groups of retrenched workers who could be organised in their areas of origin into powerloom cooperatives. Where mill faces closure powerlooms could be shifted to the proposed cooperatives of powerloom workers and the cost of the powerlooms adjusted against terminal benefits payable to the workers consequest on closure." This is nothing but a cheating proposal to deprive the workers of their provident fund and other dues in exchange for the company's looms. It is a method of passing on the crisis of the mill to the workers and in the bargain cheating them of their provident and ESI funds. How will the crisis of the market be reduced by passing on the looms to the workers. With the market already over saturated how will the workers get any scope to dispose off their production if steps are not taken to widen the demand. All trade unions must oppose these fake measures of alternative employments.

The situation therefore is that in the current year the workers will face the full effect of closure and sickness because of the new official policy. Trade Union unity is urgently required to meet this offensive and make united proposals for saving industries reorganising and restructuring them in the interest of the people and the workers. The CITU has repeately expressed its readyness to participate in management on equal terms so that the full productive potential of every concern is exploited. It has already given an

assurance that its workers will fulfil agreed norms of production and will not fail the people but there has been no response either from the Government or the management.

It is quite clear that the unity of our movement already achieved is not sufficient to meet this offensive. The National Campaign Committee of Central Trade Unions did give a call to fight closure, but its intervention throughout this period has not been effective. This is also because the CITU and its unions which would bear the main responsibility for fighting this evil and also for forging more effective unity perhaps showed some slackness in their efforts. The current year will not only see the growing offensive of closures and sickness, it will see the beginning of a wider offensive of computerisation of jobs which must follow in the wake of the new policy for introducing advanced technology.

It is necessary therefore to make proper preparations to meet this new offensive, if we are to render effective service to the cause of the working class.

The trade union movement and the CITU cannot ignore the challenges of the new economic policy which government of India has adopted. It is disclosed through the various measures adopted in this year's budget. In the first place, in the most blatant manner the authorities imposed taxes worth 1400 crore rupees on the common people while they announced a relief worth one thousands crores of rupees to the capitalists. There is no excuse, no concealement here. It is openly announced that the common man must bear the burden of the economic crisis to give incentives to the capitalists. But the burden on the common man does not end with additional taxations. The huge deficit financing is intended to ensure that he is fleeced through rising prices. Already prices of necessaries of the life have started climbing and even the Government cannot deny it. By the end of the year people will be facing exclusive rise in the prices reducing their purchasing power further.

Atrocious as these measures are they cannot be described as a departure from previous policies. The departure comes in the shape of open and avowed preference to private sector, denigration of the public sector and invitation to foreign multinationals in the name of importing advanced technology. No less a person than the Prime Minister himself publicly stated that the public sector had overspread itself and that new priority areas should be open to the private sector. To encourage the private sector, controls and

licencing are being removed in a number of cases which really means end to all planning and planned use of capital resources. The denigration of the public sector, encouragement to private sector and removal of government control have been the demands of World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund on the Government of India. These are necessary for creating a favourable climate for the multinationals to enter our country.

Import liberalisation is yet another instrument of appeasing foreign capital. But it is going to ruin a number of Indian industries.

Unless working class and the people of the country are able to check this trend they will soon find public sector and planning completely scuttled. Already in the name of promoting efficiency in the public sector more autonomy is demanded for the management of this sector. The end result of this process will be an autonomous public sector free from parliamentary control, a step towards privatisation. As a first step more powers for management and raising of capital through private sources by selling bonds is being adopted. This is a plan to reduce the public sector to the level of joint sector. All this is advocated in the name of efficiency and efficient production. Neither the Government nor the ruling party considers that for the efficiency functioning of the sector, workers participation in management on equal terms is necessary. In reality the only way to fight the lethargy, inefficiency, corruption, and bureaucratism in public sector management is to secure workers' participation in every aspect of management. But of course, the government is moving in a contrary direction to debase the public sector to the level of joint sector.

The denigrating of the public sector is not intended to help only indigenous private sector, it is intended to attract foreign multinationals also. Otherwise how can you explain the handing over the gas pipe line contract to a foreign multinational after withdrawing it from public sector firm Engineering India Ltd. and Gas Authority of India Ltd? How can you explain handing over of another contract for a fertiliser factory to another foreign firm? The policy of downgrading the public sector is undertaken under the pressure of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Apart from creating a danger to the freedom of our country it immediately diverts orders from public sector concerns to foreign concerns and leave the public sector's productive capacity unutilised.

The trade union movement and the working class must realise

that entry of foreign multinationals in the economy of our country spells danger to our freedom and independence. These powerful agencies subvert the economy of the country they operate in, they finance reactioanry forces which are prepared to do the biding of imperialism and they created internal divisions before completely establishing their domination. The cruelty of these concerns and their disregard for the lives of the peoples is experienced by our country in the hundreds of deaths in Bhopal where the Union Carbide refused to take elementary precautions to save the citizens from a dangerous gas leak. To inflict thousands of deaths on the people of underdeveloped countries is normal routine for these powerful economic organisations. The Government of India is endangering the freedom of our country by creating favourable conditions for the entry of the multinationals. This policy must be denounced by the entire trade union movement as anti-national, anti-people and anti-working class and a movement must be launched to reverse this policy. The CITU must undertake immediate and constant propaganda to warn the workers that the multinationals are the most brutal exploiters and avowed enemies of the freedom of developing countries.

Comrades, the results of the new economic policy of high taxation and freedom for private sector will be soon felt by the ordinary people, the middle classes, and the agrarian masses and the working class itself. It is the duty of the trade union movement to centralise the protests of the people and direct them into proper democratic channels raising the demands of the peasantry, the demand for lowering prices, for an effective public distribution system for immediate nationalisation of jute and textile industries, for effective intervention against sickness and closures, for effective intervention against sickness and closures, for primary role of the public sector in the economy and scrapping the new economic policy which encourages the entry of multinationals.

Comrades, why we are taking steps to strengthen trade union unity! New attacks are being organised against the solidarity and unity of our class. The conflict between the reservationists and anti-reservationits in Gujarat, betokens to the success of the government and the capitalists and dividing the working class. For months now arson, stabing curfew, and firing are continuing in the capital of Gujarat which sections of workers ranged on the opposite sides. There is no doubt that in the conditions obtaining in India

and the rigorous operation of the caste system, reservation of jobs for socially discriminated sections becomes necessary as is now provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Similar demands are coming from some other sections. And those who raise this demand often believe that reservation of jobs and seats in educaional establishments will solve all their problems. While admitting the necessity of reservation in the cases mentioned above the trade union movement must simultaneously educate all the sections that reservations cannot solve the basic problems of social oppression, rooted in feudal customs and feudal property relations. Thirty years' experience of reservation under the Constitution shows that while some people are provided with jobs, the massacre of Adivasis and Harijans continues as before. Today the ruling party which has lost its influence over the larger sections of the people bolsters its prestige by raising the reservation issue for electoral purposes. The aim is to polarise the votes and in the name of reservation monopolise the votes of certain sections, who normally would have voted for democratic and radical parties. This is what was done both in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Both the Governments suddenly announced new quota of reservation which led to a social turmoil. The Gujarat Government entered upon a policy of wholesale repression against the protesters and unleashed police terror on the people and the press.

It is legitimate to demand the resignation of the Cong(I) Ministry in Gujarat which has brought the state to this state of affairs in which toiler is pitted against toiler and repression reigns supreme. This does not mean that the trade union movement supports the anti-reservationist campaign and its demand for total abolition of reservation. While taking a sober and realistic stand on the question of reservation, taking consideration the concrete situation in our country, the CITU and its trade unions must do everything to protect the unity of the workers and emerge as the champion of all sections of workers. Their isolation in some states from the discriminated sections like the Harijans and the Adivasis or Muslims must be rapidly overcome. This can be done only if the trade union movement and our CITU unions remember that these sections have problems of social discrimination against which our unions hardly fight. The way to unity lies through the trade unions championing the demands of these sections alongwith the demands of all other workers and drawing these sections in the

common democratic struggles. Unity at the level of Central Trade Union organisation will look more and more hollow if at the base the main mass of workers is divided on issue like reservation. I wish to warn you that this type of attack against our unity is going to intensify in the near future and we must be fully armed to meet it.

Comrades, very few know that the murder of Smt. Gandhi was organised by imperialist agencies to create condition for destabilisation of the country. That dastardly action is a warning that the imperialist agencies have now the courage to openly intervene in our country. The discovery of spies in the Prime Minister's office and the bribing of high officials further point to the understanding done by the imperialists. The US and British imperialists besides openly support the Khalistan elements operating in their countries. If the working class does not fight against these conspiracies it will be a betraying of our country. It is the bounden duty of all our unions to rouse the people against the danger to our freedom and actively fight against it.

Comrades, our comrades in Tamilnadu are waging a courageous struggle to unify the people to fight the injustices done to Tamils in Sri Lanka. It is the task of all our unions to place the issue before the working class and people in all States.

Comrades, our comrades in Punjab, our workers, our CITU leaders and organisations have done a good job in maintaining the working class unity and fighting the forces of communalism and secessionism. The problem is much bigger. It relates to the dismemberment conspiracy of US imperialism already revealed in connection with Assam. You know that some US agencies had prepared a report on what would happen to India after Indira Gandhi. The report was prepared just a few months before her assassination organised by under cover agencies. The fruits of that report are now appearing. The treacherous secessionist elements encouraged from abroad and further encouraged by the failure of the Akali leadership to denounce and isolate them, are now active, killing people in Delhi, Haryana and other states. The battle for keeping India together has to be carried on by the trade union movement and the people. It is no longer a question of law and order only to be tackled by the administration. The Trade Union movement must rise to theoccasion and discharge its duty.

It will be a fatal blunder to identify the terrorists and the seces-

sionists with the Sikh community. The secessionist elements themselves hope that their activities will lead to anti-Sikh riots and create further breach between the two communities. All our trade unions must guard against the communal trap set up by mischievous elements and intervene in time to prevent communal outbrust. Our intervention last time in the riots following the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi came a little late and we were often reduced to mere spectators of a crime against national unity.

The entire trade union movement must be politically active this time to explain to the people the political meaning of the attacks of the secessionists and rouse national feeling to fight them. There can be no compromise and no conciliation towards the treacherous elements and those who dare not denounce them. A full fledged campaign for national unity launched by the trade unions, a complete assurance to the mass of Sikh peasantry from the entire working class will enable us to create conditions for setting the Punjab problem and saving national unity.

Comrades, the experience of the Parliamentary and Assembly elections constitutes a very adverse comment on the way in which the trade unions in our country is conducted. It shows an adverse balance sheet for our activities during the last five years since the return of Congress(I) to power. Both in the Parliamentary and Assembly elections major sections of the working class voted for the ruling Congress(I) party and in some cases for the opposition bourgeois parties. Only in West Bengal and Kerala a major section voted for the left, mainly the CPI(M). But in these two states also the left met with some reverse.

Industrial cities like Bombay, Steel city Jamshedpur and Rourkela, big textile centres like Ahmedabad all voted for the Congress(I). In West Bengal also in Calcutta, Howrah and Hoogli areas which are large industrial centres the Congress(I) won some parliamentary seats from the left front.

This is all the more surprising in the background of what was happening to the working class in the last five years under the Congress(I) rule. Never before our country had seen so many lockouts and closures, thousands of small concerns completely closed and tens of thousands summarily thrown on the streets. Added to this were the rising cost living and continuing high prices. But all this seemed to have had very little efffect on the voting choice of the working class which by and large rallied round the Congress(I) in

the parliamentary elections believing that the ruling party can protect national unity. It is necessary to remove the weakness in our functioning and make all out efforts to raise the consciousness of the workers.

I must refer to recent international developments. An event which took place only a few weeks back was the worldwide celebration of the 40th anniversary of the anti-fascist victory. The CITU called upon all its unions to observe the anniversary to this world shaking event in a befitting manner. You all know the victory was attained through immense sacrifices of the Soviet people and the heroes of the red army. No less than 20 million Soviet people sacrificed their lives in this gignatic battle to save freedom, democracy and socialism. The victory led to a complete change in the world situation. It led one third of the world going over Socialism, it saw a number of East European countries establish socialist regimes. It ensured the victory of the Chinese revolution and saw the emergence of Socialist China, Korea and Vietnam. It facilitated the victory of Indian freedom struggle and led to the collapse of the British empire and the old colonial system. Very truthfully it has been described as the second great turning point in the history of the world after the October Socialist revolution.

For the last four decades US imperialism with its ambition of world domination has been working to undermine the gains of this victory. It conspires against the freedom of newly liberated countries, supports reactionary regimes and tries to organise subversion in socialist countries.

In our sub-continent it does everything to support reacionary regimes, and help suppress the right of the people as in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. It does everything to encircle India with reactionary regimes. It pours sophisticated arms into Pakistan and creates a danger to our freedom and integrity. The reactionary rulers of Pakistan are helping the Khalistani elements to undermine the unity of our country. The USA and other imperialists are openly encouraging these treacherous elements. The establishment of a naval base at Diago Garcia, the refusal to agree to turn Indian ocean into a zone of peace, the encouragement given to Pakistan to manufacture atom bomb and the incitement on the Tamils are all part of US imperialist game to intimidate India and advance its plans of global domination.

However it finds that the strength of the Soviet Union and the

Socialist countries constitute an obstacle in the way of its domination. It is therefore preparing for a nuclear war against the Soviet Union, a war which not only threatens the freedom of all countries but the very existence of the world. Reagan and the USA are playing the same role as Hitler and Nazi Germany did during the Second World War with only one difference that the nuclear war threatens the very existence of the human race on the planet.

It is the duty of the working class and the people who love freedom and humanity to fight this drive towards war. The USSR as behoves a Socialist country has made repeated proposals to save the world from the holocaust of a nuclear war. But the US imperialists have rejected them and they are busy preparing their Star War project to carry nuclear war into outer space. The Working class and the people must support the USSR's proposals for peace, must join their voice with the working class and people of other lands to fight the menace of war. We must accept frankly that our trade union movement and the CITU have done very little to rouse the working class and the people to the war danger. If this continues it will nothing short of a batrayal of the international movement. We must determindly build a powerful anti-war movement based on the strength of our trade unions, a movement worthy of our class and people.

May 16, 1985

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New Textile Policy

The new textile policy hailed by textile vested interests and welcomed by other employers constitutes a repudiation of the interests of the people who require enough cloth with prices within their reach, redpudiation of the interests of the smaller section of the industry, handlooms and powerlooms and an open declaration of war against the jobs of textile mill workers. Its only purpose is to ensure high profits for the employers at the expense of all other sections of society.

Official spokesmen and owners of industries use lot of verbiage to conceal this conspiracy. They talk of a new approach, a new discovery of measures to rescue the industry which they identify with the profit interests of the big textile owners. They talk of protecting the interests of handloom and powerloom sections, the interests of factory workers, of everybody connected with the industry while in reality they suggest measures which will lead to the ruination of these sections.

The policy will adversely affect the interest of lakhs of workers and employees connected with textile industry. The mill industry employees nearly one lakh of workers. The powerloom and handloom employ many more lakhs. The livelihood of these lakh is being threatened by the new measures. At the same time there is not even a suggestion to widen the market for cloth and increase the per capita consumption to meet increased production. Cloth production in India has increased from 4,780 million of metres in 1951

to 11,534 million metres in 1983. But the industry found itself in crisis because with every passing year per capita consumption fell as a result of the economic policies of the Government and increased impoverishment of the people. It is known that in recent years the number of those living below the poverty line has increased notwithstanding the tall claims made by the planners and the Government. Half of India goes naked and at the same time there is a glut in the cloth market. The direction for a new textile policy was therefore quite clear. It should have taken measures to increase the purchasing capacities of the common man. But the Government's new policy has no such direction. On the other hand it is intended to move in a contrary direction, towards cutting down production, cutting down employment not only in factories but also in powerlooms, towards production of high priced cloths beyond the reach of the ordinary man. It is geared to securing high profits through exports and earn foreign exchange.

What is the declared objective of the new policy? The policy statement says, "Hereafter, the approach to the textile industry would be guided by this main objective (increase in the production of cloth of acceptable quality at resonable prices to meet the clothing requirements of a growing population.). In the pursuit of this main objective, the employment and export potential of the industry shall be kept in view. The availability of cloth at affordable prices for the poorer sections of the population shall be augmented".

Now see the steps that are suggested. The first step is free permission to close sick mills and the Government declaration that it will neither take over nor nationalise any sick mill. The policy declaration says, "However where a unit has no expectation of becoming viable in a reasonable period to time, there may be no alternative but to allow the unit to close provided the interests of the workers are protected. Take over by the Government or nationalisation of such sick units does not provide solution to the problem of sickness and the Government would not, as a rule, intervene in such cases."

Who will decide whether a sick mill is viable or not? The Government, banks and the employers. So the excuse that a sick mill is not viable is bound to be advanced in every case where the employers feel that high profits are not available. In fact, the distinction between viable and non-viable mills made in the state-

ment is only made to cover the truth that the Government intends to close down a large number of sick mills in the near future, especially those now run by the National Textile Corporation. The National Textile Commissioner has already declared that 22 mills run by the Corporation are making heavy losses. We will soon see that those declared nonviable mills will be closed with others to follow.

That the Government does not wish to make any serious distinction between viable and non-viable mills is seen from the fact that the textile declaration allows even healthy mills to cut down production or close sections of the mill according to the wish of the employer. To quote the declaration, "Capacity for expansion by existing units and capacity creation by new units will be permitted... As a corollary, units will also be allowed to contract capacities, including closure of a unit or part, thereof, whenever necessary or justified, provided the interests of the workers are fully protected. This approach would increase the degree of competition among units in the industry and create an environment conducive to reduction in cost and in improvement in quality."

So full freedom to run or close the mills is given to the employers and it is an important part of the new policy. The employers have been chanfing at earlier restraints and now they have got the freedom, the incentive to produce.

To say that this is subject to the protection of workers' rights is to indulge in open cheating. The workers basic interest is his job, he has a right to work. It is hyprocritical to talk of protecting his rights when you empower the employer to deprive him of his livelihood. Palliatives of compensation and offers of rehabilitation are just devices to make the public feel that the burdens of the economy are not thrown on the workers.

These measures are in true consonance with the retrograde economic policies announced in this year's budget. The new policy has openly declared its preferenc for the private sector and promised it increased freedom from Government restrictions on their exploitative practices are being removed. The Government now finally disowns all responsibilities for ensuring that the textile industry is not onesidedly run in the interests of the capitalists. The private capitalists are now given freedom to dispose of the industry's productive capacities without regard to the people's interests. The Government is shedding its image of a welfare Government inter-

vening in industries on behalf of the workers and the people.

This freedom to dispose of the labour power according to the profit needs of the employees is not the only attack on the workers' job. A much bigger attack is contemplated through introduction of modernisation measures. No one is prepared to tell the workers how many jobs will be massacred through this new offensive. The new textile policy undertakes to finance this massacre of jobs by providing soft loans to the employers. The policy makers regret that the employers have not undertaken modernisation offensive earlier. They say, "Despite encouragement and incentives by the Government the industry has modernised to only to a limited extent. Government policies would aim to accelerate the pace of modernisation in the industry."

How will they do it? "For the purpose of modernisation, adequate funds will continue to be provided under the soft loan scheme of the IDBI. In order to enable the industry to generate internal resources for modernisation the textile modernisation fund will be created."

The Government also promises to help import of foreign modernised machinery at concessional prices, at prices at or near the international prices. "Liberal imports of such textile machinery which is not manufactured indegenously shall be permitted at or near international prices." This is bound to affect the indegenous producers. When there is prospect of buying at international prices better machinery from abroad who will care for Indian product? There is every possibility of the workers in the machinery manufacturing industry loosing their jobs and the industry facing a serious crisis.

Will this modernisation achieve the declared objective of production of cloth of acceptable quality at reasonable prices to meet the clothing requirement of a growing population? Far from it. It will produce cloth a prohibitive prices beyond the reach of the people. To quote from a well-informed article from "Commerce", How do mills produce low priced cloth with operation costs escalating so rapidly?

"As opposed to industry's expectations no radical improvement in technology can substantially help the industry as a whole since such expensive equipments pay for themselves only if they are used to produce fabrics which are highly expensive and confine to minor elitist market—the narrow segment once again. Research

findings have exposed the fallacies in the conventional argument that modernisation will enable production of cheaper cloth; instead they point to one singular conclusion—modernisation will not be cost effective at the entire industry level. For instance detailed techno-economic viability analyses for different types of high machine productivity and low labour complement through automation have shown that they do not become viable economically under Indian conditions until the fabric price is Rs. 12 per metre (exmill). Secondly, modernisation will be highly labour displacing; were the textile industry, the largest employer among Indian manufacturing sectors, to displace labour, there are bound to be damaging repercussions in the consumer market itself. The industry will only pull the carpet from under its feet."

Rs. 12 per metre of cloth; this is what modernisation offers to the Indian peasant, to the Indian people. This is how cloth within the reach of the people will be produced by sacrificing the jobs of thousands of workers. The ruling cloth prices in India are already beyond the reach of the people and they are reducing cloth consumption. A study of the Textile Committee of the Ministry of Commerce showed that in 1978 when the average value per metre of cotton textiles was Rs. 5.56, the per capita off take of cotton textiles was 11.60 metres; while in 1981 when the average value per metre went upto Rs. 8.22, the per capita off take fell to 9.40 metres.

Modernisation will not be profitable without high priced cloth and the latter cannot be produced without man-made fibres. So cotton must growingly be replaced by artificial fibres. Though the policy statement pays lip homage to the production of the cotton-grower's interests he will be on the losing side like the jute grower. The cotton grower who has learnt to protect hims in recent years by organising his strength has become an obstacle to the profiteering by mills at his expense. Now the mill owners will be in a position to beat him down by using the clout of aritificial fibre.

The Government is championing the cause of man made fibres with great zeal. The textile policy statement says, "full fibre flexibility as between cotton and man made fibre and yarn would be provided to the textile industry. Greater fibre flexibility in the use of wool shall be provided in a phased manner to units licensed for cotton and man made textiles. Woolen units shall be given full fibre flexibility.

The policy promises increased domestic production of fibres,

creation of new capacity for production of synthetic yarn and fibre and reduction of fiscal levies of firbres and yarns. These are measures to help rapid replacement of cotton by fibre while talking about the interest of cotton growers.

The initiators of the new textiles policy are not satisfied with the massive attack on the employment of mill workers or with attacking the cotton grower's interests. They are bent on running power loom industry and depriving tens of thousands of powerloom workers of their jobs. All this is to remove a competitor of big industry, of the big mill bosses from the market.

The Government of India all these years used to declare that it stood for defending the interests of small and medium industries while promoting the development of large industries. In the textile industry it attempted to do this by reserving certain types of production for handlooms and protecting them from them the competition of big industry, it gave special fiscal concession to the powerloom sector. And the powerloom sector made a remarkable advance in the last few years. In 1983 out at total cloth production of 1,534 million metres the powerloom sector produced 8,528 million metres. Mill production has remained stagnant since 1951 while the powerloom production increased eight times. It is obvious that big industry considers powerlooms to be a competitor and seeks to strike at it. The Government instead of being pleased that its policy has promoted the advance of small industry seems to regret it and is prepared to do what the textile magnates wants it to do. It has therefore decided it remove the fiscal concessions hiterto given to the powerloom industry to reduce its competitive capacity. It clothes its attacks in the following words: "For the purpose of policy powerlooms in the organised mill sector, and in the unorganised powerloom sector shall as far possible, be treated at par and allowed to complete on the basis of their inherent strength and capabilities." It means fiscal concessions will be withdrawn and the small powerloom owners will be asked to compete on equal terms with big industry. What chance will be there of its survival? And soon the powerloom owners will be competing with the modernised looms of mills on 'equal' terms. If the policymakers really felt that there was some imbalance they could have remedied it by raising the wage of the powerloom workers which is much below the mill level. But this of course they could never think of.

The textile policy in relation to powerloom is dictated by the

need of big mill magnates.

The policy statement talks repeatedly about protecting the interests of the handloom weavers. This is another empty talk. Large cannot be disposed of unless per capita consumption increases. The policy statement suggests no remedy to overcome the present crisis in the handlooms are charged with the responsibility of producing controlled cloth. It is known that controlled cloth cannot give and is not supposed to give much profit to the producer. Besides it is not so popular in the market as it does not cater to the taste of our people. Till now the resposibility for producing this type of cloth was shared between NTC mills and the handlooms. Now the handlooms alone are asked to shoulder it. And this is presented as a great boon to the handloom industry.

The Congress Government had already released big industries of the responsibility of producing cheap cloth. It was transferred to NTC mills so that the losses should be borne by the public exchequer. Now again big mills are asked to produce highly profitable cloth while the handlooms are asked to bear the burden of non-popular, less profitable variety.

After every few lines of the statement the policy makers aver that they are keen on protecting the interests of the workers. What is their idea of protection? It is seen from the following: "It is of utmost importance that the interests of the workers who might be displaced by permanent closure of units are safeguard. For this purpose schemes shall be formulate to provide relief for an interim period in addition to the statutory benefits. A rehabilitation found for workers of the textile industry would be created to provide relief to such workers for a limited period." Even the promise of alternative employment is not offered. Ever time of workers is told that the relief favour is only for a limited period or interim period. This is supposed to be an additional favour over above the statutory benefits. Can any worker unless he is insane believe in these promises of relief after loss of job. There are tens of thousands of workers in Bombay who are wondering in the streets after the failure of the last strike. They knock at the mill door but the employers refuse to release their provident fund, gratuity and other benefits and the Congress(I) Government colludes with the latter in the most shameless manner. In India when you lose your job you not only do not get any additonal benefit you lose whatever you have legitimately earned like provident fund arrears and

wages etc. These promises of interim relief, rehabilitation are made to fool public opinion.

It has been pointed out that the main aim of the new textile policy is to gear the industry to exports and earn foreign exchange.

The necessity of earning foreign exchange for a country like ours is obvious. But the price that it demanded namely loss of tens of thousands of jobs, danger to cotton-growers' interests and small textile industry is totally disproportionate to the benefit that is supposed to accrue or the need that will be met. This high price for earning foreign exchange exposes the failure of the economic policies hitherto pursued, policies which have failed to end our weakness and one-sided reliance on the economy of the West. To be able to pay our debt obligations to these countries we have to earn the required foreign exchange. We are thus compelled to seek their market.

Export to Western countries have become difficult because in recent years they have been purchasing less and less cloth from us. Our export would have collapsed completely but for the increased demand from the USSR and the Socialist countries. But these latter exports do not give us the foreign exchange needed for our dealings with the West.

Exports to the West countries are besides being handicapped by protectionist measures taken under the stress of the economic crisis. These countries expect us to buy their advanced machinery as quid proquo for our cloth exports. Hence the great stress on modernisation and import of foreign textile machinery. The textile workers and people are victims of a bankrupt economic policy which failed to free us from the embrace of Western economy.

It is extremely doubtful whether the desired objective of export promotion and foreign exchange earning can be achieved by us. India's rivals are South Korea, Taiwan and others whose Governments are at the beck and call of US imperialism. Besides it has been calculated that given Indian conditions our cost of production may be twice as high as that of international cost. It seems we may lose both ways—both the interests of our people and earning of foreign exchange.

It is clear that the new textile policy with its emphasis on modernisation has nothing to do with the interests of the people. It is not necessary for producing cheap and plentiful cloth within reach of our people. Indian people are not suffering from insufficient pro-

duction of cloth but insufficient purchasing power. Modernisation will be accompanied by scrapping of lot of existing production capacity so that big industry owners earn enough profits at least at home.

The textile crisis, the growing number of sick mills, the closures all have shown the utter bankruptcy of private ownership and management. The only way our is the total nationalisation of the industry and its restructuring and reorganisation in the interests of the people. If people's interests demand of scrapping of certain concerns, if they necessitate modernisation of some to protect their interests, that can well be done under public management without much displacement of labour or dislocation of lives of tens of thousands. They nationalised textile industry can certainly plan to earn foreign exchange while protecting people's interests. But the Government refuse to accept this remedy and choses to hand over this vital industry to a corrupt, profiteering ownership.

The textile workers and their unions must meet this big offensive against the jobs of their workers and livelihood of thousands. They must be prepared to meet the new offensive of closures and lockouts and later on the offensive of modernisation. Thousands have already undergone suffering due to prolonged lockouts. But the strength of the entire working class was not brought into action to check and defeat this attack. Now at least at unions irrespective of their central affiliation must join hands, take common counsel and prepare a progamme of action to defeat this new textile policy which is not only against the interests of the people. In this common fight they must draw in the handloom and the powerloom workers who are also being penalised under the new policy. Let the CITU unions take a lead in organising and mobilising working class resistance to save the jobs of tens of thousands and ensure production of proper quality cloths for our people.

June 21, 1985

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Fight the Computer Offensive

The employees and the workers are now face to face with a cruel offensive of computerisation, automation and modernisation. The computer offensive has been announced in the recent budget and is virtually declared to be the official policy of the Government. The fact that the budget reduced or abolished the excise on computers and levied a new tax on pan masala is enough to give an insight into the mind of its framers. The computer offensive is a part of the new policy which opens the country to the full blast of the capitalist law of the market which gives full freedom to the big capitalists to run the economy as they like, to earn the profits they want without much hindrance from the Government. It arms them with the power to hire and fire as they like and play with the living conditions and lives of lakhs of workers. It denigrates the public sector and is bend on reducing its role in the country. The Government is being advised by its advisers to disband all public sector units incurring losses and privatise or close them. But the capitalist path of economy is so bankrupt that it cannot see any immediate relief unless it gets the succour of foreign multinationals. India's creditors, the World Bank the IMF have been demanding that she should open her door to the multinationals. The Government has agreed to do so. The most profitable market for these companies is in electronics, computerisation, modernisation of the communication system using electronic technology etc. That these companies will have a rich harvest is clear from the fact that out of a contem-

plated expenditure of Rs. 10,000 crores in the next five years for computerisation of communications, hardly 10 per cent will come from indigenous sources.

The computer offensive is not only against the workers and employees concerned. It is against our national economy, our entire people, who will be looted through these imports and whose economic independence would be compromised if these companies get a firm foot hold in the economy. It originals from the bankruptcy of the Government to manage the economy, its desire to pander to the profit lust of the capitalists and its desire to reduce its man-power expenditure on Government departments.

The Government wants all financial institutions and production concern to produce more and more surplus by economising on labour. It wants the capitalists to produce goods for exports at competitive prices which can again be done by using labour displacing processes. The capitalist path has landed the economy into an impassable crisis and the workers and employees are asked to pay for it.

Computerisation, automation etc are presented as the great triumphs of human mind, the triumph of our science which ensures human advance and opens new vista of progress before mankind. Those who oppose the introduction of these new achivements are dubbed as anti-progress, anti-social and anti-industrial advance. Some well-meaning innocence innocent of the class reality that dominates our society, fall into this trap and are unable to answer the charge. Overwhelmed by some immediate difficulties, some so-called pragmatists and men of 'practical' wisdom support the reasoning and walk into the treacherous trap of the employers, the monopolists and Congress rulers.

There is no doubt that computerisation, automation, the great strides in electronics, the big advance in space science, all underline a gigantic advance of human mind and intelligence. Properly used and guided they hold the prospect of releasing man from back-breaking labour over a greater part of the day to meet his material needs and release him for the development of his cultural life and personality, his individuality which today is crushed under the burden of daily overwork. These achievements hold out the prospect of eliminating the division between manual and intellectual labour which today is the cause of so much inequality.

What is meant by properly guided? It means if these achieve-

ments are placed at the service of the common people, the working class, employees, the peasantry, and are not used as instruments of exploiting them mercilessly. This can happen only if the means of production are socialised, they are under the control of the toilers, private production is abolished and political power is concentrated in the hands of the toiling people led by the working class. That is why in Socialist countries computerisation and automation are welcome, they lead to reduction of hours of work and a higher standard of living. They do not create any unemployment problem. Even if these basic changes are not achieved computerisation etc can be directed in the channel of social advance if it is made to subserve the interests of the common people under a drastically changed democratic outlook and economic policies.

When computerisation is proposed in a country like India or any other capitalist country the question that should be raised is in whose interest it is being introduced—in the interest of the common people or in the interest of the capitalists? And the answer is quite clear. Computerisation, automation, modernisation are in Indian conditions instruments of gathering more profits for the capitalists and financiers and imposing worsening conditions on the workers and employees.

Marx had pointed out that capital exploits science and the theoretical progress of mankind. Capital does not create science but exploits it, adapting it to the needs of the production process.

Speaking at the anniversary of the Peoples Paper (April 18, 1856) Marx said, "There is one great fact, characteristic of our 19th century, a fact which no party dares deny. On the one hand there have started into life industrial and scientific forces which no epoch in the former human history had ever suspected; on the other hand there exist symptoms of decay far surpassing the horrors recorded of the latter times of the Roman empire. In our days everything seems preganant with its contrary. Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it. The new-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange weired spell are turned into sources of want. The victories of art seem bought by loss of character. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our inventions and progress seem to result in

endowing material source with intellectual life and stultifying human life into a material force. This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand and modern misery and dissolution on the hand and modern misery and dissolution on the other hand, the antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch, is a fact, palpable and overwhelming and not to be conroverted." (Vol 14, Collected Works).

Marx pointed out that the use of achievement of science by the capitalist class was an instrument of class struggle and it sowed all round misery. The working class and the employees cannot forget this truth.

What are the concrete results of computerisation and automation in advance capitalist countries? According to one foreign journal, "trade union leaders are already aware that the time is not far distant when the workers displaced by automation will number tens of millions and these tens of millions will be unable to find employment in other industries. For instance, the rapidly growing electronic computer, space missiles, pharmaceuticals and other industries are practically unable to take up reduandant labour. Since these high technology industry and science are capital intensive, the growth of production in them is not accompanied by a large growth of employment." In these countries electronics and automation are being rapidly introduced in trade and transport, communications administrative management, finances, the health services and education. In Western Europe 22 per cent of bank cashiers were replaced by machines by 1979.

What is the total result of this general assault on this new technological revolution? The problem of unemployment has become intractable. There are more than 30 million people unemployed in these countries. Now they say they have recovered from crisis of the last three years but unemployment continues to increase. This despite the fact that billions are spent on destructive weapons and the armament industry is running to full capacity.

Three years back the 10th World Congress of trade unions held in Havana described the situation in these countries in the following words: "Millions of people who are deprived of the possibilities of work are driven with their families into an agonising often tragic situation. Some categories of workers are hit particularly hard especially the young, women, immigrants and workers of a certain age. Workers demand the recognition of right to work resolute

common actions against reduction in unemployment benefits, they demand the introduction of social measures, promoting the solution of the problem of unemployment, the reduction of unjustified long working week, the prolongation of the paid leave".

Situation has become worse since then. The World Bank and other economic experts are of the opinion that the present recovery may not last beyond this year. If this happens the unemployment situation will get worse.

Now why should this situation arise in countries where computerisation and automation have made a big headway if there was to be no problem of unemployment resulting from their introduction. All those who assure the employees and workers that computerisation etc. do not lead to joblessness are indulging in plain cheating.

The computer and automation processes go on continually improving, each succeeding generation performs a fantastically larger number of operations than the previous generation and is capable of displacing larger and larger number of workers than the earlier generation. That is why trade union leaders in Europe are apprehensive of tens of millions losing their jobs in the coming years.

It is with this experience in mind that we have to view the computer offensive in our country which has already deprived thousands of their jobs and which is cutting the job potentials of many servicing industries.

The offensive has already been opened in banks, LIC, telephone, railays and income tax departments. It is still in the introductory stage. In the last two years it has been slowly moving forward and its full accumulated effect is yet to be felt. And now with the Government policy openly encouraging it and with certain treacherous leaders of the employees ever ready to oblige the employers, the job killing attack will be carried out with utmost brutality. The massive character of the offensive can be seen from the fact that the number of computers are estimated to increase from 3,000 in 1984 to 1,00,000 in 1990. This accelerated rate of computerisation is going to kill the majority of jobs in the servicing industries leaving behind a trial of joblessness and destruction.

It seems some organisations of employees like AIBEA etc. have signed as agreement with the bank management under which the banking industry will be opened to the blast of 200 large computers, 2,000 mini computers and 10,000 accounting machines. At the

most modest calculation this may render some 40,000 employees surplus. Besides there will be no new recruitment for five years to come which will do away with 20,000 jobs.

Railways where computerisation is making progress consider that at least 6 lakh workers are surplus. At least this was the figure given by ex-Railway Minister Ghani Khan Chowdhury sometime back. No one can guess how many thousands will be displaced when the Metropolitical Telephone system is handed over to autonomous Corporations for complete automation.

In the meanwhile the Central Government has put a ban on new recruitment depriving some tens of thousands of young men and women of jobs. Computerisation is being extended to the construction industries which will do further havoc to the employment situation in the country. The construction industry has always been looked upon as the labour intensive has always been looked upon as the labour intensive industry absorbing large number of workers and relieving to some extent the pressure on the labour market. Now this opening also will be gradually closed. Needless to say that the extension of computerisation and automation to coal mining, steel and other public sector industries will have devastating effect on employment. The nationalised Coal Board in recent years has already retrenched 50,000 workers mostly women.

The shipping industry is no exception to this massive attack. The ships of Western countries carry reduced manning personnel; the loading and unloading operations are done by a decreasing number of workers. In India also containerisation is leading to loss of jobs. In Goa it seems, 3,000 workers lost their employment sometime back. In the main ports like Bombay and Calcutta the offensive is already in operation. It is going to multiply many times to keep pace with world developments and avoid delays for foreign ships discharging their cargoes. In the LIC a serious situation is developing with the management installing microprocessors in the branches. This may lead to an unprecedented loss of jobs.

In several concerns the management is covering the job killing offensive by making proposals for voluntary retirement. Those who decline the offer are harased in every possible way to compel them to retire. In several concerns the managements are assuring the workers that there will be no retrenchment if they accept computerisation. They conceal the fact that within a couple of years after the retirement of those due to retire the job potential will fall

by 15 to 20 per cent and young men from the families of the present incumbents will find no opening for them anywhere.

A well written article in the May-June, 1985 issue of Voice, Bulletin of Reserve Bank Employees' Association, Calcutta (the issue is devoted to automation) very precisely and correctly points out the effect of computerisation on work in the banking industry. It says, "Apart from eliminating all scope of new employment, the proposed computerisation of manual work in the banking industry will have far-reaching impact. Banking industry, in relation to division of labour consists of lower level operations manned by clerks and sub-staffs, supervision of operation manned by junior and top management personnel. It will be possible to automatically perform all these functions by the use of computers aided by electronic machines which are part and parcel of any plan of automation. Another visible impact will be disappearance of paper and pencil work since all the operations will be stored in the electronic memory of the machines and from which memory the required information for the customer or the bank could be obtained in a split of minute. With this switching over of the mannual operations under the computer system the supervising duties will be totally eliminated. This means that the head clerks, special assistants, junior and senior officers will not be required at all." Such is the wide scope of the offensive. At present in a large measure, it is concentrated against salaried employees, against clerical services, but it has also started against the industrial workers. As it gathers momentum it is bound to engulf all sections of workers—factory and office. The textile workers are already facing it with the attack of modernisation.

The employees therefore must take a strong stand and resist the contemplated attack on jobs. They have to do it not only to protect their own jobs but to ensure that their sons and daughters are not compelled to remain jobless and seek the asylum of slums.

It is good that the Bank Employees Federation of India has given a call to fight this menace and appealed to all bank employees to brace themselves for the enormous task before them.

This appeal for unity of all banking employees irrespective of organisational affiliation, shoud be responded to by all. The question however is not confined to bank employees only. P & T, Railways and other sections of employees are being attacked and the widest possible unity of bank, LIC and the other affected

sections is urgently necessary to overcome the attack.

The offensive besides cannot be met without the support of the country's trade union movement. Unfortunately a large number of employee's organisations are ploughing a lonely furrow standing apart from the common trade union movement. Most of them are not connected with any Central Trade Union Organisations, though they occasionally participate in the activities of the National Campaign Committee. This aloofness from the organised trade union movement will ruin us in the present conditions. They must appeal for the support from all trade union organisations and make every effort to secure it.

The CITU all central organisations must lend all possible help to the employees against their struggle against computerisation. The CITU considers the computerisation offensive is nothing but an instrument of passing the burden of the crisis to the shoulders of the employees. The CITU is determined to fight these attacks. A trade union organisation is not worth anything if it shirks the fight when the jobs of tens of thousands are at stake.

CITU calls upon all trade unions to throw their full weight in the struggle. The Government and the employers must be compelled to retrace their steps and hold consultations with the trade union movement to discuss the ills of the economy and the way out. The CITU is not prepared to surrender the workers as sacrifical goats to satisfy the profit appetite of the capitalists and help the Government in its anti-people, anti-national policy. The policy of computerisation is not only anti-employees and anti-working class it is also against the interest of the nation and the people.

What are the ills of our economy? Are we suffering from shortage of labour? On the other hand, the central problems for a developing country like ours is how to utilise the huge manpower at our disposal. Already a huge productive force lies unused through the inability of the Government to use it. There are more than two and half crores of unemployed in the cities. There are more than 4 crores of unemployed in the villages. Closures and lockouts have added to this number. To steady the economy these people have to be provided with jobs. To steady the economy the small concern which is getting ruined has to be protected. But the Government policy moves in the opposite direction because it is protecting the intrests of the big capitalists Instead of providing more jobs it is eliminating them by thousands. Its textile policy is

intended to throw thousands out of jobs as well as ruin the small handloom powerloom producers.

National interests, the interest of our economy cannot be protected by aggravating unemployment and mass misery and in the bargain inviting the multinationals to lord over us. There is no progress possible without proper attention to the problem of unemployment, to the non-use of the productive capacity of our labour resources. The right to work must be made a fundamental right under our Constitution so that all planning and all planned efforts, all policies of national advance centre round it. Backed by the right to work, a planning committee, representative of the interests of the people can decide where and how to introduce modern process in the interest of the nation. This will ensure that they are introduced where they are not introduced for private gains; this will further ensure that they do not cause unnecessary disturbance in production are available to the people.

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Trade Union Movement In Public Sector

Socialism which alone offers freedom from capitalist exploitation demands socialisation of all means of production, distribution and exchange, with political power firmly in the hands of the people led by the working class. Without public ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange under the state of the working class socialism cannot be transformed into a reality.

In the absence of political power in the hands of the working class what the working class faces is ownership of means of production by the capitalist state, state ownership under capitalism or what is called the Public Sector.

Regarding this Public Sector under capitalist state or capitalist state ownership Engels observed in Socialism, Scientific and Utopian as follows: "But the transformation either into joint stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalist nature of the productive forces... The modern state, no matter what form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalist, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become national capitalist, the more does it actually become national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit, the workers remain wage workers—proletarian. The capitalist relation is not done away with. *It is rather brought to a head. But brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict but concealed within it are the technical*

conditions that form the elements of the solution." (Emphasis added)

Engels here while asserting that state sector under capitalism does not cease to be capitalist, at the same time asserts that state ownership brings the capitalist relationship to a head, a crisis, and conceals the technical conditions that formed the elements of sloution. The state ownership or nationalisation increasingly proves that private ownership and appropriation of profits by individuals are not necessary to conduct the affairs of society. That is why all progressive forces and the working class support Public Sector, its extension, nationalisation of industries and press the capitalist state to move in this direction.

This besides enables conscious working class movement to intervene in the economy through the Parliament and exercise Parliamentary control over the public sector in the economy. Public opinion is able to influence to some extent the functioning of the public sector and of the economy.

In a Third World country like India which did not have key and heavy industries when it achieved independence the Public Sector had to play an important role in keeping and building the independence of the economy. Countries like India living long under colonial domination had their industrial development thwarted by the imperialist rulers who saw to it that they did not develop basic and heavy industries and remained largely suppliers of raw materials to the metropolitan countries. It became necessary for these countries. It became necessary for these industries to avoid complete dependence on the imperialists for their industrial development. But the indigenous capitalists did not have sufficient resources to develop these industries and the job had to be undertaken by the new state.

The programme of the CPI(M) gives the correct estimate of the role of the Public Sector in India. It says: "In the conditions prevailing in India, such heavy machine building and other vital industries as have been built in the state sector would not have otherwise come to fruition, for private capital was not in a position to find the required resources for the huge industrial projects. The building of these undertakings in the state sector has, therefore, helped to overcome, to a certain extent, the economic backwardnesss and the abject dependence on the imperialist monopolists, and in laying the technical base for industrialisation.

"The state sector or the Public Sector as it is otherwise called,

can play a progressive role in an underdeveloped economy, if it is promoted along anti-imperialist, anti-monopolist, democratic lines. It reduces economic dependence, created and strengthens the capital base for industrialisation. It could be an instrument of weakening and eliminating the hold of foreign capital and also for curbing and restricting the growth of Indian monopolies. But the anti-people policies pursued by the Government under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie.... and their practical results belie all such hopes."

The Public Sector in India no doubt is an instrument of capitalist development; at the same time it acts to a certain extent as an obstacle to imperialist penetration and guards the independence of the economy. Besides, in a country like India, without a powerful public sector extending over key industries there is no chance for any kind of national planning, for curbing the activities of the private sector and the manipulation of the economy.

That is why the trade union movement of our country, the working class and all progressive forces have supported the public sector and demanded its extension notwithstanding its gross mismanagement by the bureaucracy. By placing the public sector at the service of the private capital, by its bureaucratic and corrupt management and by incurring heavy losses in running in the Government has done its best to discredit public ownership. And now the same Government seeks to disown the public sector because of losses incurred by bad management. The private capitalists loose no opportunity to denigrate the public sector and hope that their propaganda will soon result in privatising public sector concerns and place at their disposal huge productive capacities built through the blood and toil of the people.

But the working class, and the trade union movement with the exception perhaps of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, are opposed to this. The hundreds of closures and thousands of sick units reveal to them both the inefficiency and incapacity of private capital and management and its corruption and selfishness. The tens of thousands who are the victims of private management and ownership are compelled to turn to the public sector, to the state, to save the situation. The demand for immediate nationalisation of the jute and cotton textile industries now moves lakhs of workers into action. The experience of the trade union movement calls for more and more nationalisation of industries notwithstanding the class

character of the present state, it demands a growing share for the people and the elected representatives to influence and control the running of industry and the economy.

The New Economic Policy of the Rajiv Government however seeks to demolish the importance of the public sector and ensure its growing decline. The Arjun Sengupta Committee's report is directed towards releasing public sector concerns from as much Government control as possible, to restrict parliamentary conrol over the policy and performance of such concerns and to allow as much freedom as possible to the management of these concerns in the day to day functioning. In short, it amounts to a planned disbandment of the public sector.

For this purpose the report recommends that a large section of the public sector described as non-core should be freed from the parliamentary supervision. Direct Government control and responsibility to the Parliament are recommended only in the core sector. The core sector includes only the following : coal and ignite, crude oil, petroleum and natural gas, power, primary steel production, primary production of aluminium, copper, lead, nickel and zinc, fertilizer, primary products of petro-chemical intermediates.

This tears out of the core sector all other enterprises like those producing heavy machineries or heavy electrical project of Bhopal, etc. Under the scheme the Public Sector plants will be producing only raw materials and intermediaries required for the private sector or supplying its energy requirement.

This disbandment of the public sector built under earlier plans is being undertaken at the instance of the World Bank which always considered this sector as an obstruction to the penetration of Western capital and its asaults of Indian economy. A substantial part of strategic industries in the Public Sector was built with the aid of the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. There would have been so steel plant in the public sector for a long time had the USSR not agreed to build the Bhillai Steel plant. The heavy engineering plant at Ranchi and other plants have helped to prevent India's helpless dependence on the West for building an independent industry.

Sore over this the World Bank which represents the interests of the finance capital of the imperialist countries has been complaining and murmuring against the public sector in India, taking advantage of the inefficiency of the bureaucratic management.

The latest report of the Bank on India blames the large and increasing role of the public sector for the sad performance of Indian industry. It calls for less Government control of the economy without directly calling for the disbandment of the public sector. It expresses itself against regulation that put restrictions on licensing given to the country's largest companies, that is the monopolists and those with foreign equity, as well as regulations that dictate location, obligatory exports and machinery-technology purchases. This is an open demand to end all planning and give freedom to Indian monopolists and foreign capital to manipulate the economy.

The report concludes, "The role of the bureaucracy (read the Government) should shift more to support growth and development rather than control it." Delicencing., decontrol and disbandment of the public sector such is the demand of the World Bank. And Rajiv Gandhi's economic policy is also set in this direction.

The denigration and disbandment of the public sector is bound to lead to a freer field for the multinationals and increase our dependence on the West. The Public Sector which hitherto stood as an obstruction to their rapid penetration is being dismantled. This is a grave anti-national aspect of this new policy. The free hand being given to private capital and multinationals to import new technology will besides do havoc with workers' job rendering tens of thousands jobless.

Considering the anti-national character of the policy of dismantling the public sector the CITU and the entire trade union movement must speak against it and rouse the working class and the people to the dangers following from it. The workers must be told that at a time when lockouts and closures demand greater Government is leaving the workers to the mercy of the private capitalists. The entire trade union movement must combine to compel the Government to withdraw from this policy of surrender to the World Bank pressure.

This is also the time for the trade union movement to review whether all these years it has done justice to its role in regard to the public sector, whether it has outlined its policies by taking into consideration the role the public sector has to play in a country like India. It may be said without contradiction that by and large the trade union movement of our country has missed the importance of a well-managed public sector in guarding the independence of

our economy and restricting the operations of the private sector. The outlook of economism dominating the trade union movement blinded it to the role of the public sector in our economy. The workers made hardly any distinction between a public sector undertaking and a private venture and concentrated on their immediate demands. They left its functioning, the fulfilment of its role in relation to the defence of national economy to the management and the bureaucracy. The corruption, inefficiency in managing the public sector was no concern of the workers. This was a non-political attitude to an important question affecting our national well-being. The trade unions and the workers were obivious of the fact that the huge investments in the public sector came from the earnings of our people, the workers, the peasants, the middle-class who all had to bear the heavy burden of taxation and high prices following the huge deficit budgets of the Central Government.

It was however inevitable that the workers should concentrated more attention on the defence of their immediate interests. The public sector management with its capitalist outlook did everything to alienate the workers from taking interest in the efficient functioning of the plant and treated the workers no better than the private owners Standing Orders of these concerns are borrowed from prison rules of the country framed by the British. They are orders meant for bonded labourers. For every facility, for every improvement in conditions, the workers and their unions had to wage several fights. The authorities besides behave exactly like the private owners in their dealings with the unions who have mass followings but do not agree to do their biddings. The favours shown to INTUC really go against the rights of the workers to have the union of their choice. The CITU believes that it is necessary to have smooth industrial relations in the public sector. The objective can be attained by deciding on the recognition of the union through secret ballot. It can further ensured by referring every agreement which the union wishes to sign to the referendum of the workers. But you cannot expect this much democracy under the Cong(I) rule. The Constitution gives the right of vote to the people to decide who should govern the country; but those who are elected with popular vote refuse to give the same right to the workers to chose their union.

But all this does not justify the policy that the trade unions have been adopting hitherto. Now because of their indifference to

the functioning of the public sector, and because of the discredit it has brought on public management large sections of people themselves feel that perhas private management large sections of people themselves feel that perhaps private management will be better than the state sector. Taking advantage of this the Government has veered round to the policy which threatens to throw the entire working class at the mercy of the capitalists and throw the economy to the danger of growing dependence. The workers must ward off this danger and by demanding growing role for the public sector in our economy should announce to the people are prepared to fulfil their responsibilities in the economical and efficient functioning of the public sector. They and their unions should declare that they are prepared to fulfil all agreed norms of production, agreed between their unions and the management. Besides, they should demand that for removal of corruption, of bureaucratic mamagement and efficient functioning of the public sector they should have equal status along with the management to deal with the problems of production, of finance, of raw materials and prices. The trade union movement should assure the entire people that given equal status in management the workers can and will overcome the present helpless position of the public sector which is often unable to utilise even 40 per cent of its capacity,. Only by directly intervening in the problems of production by demanding equal participation in management and by completely abandoning its former indifference to the day-to-day functioning of the public sector plants, will the workers be able to fulfil their responsibilities and frustrate official plans to disband the public sector under the excuse of its inefficiency.

This however is not an easy task. Because the authorities are determined to pursue their anti-labour policy. The decision to appoint Wage Boards for settling wage issues, etc, in the public sector constitutes an attack on bilateral negotiations, collective bargaining. It is a time killing device intended to weaken the authority and influence of the trade union organisation. The reenactment of ESMA shows that the right to strike and direct action will be under attack. Besides there are indications that every attempt will be made to deny wage rise, and Wage Boards will be utilised to link wages with increase in productivity. In the coming year the workers and their living standards and for every small demands to increase amenities due to them. This demands greater

unity and solidarity in their ranks. The task of defeating the Government policy regarding the public sector has to be carried out in these conditions. The trade unions and the workers should show sufficient maturity so that while defending their interests, they are also able to protect the public sector from being dismantled.

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New Economic Strategy and Policy

In the name of importing advanced technology, promoting quick industrial development, a new economic policy has been announced whose basic postulates are removal of controls, freedom for the private sector, denigration and growing disbandment of the public sector and opening the Indian market to the multinationals.

This is clear from the report of the Arjun Sengupta Committee. Its recommendations are directed towards releasing public sector concerns from as much government control as possible, restricting parliamentary supervision over the policies and performance of the concerns and allowing as much freedom as possible to the management in the day-to-day functioning. In short it amounts to a gradual disbandment of the public sector.

For this purpose the Committee proposes to remove a large section of the public sector from parlimentary supervision by describing it as non-core sector. Direct government control and responsibility to Parliament are recommended only in the core sector. For the rest the controls obtaining at present are to be replaced by such devices as the Holding Company, appointment of government nominees on the Board of Directors—all of which are aimed at giving an autonomous status to the concerns and reduce the role of the government representatives to mere tendering of advice.

The Committee writes, "Public enterprises in India operate in a large number of sector; while some are in the core sector, others

are not. In our opinion, a careful dovetailing of all the plans of public enterprises and the National Plan is required only in a few core sectors which are critical for a planned development of the country."

Having laid the basis for narrowing government control on public sector concerns, the Committee arbitrarily defines the core sector. It says, "We would suggest that for the purpose of defininging Government-Public Enterprises relations the following sectors may be considered as core sectors: Coal and lignite; crude oil, petroleum and natural gas; primary steel production, primary production of aluminium, copper, lead, zinc and nickel; fertilizers; primary production of petrochemical intermediates."

This tears out of the core sector all other enterprises like those producing heavy machineries like HEC at Ranchi, the Heavy Electrical Project of Bhopal and concerns like IDPL. All these are designated as non-core sectors requiring freedom from government control. The Committee recommends that the plans of the public enterprises in the core sectors "will have to be integrated into the National Plan as is the case at present. However, this would not preclude modifications in the present procedures to allow for a greater measure of autonomy." Even the core sector must be freed to some extent from public control.

As for the non-core sector the Committee says, "As for public enterprises in the non-core sector, we would recommend that their plans be integrated into the National Plan only in an indicative sense and such units would continue to be governed by the indicative and regulatory framework of planning as applicable for all similar private sector units."

The first step towards treating public sector units as private sector enterprises is suggested here. The Planning Commission is asked it treat them as any private unit and be satisfied with the discipline exercised by the general regulatory framework.

Having thus freed the non-core public sector from the controls of the Planning Commission the Committee recommends freedom for the entire public sector from ministerial or governmental control. There is a specious argument about invigorating the efficiency and performance of the enterprises by freeing the management from ministerial control in the day-to-day functioning of the enterprises. "Government's responsibility is to ensure that public money invested in these enterprises earns an appropriate rate of return

and that the functioning of these enterprises is consistent with the planned objectives including those related to employment, fair pricing, regional dispersal of the industries , and efficient use of scarce resources. Once the goals have been mutually agreed to, the enterprises should be allowed to operate without further intervention by the government in day-to-day functioning."

Only a fool or a knave can imagine that planned objectives can be fulfilled by the men on the spot without constant supervision of the public and Parliament. The plea is not an honest plea for strengthening the public sector but for taking yet another step towards its privatisation.

Following this reasoning the Committee suggests an organisational structure which keeps "the operations of an enterprise at an arm's length from the Government". Instead of ministerial control it suggests a Holding Company. The Government is to deal with the Holding Company at the level of the Board of the Holding Company which is responsible for the day-to-day operations of a number of subsidiary companies.

To ensure autonomy for these enterprises the Committee blandly suggests that Parliament should restrain from exercising its authority. "Parliament's authority in such matters in supreme, but it may be necessary to evolve a convention by which Members of Parliament accept some selfimposed restraint on the nature of questions they ask." So management efficiency demands protection from questions in Parliament by elected representatives of the people. Such is the plan for the disbandment of the public sector which has an important role to play in protecting our economy from dependence on the West. One safeguard of the economy is being thrown out to meet the complusions of the capitalist path, the crisis of the mixed breed system. It will distrort the progress of the economy and facilitate the entry of multinationals, the sworn enemy of all liberty and freedom.

The newly announced policy of computerisation, of import of advanced technology, of imports liberalisation, is bound to lead to influx of multinationals and their growing pentration into our economy. The computer market and its growing requirements will lead the country into the net of the multinationals which the country has avoided so far to a great extent.

The massive victory of the Congress(I) at the polls could not lead to a grip over the economy. The ravages done by the capitalist

path, the utter inefficiency of production under it and the industrial stagnation have all brought the country to a situation in which continuation along the capitalist path demands surrender of many bastions against the penetration of foreign capital. The claims of an independent self-sufficient economy under which the capitalist path masks its selfish and class character will be now more and more assailed.

Desperately in need of the foreign Western market, the Government is opening the country to computerisation and flow of advanced technology which will sacrifice the jobs of lakhs of people. The compulsion of the capitalist path demand that the working class and employees of India should be turned into beggars to achieve the objective of increased exports and five per cent grwoth.

To achieve these aims the Sengupta Committee recommends linking of workers' wages with productivity and replacement of bilateral negotiations by the discredited wage boards.

The new economic policy of the Rajiv Government and the Arjun Sengupta Committee Report constitute a warning to the people that the inddependence of our country's economy is being sacrificed to protect the interests of the Capitalist path, of the private capitalists. This must sooner or later, affect the non-aligned foreign policy of our country which hitherto kept it out of the orbit of imperialism. You cannot allow the multinationals to rampage over a country's economy and at the same time profess and protect an independent foreign policy. This is the experience of all newly independent countries.

And finally if the new policy is allowed to go unchecked, it will undermine the freedom and independence of our country. It is the task of the working class to fight this policy and protect our people and our country against its dangerous consequences.

8th November, 1985.

This is foreward to the CITU publication "Sinister Conspiracy against Public Sector" based on Arjun Sengupta Committee Report.

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Sixty Eighth Anniversary of The November Revolution

The 7th November this year will be celebrated in the midst of truncated recovery of the capitalist world and the rapid all round advance and social progress in the Socialist world. The so-called recovery has not rescued the capitalist countries from the plague of unemployment for millions and mass misery, nor from the astronomical military expenditure for destructive war purposes.

On the 68th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution which gave a telling blow to the world capitalist system, the CITU sends its warm greetings to the working class, the trade unions, and the AUCCTU and the people of the USSR. While engaged in scoring new successes for Socialism, the working class, the people of the Soviet Union and the Soviet State are engaged in relentlessly fighting the U.S. plans of nuclear war and protecting world peace. The CITU wishes them success in this great endeavour and calls upon all its State Committees and unions to observe 7th November as a day to protect peace, express solidarity with the Soviet people and the Socialist camp and oppose U.S. plan for a war. The CITU wishes further success to the Soviet people in their planned efforts to raise the living standard of the people and ensure all-round increase in all aspects affecting human life.

War clouds continue to hang over the world. But there is some difference compared with the situation a year back. The imperialists though determined to pursue the drive towards war are being thrown on the defensive. The peace proposals of the Soviet Union,

further growth of peace movements, the rising concern in all continents over the danger and nearness of war all have forced the U.S. imperialist to adopt new manoeuvres.

The balance sheet of last years' struggle for peace is in favour of people and the advantage must be utilised for further advance.

The deployment of Pershing and Cruise missiles in Europe cause serious concern to the people and they are now opposing further commitment of their governments to U.S. plans. France refuses to join the U.S. in its Star Wars Projects. West Germany which supports the USA is facing the opposition of its own people, Australia and New Zealand have refused participation in the Project and New Zealand refugees to allow U.S. ships with nuclear arms into its ports.

The world peace forces have been immensely strengthened by the peace proposals of the Soviet Union. This proved to the people that the Socialist States and the Soviet Union were seriously endeavouring to safeguard world peace. They exposed the U.S. imperialists who would not respond to any proposal and insisted that they should be free to pursue the Star War Project. The USSR has made proposals to scale down nuclear armaments and laid down only one condition—the Star War Project and militarisation of outer space should be abandoned in the interests of world peace.

What is the Star War Project of USA? It is a project for militarilisation of space, for carrying war into the outer space. It is a programme to get superiority in nuclear arms over the USSR for purposes of aggression, for first strike. A Bowman, President of U.S. Space and Security Study, made it clear when he said that the aim of star war plans was to hamstring that type to strategic arms, which entitled the Soviet Union to maintain parity. "We are tired of this equality business. The only way we can keep our political leverage is to regain absolute military superiority."

The same Bowman said in June 1984, "Space weaponry supposedly being developed as a defence against nuclear bomb no real effect against anything other than silo based missiles. The net effect of such a system to both sides gives an enormous advantage to one who strikes first." The USA seeks to strike first with impunity and is developing the SDR Project.

Naturally the USSR has refused to concede this superiority for aggression against itself and has declared that all negotiations for halting a nuclear race are meaningless unless the SDR project is

abandoned.

All eyes are now turned towards the November summit meeting between Comrade Gorbachev, Gen. Secretary of the CPSU, and American President, Reagan. Gorbachev and the Soviet Union have made wide ranging proposals which only hardened warmongers and misanthropes can refuse.

On October 3, 1985 during his visit to France, Gorbachev revealed that the Soviet Union had proposed to the USA that both sides should agree to complete ban on space strike weapons and 50 per cent reduction in their nuclear weapons capable of reaching each other's territories.

The USSR also proposed to reach a separate agreement on medium range nuclear weapons in Europe without linking it directly with the problem of space and strategic weapons. The USSR proposed direct talks with Britain and France taking it into consideration the nuclear potential of these two countries.

The USSR has already pledged that it will not be the first to use nuclear strike, it has declared unilateral moratorium on the development of medium range missiles in Europe, a unilateral moratium on any nuclear explosion.

Will the U.S. respond? The imperialist will find it difficult to reject the proposal outright. They will seek subterfuges and excuses to reject them because they are bent on achieving the Star War project of aggression.

If the proposals are accepted peace would be preserved. But peace is the real difficulty of the USA. Peace and giving up the arm race will destroy the huge profits of the military industrial complex which rules the USA.

Reagan has already stated that the United States will not retreat from the U.S. Star War Programme. Reacting to the new Soviet offer he said on October 4 that the United States is not going to retreat from the research on star war system, adding that the testing of the system goes along with the research".

Undeterred by world opinion the U.S. vigorously presses its space war programme. The U.S. Secretary, Casper Winberger announced on 8th October that the United States conducted two successful star war lasser tests last month."

Pravda, organ of the CPSU in an editorial denounced the U.S. testing of anti-statellite weapons. It said that the latest American test was staged while the Soviet Union maintained its unilateral

moratorium on the placement of any kind of anti-satellite weaponry in space, for as long as other countries, including the United States, refrain from such activities." It said that the United States chose to ignore these demonstrations of Soviet good will and took a step in this dangerous direction, meant to help pave the way to create a new class of armaments, space strike system.

Such is the policy of aggressive imperialist powers.

While Reagan is determinedly proceeding towards militarisation of space and new space and new space strike weapons, everything is not smooth in the camp of his allies and the public opinion in the allied countries is wavering towards opposition to Reagan's plans.

President Reagan sought to forge a common stand with its allies on the question of Soviet proposals. He therefore proposed a summit on October 24 of the leaders of the US, Britain, Italy, Canada, Federal Germany, France and Japan. But the French President refused the invitation. The French Press said that the US proposals ran counter to the need of independence in the relationship between great powers and that France was critical about the effectiveness of such a summit.

In Britain the Liberal Party at its annual convention in September 1985 called on the British Government to "oppose President Reagan's ADR which obstructs progress towards detente, divides NATO countries, diverts the resources....helps to perpetuate the division of the world into two hotile armed camps and which, if developed would vitiate the anti-ballistic missiles treaty."

The annual conference of the British Labour Party also expressed concern with the Press reports that the British Conservative government had reached a secret agreement with the United States to give control over large areas of the country to the US military during time of crisis. The conference called for nuclear disarmament and committed itself to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

These voices of protest from inside the imperialist countries are going to increase with Reagan's decisions to go ahead with the space project.

The world is being taken towards a destructive genocidal war by imperialist war mongers. Only the united will and action of the mass of the people can defeat these war designs.

But the war drive is not directed only against the Soviet Union and the Socialist camp. Its ultimate purpose is to establish the

domination of US imperialism over the world. The USSR with its defence preparedness, its economic advance, and with the help it renders to liberation struggles constitutes the biggest obstacle in the imperialist passage to domination. The war drive endangers the freedom and independence of countries like India who are therefore vitally interested in preventing war and preserving peace.

All over the world the US imperialists conspire against the freedom of countries who refuse to bow down to their dictates. They support the racist South African Government which oppresses the African freedom fighters. They support Israel to occupy Palestinian land and recently in the most shameless manner they justified Israel's attack against Tunisia.

In the Indian sub-continent they arm Pakistan against India and surround India with a ring of Governments hostile to this country and prepared to toe the US line. They are crowding the Indian ocean with their nuclear armed naval ships and their base at Diego Garcia is a direct threat to India and the littoral countries. All these anti-Indian acts against the freedom of Asian and African countries are part of the design for global domination.

The nuclear war drive against the Soviet Union is part of these designs.

The Soviet Union while working for peace follows the Leninist directives, "a revolution must know how to defend itself". It has made it clear that the would be aggressor will be met with retaliatory resistance and they should know it. The capacity to defend, the Soviet capacity to retaliate coupled with its earnest efforts for peace constitutes today a big deterrent against war.

There are other forces working against nuclear war plans. The peace movement of the common people of all lands, the non-aligned governments and movement and the growing participation of the organised working class of advanced countries in the peace movement, constitute powerful forces operating in defence of peace.

The peace efforts of the Soviet Union must be aided with the rebuted vigours by all these forces so that from all sides the imperialists are cornered.

In this respect India's working class has much to do to discharge its responsibility to the socialist camp, the Soviet Union and the peace movement. Its contribution to the world peace movement leaves much to be desired. The peace movement in our country is

at present restricted to very narrow circles. With the country and the government also committed to peace the movement should have assumed massive proportions. The fault lies with the trade union movement. The National Campaign Committee which at present represents a broad measure of trade union unity does not posses a common outlook on this vital problem affecting the destiny of the world. The trade union movement of our country is therefore unable to unitedly expose and fight the war designs of US imperialism.

But this does not excuse the CITU and its unions which should realise that they have not done their best to discharge their international duty and organise effective war resistance in the country.

The weakness have to be overcome both in national and international interests. Our solidarity with the Soviet Union and its working class and people would remain symbolic if the CITU does not devote its full energy to draw the wide mass of the working class into the anti-war struggle and links itself with the struggle for peace waged by all contingent of world working class. Solidarity with the socialist camp and the October Revolution, concern for the defence of Socialism and the achievements of the world working class, demand that India's working class build a powerful peace movement and throw its full weight in the struggle to save the world from the holocaust of a nuclear war.

On November Seventh

Express Solidarity with the Soviet people and their struggle against imperialist war plans;

Denounce Reagan's Star War Project;

Support Soviet peace proposals, Raise the slogan of working class unity against nuclear war.

The Working Class, Vol. 15, No. 3 November 1985

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Rajiv's Economic Policy and The Public Sector

The economic policy of Rajiv Government reveals itself as continuous depridations on the incomes and living standard of the people and growing attacks on their jobs in the name of modernisation of economy. The last budget saw the first phase of this policy. It gave concessions amounting to more than rupees thousands crores to the private capitalists and businessmen while just before the budget it levied new burdens of more than a thousand crores of rupees on the common people.

The excruciating rise in the prices announced at the end of January this year, rise in the issue prices of food grains, increase of Rs. 48 per quintal in the price of wheat, 10 per cent in fertilizers and hike in the prices of petroleum products including kerosene, the total burden again exceeding Rs. one thousand crores, opened the second phase of this policy.

In addition Rajiv's Government policy now openly declares computerisation, automation as the official policy of the government. This means continuing war on the jobs of employees and workers.

This economic policy is not only deterimental to the immediate interests of the workers but it is dangerous to the interests of the country as a whole. If pursued over any length of time it will compromise and undermine the economic independence of the country and jeopardise its political independence.

The policy is a retreat from the earlier position which consid-

ered the public sector as important and accepted the need of control over private sector. National planning, inspite of its defects and class bias, did serve to a great extent the need of protecting Indian economy against subjugation to foreign capital and western interests.

But now in the name of importing advanced technology and promoting quick industrial development a new policy has been announced whose postulates are removal of controls, freedom for the private sector, denigration and growing disbanment of the Public section, denigration of national planning, and opening the Indian market to the multinationals. In short the entire country is being exposed to the uncontrolled exploitation of the private sector and foreign multinationals with government control day by day removed.

The free entry of multinationals in to the Indian market will not only mean unbridled exploitation of the workers and the peoples, but will lead to the danger of undermining of our economic independence. The multinational are not satisfied with capturing economic market but conspire to bring down governments and establish their economic and political domination over countries. The restrictions that hitherto operated against the entry of multinationals are being removed and the people of our country are being exposed to great political danger.

The declared policy of computerisation, of import of advanced technology is bound to lead to influx of multinationals and their growing penetration into our economy including the public sector and its management. The computerisation and automation drive that is being planned for the public sector will lead to massive retrenchment of jobs. The Sen Gupta Committee's recommendation to link wages in the public sector with productivity will lead to the same result.

Large sections of workers and many trade unions have acted in the past as if the way as the public sector functioned or what the government did with it was no concern of theirs. But this was wrong attitude for the working class of a newly liberated country. The public sector in India cannot be compared with the Public sector in Britain for instance. There both the public and private sector are instruments of imperialism and function under state monopoly capitalism.

But in newly liberated countries a well-managed public sector

based on strategic industry can led an instrument of defending the economy against imperialist depredation and dependence on imperialism. It does serve the interests of indigenous capitalist. But it obstructs the penetration of imperialism into the economy. This is why in India were the public sector started its activities in strategic industries it was largely supported by the trade union movement and all progressive forces. In spite of a great deal of mismangement the public sector has contributed to defending the independence of our economy to a great extent. It has been so because in a large number of cases it was directly helped by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. In fact, we would not been able to build our strategic industries if help from socialist countries were not available.

This aspect of the public sector has not been properly put before the workers by the trade unions. Today it is all the more necessary to do so because under the pressure of the imperialists, the world bank and the IMF the official policy is denigrading the public sector and giving more encouragement to the private sector. But the matter does not end here. The denigration of the public sector is further intended to invite foreign mulitnational companies to 'help' India in her technological advance.

The World Bank and foreign multinationals have always adopted a hostile attitude to India's public sector. They know that as long as it stands and expands their efforts to penetrate into the economy will not meet with easy success. That is why they were always opposed to it. And now with the recent economic policy of the government they are likely to achieve their end.

In an interview to a newspaper Rajiv Gandhi announced that we must take hard look at the public sector not necessarily closing the plants down but making them pay, atleast break even, by just being tough.

Being tough realy means starting the process of disbanding a major part of the public sector, keeping under public management only the core sector and transforming the rest into autonomous corporations free from parliamentary control the first step towards complete privatisation. It also calls for closure of units which are making losses.

This is clear from the Report of the Arjun Sengupta Committee. Its recommendations are directed towards releasing public sector concerns from as much government control as possible, to restrict

parliamentary supervision over the policies and performances of the concerns and allow as much freedom as possible to the management in the day to day functioning. In short it amounts to a gradual disbanment of the public sector.

For this purpose the committee proposes to remove a large section of public sector from parliamentary supervision by describing it as non-core sector. Direct Government control and responsibility to parliament are recommended only in the core sector. For the rest the controls obtaining at present are to be replaced by such devices as holding company, appointment of government nominees on the boards of directors—all of which are aimed at giving an autonomous status to the concerns and reduce the role of government representatives to mere tendering of advice.

The Committee says "We would suggest that for the purpose of defining government-public enterprises relations, the following sectors may be considered as core sectors. Coal and Lignite; crude oil, petroleum and natural gas, power, primary steel production, primary products of Alumunium, copper, lead, zinc, and nickle, fertilisers, primary products of petro-chemical intermediates.

This tears out of the core sector all other enterprises like those producing heavy machinery like the Ranchi plant, the Heavy Electrical Project of Bhopal and concerns like IDPL. All these are dessigenrated as none core sector with more or less freedom from government control.

The first step towards treating public sector units as private sector enterprises is suggested here.

Such is the plan for disbanment of the public sector and its growing privatisation. A direct result of this policy today is that large number of public sector units are without any orders as government agencies themselves often accept orders and sign contracts with foreign companies who are able to quote lower prices. This is what is called opening India to the wind of competition. The Order book of many public enterprises show that if the situation does not change redically many of them will have to be closed. Already because of mismangement bureucraticism, corruption, allienation of the workers from planned production these concerns are unable to utilise even 50 per cent of their productive capacity. In many concerns workers have no work because of the new policy and authorities are thinking of massive retrenchment.

Another calamatious result of this policy is likely to be the pene-

tration of the multinationals in the management of public sector. The *Times of India* Dated 23 Feb. contains a report which throws light on the insidious conspiracy that is going on in the government circles to admit the mulitnational into the public sector. The report says "Influential non-residential Indians have manoeuvered to secure a backdoor entry into this country for providing management consultancy services to public sector undertakings. Both the political leadership and the bureaucracy headed by Union Cabinet secretary Mr. P.K. Kaul helped in opening the gates to the newly incorporated consultancy companies."

The agreement package with this company provides to exhobidant fees to be paid to various consultancy firms which public sector units would be forced to accept. Each consultant would have to be paid a minimum of one lakh fifty thousand dollar a year and a minimum of five consultants would have to be engaged by all such undertakings, which start receiving the so-called specialised services.

Most of these consultancy firms receive around 75 thousand dollars a year in United States.

Mr. P.K. Kaul has discussed the consultancy plans with secretaxies of the ministries of powers, coal, heavy industry, fertilisers and told them to take appropriate steps for involving the mentioned companies in various public sector undertakings attacked to their ministries. Naturally those who have to do with the public sector fear that all this will limit technology choices and the freedom of state sector to bargain for the best available technology directly and without the mediation of foreign sub-technology brokers. This will necessarily tie on the public sector through the groups of foreign consultants charging high fees while giving no performal guarantee. The authorities besides openly belittle possibility of indegenous research and opined that it will prove costly in a time. It is known that imperialist circles were always opposed to independence indegenous research.

The new policy therefore not only contain proposals for the disbandment of the public sector but also proposes to put the public sector under the technological and managerial control of foreign compaines. It is nothing but an act of high treasure.

It will be nothing short of a crime towards the people and the country if the working class of our country and particularly the workers in the public sector remained indifferent to this develop-

ment. There is no doubt that the public sector management has been treating the working class like any private sector management and has been successful in killing the workers interests in the efficient functioning of the public sector units. In fact the management in the public sector has taken an attitude which forces the workers to devote exclusively to the defence of their immediate interests and neglect the policy issues which affect the people as a whole. This attitude if it continues now will harm the working class and the people. It is necessary therefore to understand the danger amanating from the policies of the government and fight against privatisation of the public sector and penetration of foreign influence in its management.

Simultaneously our unions should openly declare that provided they are given equal status they are prepared to intervene and help in solving the problems of efficiency and proper management of public sector concerns. It is a matter of shame that a large number of concerns are not able to utilise even 50 per cent of their productive capacity; that thousands of crores of rupees gathered from the common mens earnings are being wasted by useless bureaucrate and corrupt officials who are now inviting foreigners to penetrate in the management, that inspite of our unused productive capacity we have to import from abroad hundreds of crores worth of goods which we can produce here.

The working class must take note of this and demand the right of participation in the management on equal terms so that the country can be saved. It should also assure our people that so far as it is concerned it knows its responsibility in carrying out agreed norms of production and will not fail in his duty to the people, nor will it allow the productive capacity that has been created from toil of the common people to be wasted.

Workers of the public sector and the entire working class must see the national danger from the policies of disbanment of public sector and by their combined efforts should force the government to retreat from this disastrous course.

24.02.1986

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Speech Before The Third Conference of Water Transport Workers' Federation

Haldia, 8th—10th, March 1986

Comrades,

I am glad to be in your midst to resume our discussions started at Tuticorin which were interupted following the assassination of Smt. Gandhi. Perhaps the present conference is a somewhat restricted gathering compared what we had at our full conference. That means added responsibility is to be shared by a smaller number of people and I am sure none of you will have any hesitation in accepting this new burden.

Before I turn to the problems before us let me remind you that only on 4th of this month be observed the Tenth Death Anniversary of late beloved comrade Gerald Pereora, our first President. As you know Comrade Gerald was much more than the President of our organisation. All his life he was a staunch fighter in the cause of communism and the working class. He led a restless life in the cause of independence of our country.

I am glade to know that his wife Com. Louise and his children are following in his footsteps and holding high the banner of the working class movement.

Comrades, as port and dock worers our problems are multiplying not surprisingly, because a menacing economic situation is enveloping the entire country.

As in every capitalist country the deteriorating economic situation makes the working class and the common people its hostages. You are aware that more than 400 big concerns remain closed for the last three years. Nearly a lakh of small concerns have gone sick and majority of them are declared unviable that is they will be permanently closed throwing tens of thousands out of work. The National Textile Corporation has decided to close down a few more textile mills throwing out hundreds of workers.

Of course, they even-handed in their justice and the four mills to be closed are distributed over four states. Government's policy has further led to the closure of thousands of power looms. Further the Government is demanding that the Food Corporation of India should retrench thousands of its employees.

In this situation how can we escape our share of attack unemployment, retrenchment and so on. Since our last successful strike, a result of all in unity we had forged, we are perhaps stagnating and their is a slide back on the part of the authorities. As everywhere else the cry here is also for reduction of man power, mechanisation and modernisation. In the present critical situation facing the country and the working class, in a situation in the which the Government of India is officially committed to computerisation and automation, we must expect greater and greater attacks on employment opportunities and greater and greater resistance to increase in wages, amenities, provision of housing and other facilities and above all an attack on trade union rights. The unscrupulous use that the government is making of Section 311(2) of the Constitution, to strike at the job security of the Government employees reveals its mind. You are all aware that hundreds of loco-workers have been dismissed from their jobs after the supreme court judgement interpreting Section 311(2) of the Constitution.

The Port and Dock workers must take note of the fact that the Report of the committee of Transport which still governs the Government's policy opines that transport policy should have nothing to do with considerations of employment. It says "In our view, therefore, it will be sensible not to mix up employment objective with the issue of choosing an efficient transport system." The specious excuse is that consideration of employment in transport may make it less efficient and hamper the growth of employment in other industries. To quote the committee "We reiterate our view that employment generation, however important it may be as

policy objective, has no part to play in determining an optimal model-mix."

The government's transport policy, whether it is road, water or air, is based on this formulation which the common outlook of an exploitative society.

For the Water Front workers this means growth of containerisation and mechanisation at a swift rate. In 1980 more than a thousand container vessels visited Indian ports. Their number was only 71 in 1967. Container traffic grew from 70 thousand tons in 1980-81 to 2 lakh 3 thousand tons in 1984-85. The rapid development of container traffic has taken place inspite of the fact that hardly any Indian port possesses adequate, facilities for the traffic. The Transport Committee report recommends such facilities should be rapidly built in all ports. One can imagine the employment situation when the committees plans are put in full operation.

The seamen especially are in a bad plight. They have been facing innumerable problems concerning regular employment, proper distribution of employment opportunities in big ports, racial discrimnation and the total indifference of the government to their corection. Besides for years the government and the shipping concerns continued to deal with a union which is hardly a union and which adopted gangsterous methods for recruiting membership. I congratulate our Forward Seamen's Union of India for its courageous fight against this goondaism and building a union which is really representative and courageously defend the interests of the workers. I congratulate them for their success in securing recongintion from the Government on the basis of verification of membership. This is certainly an outstanding success and hard work, courage, and sacrifices were required to achieve it.

But though the Government had to bow down before the ballot of the workers the shipping owners refuse to deal with the union and continue their illegal machinations against the workers with the aid of old union. Here again the Government does not excercise any pressure on the shipping owners to accept the verdict of the workers though the government possesses a strong financial clout in its hand. If only the shipping companies were to know that the anti-labour practices of Ship owners' Association will cost it at least part of the economic assistance coming from the Government they will hasten to change their attitude towards the Forward Seamen's Union of India.

The employment situation is badly affected by the recession in India shipping. It seems for the first time India's merchant fleet tonnage has declined. A year back according to the Indian National Ship Owner's Association their were 407 ships and 6333763 gross registered tons as against 335 vessels (6,135,909 G.R.T. on January four this year). There was a bigger decline in operational tonnage involving 79 ships. Obviously this has affected the employment potential of Indian shipping making the matter worse for the Seamen.

Was their no remedy to protect Indian shipping as well as the jobs of Indian Seamen? There was. But the government of India has shown utter indifference to the interests of Indian shipping and Indian Seamen. It is agreed by all under the UNCTAD agreement that 40 per cent of a countries trade should be carried in national bottoms. But the Government does not take any steps to implement this and protect Indian interests. On the contrary public sector exporters and importers we with each other to discard the officially declared policy. They prefer foreign ships to Indian ships when placing their export or import orders. They do the same when they order materials and machinery for their concerns. They prefer foreign compaines to Indian companies in the private or public sector for executing their orders.

The Indian Seamen besides are victims of racial discrimination in foreign ships. The foreign employers employ Indian seamen on a wage which is not even 1/4 of the wage a British or European seamen gets. But the Government of India refuses to take any steps against this and protect the honour of India and the interest of Indian seamen.

On the contrary it encourages this discrimination and low wages by not demanding wage parity with foreign seamen. It refuses to distribute the funds accumulated in the account of seamen and seeks to pocket them for its welfare fund.

What are these funds? More than millions pounds a sum of nearly 50 crores accumulated for cash originally set aside to curb exploitation of mainly Indian seamen. Shipping companines are committed to pay 15 million pounds to 15 thousands Indian seamen under a scheme introduced seven years ago. Where is the hitch? The British ship owners insist that the Indians which means the Government of India are responsible for the money being frozen because they have blocked its transfer to individual seaman

and wants it channalise into a general welfare fund. The companies refuse to release it for the so-called welfare fund and the money continues to remain in the hands of the foreign compaines. But the Government of India refuses to distribute it to the seamen who have earned the money.

There is perhaps no government in the world which demands racial discrimnation against its country's seamen and seeks to pilfer funds set aside to curb their exploitation. This is Rajiv's socialism. Why all this pilfering? Only to ensure cheap labour to Indian ship owners.

Comrades, all this shows that our organisation must develop more strength to be able to meet the problems facing the water front workers. A successful defence of the workers' interests will be repeately hampered unless we become a major force in the industry. But perhaps there is lot of self satisfaction with what we have achieved and the necessary activities to forge ahead and to change the existing balance of forces is not forthcoming. There is greater need for all India coordination and activity. The functioning of our all India organisation must be more regular, more consistant and more democratic. Constant meetings of councils and executives are necessary to study the situation in each port and map out correct tactics and methods of struggle. Individualism of any type is extremely injurious to the movement pioneering efforts of individuals play a very big role in the initial stage in building an organisation. But with its expansion, concentration of work round few individuals becomes counter productive and obstructs the further development of the organisation. Our organisation has now reached a stage at which more and more sharing of work, collective responsibility, ecehange of views and subordination of individual to the collective is essential if we are to expand further.

Comrades, now let me turn to the problems facing the entire working class and the country as a whole. You all know that the Rajiv Government announced last year its New Economic Policy which now reveals itself as a continuous depridations on the incomes and living standards of the people and growing attacks on their jobs in the name of modernisation of economy. The last budget saw the first phase of this policy. It gave concessions amounting to more than 1000 crores of rupees to the private capitalist and businessmen while just before the budget it levied new burdens of more than 1000 crores of rupees on the common

people.

The Finance Minister did the same trick this year and just before the budget announced rise in the issue prices of foodgrains, increase of Rs. 48 per quintal in case of wheat, 10 per cent in fertilizers and hike in the prices of petroleum products including kerosene, the total burden again exceeding Rs. 1000 crores. In addition the Government has declared computerisation and automation as the official policy which means continuing war on the jobs of the employees and workers.

This economic policy is not only detrimental to the immediate interests of the workers but it is dangerous to the interests of the country as a whole. If pursued over any length of time it will compromise and undermine the economic independence of the country and jeopardise its political independence.

This policy is a retreat from the earlier position which considered the public sector as important and accepted the need of control over private sector. The national planning inspite of its defects and class bias helped to protect Indian economy against subjugation to foreign capital and western interests.

But now in the name of importing advanced technology and promoting quick industrial development a new policy has been announced whose postulates are removal of controls, for the private sector, denigration and growing disbanment of the public sector, denigration of national planning, and opening the Indian market to the multinationals. In short the entire country is being exposed to he danger of uncontrolled exploitation of the private sector and foreign multinationals with government control day by day removed.

The free entry of multinationals in to the Indian market will not only mean unbridled exploitation of the workers and the people but will lead to the danger of underming our economic independence. The multinationals are not satisfied with capturing economic market but conspire to bring down governments and establish their economic and political domination over countries. The restrictions that hitherto operated against the entry of multinationals are being removed and the people of our country are being exposed to great political danger.

The declared policy of computerisation, of import of advanced technology is bound to lead to influx of multinationals and their growing penetration into our economy including the public sector

and its management. The computerisation and automation drive that is being planned for the public sector will lead to massive retrenchment of jobs. The Sen Gupta committee's recommendations to link wages in the public sector with productivity will led to the same result.

Large sections of workers and many trade unions have acted in the past as if the way the public sector functions or what the government did with it was no concerns of theirs. But this was a wrong attitude towards the public sector of a newly liberated countries. The public sector in India cannot be compared with the public sector in Britains For instance, their both the public and private sector are instruments of imperialism and function under state monopoly capitalism.

But in newly liberated countries a democretically and well-managed public sector based on strategic industry is an instrument of defending the economy against imperialist depredations and dependence on imperialism. It does serve the interests of indigenous capitalism. But it obstructs the penetration of imperialism into the economy. This is why in India when the public sector started its activities in strategic industries it was largely supported by the trade union movement and all progressive forces. In spite of great deal of mismanagement, the public sector has contributed to defending the independence of our economy to a great extent. It has been so because in large number of cases it was directly helped by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. In fact, we would not have been able to build our strategic industries if help form socialist countires were not available.

This aspect of the public sector has not been properly put before the workers by the trade unions. Today it is all the more necessary to do so because under the pressure of the imperialist, the world bank and the IMF the official policy is denigrading the public sector and giving more encouragement to the private sector. But the matter does not end here. The denigration of the public sector is further intended to invite the foreign multinational companies to 'help' India in her technological advance.

The World Bank and foreign multinationals have always adopted a hostile attitude to India's public sector. They know that as long as it stands and expands their efforts to penetrate into the economy will meet with obstruction. That is why they were always opposed to it. And now with the recent economic policy of the Government

they are likely to achieve their end.

Comrades, the New Policy of the Rajiv Gandhi not only contains proposals for the denigration of the public sector but may also lead to steps to place the public sector undertakings under the technological and managerial control of foreign companies. This danger hangs over the people in the country notwithstanding the fact that the Prime Minister and his Government has been recently assuring the country that they continue to attach importance to the public sector and will not follow a policy of weakening it. But in fact it seems a process of penetration of the public sector by foreign multinationals is already starting if we are to believe reports appearing in the press. The penetration is taking place in the name of technological agreements with Non-Residential Indian Companies which are often a sign-board for foreign multinationals.

The entire trade union movement should fight this policy which compromises India's economic independence and at the same time inflicts wide-spread unemployment, exploitation and an era of high prices on the people.

Comrades, you are all aware that our country is passing through a serious crisis with a big attack of divisive forces, communal fanatics and imperialist agencies on the unity and integrity of the country. The Cong(I) Government day by day reveals its pathetic helplessness to meet this challenge and opportunistically compromises with them for temporary advantages. Its compromise with Muslim fundamentalists to sacrifice the rights of muslim women is opposed by all the progressive forces of the country. No bourgeois opposition party is in a position to save the country's unity. Only a united working class movement overcoming all communal and caste difference and regional chauvinist outlook can save the country. Only full support of the trade union movement for the left forces in the country who are determined to fight the divisive forces can defeat the plans of enemies of our country. The entire working class movement therefore lend its full support to the left forces and the two left front governments of West Bengal and Tripura who hold the banner of unity of the country and protect the democratic rights of the working class and the people.

The May Day centenary that is approaching calls upon the working class to discharge its responsibility to the entire people of India, its role in defending the peasants the agricultural workers, and the democratic rights of the people. It calls upon the working

class to look ahead and build a formidable movement to end the rule of bourgeois-landlord alliance and to prepare to move towards a state of Peoples Democracy.

You all know that the first blood bath on May Day took place in 1886 in Chicago in connection with the observance of Ist May Day. For demanding 8-hours day. Several workers were killed and their leaders executed. The names of the heroic leaders were Alber Parsons, August Spies, George Engles and Adoll Fisher. Their names will always be remembered by the working class of the world.

Hundred years back capitalism prescribed death penalty for those who dared demand 8-hours day or any limitation to the capitalist exploitation of the workers.

But the working class movement could not be suppressed. Within few years observance of May Day for 8-hours day became an international day for the working class the call coming from the socialist international 1889. Europe and America observed the Ist International May Day in 1890 with several thousands in the countries of the two continents joining the demonstration. Every year they honoured the memory of the Chicago fighter.

The bond of working class union began to spread to other countries and the day began to be observed in India, China and other countries of Asia and Africa. May Day became a real international day spread all over the world.

In the hundred years since 1886 the working class movement has scored magnificant successes with one third of the world going socialist and the smashing of old colonial system, enabling countries like India to attain freedom. This was rendered possible because of the immense sacrifices of the world working class. The working class of Soviet Union and its people paid the prices of 20 millions lives to defeat fascism and protect the freedom of all peoples.

The Chinese revolution gave yet another stagnant blow to the world imperialist system. In these years the working class not only fought for itself but fought for the entire society, for all the downtrodden the peasants and toiling section. Acting as the leader of the people in each successful socialist revolution it led its country out of slavery and capitalistic exploitation.

This could not have been possible if May Day had represented only a Day for announcing some partial demands. From the

beginning partial demands were accompained by the firm resolve to protect international unity of the working class, to end the capitalist system and take political power in the hands of the working class and its allies the toiling people. This May Day centenary calls upon us to celebrate the day with its revolutionary content in mind and with a firm determination to protect international unity and discharge our national tasks.

Today the danger of nuclear war hangs over the world May Day calls upon the world working class to frustrate the imperialist designs of war and firmly protect the unity of the international working class. The war that is being organised is not a war between two super powers but an aggressive counter revolutionary war of US imperialism and its allies against the Soviet Union and Socialist system. It is a war to re-enslave the entire world to capitalism and re-establish imperialist global domination over the third world countries like India. It is a war which will destroy tens of millions of lives and may even destroy entire humanity.

In these conditions it becomes the bounden duty of Indian working class to expose the war plans of US imperialists to the people and marshal the entire strength of the working class and the people of our country to protect world peace. The CITU has of late taken some steps to propogate the cause of peace, and expose imperialist war plans. But these do not meet the news the situation at all. Much more needs to be done to discharge our responsibility to the international working class and the people of the world.

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Revolutionary Traditions of May Day

THOUGH May Day in our country is largely associated with the raising of many urgent and partial demands, the revolutionary tradition of May Day always combined partial demands with declarations of the international solidarity of the working class and a firm faith and determination to end the capitalist system and capture political power for the working class.

This combination of struggle for partial demands with proletarian internationalism and deposing the capitalist class from political power combined the immediate practical struggle of the working class with its ultimate objective of social emancipation, its objective of socialism.

The trend in the working class movement which confined itself to the immediate struggle only, which looked upon May Day as only a day for declaration and assertion of partial demands, diverted the working class movement from its revolutionary objectives, and ending of capitalist rule and establishing socialism and working class power.

The social transformation that we see today in the world in the course of hundred years from the observance of the first May day, with one third of the world going over to socialism is the direct achievement of the revolutionary traditions of May Day.

In the course of hundred years one third of the world has gone socialist; the old imperialist system has been liquidated; formely enslaved countries like India have been liberated; the world has

seen the great socialist revolution of Russia led by the Bolshevik Party and Lenin; it further saw a complete smashing of the fascist force by the Red Army, the working class and the people of the Soviet Union, it saw the success of the great Chinese revolution and grand victories of socialist revolutions in a number of countries in Europe, in Cuba, in Korea, and the unimaginable and unparalleled victory of the working class and the people of Vietnam.

Two Lines—Revolutionary and Reformist

These victories were the direct result of the revolutionary line of the world working class movement which was embodied in Marxism and Leninism. The observance of the first May Day, the economic demands raised and the political demands put forward were all in consonance with what the first International guided by Marx had taught the working class movement. It is no accident that only those parties which remained faithful to the initial ideology proclaimed in relation to the First May Day were the leaders of the successful socialist revolutions; such were the Marxist Leninist parties.

It is no accident either that those who strayed away from the revolutionary understanding guiding earlier May Day observance never succeeded in organising a socialist revolution or peaceful transition to socialism in any capitalist country. They mostly functioned as an opposition prty under the capitalist framework and when elected to form an government they were unable to change an iota of the exploitative system. The histories of these parties, the reformist socialist democratic parties of Europe and the Labour Party of Europe show that they not only turned a back on revolution but also on international unity of the working class. On all crucial occasions this reformist trend betrayed international solidarity and deserted the banner of proletarian internationalism.

During the frist imperialist war, during the antifascist war the Labour Party of Britain, the Socialist Democratic Party of Europe betrayed the banner of proletarian unity. They remained with their respective governments and during the anti-fascist war they joined the struggle against Hitler only when their governments desired to join it.

The centenary of May Day comes as a fresh call to us to determinedly pursue the militant course of the movement and take the country out of the perilous situation facing it.

Pre-1986 Developments

Hundred years back a brutal capitalist system hardly recognised any rights for the working class. But the struggle for the limitations of working hours, for 8-hours day was already developing both in Europe and the USA, the seats of capitalism.

In August 1866 in the USA a working men's convention held in Baltimore passed a resolution demanding 8 hours day. Within two weeks of this convention the Geneva Congress of the 1st International founded by Marx made the same demand saying : "The legal limitation of the working day is a preliminary condition without which all further attempt at improvement and emancipation of working class must prove abortive. The Congress proposes 8-hours as a legal limit of the working day."

The two contingents of the working class were simultaneously raising the same demand and preparing for a platform for common action and solidarity. This was stated in clear terms in the Geneva Congress resolution : "As this limitation represents the general demand of the workers of North American United States the Congress transforms this demand into the general platform of the workers of the whole world". Thus began the platform of intenational action and solidarity.

But this was just the beginning. Between 1866-86 which saw the ushering of May Day with its militant traditions, the working class movement went through many ordeals, facing massacres and executions. But it continued to march forward. It had found reliable guides in Marx and Engels and the international Association of Working Men (1st International), founded by them. The activities of the International reached their climax in the uprising of the workers of Paris and the rise of the Paris Commune, the first state of the working class in 1871. The brutal massacre of the communards was followed by a raging reaction in the countries of Europe. The Head Quarters of 1st international had to be transferred from London to New York. The International ceased to exist in 1876. The first organisation to cement the international solidarity and unity of the working class came to an end.

But the struggle of the working class continued. It could not be entirely suppressed. In October 1884 at the Fourth Congress of the Federation of Organised Trades and Labour Unions of the United States and Canada it was decided that 8 hours shall constitute a legal day's labour from May 1886.

The resolution envisaged a strike on May 1st and this was the beginning of the militant strike tradition of May Day. By 1886 May several thousands workers and several organisations were ready to strike for eight hours day.

Chicago's Blood Bath

The strike was most militant in Chicago where thousands of workers participated in direct action. The employers and the US capitalist government decided to hit back. During the course of the demonstration on May 4th which was organised to protest against police action against the workers on May 3, provocators and hirelings organised a bomb outrage to damn and implicate the leaders of the workers. The events of May 3rd and May 4th which led to what is known as the Hay Market affair was the direct outcome of the May 1st strike. The demonstration held on May 4th at Hay Market Square was called to protest against the brutal attack of the police upon a meeting of striking workers on May 3rd during which six workers were killed and many wounded. The protest meeting was peaceful but the police launched an unprovoked attack. A bomb was thrown into the crowed killing a seargent. A clash ensued with the result that several police men and four workers were killed. But the authorities were not satisfied with this blood of workers. The fighting leaders of the workers, Albert R. Parsans, August Spies, Adolph Fischer and George Engel were framed and sent to the gallows and other militant workers of Chicago were sent to long terms of imprisonment.

Capitalist justice demanded lives of four working class leaders for demanding 8 hours day, for attempting to limit the exploitation of the workers. Thus started another militant tradition of May Day, the tradition of reveolutionary sacrifice.

The defending accused displayed courage and dignity during their trial. They defended themselves and at the same time they accused the authorities. Parsons who had escaped arrest appeared before the court and took his place besides his colleagues. On Novermber 11, 1887 Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel, Adolph Fischer were hanged. Spies's last words were "There will come a time when our silence will be more eloquent than our words."

Three leaders who were sentenced to life improsonment were released in 1893. The new governor of Illionis had to admit that their guilt had not been proved and that like the other executed

leaders they had been the victim of the biased jury. The principal witness had been bribed. American bourgeois justice now stood exposed before the world.

The sacrifices of American workers were not invain. The developing working class movement in Europe decided tc join hands with them. The first Congress of the Socialist International, the Paris Congress which met in 1889 decided to internationalise the observance of the May Day.

Socialist International

The first Congress of the Socialist International was not an ordinary event. The working class movement did not have an international centre after dissolution of the first International. But the ideas of Marx and Engles continued to guide the working class movement and a new upsurge in political consciousness and organisations was taking place.

Engles was still alive to guide the movement. This was the period when socialist parties of the working class were being formed on the basis of a correct Marxist programme. These parties met in Paris to form the first Congress of the New Socialist International later on known as IInd International. The first session was attended by Frederich Engels who was all along guiding these parties to give a correct political and organisational form to the new international union of workers.

The parties and leaders who met in First Congress were all influenced in a large measure by Marxist teachings and while deciding to internationalise the May Day they applied the Marxist understanding to the current situation. They therefore could not be content with only declaring for urgent economic demands but combined the partial struggle with the struggle against war and the struggle to end capitalism.

Programme of Partial Demands

Like the first international before it the Paris Congress called for a comprehensive programme of immediate demands which, in the conditions obtaining then, was bound to lead to intense class conflict and rise in the revolutionary consciousness of the working class. The programme included (1) an 8 hours working day to be established by legislation; (2) prohibition of child labour; (3) restriction on juvenile and female labour; (4) special regulation for night work and hazardous occupations; (5) the establishment of mandatory weekly day of rest; (6) the prohibition of remuneration

for work in kind or through factory run shops; (7) the establishment of state institution of factory inspectors. There was also the demand for equal pay for equal work of men and women irrespective of nationality and for an "unrestricted complete freedom of unions and coalitions."

The demands enumerated above clearly show the primitive conditions of living obtaining at the time and the unbridled character of exploitation carried on by the capitalist class. In this situation a concerted international movement for these demands for regulating by law the working day was bound to lead to revolutionary consequences.

The Geneva and Brussels Congresses of the First International had elaborated a similar programme of partial demands. The Paris Congress resolution now again presented a programme of international working class movement systematically presenting the immediate demands of the proletariat. It was further asserted that attainment of these demands was "absolutely imperative in all countries where the capitalist mode of production prevails", in order to "counter the destructive influence of the existing economic system."

Political Struggle and War

But the Congress did not content itself with proclaiming a programme of partial demands. The resolution on international labour protection stated that "Labour and the whole of mankind can only be emancipated by the proletariat organised as a class on an international scale, which must win political power in order to expropriate the capital and convert the means of production into public property." This connected the struggle for immediate needs of the working class with its ultimate goal of socialism.

When the Paris Congress met, the danger of militarism and war was growing in Europe. Prominent leaders of the Socialist parties and above all F. Engels were already busy working out a policy of opposition to war by the working class. The Paris Congress therefore adopted a resolution on disbandment of standing armies and calling for arming of the entire people. This resolution exposed the direct connection between wars and capitalism and underlined that world wide triumph of socialism was the best guarantee that there will be no war.

Internationalisation of May Day

It was in this background that the Paris Congress passed a reso-

lution internationalising the observance of May Day. The resolution said "The Congress decides to organise a great international demonstration so that in all countries and in all cities on one appointed day the toiling masses must demand of the state authority the legal reduction of the working hours to 8 hours as well as the carrying out of the other demands of Paris Congress. Since similar demonstration has already been decided on May 1st 1890, by American Federation of Labour at its convention at St. Luis in December 1888, this day is accepted for the international demonstration. Workers of the various countries must organise this demonstration according to conditions prevailing in each country.

At its next Congress in Brussels in 1891 the Socialist International called upon the workers to observe May 1st to demand the eight hour day and to ensure peace among the nations. This was a very important addition to preserve peace because without preserving peace working class solidarity lost all meaning. The First International under the guidance of Karl Marx in its manifesto on Franco-German war (1870) had already called upon the workers to protect peace and maintain their solidarity. Under this inspiring call the workers of Paris sent fraternal greetings to the workers of Germany when the rulers of the two countries were at war. The call of the IInd International to raise opposition to war and demand peace among nations on May Day was the tradition of internationalism set by the Ist International.

The resolution also demanded that May Day should be observed by organising strikes wherever possible.

How the Ist May Day was Observed

The convening of the Paris Congress was the result of the increased activities among the working class and its rising international consciousness. It was preceded by a large number of strike struggles in all countries of Europe and political advance of the working class on the electoral and parliamentary front. It was not surprising at all that the call of the Paris Congress to observe May Day met with enthusiastic and massive response in Europe and America. On May Ist 1890 hundreds and thousands of workers filled the streets of industrial cities in most of the European countries. In some cities of Germany, France and Denmark a number of factories came on strike to mark the international day. Massive demonstrations were witnessed in a large number of cities. More than a hundred thousand demonstrators demonstrated in Vienna,

60 thousands in Budapest and between 40 to 50 thousands in Marsailes and Lyons, 35 thousands in Prague, between 20 to 30 thousand in Roubaix, Lille, Stockholm, Chicago and many other cities, 20 thousands in Warsaw and 3 thousands in Lvov (History of International Working Class Movement, Vol. 2)

In Spain and Britain the day of international solidarity was marked on the first Sunday of May 4th. In Barcelona nearly hundred thousand workers demonstrated.

Engels on May Day

Engels took part in the preparations of the London workers for the 1st May Day demonstration. Inspite of the influence of the reformist trade union leaders over the workers the situation was extremely favourable. Because at the beginning of 1880 the English workers' movement especially in London had seen a new upsurge due to the fact that success crowned the determined activity of Elenor Marx Aveling, Dr. Edwar Aveling, the leader Tom Menn, John Burns and others to draw the less qualified workers such as the gas and coal workers into the movement. These proletarians organised themselves into their own trade unions for unskilled workers because they had been denied admission into the old trade unions. Engels supported the mass movement as well as the 1889 strike at the London dock to the extent that he could. Now at last a fresh revolutionary breeze began to blow through the proletarian movement in England also. That made itself apparent at the London May Day demonstration. (Engels Biography, Peoples Publishing House, P. 560).

The May Day rally was held on 4th May a Sunday in Gernmany. Engels considered it to be truly overwhelming and in his letter to Bebel he wrote "I was on platform four (a large truck) and could only see a part of the crowd one third or 1/8th but jammed together as far as the eye could see. 250 of 300 thousand people of which more than three quarters where demonstrating workers. Avelings, Lafargue and Stepniak spoke from my platform I was only an onlooker." And then at the end of his letter he writes "I carried by head two inches higher when I descended from the truck."

In his preface to the Fourth German edition of the Communist Manifesto written on May 1, 1890 Engels writes "Proletarian of all lands unite. Few were the voices to respond when we launched these words into the world 42 years ago on the eye of revolution in Paris, when for the first time, the proletariat arose and fought for its

own rights. On Sept. 17, 1864 the proletariat of practically every land in Western Europe joined hands in the International Workingmen's Association of glorious memory. The international survived only for 9 years. Nevertheless the union that organisation created will live for all times; It is today stronger than ever. Indeed events are showing this to the full. As I write these lines the proletariat of all Europe and of America is holding a review of its forces. It is mobilised for the first time as *one* army marching forward under one flag and fighting for one immediate aim; an 8 hour working day established by legal enactment as was demanded by the Geneva Congress of the International Workingmen's Association, and again by the International Socialist Congress held at Paris in 1889. The spactacle that we are now witnessing will make the capitalists and land owners of all lands realise that today the proletarians of all lands are in every truth united.

"If only Marx was with me to see with his own eyes".

Firings and Killings Again

This first international action of the working class did not pass off without blood shed. The ruling classes understood the challenge behind it and in several places they tried to suppress it with brutal firing and terror. On the 1st May Day there were clashes with police in Italy on May 1, 1890 and in France, Italy and Spain in the following years. In northern French town of Fourmies a peaceful May Day demonstration was met with the rifle fire. At least 50 people including men, women and childern fell to the ground. Ten died instantly. The Fourmies slaughter was denounced by the French workers. At a parliamentary by-election the solcialist nominated Paul Lafargue as their candidate. (He was in prison for speaking out against the Fourmies shooting). The election swept Lafargue into the Chamer of Deputies.

In Russia where the trade union movement was illegal and political parties were not permitted legal activities, May Day was repeatedly accompained by mass arrest, jailings, shooting etc. Nonetheless its appeal continued to increase and it began to play a more and more prominent role in the struggle for democarcy.

As years went by new and new contingents from different countries joined in the observance of May Day and widened the circle of proletarian international unity. Every year on the First of May thousands from industrial countries were joined by tens of thousands from the industrial cities of colonies and May Day

became a symbol of the fight for international freedom for socialism, for abolition of exploitation of man by man. It became the widest expression of protest againt the immperialists capitalist system. The militant section workers from individual factories and some whole districts decided to go on strike to express their solidarity with the demands of international proletariat.

May Day became the tradition of the entire working class movement.

May Day in Russia

In Russia under the guidance of Lenin and the Social democratic party the observance of May Day became a rallying point for the revolutionary activity of the working class. Lenin and the Social Democratic Party saw to it that the May Day was not reduced simply to charter of demands, that it kept before it the revolutionary objective of ending the rule of capitalists and that it always upheld the banner of proletarian internationalism opposing war and standing for international peace. Lenin also saw to it that May Day did not simply become a day of international solidarity voicing general slogans of internationalism but also become a rallying point for discharging the immediate revolutionary task facing the Russian proletariat, an instrument for rallying the working class as the leading force in the democratic and socialist revolutions. Everything that Lenin wrote on May Day, and the corrections that he tried to introduce were intended to see that the working class fulfilled this role and stuck to the revolutionary traditions and ideology of May Day.

In Russia the First May Day meeting was called by Brusney Organisation of St. Petersburg. It was held secretly on the first Sunday of May, 1891 in a place that can be easily vacated in the event of a police raid. One of the speakers said "What we need first and foremost is an orgainsed force, consisting of workers consciously striving for an improvement of their conditions, that could compel the government to grant their political rights, for this is the sole condition that gives us the opportunity to set about reshaping the existing economic system."

Lenin on May Day Demands

Within ten years May Day celebration in Russia made quick political advance. Lenin wrote in his preface to the pamphlet May Day in Kharkov, written in 1900, "what made the May Day celebrations in Kharkov an event of outstanding importance? The large

scale participation of demands put forth in proclamations and the revolutionary character of these demands, the 8 hour days and political liberty. The legend the Russian workers have not yet matured for the political struggle, that their principal concern should be purely economic struggle, which they should only little by little and very slowly supplement with partial political agitation for partial political reform and not for the struggle against the entire political system of Russia—that legend has been totally refuted by the Kharkov May Day celebrations." (Collected Works Vol. 4 p. 358).

Lenin notes here that the workers have broken through the cordon of economic demands and are coming out on May Day with political slogans with basic political demands. Lenin at the same time tells the Kharkov comrades that it is erroneous to include all kinds of sundry economic demands in the May Day proclamation. The economic demands should be of a really revolutionary character which will enhance the revolutionary consciousness of the working class and aid the political struggle. Lenin writes "Let us take for example the demands put forward by the Railway Workshop employees. Of the fourteen demands eleven have to do with minor improvenments which can quite easily be achieved even under the present political system—wage increases, reduction of the hours, removal of abuses. Included among these demands as through indentical with them, are the folowing three: (4) introduction of an eight hour day, (7) guarantee against victimisation of workers after the May Ist events (10) establishment of a joint committee of workers and employers for settling disputes between the two parties. The first of the demands (4) is the general demand advanced by the world proletariat; the fact that this demand was put forward seems to indicate that the advanced workers of Kharkov realise their solidarity with the world socialist working class movement. But precisely for this reason it should not have been included among minor demands like better treatment by foremen, and a ten per cent increase in wages. Demands for wage increases and better treatment can (and should) be presented by the workers to their employer in each separate trade; these are trade demands put forward by separate categories of workers. The demand for an eight hour day, however, is the demands of the whole proletariat presented not to individual employers, but to the state authorities as the representatives of the entire present day social and political

system, to the capitalist class as a whole, the owners of all the means of production. The demand for eight hour day has assumed special significance. It is a declaration for solidarity with the internationl socialist movement. We need to make the workers understand this difference so that they do not reduce the demand for the eight hour day to the level of demands like free Railway tickets or the dismissal of a watchman. Throughout the year the workers, first in one place and then in another, continuously present a variety of partial demands to their employers and fight for their achievements. In assisting the workers in this struggle, socialists must always explain its connection with the proletarian struggle for its emancipation in all countries. And the First of May must be the day on which the workers solemnly declare that they realise this connection and resolutely join in this struggle." (P. 362, 363, Vol. 4).

This is how Lenin demarcates the concept of revolutionary May Day from the reformist understanding which seeks to convert in into a day of declaration of partial demands.

May Day and Concrete Revolutionary Tasks

Lenin further told the workers that May Day should not simply mean a general declaration of international solidarity but address itself also to the concrete revolutionary tasks facing the working class in each country.

Combining urgent economic demands having revolutionary significance with a general expression of international solidarity and desire for socialism was not enough. To be able to reach the goal of socialism it was necessary that the working class of each country addressed itself to the concrete problems of revolution facing it. It was therefore necessary to raise these problems in May Day meetings as part of the struggle against capitalism. This is what Lenin said in 1902 in his letter to Northern League "It should have been added that in our country May Day also became a demonstration against the autocracy, a demand for political liberty. Pointing to the international significance of the holy day is not enough. It must also be linked with the struggle for the most vital national political demands." (Page 168 Vol. IV Collected Works).

Lenin emphasises the same point in connection with the approaching May Day of 1903 : "Finally we must try to bring the answer of the workers out on to the street, to broadcast our demands through demonstrations and to show publicly the numbers and strength of the workers, their class consciousness and

determination. Let the coming May Day celebration be not only a general declaration of our proletarian demands but also a special and definte answer to the manifesto of Feb. 26" (Page 348, 250, Vol. 6, Lenin Collected Works).
The manifeto of Feb. 26th was the manifiesto of Russian Czars to befool the people.

The polilical demands that Lenin asked to be raised on May Day were (1) Immediate and uncondional recognition by law of the freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and an amnesty to all political prisoners and members of religious sects, (2) Demand of the convocation of a constituent assembly which will be elected by all citizens and establish an elective form of Government, (3) Immediate and unconditional recongintion by law the full equality of the peasants with all other social stratas and convocation of peasants committees for the abolition of remnants of serfdom in the country side. In short, lenin asked that the demands for maturing democratic revolution should be fully expressed on May Day.

Russo-Japanese War

By 1904 the Russo Japanese war had already started. It was no longer a question of working class opposition to war in general, but of opposing Czar's war against Japan. Many social democrats and others who considered themselves to be socialists wavered in their opposition and some got overwhelmed by the fumes of bourgeois chauvinism. In this situation Lenin wrote a leaflet for the May Day asking the working class to oppose the war. He wrote "our people are perishing from want and starvation at home, yet they have been dragged into a ruinous and senseless war for alien territories lying thousands of miles away and inhabited by foreign races. Our people are ground down in political slavery yet they have been dragged into a war for the enslavement of other peoples. Our people demand a change of political order at home but it is sought to divert their attention by the thunder of guns at the other end of the world".

Then Lenin calls on the workers to enter into decisive battle against the Czar's rule : "Comrade workers, let us then prepare with redoubled energy for the decisive battle that is at hand. Let the ranks of social democratic proletariat close ever firmer. Let their word spread ever further afield. Let campaigning for workers' demands be carried on ever more boldly. Let the celebration of May Day win thousands of new fighters to our cause and swell our

forces in the great struggle for the freedom of all the people, for the liberation of all who toil from the yoke of capitalism.

Long live the eight hour day.

Long live International Revolutionary Social Democracy.

Down with the criminal and plundering Czarist autocracy (Page 202, Vol. 7, Lenin Collected Works).

May Day During 1905 Revolution

1905 was the year of revolution and the May Day slogans had to be addressed to the revolutionary situation that was rapidly developing all over the country. The Russo-Japanese war was still continued and it had to be opposed and the working class had to be reminded to the international unity of the isocialist movement. Lenin wrote another leaflet for May Day of 1905 and said, "Comrade workers the great holiday of the workers of the world is coming. On the first of May they celebrate their awakening to light and knowledge, their association in one fraternal union for the struggle against all oppression, against all tyranny, against all exploitation, for a socialist system of soceity....

"Down with the enmity between workers of different nationalities and different creeds. This enmity can only benefit the plunderers and tyrants, who live by the ignorance and disunion of the proletariat. Jews and Christains, Armenians and Tatars, Poles and Russians, Finns and Swedes, Letts and Germans, all, all of them march together under the one common banner of socialism.... On countries, international Social Democracy reviews its forces and gathers its strength for a further unremitting and unswerving struggles for freedom, equality and fraternity.

The leaflet continues "Hundreds of thousands of young lives have been torn away from the people to perish in the Far East....And what is war for? For Manchuria, which our predatory government has seized from China Russian blood is being shed and our country runied for the sake of foreign territory.

"Let this year's First of May be for us the celebration of the peoples rising, let us prepare for it and await the signal for the decisive attack on the tyrants.... Prepare then for the great battle, Comrade workers, stop work in the factories and the mills on the First of May, or take up arms according to the advice of the committees of the Social Democratic Labour Party.... The St. Petersburg workers proclaimed on the famed 9th of January : Freedom or Death. Workers of all Russia, we will repeat the great battle

cry, we will not shrink from any sacrifices; through the uprising we will win freedom; through freedom socialism.

Long live the First of May. Long Live international Social Democracy. Long live the freedom of the workers and the peasants. Long live the Democratic Republic. Down with the Czarist Republic. Down with the Czarist autocracy" (Lenin Collected Works, P. 348, 350 Vol. 8).

It will be seen that the various struggles were led by the political party of the working class, the Social Democratic party with Lenin at its head. It was able to keep to the revolutionary traditions of May Day, combining the struggle for partial demands with opposition to predatory war and determination to end the capitalist system. Together with this the Social Democratic party raised political slogans and revolutionary demands which were necessary in the Russian conditions to fulfill the task of the impending democratic revolution and clear the road to socialism. Step by step as the revolutionary situation developed the May Day in Russia began to reflect the immediate revolutionary demands of the entire people and by 1905 Lenin could raise the demand of taking to arms on May Day.

In these years Russia was the storm centre of revolutionary movement. The working class of Russia led by the Bolshevik party and Lenin and following the revolutionary teachings of Marx and Engles was able to recover from the defeat of 1905 and achieve a successful socialist revolution in 1917.

Sliding Back from Revoluntionary Tradition

But the situation was quite different in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, some of which at one time headed the Marxist movement of the working class. The "peaceful" period of capitalism, the development of capitalism into imperialism and the emergence of a privilleged labour autocracy in the imperialist countries benefited by the loot from colonial countries and a certain expansion of parliamentary and democratic rights for the workers created illusions about peaceful development towards socialism. A revisionist tendency gradually arose inside the social democratic movement which considered class struggle and revolution as totally unneccssary and therefore began to discard the militant tradition of working class movement, traditions embodied in the celebration of May Day.

The revisionist tendencies and outlook were primarily repre-

sented by the trade union leadership. In fact the British trade unions were being conducted on a reformist and collaborationist line for a long time and always rejected celebration of May Day by means of strikes. As early as 1879 Engles observed in relation to the British trade union movement : "for a number of years the English working class movement has been hopelessly describing a narrow circle of strikes for higher wages and shorter hours, not, however, as an expedient or means of propaganda and organisation, but as the ultimate aim. The Trade Unions even bar all political actions on principle and their charters, thereby also ban participation in any general activity of the working class as a class.... No attempt should be made to conceal the fact that at present no real labour movement in the continental sense exists here."

This was the situation a decade before the foundation of the Socialist International. The same trend began to develop in the continental parties also which naturally sought to deprive the May Day of its revolutionary content and restrict it to raising few demands for economic reform within the frame work of the capitalist system. **Lenin on Jena Congress** Lenin noted these developments in the German party as early as 1905. In this article, Jena Congress of German Social Democratic Worker's Party he wrote." Another question that came up for discussion in Jena prior to the question of political strike is also highly instructive for Russia. This was the question of May Day celebrations or to be more exact (to take the gist of the matter and not the item that grave rise to the discusion), the question of the relation of the trade union movement to the Social Democratic Party. Proletary has spoken several times about the profound impression made on German Social Democrats, and not only on them alone, by the Cologne Trade Union Congress. It became more than evident at this congress that even in Germany, where the tradition of Marxism and its influence are strongest, anti-socialist tendencies towards "pure trade unionism", of the British i.e. absolutely bourgeois type are developing in the trade unions, mark you, social democratic trade unions. That is why form the question of May Day demonstration in its literal sense, there inevitably arose at the Jena Congress the question of trade unionism and social democracy, the question of economism to speak the terms of trends within the Russian Social Democratic movement.

"Fisher who delivered the report on the question of May Day,

frankly stated that it would be a bad mistake to ignore the fact that in the trade union the socialist spirit is disappearing. Now here, now there. Things had gone so far that, for instance, Bringmann, representative of Carpenters Union had uttered and published sentiments like the following : "The strike on May Day is like a foreign body in the human body." "In the given circumstances the trade unions are the sole means for improving the conditions of the workers", etc. And these symptoms of diseases as Fisher aptly termed them are supplemented by number of others. In Germany, as in Russia, and indeed everywhere, a narrow trade unionism or economism is linking with opportunism (Revisionism).

The newspapers published by the same Carpenter's Union wrote about the crumbling foundations of scientific socialism, the erroneousness of the theory of crisis, the theory of collapse etc. The revisionist Calwer did not call on the workers to show discontent or increase their demands but be modest, etc. etc.

"Bebel fully recognised the danger of narrow trade unionism. He went on to say that he knew even worse examples of this craft union apathy. Young trade union leaders go so far as to jeer at the party in general, at socialism in general, at the theory of class struggle."(Page 293 Vol. IX).

While this was the trend which was developing in Western Europe, in Russia, because of the guidance of Lenin and in the midst of the developing revolutionary situation, May Day demonstration began to symbolise the revolutionary activities of the entire people. In June 1912 in his article 'Revolutionary Upswing' Lenin wrote "The great May Day strike of the proletariat of all Russia and accompanying street demonstrations, revolutionary leaflets, revolutionary speeches before gatherings of workers have clearly shown that Russia has entered a period of revolutionary upswing." (Vol. 18 Page 208).

May Day, 1912-1913

Lenin underscored the importance of 1912 May Day when he said that on this day the working class emerged as a leader of the entire people. He wrote "Let our slogans be", the St. Petersburg committee wrote in their leaflet, "a constituent assembly, and eight hour working day, the confiscation of the landed estates. And further on the leaflet launches the call : "down with the Czarist government, down with the autocratic constitution of June 3, Long Live the Democratic Republic Long Live the Socialism."

"Hundreds of thousands of St. Petersburg proletarians followed by workers throughout Russia resorted to strikes and street demonstrations not as one of the separate classes of bourgeois society, not with "their own" merely economic slogans but as the leader raising aloft the banner of revolution *for* the whole people, *on behalf of* the whole people and *with the aim* of awakening and drawing into the struggle *all* the classes who need freedom and are capable of striving for it."

The number of those who struke work on May Day in support of revolutionary demands was 300 thousands.

Lenin once more emphasised the leading role of the working class in the political struggle while describing the May Day demonstrations of 1913. "And now comes May Day action by Russian working class, who first held a rehearsal in Riga and then went to resolute action in St. Petersburg on May First.... The tasks of the approaching revolution have come to the fore again in the all their grandeurs and the forces of the advanced class leading it stand out in bold relief before the hundreds of old revolutionaries, whom persecution by hangmen and desertion by friends have not defeated or broken, and before millions of people of the new generation of democrats and socialists."

Describing the happenings and repression in connection with the May Day Lenin writes, "Weeks before May Day the government has appeared to have lost its wits, while the gentlemen who own factories behaved as if they had never had any wits at all. The arrests and searches seemed to have turned all the workers' districts in the capital upside down. The provinces did not lag behind the centres. The harassed factory owners called conferences and adopted contradictory slogans, now threatening the workers with punishment and lockouts, now making conscessions in advance and consenting to stop work, now inciting the government to commit atrocities, now reproaching the government and calling on it to include a May Day in the number of official holidays."

"But even though the Gendarmes showed utmot zeal, even though they "purged" in the industrial suburbs, even through they made arrest right and left according to the latest "list of suspects", it was no use. The workers laughed at the impotent rage of Czar's gang and the capitalist class and derided the government's menacing and pitiful "announcements"; they wrote satirical verses and circulated by hand or passed them on by word of mouth. They

produced as if from no by where fresh batches of small poorly printed "leaflets", short and plain but very instructive calling for strikes and demonstrations and reminding the people of the old uncurtailed revolutionary slogans of the Social Democrats, who in 1905 led the first onslaught of the masses against autocracy and against monarchy".

Under the leadership of the Social Democratic Party and under the guidance of Lenin every May Day became a nightmare for the ruling classes and a source of inspiration and organisation for the people as a whole.

Imperialist War of 1914—Collapse of Reformism

In August 1914 when the first imperialist war broke out the Bolshevik party opposed the Czarist imprialist war and decided to use the war crisis for the purpose of revolution and capture of political power. Initally it had to face tremendous repression and opposition from the reformist elements in the working class. But keeping to the international traditions of opposing war they finally succeeded in overthrowing the Czar and the rule of the capitalists and establishing the First Socialist State of the world.

Unfortunately the miltant traditions of earlier May Day were lost under the pressure of the reformist leaders of trade unions in Britian, Germany, France, the USA and elsewhere. They tried to convert the May Day into a general holiday instead of a day to review the class forces in the battle for vanquishing capitalism and ushering in socialism.

These reformist leaders abandoned strike as a method to observe May Day and often chose only a factory holiday to observe May Day. Besides pursuing their class collaborationist policies they gradually gave up their international outlook and began to take vacillating and reactionary positions on the question of imperialist war. The result was that when the Ist world war broke out, instead of the working class these leaders supported their imperialist rulers in conducting the war. Only the revolutionary wing the Bolshevik Party led By Lenin in Russia, the revolutionary wing of social democracy in Germany led by Rosa Luxemburg stood by internationalism and opposed war. The tradition of militant May Day and its international character was preserved by communists, and revolutionary trade unions. It is because of this that the working class of Russia could organise a successful socialist revolution and ensured the biggest triumph for the common move-

ment.

Reformist Line Continues

After the end of Ist world war the reformists did not change their tactics and they went in for greater and greater collaborations with capitalist governments. They concentrated their attention on certain economic demands and devoted May Day exclusively to the reiteration of immediate demands. It was left to the Communist and militant trade unions to carry forward the tradition of military and class struggle and fight the rising fascist forces. The Communist Party of Germany and the militant section of the working class covered themselves with glory in the anti- fascist struggle. But the reformist leaders of British and French trade unions would not join collective struggle against Hitler fascism and continued to side with their respective imperialist governments in their dirty international intrigues against the USSR. During this period the labour movement in USA came under the domination of class collaborators and toughs working in league with the management. Year by year the ealier international outlook and militancy was chocked out.

The result was that for a long time during the second world war the working class movement of Europe and America could not play its proper role and often lent itself to imperialist intrigue against the Soviet Union. However the banner of working class ideolgy and socialist revolution had now reached several countries in Asia and elsewhere. In these countries the revolutionary tradition of May Day was kept alive the anti imperialist struggle and the result was the triumph of one of biggest revolution in the world the victory of the Chinese revolution followed by the revolutions in Korea. Vietnam, and the socialist revolutions in Eastern Europe directly under the impact of victories of red armies.

Nothing can surpass the grandeur and historic importance of May Day 1945 obseved by the victorious working class and people of the Soviet Union.

The order of the day of the Supreme Commander in Chief, Stalin said: "Working people of the Soviet Union, Today our country is celebrating the first of May, the International festival of the working class.

"This year the peoples of our motherland are celebrating the First of May during the victorious consumation of the Great Patriotic war."

"The stern times when the Red army was fighting back the attacks of enemy troops near Moscow and Leningrad, near Grozny and Stalingrad, are gone, never to return. Today our victorious troops are routing the armed forces of the enemy in the heart of the Germany, far beyond Berlin, on the river Elbe. The collapse of Hitler Germany is a matter of the very near future."

It will be clear that wherever the class tradition of earlier years and international solidarity was maintained the working class advanced rapidly. In other states it was let down by reformist leaders. The hundred years since the Hay Market affair show that notwithstanding massacres, executions and tortures the working class movement had registered unprecedented triumphs with capitalism abolished over one-thrid of the world. On the centenary day the working class must recall not only the great sacrifices of the ealier martyrs but also the magnificent triumphs of the international working class movement which should speed our efforts to move forward to socialism in our country.

Response to New Situation

Life and class realities are however asserting themseleves. Today even the reformist trade unions of Western countries are facing the danger of nuclear war and have to speak against it. Whether they lodge their protest in May Day meetings or not they are uanble to ignore the danger of war and have to oppose it at their annual conferences. The leaders of many of these organisations are unwilling to blame their own imperialist governments and are not unwilling to pass on the blame to the Soviet Union. But the mass of workers has seized the initiative and in many countries despite the opposition of their leaders they have jointed the wide peace movement in which millions are involved. A powerful organisation like the British Trade Union Congress had to come out in total opposition to war and the British Labour Party at one of its conferences voted in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmanment. Due to the nuclear danger the old spirit of international unity and internationalism is again coming back and the tradition of the earlier May Day to oppose international conflict is again being revived. Of course it is true that the Socialist parties which have great influence over the working class in these countries even now continue to play their game of reformism and anti-Sovietism and by their behaviour and practice do everything to split the ranks of the working class on the question of war itself.

Mighty Force of Peace

But guarding the international traditions of May Day has arisen a powerful and invincible force—the force of the working class of all socialist countries and the people of the countries, a force which runs into hundreds of millions. Never before was there such a force to guard the international unity of the working class and to oppose the internecine war. Never before international unity of the working class had the advantage of being backed by powerful socialist states.

This mighty force is backed by tens of millions of working class from capitalist and third world countries which are now rallied under the banner of the World Federation of Trade Unions. The World Federation of Trade Unions which includes under its banner the working class of socialist countries has been the most consistent fighter for protecting world peace and international unity, and it is being aided in a powerful manner by the world peace movement.

Such are the powerful forces defending the international unity of the workers. But the danger of war continues and the centenary called on all sections of the working class to redouble its efforts to frustrate the war mongers.

May Day in India

In our country the working class movement has been observing May Day for the last 50 years or more. In fact the demand of eight hour day was made in our country by the Railway workers of Howrah as early as 1862. There was also an effort from Bengal to establish contacts with the First International and a letter was written to that organisation which is noted in one of the minutes International Workingmen's Association. However from the beginning the trade unions of our country could not unitedly adopt or accept the observance of May Day. In the 20s or 30s except the Communists hardly anybody observed the day. Later on those who decided to observe it from among the non Communists did so under the influence of the reformist IInd International and the reformist trade union movement of Great Britain. Many trade union leaders consider May Day as something foreign and refused to accept it as a common day for international unity of the working class. That is because they had no concept of working class as a class and the necessity of international unity. Today also there are some trade union organisations in our country which consider May Day as an alien intrusion in our movement.

The trade union movement could not observe a common May Day in the spirit of May Day internationalism and its call to end the capitalist system because of the same reason that plagued the western movement. One wing of trade union leadership not only did not want any reference to socialism it did not want any reference to politics in the trade union movement. These leaders were definetly anti-strike and its support was used by the government to befool the British public opinion that Indian labour was supporting the British against the demand for national independence. Their policy of collaboration with the British having been defeated they split the AITUC in 1929. They wanted unity on the basis of rejection of political anti-imperialist struggle, a rejection of all politics by the trade unions and avoidance of strikes.

It is easy to understand therefore that there could not be a common observance of May Day along with these sections.

Bourgeois Nationalism and Internationalism

Things were not easy either with the nationalist section. One section of the nationalists in the trade union movement was opposed to introduction of any independent politics for the working class and in fact was opposed to introduction of any politics inside the trade union movement. Its deeply bourgeois nationalist outlook also prevented it from thinking in terms of internationalism of socialism. In fact it also counterposed internationalism to nationalism and partiotism and charged the communists with dependence on foreign ideology. The radical national wing however was prepared to put the problems of independence and freedom before the working class, give call for anti-imperialist action but was opposed to internationalism. A large number of these radicals, soon developed an anti-Soviet attitude.

It will be seen therefore what in these years observance of May Day based on its basic call was not possible in association with any wing. The Communists therefore were often forced to observe May Day by themselves. Sometimes in the interests of unity they observed May Day in association with radical nationalists, the Congress socialists and called upon the workers to fight for freedom and independence. But in such meetings the call for international solidarity and unity was very weak.

Communists Stand by Revolutionary Tradition

But the communists and trade unions influenced by them were able to carry the spirit of internationalism and May Day to the

sections following them. They were the first to organise the first anti-war strike in Bombay when the IInd World War started. Within a few days of the declaration of war they organised Bombay on October 2, 1939 an anti-war protest strike in which more than 90 thousand workers participated. This was the first anti-war strike against the 2nd World War in the world labour movement. The resolution unanimously adopted at the mass meeting of the workers proclaimed : "This meeting declares its solidarity with the international working class and the people of the world, who are being dragged into the most destructive war by the imperialist powers. This meeting regards the present war as a challenge to the solidarity of international working class and declares that it is the task of the workers and people of different countries to defeat this imperialist conspiracy against humanity."

The Communists were the first to start resisting the war burdens imposed on the people. They started their resistance with the strike of 1 lakh 75 thousands textile workers for dearness allowance in Bombay in March 1940. The Bombay strike unleashed a wave of strike all over the country.

Opportunist Trend

After independence the trade union wing controlled by the National Congress split away from the AITUC making it clear that it did not want to associate with the communists in the trade union movement. This was an open device to bring the working class under the influence of bourgeoisie, reject internationalism and develop class collaborationist politics inside the working class. The INTUC was founded to achieve this purpose. It was of course difficult to have a common May Day observance with the INTUC which rejected revolutionary politics and international class unity.

However things did not go well either with those who remained in the AITUC. The virus of reformism of collaborating with the bourgeois landlord government soon caught a section of AITUC. The revisionism also invaded a section of the then CPI leadership which finally led to a split in both the organisations. All these finally ended in both the CPI and the AITUC supporting the reactionary emergency rule. It was obviously not possible in those years to have a common May Day expressing the revolutionary content of the earlier May Day.

Struggle for Trade Union Unity

This lack of cohesion and a common revolutionary ideology

still dogs the trade union movement. It is of course essential that the trade union movement should growingly unite as without it the full class force of the working class cannot be felt by the rulers that be. But the existing trade union unity achieved through the National Campaign Committee does not go beyond announcing and acting for certain immediate economic demands.

Till now the committ has been unable to come out with united resoulation opposion war and exposing the US imperialist aggerssor. it has been unable to explain to the workers the dangers and horrors of nuclear war and the fact that the war is also connected with the US imperialist plans of global domination including the enslavement of India. The National Campaign Committee cannot be said to possess a common outlook and the problems of democracy and unity facing India. It is because of this that during all these years a proper May Day paying tributes to the spirit of internationalism and revolution of the earlier May Day could not unitedly be observed in all parts of India.

Things have however changed and things are changing. The challenge of nuclear war is now rousing large sections of our people including those trade unions who till now showed pathetic indifference to it. The challenge of internal divisive forces is also rising making many trade union organisations aware of the responsibility to meet it. However many organisations are still totally unaware of the US imperialist conspiracies against our country and the responsibility of US imperialists for the danger of nuclear war.

The initiative recently taken, by the INTUC leadership to call a meeting of several Trade Union Centres to develop common understanding on the question of war, fight against divisive forces and to express protest against aparthied constitutes a sign of growing awareness of the wider problems facing the working class and the trade union movement. It is a welcome step and every effort should be made to create common consciousness and a sense of urgency among the workers regarding these problems.

While welcoming the growing consciousness about war danger the CITU and its unions must regard the May Day centenary as an occasion to fully revive the spirit of earlier May Day in the light of our manifesto. It will be doing a great harm to the militant course of the working class movement if May Day centenary is allowed to be vulgarised into a declaration of some economic demands divested of all revolutionary content.

The centenary slogans must cover the three commponents of the revolutionary tradition of May Day. One, partial demands carrying revolutionary significance and capable of creating class consciousness to fight the existing order. Two, immediate tasks facing the revolutionary movement in India. Three, fight against war and protection on international unity of the working class.

The May Day centenary manifesto includes, all these components. Its says, on May Day the working class must unitedly voice its protest against the economic policy of the government and protest against the freedom given to multinationals to penetrate our economy.

It must demand a halt to attacks on trade union rights and condemn offical policy of computerisation. Calling for immediate opening of all closed factories and concerns, it must demand immediate adequate unemployment relief and further demand that the right to work should be embodied in the Constitution as a fundamental right. It must call for immediate and total nationalisation of the cotton textile, jute and sugar industries.

The working class must announce its preparedness and determination to champion the cause of the people and the peasants and agricultural workers. It mut demand complete overhauling of agrarian relations, break-up of concentration of land and distribution of the land to the tillers.

On May Day the working class must proclaim its determination to fight the forces of authoritarianism, defend and expand the democratic rights of the people and work for the state of people's democracy to open the way to socialism.

It must declare its resolve to fight imperialist conspiracies which are undermining the unity of our country, the secessionist and divisive forces which are unleashing forces of disintegration, and communal and obscurantist agencies which disrupt the unity of the toilers.

In view of the constant pressure on our foreign policy of non-alignment and the vacillations and trends already in evidence the working class must keep a vigilant watch on the conduct of our foreign policy and by timely intervention prevent any antinational compromise. The policy of non-alignment which opposes war and stands for peace and which helps to keep a number of third world countries out of the orbit of imperialist domination is of great help to the working class in fighting the menance of war and discharg-

ing its international responisibility. The policy of non-alignment which befriends the Socialist countries enables Indian people and the working class to throw their weight against the war mongers and on the side of peace.

International unity of the working class and opposition to all militarist, imperialist and aggressive wars is an integral part of the revolutionary heritage of May Day struggle. The centenary manifesto correctly observes "Today the entire world is again threatened with the danger of nuclear war. It is not a war between two super powers, but a war that is being organised by the imperialist camp against the Socialist camp which is the achievement of hundred years of struggle of the world working class.

Why do the imperialists seek to unleash a war against the socialist camp? Because there is no unemployment, no poverty, no economic crisis, and no capitalist exploitation in the socialist countries. Practical achievements of socialism are attracting like a magnet millions of people towards it. The imperialists want to stop this march of progress and reconquer the whole world again for their exploitation.

The USA and its imperialist allies are spending millions of dollars on nuclear and other armaments while more than 30 millions are unemployed and starving in these countries. To be able to attack the Soviet Union they have delpoyed missiles in Europe and are also increasing their conventional armaments. Reagan's Star War Project is a diabolical device to carry nuclear war into outer space.

The USA imperialists not only seek to destroy socialist system they also seek to reconquer the entire world for imperialistic exploitation. The nuclear war plan is also a plan for global domination, for re-enslavement of third world countries like India.

That is why the USA imperialists and Reagan refuse to accept any limitation on nuclear armament, any limitation on military expenditure and refuse to leave outer space free from nuclear weapons. The USSR has made several proposals for limitation of nuclear strikes. But the American govt. did not respond and refused to pledge that it would not be the first to use the nuclear strike. In fact the star war project is precisely intended for nuclear first strike.

In these circumstances the recent proposals made by Comrade Gorbachov, Secretary of the CPSU to eliminate nuclear weapons by the end of this century, and to take initial steps towards the aim,

serve cause of peace and show a way to save humanity from a most destructive war. The CITU and the entire working class of India must lend their full support to these proposals. Their adoption will protect international unity of the working class and uphold the banner of proletarian internationalism.

The appeal of the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions, Soviet Union, to the Working People and Trade Unions of the World on the statement of Comrade M.S. Gorbachov constitutes an urgent call for international unity and action against the danger of nuclear war.

The appeal coming from the working class which only four decades back had to sacrifice 20 million lives, the flower of the working class, in the struggle against fascism and for the freedom of all people must find adequate and effective response of May Day. It reminds India's working class, as contingent of the world working class, to take firm and active stand against the developing war danger.

The appeal says, " General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. M.S. Gorbachev made a statement advancing a programme of complete and world wide elimination of nuclear arms before the year 2000 and laying down other major peace actions.... Mankind is offered a clear, coherent and thoroughtly thought out programme of concrete action whose realisation would allow the 20th century to be completed by marking it with peace and disarmament.

The appeal says "on behalf of 137 million Soviet Trade Union members, the AUCCTU appeals to the working people of all countries, to all trade union organisations, to give their all round support to the Soviet Union's large scale programme for the complete elimination of nuclear arms throughout the world before the end of this century."

It calls "on the working people and trade unions of the world to press for the other powers, primaily, the USA joining in prolonged Soviet unilateral moratorium on any nuclear explosions; to fight for banning completely the developing and production of new types of weapons of mass annihiliation including speace strike stystem; to demand a complete destruction of chemical weapons; to help in every possible way to ensure that the process started by the Soviet-US summit in Geneva will result in the realisation of the principled accords arrived at during that meeting, and in concrete

agreements to be adopted on the issue of halting the arms race and promoting mutual trust."

The appeal adds, "It is only through concerted efforts that the edifice of lasting peace can be erected. Further development depends to a considerable extent on how much united the battle front will be in fighting against the danger of war.... Any delay is intolerable. In order to enter the third millennium without the weapons of mass annihilation it is necessary to act today."

This is a concrete programme for fighting the danger of neclear war, for frustrating the imperialist plans and for welding together the international working class into a single united army for defending peace. The May Day centenary in our country must fully respond to this appeal, popularise the Soviet proposals for peace and rouse our entire working class to discharge its international obligations. This is one of the most important issues facing the working class all over the world and the May Day Centenary should not find India's working class lagging behing in the struggle for world peace.

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American Brinkmanship

The unprovoked and dastardly US attack against Libya constitutes an act of criminal aggression unparalleled in recent history. It can be compared only with Musolini's attack on Euthopia or the many treacherous deeds of the late Adolf Hitler of evil memory.

This is the second time that aggression was launched against this small country by a bullying power which has enough nuclear arms at its disposal to destroy the entire world. It is the same power that launched a cowardly aggression against Grenada and is today supplying arms and help to Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries to upset the democratic government of that country. These misdeeds coming one after another are not the product of the mind of an individual but the logical consequence of the policies of the industrial-military complex that rules the US in the name of people. The class character of the representatives of the people elected under the US Constitution was seen when both the Senate and House of Representatives voted for military action against Libya.

The excuse that action was taken because the Libyan Government was supporting terrorist actions against American citizens and institutions cannot be accepted by any same or honest person. The immediate cause of this aggression is supposed to be the killing of two US personnel in West Germany after a bomb attack. No one except the U.S. agencies consider that the attack was the handiwork of Libyan terrorists. But the U.S. imperialists do not need any proof when they consider aggression necessary in their interests. Neither

do they consider the restrictions and norms of international law before attacking the sovereignty of any other nation. Like the British imperialists of the earlier days, they consider themselves to be the overlords of the world and place themslves above all international guarantees, UNO resolutions, or any moral code of behaviour. They consider it perfectly moral and legitimate to kill hundreds of innocent Libyans as a revenge of the loss of two American lives.

Mrs. Thatcher's Government by slavishly joining the US imperialists and Reagan in the shameful aggression against Libya has covered itself with utter disgrace. No previous British Prime Minister had sunk so low as to subordinate its foreign policy and its independence to the dictates of a dominaing ally and a rival power. Mrs. Thatcher not only supported Reagan, she readily obliged him by allowing the use of Britain base US planes to carry out his nefarious design. Except France and Spain no other European country forcefully opposed the US missiles to be deployed in their territories under the pretext of protecting their security against the USSR, have the courage to dissociate themselves from such aggression. The NATO alliance has worked and US has been allowed to go ahead with certain verbal demarcation from its stand.

However, the people of Europe, the democratic and progressive forces all over the world and the fighters for peace have all unanimously condemned this dastardly action isolating the US Government and its allies. There is wide spread indignation among the Arabic countries though the Governments of some of these countries are only expressing their opposition verbally and preventing people's anger from taking its full course. The condemnation by the Soviet Union has encouraged the anti-imperialist and democratic forces and increased their confidence to fight US policy. The communique issued by the conference of Non-Aligned Ministers has further helped in exposing the US and isolating it from the people of a large number of Third World countries.

The unmitigated act of aggression has united all secular political parties in India and in Lok Sabha all parties have unanimously condemned the US Government for its armed attack against Libya. The ruling party, its government, the bourgeois-opposition parties and all left parties have voiced the indigation of democratic forces against American invasion and made it clear that those who pursue this policy will ever be opposed by the mass of democratic forces

in the country.

This ruthless act of aggression, however, was to be expected from a power which is seriously preparing for a nuclear war and its extention to space. These acts of US imperialism exposed the utter hypocracy of those who while opposing US acts of aggression, indulged in cheap talks about two super powers. The Reagan administration continues to vitiate the international atmosphere by refusing to agree to any concrete proposal for stopping nuclear tests and step by step eliminating of all weapons of mass destruction as suggested by Com. Gorbachev. The optimistic atmosphere that was created after the Gorbachev-Reagan meeting has been dissipated by Reagan's wild statements and still wilder moves had actions of his administration. As the Soviet Government's statement issued on April 12 states "The nuclear explosion conducted by the United States on April 10, 1986 once again clearly demonstrated what is really concealed behind the words of the United States administration about its devotion to the aims of liquidating nuclear arms. It is intended to further threaten mankind with a nuclear war, to keep that world in the trap of fear of universal annihilation. Once again Washington has placed the egoistic imperialist ambitions of the United States' military industrial complex above the interests of mankind. The American Government's irresponsible actions are an open challenge not only to the Soviet Union but also to the people of all continents; to the world as a whole".

Last summer in order to facilitate peace negotiations the Soviet Union declared and unilateral moratorium on all nuclear tests. It was hoped that the US administration would respond to this offer and take steps to accelerate the drive for peace. It was necessary that the US gave up its Star War project and put an end to all nuclear tests designed in the direction of carrying war to outer space. But the US Administration refused to give up its Star War Project and advertised it as a product for defence only. US experts themselves revealed that the Star War Project can be used only as a weapon of first strike otherwise it has no validity. Inspite of opposition to the project by the progressive forces, the American administration went ahead taking steps to complete it and by its nuclear explosion of 10th April it announced that it had no intention of engaging in peace negotiations. The time bound programme proposed by Com. Gorbachev to rid the world of nuclear weapons was rejected.

The USSR was now compelled to give up its voluntary moratorium on nuclear tests. Responsibility for this situation entirely lies with the US administration.

The Soviet statement of April 12, at the same time assures: "Soviet Government reiterates its proposals to the Governments of USA and Great Britain on resuming and bringing to completion the tripartite talks, stopped in 1980 with a view to work out a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapons tests. The Soviet Union stands for its undelayed beginning of multisided talks within the frame work of Geneva conference on disarmament with the same aim. We are also prepared to reach agreement on spreading the terms of 1963 Moscow Treaty banning nuclear weapons test in the atmosphere, in outer space.

Earlier by agreeing to verification on spot the USSR removed the last excuse for US refusal to accept ban on nuclear test.

It is futile to expect that the US administration will respond to the new Soviet offer and make way for meaninful dialogue for peace. The US imperialists are bent on achieving military and arms superiority over the Soviet Union before they launch a destructive war. A power determined to carry out its war designs resorts to aggressive measures against all thos who are likely to oppose its war. It does not want any neutrals in the war. It therefore tries to subjugate both neutral and the opponents of the war before it enters upon its major adventure. The Libyan crisis is a product of this policy and constitutes a warning for all democratic and peaceful forces that the US is engaging in brinksmanship and is fervently preparing for a nuclear holocaust. 17.4.86

Worldwide Protest Actions

Spontaneous protest actions burst out all over the world against the USA's barbarous attack on Libya. Trade Union workers, students, youth, women and the peace loving people joined the demonstrations in large numbers. In USA, hundreds of people staged demonstrations before the Pentagon recruitment centre in New York. Similar demonstrations were held at Chicago, Boston, San Francisco and other cities of America. Over two thousand people demonstrated before Margaret Thatcher's office at 10, Downing Street and at White Hall, London. More than 160 demonstrators were arrested. Another candle light demonstration was organised by the Britain's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Demonstrations were also staged before the American Embassy. Everywhere

the placards read: "Murderers Out of Britain", Margaret Thatcher—Blood in Your Hands". In Copenhagen, a mass demonstration held before the US Embassy denounced the American policy as a threat to world peace. Another rally was held at Orhus. In Vienna, 22 people were arrested from a mass demonstration held before the US Embassy. In West Germany thousand protesters fought with the riot police on 16th night. Windows of buildings were smashed, ten were arrested and 17 police men were injured in the course. Hundreds of people staged demonstrations in North and South Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan. The police lined up in Sweden to control the demonstrators. Demonstrations were held in Brazil also. Widespread demonstrations took place in Italy. Marchers paraded in 90 cities of the country. Organised by the Communist Party, thousands of people and students paraded the streets of Rome, shouting: "Yankee Go Home" and "Reagan the Executioner" Organised by the Spanish Communist Party and anti-NATO groups, thousands of protesters rallied at Madrid, Zaragoza and a dozen other cities in Spain. In the industrial cities of Basque, San Sebastian and Victoria thousands of demonstrator clashed with the police. Widespread demonstrations were held in Pakistan with Burning of American flags and effigies of Reagan. People shouted slogans: "Death of Reagan", "Pakistanis and Libyans are Brothers". The Women's International Democratic Federation from Berlin condemned the US attack. Demonstrators from Africa and West Asian countries staged a sit-in demonstration before the American and UK Embassies at Beijing.

CITU Denounces U.S. Aggression: B.T. Ranadive, President of CITU in a statement issued on April 16, denounced the naked aggression as a political brigandage by the USA in pursuance of its aim for global domination and pursuit for war. It welcomed the declaration of the non-aligned foreign ministers condemning the US attack. The CITU called upon the State Committees and the unions to protest against the US warmongers and in support of the Libyan people. The Parliament unanimously condemned the attack and a large number of the M.P.s demonstrated before the US Embassy at Delhi. All the political parties and trade unions similarly condemned the US action. Students, trade union workers, youth and other mass organisations held massive demonstrations at Delhi, Calcutta and other places of the country.

The Working Class, Vol. 15, No. 9 May 1986

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Presidential Address

CITU General Council Meeting
Calcutta, March 31—April 2, 1986

Comrades,

At the outset on behalf of all of you I wish to pay homage to the memory of Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden who fell a victim to the assasin's bullets. In his death the world has lost a valiant fighter in the cause of peace, a fighter who made significant contribution to the struggle against war and preservation of peace.

On behalf of all of you I offer my greetings to Nelson Mandela, the courageous fighter against apartheid, fighter for the freedom of the African people. His incarceration in the prison for two decades has not daunted his spirit and from the jail itself he has become a source of inspiration to hundreds of thousands fighting against the racist fascist regime of Botha. His voice has broken through the jail walls and prison bars and rings continuously with the challenge to his oppressors who are now openly and clandestinely supported by the imperialist powers. None is so shameful and outrageous in its support as Reagan's US Government which all of us must denounce with anger and indignation. I also wish to convey our greetings to the courageous wife to convey our greetings to the courageous wife of Nelson Mandela who carries forward the task of fighting those who enchain her people.

Left-Front Governments—Advanced Outpost of Democracy

Before I turn to other subject let me on your behalf congratulate the Left Front Government of West Bengal headed by our Vice President Com. Jyoti Basu on its successful defence of the demo-

cratic rights of the people of West Bengal and safeguarding their economic interests in the midst of a very perilous economic situation. For more than 8 years since the installation of the Left Front ministry democratic liberties have been completely protected in the State in contrast to what is taking place in Congress(I) ruled States where lathi charge, firing on striking workers and harijan killings go on uniterrupted. Besides, all Cong(I) ruled States are affected by the virus of communalism and the attack of divisive force, with the administration standing paralysed before them. But in the left front ruled state of West Bengal the divisive forces are checked by growing unity of the people, and the policies of the left front government protect this unity and strengthen national unity. The two left front ministries of West Bengal and Tripura stand as advanced outposts of democracy protecting the unity of the people, the country and the vital interests of the workers, peasants, the adivasis, and harijans—all down trodden sections, throwing their weight against the vested interests, using the administration as an instrument of popular will. In these two states the Governments stand committed to protect the rights of Muslim minority and fight communalism coming from the majority or minority community. The working class and its organisations highly appreciate this policy and lend their full support to the ministries against which the Central Government and Cong(I) ruling party continue to conspire with a view to destabilising them.

Comrades on behalf of all of you I greet our valiant working class of West Bengal, our strongest base. I greet the jute workers who recently waged a successful struggle for their demands and whose union, the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union is the biggest union affiliated to the CITU. The working class of Bengal has successfully waged many heroic battles in recent months, organised protest actions and has been able to defend its interests in the most adverse circumstances. In all its activities it is helped by the Left Front Government which ensures complete freedom for its movement.

The working class of Bengal led the great protest against the price hike imposed by the Central Government. Its strike of 11th February became a signal for the rest of the country to take up the fight against price rise.

Hail The Peace Proposal

An outstanding event of recent months in the international

world is the successfully concluded 27th Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union. In the midst of a capitalist world badly affected by unemployment and unable to reap the fruits of industrial technical revolution for the benefit of society, the CPSU Congress announced the complete superiority of the socialist system which is now embarking upon a new plan of accelerated economic development to raise the living standard of the people to still a higher level. This was being accomplished when huge resources had to be diverted for the purpose of defence because of the war situation created by US imperialism and its allies. The Congress expressed firm confidence in achieving its economic goals and at the same time strengthening the defence capacity of the Soviet Union. Firmly adhering to the laws of development of socialist society the Congress mapped out further successes for its planning and took steps to bring the relations of production in conformity with the huge development of productive forces achieved under the rapid growth of industrial technical revolution. It meant heightening the efficiency of centralised guidance of the country, strengthening the role of the centre, in implementing the main goals of the party's economic strategy and in determining the rate and proportions of national economic growth, and its balanced development. At the same time it meant the practice of interfering by the centre in the daily activities of the lower economic links must be overcome.

Uphold Revolutionary Traditions of May Day

Comrades, the May Day centenary will be observed within a few weeks all over the world. This great day of international solidarity must be observed fittingly by all our trade unions, all our state committees honouring the memories of those who fell victims to the Chicago massacre, those who were sent to the gallows by an enraged capitalist class because they dared to demand 8 hour day and called for a curb on the unbridled exploitation of the working class. The day must recall the great advances the international working class movement has made during the last hundred years with one third of the world going socialist with the old colonial system smashed and the enslaved countries of Asia and Africa emerging as free countries, free from foreign domination.

On this day our unions must remember the revolutionary traditions of May Day following which one third of the world marched to socialism and neglect of which kept the workers of advanced

countries enchained to capitalist slavery.

Revolutionary content of May Day consists of raising such partial demands on the Day as have (1) revolutionary consequences; (2) expressing firm determination to end the capitalist system, establish working class power and socialism; (3) defence of proletarian internationalism and international unity of the working class. Confining May Day activities only to raising some partial demands and neglecting the other two aspects takes away the revolutionary content of this historic day. The working class on this day cannot neglect the immediate political task facing it, if it wants to achieve socialism. It also cannot forget its international duty and foil all efforts of the capitalist class to split it.

On all occasions the danger to international unity arises from the wars organised by ruling capitalist classes. It has been the tradition of May Day to oppose all such wars and proclaim the unity of the international movement in the battle to end the world capitalist system.

International Solidarity Against War

Today protection of international solidarity and unity of the working class, has assumed supreme importance. The international situation is marked by US imperialist drive for nuclear war against the socialist Soviet Union. The war that is being planned is the war of imperialism against socialism, against the working class conquests and achievements over the last hundred years. It is also a war for re-establishing the global domination of US imperialism over the newly liberated countries. The ideological and the military strength of the Socialist camp stands as a deterrent to the imperialist plans of domination and therefore US imperialism is attempting to secure military superiority over the Soviet Union to launch a war against it. The Star War Project of Reagan is part of the offensive preparations.

In contrast to these plans of the USA, the Soviet Union and Comrade Gorbachev have made several proposals to stop the progress towards war and gradually eliminate all nuclear weapons. But the US imperialists refuse to respond.

In these circumstances international unity of the working class demands constant opposition to war and ful support to Gorbachev's proposals for peace. On May Day it must be our endeavour to carry the message of peace to the workers and expose US plans for war. The defence of the socialist camp against imperialist war plans

constitutes the essence of internationalism.

Respond to AUCCTU Appeal

Comrades the situation is serious as can be seen from the appeal of the AUCCTU to the working people and the trade unions of the world. The appeal which was sent to our organisation also calls for support to the proposals made by Comrade M.S. Gorbachov for advancing a programme of complete and world wide elimination of nuclear arms before the year 2000. It says "on behalf of one hundred & thirty seven (137) million Soviet trade union members the AUCCTU appeals to the working people of all countries to all trade union organisations to give their all around support to the Soviet Union's large scale programme for the complete elimination of nuclear arms."

It says "It is only through concerted efforts that the edifice of lasting peace can be erected. Further development depends to a considerable extent on how much united the battle front will be in fighting against the danger of war. Extensive opportunities for working people to take joint action in defence of peace are offered by the campaign "Trade Unions and Working People for Peace and Jobs" launched at the initiative of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

The appeal further adds "we are sure that the trade unions must put aside all differences and reject all that divides them when it comes to the struggle for safeguarding peace, against the threat of a new war. In this we must be united just in matters relating to common vital interests of those whom the trade unions are called upon to protect. The Soviet trade unions adhere exactly to these view points.

"Any delay is intolerable. In order to enter the third millenium without the weapons of mass annihilation it is necessary to act today. May 1986 designated by the UNO as an international year of peace must become a turning point in resolving the most pressing issue of our times—that of preventing a nuclear holocaust."

Comrades, we all must fully respond to this appeal for international unity from the people and the working class which only four decades back sacrificed 20 million lives to save humanity from fascist domination. The appeal should spur us to overcome our weaknesses in regard to the peace movement and urge us forward to to move the working class and the people against the danger of nuclear war created by the US imperialism and for maintenance of

peace.

Welcome Initiative

Comrades the initiative recently taken by the INTUC leadership to call a meeting of several trade union centres to develop common understanding on the question of war, fight against divisive forces and express protest against apartheid constitute a sign of growing awareness of wider and vital problems facing the working class and the trade union movement. It is a welcome step and every effort should be made to create common consciousness and a sense of urgency among the workers regarding these problems.

Denounce Divisive Forces

Comrades, you all are aware that there is a rapid deterioration in the political situation with divisive forces on the offensive, the Cong(I) Government a helpless spectator unable to combat them and often compromising with them and the mass of people unable to intervene and stop the rot. The deterioration of the situation in Punjab is marked by a growing offensive of the confrontation and their surrender before these forces and the complete inability of the Cong(I) party which still wields considerable influence on the people of Punjab to intervene on behalf of national unity. In Assam the new ministry pursues separatist and secessionist aims and its followers run a campaign of intimidation and murder of opponents. The ministry is also preparing for steps which may lead to expulsion of thousands of Indian citizens from Assam dubbing them a foreign nationals. The Cong(I) Government at the Centre and in the States compromises with these elements and in its own selfish interests take steps which help and encourage the communal and divisive forces. The unlocking of the Ram Janma Bhoomi temple in the midst of the present critical situation can be described only as an act of unmitigated provocation to the Muslim masses which is now being fully utilised by fanatical communal leaders. Simultaneously the Cong(I) government to protect its muslim electoral base compromises with the worst section of Muslim communalists, on the question of the right of Muslim divorcee woman to secure maintenance from her husband. The legislative measure which it has placed before the Parliament is a shameful and treacherous piece surrendering the rights of Muslim women to the jackals of obscurantism. No previous Central Govt. had degraded itself so much and prostrated itself in such a manner before

religious bigotry and orthodoxy as the Rajiv Government. The explanation offered by the Prime Minister in justification of the measures is on par with that offered by many Shankaracharyas in defence of untouchability.

As a result the divisive forces are on the attack everywhere and the unity of the toiling people and the working class is being directly affected. The trade union movement and the working class must take a common stand to combat these anti- national forces and defeat the game of the imperialists who are supporting them from behind. It is the immediate duty of the National Campaign Committee, all Central Trade Unions and all Industrial Federations to enter the battle to defeat the forces of communalism and casteism and assert the class unity for the working class and protect the unity of the country.

As I have already mentioned, the initiative taken by the INTUC should help the trade union movement to unite for this offensive.

Fight Against all Pervading Corruption

The crisis is affecting all aspects of our national life and in State after state, in city after city, law and administration is crumbling down and is openly used in the defence of vested interest. The stench of corruption pervades the entire social life. From Chief Minister of states to ordinary police officers and jail officials are caught in this web of corruption. In Delhi notorious convicts flushed with money are able to run the jail administration, and escape with the direct help of jail officials. Is it any wonder that in this atmosphere bribery and corruption, foreign espionage should thrive in the country and its tentacles spread far and wide. The recent exposure of CIA net work in Delhi must be taken seriously by all patriotic people. It also shows the danger created by the present administration of the security of our country.

This situation itself is the result of the process of the undermining of our economy that has been going on for the last few years.

People's Answer To Price Rise

Comrades, you all know that the Rajiv Government announced last year its New Economic policy which now reveals itself as continuous depredations on the incomes and living standards of the people and growingg attacks on their jobs in the name of modernisation of economy. The last budget saw the first phase of this policy. It gave concessions amounting more than 1000 crores of rupees to the private capitalists and businessmen while just before the budget

it levied new burdens of more than 1000 crores of rupees on the common people.

This year again a new burden of not less than thousand crores of rupees was imposed through the hike in administered prices of vital commodities and necessaries of life. There have been widespread protests and bandhs against this fleecing of the people. The battle must be carried on and the CITU unions must continue to mobilise people's protest against the new imposts. The widespread bandh in many states show that the people are ready to move into action if a call comes from several organisations.

The New Policy however goes much beyond giving concession to big capital and addition of burden on the common man.

It is a retreat from the earlier position which considered the public sector as important and accepted the need of control over private sector. The national planning inspite of its defects and class bias was intended to serve the need of protecting Indian economy against subjugation to foreign capital and western interests.

The postulates of the new policy are removal of controls, freedom for the private sector, denigration and growing disbandment of the public sector, denigration of national planning, and opening the Indian market to the multinationals. In short the entire country is being exposed to the uncontrolled exploitation of the private sector and foreign multinationals with government control day by day removed.

Danger from Multi-Nationals

The free entry of multinationals into the Indian market will not only mean unbridled exploitation of the workers and the people but it will lead to the danger of undermining our economic independence. The multinationals are not satisfied with capturing economic market but conspire to bring down governments and establish their economic and political domination over countries. The restriction that hitherto operated against the entry of multinationals are being removed and the people of our country are being exposed to great political danger.

Stop Denigration of Public Sector

Large sections of workers and many trade unions have acted in the past as if the way the public sector functioned or what the government did with it was no concern of theirs. But this was a wrong attitude of the working class of a newly liberated country. The public sector in India cannot be compared with the public sector of

Britain. For instance, their both the public and private sector are instruments of imperialism and function under state monopoly capitalism.

But in newly liberated countries a well managed public sector based on strategic industry is an instrument of defending the economy against imperialist depredations and dependence on imperialism. It does serve the interests of indigenous capitalism. But it obstructs the penetration of imperialism into the economy. This is why in India when the public sector started its activities in strategic industries it was largely supported by the advanced trade union movement and all progressive forces. In spite of a great deal of mismanagement the public sector contributed to defending the independence of our economy to a great extent. It has been so because in a large number of cases it was directly helped by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. In fact, we would not have been able to build our strategic industries if help from socialist countries were not available.

This aspect of the public sector has not been properly put before the workers by the trade unions. Today it is all the more necessary to do so because under the pressure of the imperialists, the World Bank and the IMF the official policy is denigrating the public sector and giving more encouragement to the private sector. But the matter does not end here. The denigration of the public sector is further intended to invite the foreign multinational companies to help India in her technological advance.

Comrades, the New Policy of Rajiv Gandhi not only contains proposals for the denigration of the public sector. It may also end in placing the public sector undertakings under the technological and managerical control of foreign companies. In fact it seems a process of penetration into the public sector by foreign multinationals is already starting if we are to believe reports appearing in the press. The penetration is taking place in the name of technological agreements with non-residential Indian capital which is often a sign board for foreign multinationals.

Comrades, the officers of the public sector undertakings recently entered a strong protest against the way they were treated by the authorities. They observed an all India protest day on the 13th March voicing following demands: 1. Uniform dearness allowance neutralisation. 2. Amendment of Payment of Bonus Act for abolishing bonus eligibility ceiling limit 3. Implementation of Interna-

tional Labour Organisation Compendium on good practices for professional workers specifically in relation to right to form association and collective bargaining and role in decision making. 4. Pension scheme for public sector employees in addition to present retirement benefits. 5. Definition of legal status of officers in public sector. 6. White paper on government policies relating to public sector particularly with reference to (1) capacity utilisation of existing investment in technology manufacturing facilities and man power, (2) import liberation and (3) participative management.

The CITU supports these demands some of which are not only in the interest of the officers but in the interest of the country as a whole.

Machination of the Multinationals

Guided by the spirit of patriotism the Officers' Association exposes the claims of the Government to justify its present policies of denigration of the public sector. They say, "yet another attack on the public sector is that it is not competitive and an exposure to international competition would streamline such enterprises. This policy is merely an attempt to hide the vital truth that several multinationals in the capital goods industry are badly hit by recession and would resort to anything to get the Indian market." They further say, "Is it not amazing that when the Indian shipyards are starved with orders, the government of India under the SAFAUN scheme provides subsidies for the Indian merchant navy to import ships? Similarly, while no country allows the import of electrical equipment if they indigenously manufacture electrical power equipment, the world imports are allowed while BHEL starves. The Chairman of BHEL is reported in the press as having stated, "No country kills its own indigenous industry. We are concerned that if orders went outside, BHEL's capacity utilisation would be reduced. We will fight for the orders".

"It must be clearly understood that there are no short cuts in technological development. Technology imports in a close market are in essence an alternative route for penetration into the market that too on a preferential basis. Indian scientists and technologists are quite capable of meeting a substantial requirement of industrial technology. What is lacking is the political will to ensure self reliance. We the representatives of the public sector officers warn the public that the present policies of down grading the public

sector and of liberalising import both of equipment and technology will prove disastrous in the long run."

Our apprehensions about the New Economic Policy are now fully supported by the officer's association. They also realise that under the guise of opening the public sector to competition, penetration of multionationals is bound to take place endangering the interests and economic independence of the nation.

Introduce Democratic Management

Under these conditions it is absolutely essential that the public sector is opened to democratic management by the full participation on equal terms of workers, officers and the management. Instead of opening the public sector to foreign competition it should be opened to democratic and participate management to increase its efficiency to serve the interest of the country.

Workers' Participation on Equal Status

Comrades, the CITU is repeatedly demanding workers' participation in management on the basis of full equality and on the basis of representation through a secret ballot of the entire workers of the factory or concern. Both elements, equal status and representation on the basis of ballot, are necessary if the entire mass of workers are to be involved in running the concerns and inspired to make its effective contribution to efficiency to serve the interest of the country. But the government refuses to accept either of these conditions and proposes a farcical form of workers' participation. It does not gurantee or accept status of equality for the workers. It refuses to accept that workers' representatives should be chosen by secret ballot. It does not propose to go beyond the vote of trade union membership and that too based on check off system. This necessity leaves out of account a major section of the workers who are thus deprived of all interest in promoting the efficiency of production.

One can easily understand the opposition of the Government to the demand for secret ballot. But it appears very strange that some trade union organisations also should side with the government on this issue and decline to support the demand for ballot under this or that specious excuse. It shows utter lack of confidence in the mass of workers and resistance to draw the entire mass of workers into the task of running the concern.

Growing Industrial Sickness

Comrades, notwithstanding the official claims of higher rate of

industrial production the number of sick concerns continues to increase. Now more than 500 big industrial units and more than 90 thousand small units are sick. This has imposed untold sufferings on the lakhs of working class families with no sign of relief in the near future.

On the other hand there are indications that conditions are going to be more difficult and more concerns will go sick or be closed as a result of the import liberalisation policy of the government. Many industries are threatened with closure with the liberal import of materials, components and other products. Only certain big industries and monopolists are taking advantage of the situation and their employment capacity is much less because of the import of sophisticated machinery and computers.

Monopolists Thrive

The beneficiaries of the new policy can be clearly identified from a review of Indian economy made by Shri R.P. Goenka, President-elect of the FICCI appearing in the Economic Times dated March 22. According to Mr. Goenka, "Industry has responded well to the new opportunities.... by the end of the December 1985 about 1196 registrations had taken place in the 25 broad industry groups delicenced, totalling approximately Rs. 4000 crores...Seventeen MRTP and 27 non MRTP companies have availed of the broad basing facilities. MRTP companies in industries exempted from section 21 and 22 of the MRTP Act also invested more specially in electronic etc., total investment being of the order of Rs. 2889 crores."

Such is the situation facing us and our trade union movement is called upon to resist the effect of the new policy. This calls for greater unity and greater concerted action and not weary calls for symbolic protest or anaemic dharnas.

While Workers are Ruined

The textile and jute workers continue to face a difficult situation. More textile mills are being closed. Recently the NTC ordered four more mills to be closed throwing thousands of workers out of job. We must therefore urgently pursue our demands for the nationalisation of jute and textile industries and create sanction for it. The trade union movement is fully prepared to meet its responsibility in any nationalised concern and discuss all problems including the problem of more efficient production and modernisation of industry in the interest of nation the people and the working class.

Growing Unemployment

Comrades, there is nothing more heart rending, nothing which makes us more indignant than the mounting increase in both urban and rural unemployment. The figure of registered unemployed has now reached 3 crores and this does not bother to get registered. No one really knows the number of rural unemployed. The figure may vary between four and five crores and even more.

Year by year young men and women full of vigour, youthfull hope and a robust outlook on life enter the labour market from schools, colleges, peasants and working class families only to meet with denial of opportunities to contribute to social wealth. Unable to earn a living they undergo the humiliation of living all the expenses of relatives and others or from a chance job which may come in their way. Crores of India's young citizens see no prospect before them except this degraded existence. Forty years of Congress rule is resulting in the social killing of a whole generation.

The trade union movement of our country, the CITU and its unions must be severely indicted for neglecting this young section of the working class and confining itself defending the emolument of those on permanent jobs. In this way the trade union movement becomes a partner of the capitalist class to make the younger generation the scape goat of the crisis of the capitalist path.

Fight for Right to Work

It seems hardly any State Committee can boast of any significant steps to mobilise the unemployed to call their conference and agitate for immediate relief. Barring citing figures of increasing unemployment, the trade union movement has done very little. Hunger Marches, raising the direct demands for immediate relief under the guidance of organised trade union movement will rouse this vital section of the working class to fight for its right and strengthen the untiy of the class.

The West Bengal Government has provided unemployment relief to the unemployed but the Cong(I) government has done nothing in this direction. Some of them or at least some Cong(I) leaders try to solve the problem by inciting one section of workers against another on the slogan of jobs for the sons of the soil.

In the May Day centenary celebration a special day should be assigned for raising the demands of the unemployed and calling for right to work to be embodied in the Constitution a as fundamental right. The workers must be told that the right work is not just a

dream but is concretely embodied in the Constitutions of all Socialist countries. To secure it, political power must be in the hands of working class and the people.

The General Council should direct the State Committees to take effective steps to organise the unemployed, call their conferences, ventilate their grievances and rally the organised workers in defence of their demands.

The organised movement must rouse the entire working class against the steps and plans of the government which are leading to further unemployment. Apart from the computerisation drive the public sector authorities, the Central Government and a number of State Governments have stopped further recruitment and refused to fill vacancies that arise due to natural wastage. Tens of thousands of posts remain vacant. Besides both in public sector and government departments authorities are imposing compulsory or the socalled voluntary retirement on a number of employees and workers. In the banks also the same procedure is axeing nearly 20 thousand workers of the Food Corporation of India. And according to press reports the Coal authorities have considered that nearly one lakh workers are surplus in the coal industry.

Give up Feudal Outlook Towards Working Women

In this retrenchment offensive the women employees and women workers are the first victims and they have to bear the brunt of the offensive. Very few trade unions attach importance to defending the jobs of women workers. The neglect of working women by the trade unions constitutes an intractable disease which will have to be dealt with by uprooting the cause, namely the survival of feudal outlook towards women.

These plans of the Government and the authorities must be fought continously and a demand must be made to fill in the vacancies created during the last so many years. The CITU unions should lend their full support to the employees' unions and champion their cause. Simultaneously similar plans which are hatched in the private sector have been to be fought. A large number of private concerns are replacing permanent labour by casual or contract labour to escape payment of dearness allowance and contribution to ESI and the provident funds. These malpractices must be fought vigorously and unitedly.

Fight Against Arbitrary Powers

Comrades we all must congratulate the State Government employees and their federation on their magnificent strike to protest against sections 310 and 311 (a) (b) of the Constitution. More than 4 million employees participated in this gigantic protest showing extraordinary unity. They had to launch this protest because the two sections, as now interpreted by the Supreme Court, leave arbitrary powers of dismissal in the hands of Government. And the authorities have already taken advantage of this to dismiss a number of locomen who had gone and strike in 1981 to secure implementation of earlier agreement of reduce hours of work.

Organise the Unorganised Workers

Comrades, it is a matter of some satisfaction that at least some of our State Committees like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu. Andhar Pradesh and Delhi have been made efforts to reach the workers of unorganised sector. Several of these committees have held conventions on the question of revision of minimum wages and other demands of unorganised workers. In Karnataka 30 thousands were arrested when government offices were picketed in August 1985 and there was a strike embracing over 5 lakh of workers.

The unorganised sector forms a very important militant and most exploitated section of the working class and our movement cannot be said to be completely representative movement unless it embraces and inspires this vast section.

Collapse of Labour Legislations

Comrades, we all realise that there is a virtual collapse of all labour legislations including the safety legislations deliberately organised by the authorities to attack and withdraw statutory concessions and rights. The courts also had several time observed that legislation itself was farcial and its violation could be virtually done with impunity by the employing class. Now recently the crooked ways of the government were exposed by Baju Ban Riyan, CPI(M) M.P. in connection with an amendment to the Contract Labour Bill.

What is the purpose of this new amendment? Previously it was provided that the government of that state where the Central unit is functioning shall be the appropriate government for intervening and settling any dispute between the contract labour and the contractor. But now the power is being vested in the Central

Government. Why? Com. Baju Ban Riyan answers why: "Sir over the last one or two years labour dispute developed in certain Central units located in West Bengal like the Burnpur Steel Project, the Durgapur Steel and Fertilizer Corporations, the Metro Railways, etc., where contract labour was working. In these cases the Labour Commissioner of the State Government of West Bengal intervened and resolved these disputes to the satisfaction of the workers. The State Government arranged for the regularisation of the workers and saw to it that their outstanding dues are also paid." This was of course not to the liking of the Central Govt. They and the Cong(I) State Governments were accustomed to use the police against the contract labourers and suppress their struggle. Baju Ban Riyan gives instances: "About two years back the contract labour working under the Assam Oil Division agitated for the payment of their dues. They were mercilessly beaten up by the CISF and driven away without paying them their dues." Similar fate overtook the contract workers at the Panipat Fertilizer Project.
This is the secret of the new amendment. The Central Government wants to deal with contract workers directly to beat them up into submission. This is how labour legislation is being improved under the Congress(I) rule.

Indaunted Facing Repression

Comrades, the working class continues to fight its battle in the most adverse circumstances facing it. Every year more than a million workers risk their jobs, their livlihood, their wages, when they take up the fight against the employers' offensive. Since 1982 between January and November, 82 million working days were lost in disputes involving 1.4 million workers. In 1983 the corresponding figures were 40 million days lost involving 1.23 million workers. In 1984 between January and August 45 million man days were involving 1.76 million workers. In 1985 during the same period 17 million man days were lost and lost and 2.06 million workers were involved.

In these strikes the workers had not only to undergo privations and sufferings but face police repression and goonda attacks. The workers in Himachal Pradesh, in Haryana, had to face the most illegal action of the police including kidnapping with the connivance of the police with the hired goondas of the management. But our young units are carrying on the struggle courageously and

bravely and consolidating the strength of the CITU. We must all appreciate the courage and devotion of our CITU units in Punjab which have to uphold the working class flag in the midst of a campaign or murder and terror, great our comrades in Assam who had to face a similar situation and our comrades in Tamil Nadu who were conducting the struggle of the working class in the midst of rise chauvnistic sentiments and feelings.

It is only the working class which with all its faults continues to defend its interest and fights the employers and the government. It is our duty to harness and spirit of resistance for vigorous defence of the interests of the workers.

Fight for the Cause of Peasantry, Agricultural Labour

It is our responsibility to link this resistance with the demands of the peasantry which still continues to be neglected with the demands of agricultural workers and above all to link it with the demands of democratic struggle against authoritarianism. It is through our intervention that the scattered struggle will create a consciousness which can unitedly fight harijan baiting on the one hand and attacks on Muslim minority on the other. Only a strong working class movement continuously increasing its consciousness and spreading its influence over the rural areas will check the atrocities on harijans and inspire religious minorities to stand united with the working class.

Increase Independent Activities

Taking this responsibility into consideration it has to be admitted that our intervention has not been effective. It has not been effective even in the economic struggle considering the large number of strikes that go untouched or unled by the CITU. It is necessary to overcome this lacuna and be with the workers whenever they are in action. This means the independent activities of the CITU must increase the times and they must reach the spontaneous struggles breaking out in several places.

Without such increase in independent activites the required trade union unity to meet the economic offensive cannot be built. The habit of waiting on others before moving further in the name of trade union unity is a pernicions habit which leads to slowing the pace of trade union unity. The CITU unions and leaders must realise that the building and strengthening of trade union unity

depend on their activities and incessant effort.

Use Strength of United Movement

Comrades, while we certainly appreciate the unity built around the National Campaign committee it is necessary to remark that the momentum it earlier gave to united mass action is losing its force. In the midst of a grave economic situation if united activity is unable to go beyond symbolic protest there is something radically wrong with our ways of functioning and it must be located. Trade Union unity cannot be reduced to some kind of routine affair with no increse in the weight of mass action, on the quality of mass protest.

In reality the power of united trade union movement if it is effectively used, is a mighty power which was seen in the anti-price hike bandhs organised in a large number of states. The participation of working class was most enthusiastic in many states and set the pace for mass response. I congratulate our working class and our CITU unions on the massive expression of protest against the price rise.

There is no doubt that inspite of our weaknesses the net of trade union unity is widening and larger and larger section of working class is responding to its call. The participation of INTUC union in West Bengal and Kerala in joint calls on some important issues constitute an important advanced for our struggle for unity. On your behalf I have already appreciated the initiative shown by the INTUC on the question of united stand of all trade unions and in defence of peace.

Fight for World Peace

Let me therefore conclude my speech on the question of world peace vital to the world working class movement and to the people of the world. The working class of our country must realise that the non-alignment policy pursued by the Government is an important factor in strengthening the world balance in favour of peace and faciliate our task to fight against the war mongering plans of US imperialism. Karl Marx had said that the maturity of a working class is seen from the interest it takes in the foreign policy of its government. It cannot be said that our movement has taken much interest in influencing, shaping and strengthening the policy of non-alignment which helps us to fight the imperialist war mongers. Today immense pressures are being exercised to change this policy taking advantage of the serious economic situation in which

the Government of India find itself. To exercise vigilance and defeat all attempts to change the foreign policy in the reactionary direction is an integral part of our task to fight war, to protect peace and protect the gains of hundred years of world working class movement.

Let our General Council in this May Day centenary year assure the working class of Soviet Union and other countries that our organisation and our working class will do everything to frustrate imperialist plans of war against the peoples of the world to protect peace and gains of socialism. Let me once again assure the AUCCTU that its appeal will be warmly responded to by our CITU unions and by the workers of India.

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