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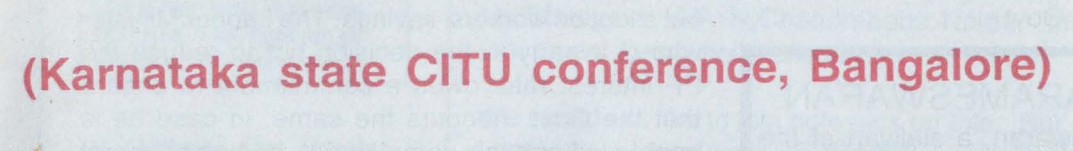
MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU



**PSU
WORKERS
STRIKE
17-19
AUG. 2000**

**BOYCOTT
SECOND
LABOUR
COMMISSION**

**DELHI
CITU
RALLY
20 SEP. 2000**



(Karnataka state CITU conference, Bangalore)

GOVT REDUCES INTEREST ON PF

The 153rd meeting of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) was held under the Chairmanship of Satyanayan Jatia, Minister for Labour & Chairman, Central Board of Trustees, EPF. Muni Lal, Minister of State (L&E) & Vice-Chairman, Central Board of Trustees, EPF and L.Mishra, Labour Secretary, were also present. In his introductory remarks, the Labour Minister & Chairman, CBT reaffirmed that the interest of the workers should be fully secured. Accordingly all possible means may be explored to maximize the yield on investment and it should be possible to maintain payment of interest @ 12% per annum on monthly balances during the financial year 2000-2001.

After detailed discussion, the Central Board of Trustees, EPF recommended that the interest @12% p.a. on the monthly running balances be credited to EPF members account for the financial year 2000-2001.

As decided by the CBT the EPF Organisation started crediting the accounts of the EPF members with 12% interest on the running monthly balances from April, 2000.

But, the Government issued a notification on 28th June, 2000 reducing the interest rate to 11%.

This is the first time the decision of the CBT had been over ruled by the Govt.

COM. P. R. PARAMESWARAN

Com. P. R. Parameswaran, a stalwart of the working class and democratic movement in Tamilnadu and one of the founder leaders of the CITU in the State, passed away on 17th July, 2000. He was also a former member of the Central Committee of the CPI(M). He was the editor of the Tamil theoretical monthly 'Marxist' and had authored a number of books. Starting his life as an ordinary tailoring worker, he took an active part in the working class and political movement; he was detained under 'MISA', suffered imprisonments, braved many a repression. The CITU and 'The Working Class' deeply mourns his death and pays homage to his memory.

The CITU Secretariat denounced the decision of the Government and said:

"Despite a unanimous decision of the Central Board of Trustees of the Employees Provident Fund, presided over by Satyanarayan Jatia, Union Minister for Labour, the Govt of India have cut down the rate of interest on Employees' Provident Fund from 12% to 11%. This is an unprecedented move by the Govt, which reduces the statutory vesting of the administration of the EPF with the Central Board of Trustees to a mere farce.

The CBT, a tripartite body with the Central and State Govts, employers and workers represented on it, was not even consulted as laid down in para 60(1) of the EPF Scheme. As a result, the workers are made to suffer huge financial loss, with the Govt using the workers savings at a cheaper rate of interest.

It may be noted that the Govt is holding over Rs 15000 crore of the pension fund paying only 8.5% interest. The Govt have turned a deaf ear to another unanimous decision of the tripartite Standing Labour Committee, requesting the Govt either to pay 12.5% interest or release the fund for investment by the CBT.

The CITU strongly denounced this anti-worker, retrograde decision of the Govt. which is nothing but a loot on workers' savings. The Labour Minister who is a party to the decision not to reduce the PF interest rate, owes a commitment to ensure that the Govt honours the same. In case he is unable to keep this commitment, he has no moral right to continue in office."

The CITU also called upon the working class irrespective of affiliations to raise their voice of protest against this retrograde design of the Govt. A special meeting of the CBT was convened by the Minister of Labour, in the wake of such protests. The meeting held on 25.7.2000, again under the Chairmanship of Satyanarayan jatiya, reiterated the recommendation of continuing the rate of interest at 12% for the year 2000-01. The Minister of Labour was requested to take up the matter once again with the Minister of Finance and take appropriate steps in this regard.

THE WORKING CLASS

CITU MONTHLY

AUGUST 2000



Courtesy: The Hindu

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EDITORIAL

WHY SHY AWAY FROM STRUGGLE ?

The present NDA Government led by Atal Behari Vajpayee has abandoned whatever little pretensions of *swadeshi* that was talked about earlier. The working class has no option but to intensify the struggle against the disastrous pursuit of the policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation.

Earlier this year, the working people went on a countrywide general strike on 11th May.

The public sector employees have declared a three days strike from 17th to 19th August, 2000.

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh leadership has all along rightly been criticising these Industrial and Economic policies - pursued earlier by the Congress and UF regimes and now by the NDA Government. They have expressed concern that "World Bank, IMF and WTO are increasingly penetrating into the sovereign decision making process of the Government and this cannot be allowed". They have also pointed out the indiscriminate disinvestments in the core Public Sector Undertakings.

But the BMS has chosen to term the May 11th strike as "politically motivated", in the words of AB Sambasiva Rao, Vice President, BMS. He also saw 'reason' in the statement of the Chief Minister of his State, viz., AP, N.Chandrababu Naidu, "that the Trade Union movement being politicalised".

We would not like to join polemics on this. But, it will be interesting to note here, Jagdeesh Shettigar, the man in charge the Economic Cell of BJP choosing to question the credentials of the *Sangh Parivar*, including the BMS and others.

Shettigar vowed to "call the bluff of the so-called champions of *swadeshi* pointing out how irrational they are". He found that "the same people termed the last three budgets of the NDA government as the one in tune with the *swadeshi* principles.... If three months back *swadeshi* activists were satisfied with the measures initiated ... what made these people red eyed all of a sudden?" His advice in short was "don't lecture, you don't know economics".

Now, the BMS leadership would do well to ponder over what to do. Better, they join the struggle. Enough of shying away from it.

BOYCOTT OF II NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR

Six CENTRAL TRADE UNIONS had decided to boycott the Second National Commission on Labour, constituted by the Government of India, under the Chairmanship of Ravindra Varma.

Explaining the reasons behind their decision to boycott, the leaders of the Six CTUs, viz, M.K. Pandhe, CITU, K.L. Madhendra AITUC, Swapan Mukherjee, AICCTU, Abani Roy, UTUC, Asutosh Banerjee, UTUC(LS), D.D. Shastri, TUCC, addressed a letter to the Union Labour Minister, Satyanarain Jatia, the text of which is reproduced herein:

"We like to draw your attention to the following regarding the Second National Commission of Labour:

1) The Government of India have constituted the Second National Commission of Labour without any consultation with the trade unions, despite the unanimous decision of the Standing Labour Committee directing in-depth consultations

with all partners.

2) The composition of the Commission do not repose any confidence to the workers that their mounting problems can be considered to their benefit. The suggestions of the trade unions given in this respect earlier to include all the major Central Trade Unions have been ignored. There is only one full time member of the Commission, that too from the Maratha Chambers of Commerce, a representative organisation of the employers.

3) Moreover, the Terms of Reference are in conformity with the employers' demands for deregulation of labour legislations commensurate with the retrograde globalised economy, giving the employers a free hand to deal with labour. The earlier joint suggestions of the trade unions in this respect also have been ignored. The Central Trade Unions voiced their concern over this in the Indian Labour Conference also. But the Government of India is

in no mood to pay any heed to the genuine concerns expressed by the trade unions in these fora as well.

We regret to note that the Commission, on the contrary, have already started the process of functioning unilaterally and arbitrarily, eliciting replies to their questionnaire, etc. The Government has even started the move to amend the Labour Laws also, without any consultation with the trade unions.

Such attitude of the Government has led to growing resentment among all sections of the working people in the country. Under the above circumstances, we, the following trade unions are constrained to take the decision not to join any committees or sub-committees of the Second National Commission of Labour at any stage".

All the State Committees, unions and federations shall not respond to any questionnaires/queries from the Commission.

PETITION TO PRESIDENT OF INDIA MASS RALLY IN DELHI : 26 SEP 2000

As decided by the General Council of the CITU at Kozhikode, a mass signature campaign is on throughout the country. Efforts are afoot to ensure collection of maximum number of signatures in the mass petition to President of India in the proforma already sent, covering all sections of workers, employees and common people from all walks of life.

As decided by the CITU secretariat, the concluding date of the signature campaign is extended upto 31st August 2000. It has also been decided that a mass rally of workers will be held before Parliament on 20th September 2000, with the participation of the workers of Delhi and adjoining States to submit the petitions to the President of India through massive demonstration.

Accordingly, the State Committees/Industrial Federations/ all affiliate unions are requested to take urgent organisational steps to intensify the mass signature campaign to ensure collection of signatures in terms of several lakhs and send the mass petitions along with a note mentioning the number of signatures collected, to the CITU centre, positively by first week of September 2000, to enable their submission to President of India on 20th September at Delhi.

THE DOTTED LINES FOR THE LABOUR COMMISSION

The Second National Commission on Labour, has been directed to take into account, *inter-alia*, the "follow up implications of the recommendations made by the commission set up in May 1998 for review of various administrative laws governing industry." The Commission recommendations in so far as they relate to labour laws are as follows:

" Out of the large number of labour laws administered by the Central Government, the commission has confined its observations to the important provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, Factories Act, 1948, Employees Provident Fund Act, 1952, Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, Trade Unions Act, 1926 and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970. It was noted that the Mitra Committee set up by the Ministry of Labour in October 1997 has made a number of concrete suggestions for amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The commission endorses the recommendations made by this committee, and also agrees that the title of the Act should be amended as the Employment Relations Act, in order to shift the focus from disputes to measures for harmonious relations. Some of the important issues to be decided urgently in the context of amendments to this Act would be the concept of lock-outs and strikes, the definition of industry and workman, the establishment of grievance redressal machinery, and prior approval by Government for lay-off, retrenchment and closure. It is necessary to move forward on the basis of negotiating councils as collective bargaining agents and discourage avoidable multiplicity of trade unions. At the Government level, it would be useful to set up independent and autonomous Industrial Relations Commission in order to relieve the executive from the work load for conciliation and arbitration of labour disputes. The legal norms for the notice for strikes and lock outs, exemption of essential services, requirement of majority resolution of unions, etc should be agreed to quickly with employers and labour for enactment. Effort should be to reduce the reference of disputes to labour courts and tribunals, given the huge pendency of cases and inadequate infrastructure, and to promote arbitration and conciliation. It is also possible to lay down norms for the registration of trade unions and their recognition and reduce the proportion of external office bearers in unions.

" There is considerable demand from both public and private establishments and Central Government Departments for amending the existing provisions of the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970. The commission was informed that the matter has been considered in detail by the Committee of Secretaries and the Labour Ministry has been requested to draft proposals for amendments to the Act in a short time and take up formulation of a separate legislation as part of the overall exercise for reforming labour laws. The Commission would urge the Labour Ministry to bring forward these amendments as soon as possible in order to reduce or relax the present legal regime for engagement of contract Labour in all the non-core peripheral activities of various departments and establishments. The engagement of contract labour even in routine services like sweeping, cleaning, security in Government departments and public sector organisations have been banned by a notification issued by the Labour Ministry, and public sector undertakings are obliged to engage departmental labour for tasks that are not part of their main functions. Because of the Supreme Court judgement in the Air India case, the Central agencies are required to absorb the contract labour after termination of the contract at considerable expense. Given the rate at which some activities will become obsolete because of changes in technologies, or where activities are of a seasonal and temporary nature, there is even greater need for permitting the engagement of contract labour. It should, of course, be ensured by the principal employer that the contractor complies with the requirements of payment of minimum wage, assuring proper working conditions, etc."

These are some of the dotted lines on which the Ravindra Varma Commission on Labour is called upon to make its recommendations. Is there any point in cooperating with this commission?

ESI SCHEME: DETERIORATING MEDICARE

The implementation of the Employees State Insurance Scheme was commenced on 24th February, 1952, that too in just two centres, viz. Kanpur and Delhi.

The ESI Act has in-built provision for extension of its coverage to all classes of establishments - industrial, commercial, agricultural or otherwise, besides factories. However, it continued to apply for a long time to factories alone; its application was extended much later to a few classes of establishments viz. shops, hotels, restaurants, cinemas, road-motor transport undertakings and newspaper establishments employing 20 or more persons. This was accomplished by May, 1990. The position has remained static ever since, even in the States and areas where the Scheme has already been implemented.

The ESI Scheme presently covers about 91 lakh insured persons IPs as on 31 March, '99, spread over 22 States and Union Territories across the country.

The ESI Scheme is administered by a corporate body called the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). It has members representing employers, employees, the Central Government, State Governments, Medical Profession and the Parliament.

RIGID GOVT. CONTROL

The ESIC is supposed to be an autonomous body, but by an amendment of the Act, the ESIC has been relegated to the position of a mere recommendatory body.

While the Government of India is exercising its over-all control in all matters, and utilising its reserve funds to meet its budget deficits, they are not contributing a single paisa for the operation of the Scheme.

The performance of the ESI Scheme has at the end of 1998-99 accounting year is as under:

State/Union Territories covered: 22

Even in the 22 States/Union Territories covered, the Scheme is in force only at 642 industrial centres, covering 80 lakh employees.

DECLINING COVERAGE

The coverage of employees under the ESI Scheme has shown only a decrease (see box below).

This decrease is despite additional 6873 employers being brought under coverage during 1998-99.

On the other hand, the number of employees yet to be covered has registered an increase of 27,900 during 1998-99.

CEILING ON EXPENDITURE

The ESI Corporation has prescribed a ceiling on per capita expenditure and medical care, which was last revised on 1st April, 1999. The revised ceiling on expenditure for medical facility for Insured Person Family Unit per annum is Rs. 600 only. This per capita expenditure ceiling has also a break up as under:

- (a) Rs. 170 for drugs and dressings
- (b) Rs. 20 for repair and maintenance of medical equipment
- (c) Rs. 50 for reimbursement of expenditure on super specialty and general specialty care in advanced medical institutions
- (d) Rs. 360 under other heads

(All amounts are per family unit, per annum)

Amount spent beyond the prescribed per capita limit is to be borne by the State Governments.

The All India Average per capita expenditure increased during 1998-99 was Rs. 662.67 only.

The availment of expenditure and imposition of

| | As on 31.3.1998 | As on 31.3.1999 | Decrease |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Total number of employees covered | 85,2002 | 8361,900 | 80,76,700 |
| Total number of insured family units covered | 90,95,450 | 88,19,050 | 2,76,400 |
| Total number of insured Women | 15,24,100 | 14,78,400 | 45,700 |
| Total beneficiaries | 3,52,90,350 | 3,42,17,900 | 10,72,450 |

unrealistic ceilings is to be viewed in the background of increase in the incidence of morbidity. The number of new cases per 1000 insured persons during the year under 51 heads of diseases, reported by the ESI Corporation itself, has increased from 1338.2 to 1971.10 from 1997-98 to 1998-99.

ARREARS UNREALISED

The question of arrears of ESI contribution is again the same familiar story of wilful default, mounting arrears and ineffective recovery process. As at 31.3.1999; the ESI arrears amounted to Rs. 452.28 crore, the increase during 1998-99 itself was of the order of Rs. 71.27 crore. Out of this arrears, an amount of Rs. 237.21 crore, accounting for 52.45%, was described as "could not be recovered over the years due to litigation, liquidation, closure or whereabouts of the employers not known!" Here again, the textiles and jute industries topped the list of outstandings, accounting for 37.66% of the Rs. 452.28 crore arrears.

The ESI Corporation boasts of having set up a revenue recovery machinery of its own prior 1992, besides similar recovery being attempted through the District Collectors. Out of Rs.215.07 crore (47.55%) of the arrears classified as recoverable, cases pending with the Collectors / Recovery Officers of the ESIC numbered 72,440 as on 31.3.1999. But, the ESI scheme has not failed as a source of mobilising huge funds for investments for the Govt. The total investments of the ESIC as on 31.3.1999 was over Rs. 4800 crore, of which the special deposits with the Central Government alone contributed Rs. 3017 crore!

RETROGRADE REMEDIES

Two committees in the recent past (1) Satyam committee and (2) Task Force on Social Security studied the ills afflicting the ESI Scheme. There had been innumerable review committees; etc. during the last five decades, which only churned out reports and recommendations, that have been of not much practical relevance, when it comes to improving the implementation of ESI Scheme. But, the remedies prescribed by the Satyam Committee is worse than the disease. It recommended conscription of the scope of the ESI Scheme itself as follows:

"No insurance scheme can be so open-ended as

to assure 'full medical care'. Somehow, the original concept of 'reasonable medical care' has been expanded over the years. It is necessary to revert to the original position and if possible be more precise about what is assured".

As was noted earlier, the Scheme has a provision of Rs.600 as an overall limit for per capita expenditure per annum. This is 'full medical care' and "open ended", which the Satyam Committee wants to be curtailed drastically!

The privatisation mania, which has now become too fascinating an idea in the era of liberalisation, has also caught up with the Satyam Committee. The committee had recommended privatisation of the management of the ESI Hospitals on the spurious plea of 'capacities remaining under-utilised'. It has also recommended contracting out of arrangements for ambulance, cleaning, security and kitchen, and maintenance equipment in the ESI Hospitals, notwithstanding the apparent perennial nature of these jobs in any hospital.

There has also been at least a half-hearted recommendation to the effect that "it will be useful if the Government of India can also give a matching contribution" to the ESI Scheme expenditure. But the response of the Central Government, with its track record of curtailing all welfare-related expenses, can only be a predictable no.

OVERHAUL NEEDED

The ESI Scheme through the decades has only resulted in the ESI Corporation having grown in size and infrastructure. But, despite contribution rates having been raised from time to time, the ESIC and the Government of India are only restricting and restraining various benefits. The result is the workers are unnecessarily harassed and they have lost confidence in the Scheme. A substantial percentage of workers do not avail of the various "benefits and facilities" in the Scheme. This has naturally led to a plea for making ESI Scheme optional and facilitating exemption from the Scheme, if both employer and employees in any establishment seek for it.

A drastic overhaul of the ESI Scheme, freeing its administration from the rigidities of Government controls, ensuring a worker friendly implementation, gradual abolition of constitution from workers, extending coverage to all those in need of public health care are the imperatives.

ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF WORKING WOMEN

12th July, 2000

NOTICE

As you are aware, the CITU Working Committee has decided to hold the All India Conference of Working Women, separately from the CITU Conference.

The West Bengal State Committee of CITU has agreed to host the conference, which will be held at Haldia on 16-17 September 2000, to discuss the following agenda:

1. Report of the Secretary
2. Organisation
3. Home based workers
4. Future Programmes
5. Election of new committee

All the State Committees should send working women delegates, according to the quotas assigned by the Centre.

State Committees should ensure that working women belonging to CITU affiliated unions, particularly from industries with large number of women, have adequate representation in the delegation, together with middle class working women activists close to CITU.

All the States should hold State conventions of working women before the all India conference. Reports of activities among working women during the last 3 years after the Kochi conference and the details of women in the committees and as office bearers at the district and State level should be sent to the CITU centre by the 31st July, 2000 to facilitate the preparation of the report to the conference.

The exact venue, delegate fees, detailed programme and the address of the reception committee will be informed shortly.

It is advised that the delegates should book return tickets immediately. Except the North-eastern States, delegates from all other States are requested to purchase tickets upto Kharagpur.

M.K. Pandhe
General Secretary

The All India Coordination Committee of Working Women met on 26-27 June at Bangalore. 24 Comrades from 10 States - Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry, Tamilnadu, Tripura and West Bengal participated in the meeting, presided by Nisha Roy, Kanai Banerjee, Secretary, CITU, attended the meeting.

The following decisions were taken by the committee.

1. State conventions of working women should be held before the All India Conference.
2. The conference will have special discussion on organisation and home based workers.
3. States should send the following reports to the Centre, before 31st July 2000.
 - i. Report of activities after the Kochi Conference.
 - ii. Report of the impact of the policies of LPG on the working women in different industries in the State.
 - iii. Some case studies relating to equal wages, maternity benefit and sexual harassment at work place.
 - iv. Latest position regarding the representation of women in the CITU and Union committees at district and State level.
4. The September issue of The Voice of the Working Woman will be brought out as a special issue, commemorating two decades of its publication. November issue will be the Conference special issue. Comrades should collect and send advertisements according to the quotas taken, before the 15th August.
5. Working women should be mobilised in large numbers in the CITU campaign against the economic policies of the BJP Government at the Centre.

Against anti-PSU, anti-worker Govt policies PSU WORKERS TO GO FOR THREE-DAY STRIKE

The extended meeting of Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) held on 5th July 2000 at New Delhi has unanimously decided to go in for three-day strike on 17-19th August in all the PSUs all over the country to protest against the anti-worker, anti-PSU and anti-national policies of the Govt of India.

The extended meeting of CPSTU was attended by 135 representatives from the public sector trade unions from all over the country and was presided by a presidium consisting of Sunil Sen(AITUC), Swadesh Devroye(CITU), RA Mital(HMS), Michael Fernandes(Joint Action Front, Banagalore) and P Anjaiah(PSU TU Coordination Committee, Hyderabad).

The Declaration adopted unanimously in the extended session of CPSTU has mentioned inter alia, that: "The meeting expressed serious concern that the intensified attack on public sector under the 'second generation reform has attained liquidationist dimension. The meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Disinvestment has cleared privatisation proposal for 11 PSUs and firmed up annual disinvestments plan for 33 PSUs. The most injurious development is that the big business house in the country along with the MNCs have been mounting pressure on the Govt to go for privatisation in the high profile sectors like automobile, telecom. Oil, coal and power. They call it 'big ticket privatisation.' Top ten profit making PSUs come from these sectors only....the Govt has completely succumbed to the pressure of MNCs. The decision of the Govt allowing 100% FDI in oil and power sector definitely corroborates such conclusion....."

"The Govt of India reiterates its resolve not to revive the sick PSUs and finalised its decision to close down 6 sick units....Public sector workers of the sick units have been deprived of the wage revision for long ten years including the enhanced rate of DA. In some cases salaries have not been paid to the employees for the last one year or so. While the employees are coerced to opt for VRS, their dues on account of retiral benefits are not paid...."

Even after three and half years of expiry of the previous wage agreements, the new agreements are not even in sight due to retrograde guidelines of Department of Public Enterprises(DPE) and particularly the stipulation for ten years tenure of wage agreements. The Committee of Ministers constituted under pressure of 2nd February 2000 strike of the PSU workers, has reportedly recommended five years tenure...but disturbing news is pouring in that DPE wants to put retrograde condition of not allowing full neutralisation in case of five year wage agreement....The already prevailing resentment among the workers due to abnormal delay in wage settlement has reached to flash point."

In consideration of above situation, the CPSTU has decided the action programme on the basis of following issues:

- * For five years wage settlement with full neutralisation
- * Against wholesale privatisation of PSUs
- * For revival and against closure of sick PSUs
- * Against non-payment of salaries to employees of sick PSUs

PROGRAMMES

- * Three Days Strike in all the Public Sector Units all over the country on 17th, 18th and 19th August 2000.
- * To serve notice in all the PSUs through demonstration on 3rd August 2000.
- * Strike programme to be preceded by Gate-demonstration, Dharna etc in all the PSUs during the intervening period.
- * Prepare for indefinite strike in the PSUs.

The National Confederation of Officers' Associations in the CPSUs (NCOA) has resolved in its National executive meeting held on 9th July 2000 that " the NCOA is in complete agreement with the spirit and contents of the Declaration of CPSTU. The Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions comprising six Central Trade Unions and various other industrial federations has on 19th July 2000 extended full support to PSU workers' countrywide strike.

COCHIN SHIPYARD: YET ANOTHER LEGAL WIN

S KRISHNA MOORTHY

The Deputy Chief Labour Commission, (Central), Bangalore, the authority under the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act has given a decision holding that the nature of job carried out by the Contract Workers in Cochin Shipyards Ltd is either the same or similar in which the regular workers of Cochin Shipyards are engaged and hence the contract workers are entitled for same wage rates, holidays, hours of work and other conditions of service at par with the permanent workers of the principal employer establishment.

Cochin Shipyards Workers' Union (CITU), filed a petition before the authority under Rule 25(v)((a) & (b) of the Central Rules under the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act.

"In cases where the workmen employed by the contractor perform the same or similar kind of work as the workmen directly employed by the principal employer of the establishment, the wage rates, holidays, hours of work and other conditions of service of the workmen of the contractor shall be the same as applicable to the workmen directly employed by the principal employer of the establishment on the same or similar kind of work.' Provided that in the case of any disagreement with regard to the type of work, the same shall be decided by the Deputy Chief Labour Commissioner (C) of the respective zones.

(b) in other cases the wage rates, holidays, hours of work and conditions of service of the workmen of the contractor shall be such as may be specified in this behalf by the Deputy Labour Commissioner (C)."]

THE BACKGROUND

The contract workers in Cochin Shipyards were engaged in unskilled, skilled and even highly skilled jobs. Some of the skilled jobs like painting etc were done only by contract workers. Fire fighting jobs in vessels were mainly being carried out by fire watchmen engaged on contract basis. The strenuous and hazardous jobs like sludge removal, blasting, buffing, coltar painting etc were done only by contract workers. Still the wages and other service conditions of the contract workers were miserably low compared to that of the

permanent workmen. The contract workers were deprived of even the basic minimum facilities like canteen, rest-rooms, drinking water etc. The repeated requests of the union to the contractors and the Principal Employer to rectify these anomalies were not acceded to. It was in this context the union approached the Authority.

The Authority, during the year-long proceedings, held several sittings, perused several documents and examined a number witnesses from either side and heard the final arguments. In its 143 page decision, the Authority has relied heavily on various High Court and Supreme Court decisions in Air India Statutory Corporation case, Haryana State Electricity Board case, Bangalore Water Supply case and also the Gujarat Mazdoor Panchayat case. The significant observations of the Authority are extracted hereunder:

"SAME" AND "SIMILAR"

The expression "same" and "similar" are not the same. The expression used in the aforesaid provision is "same" and also "similar". Therefore, what is required to be examined by the Chief Labour Commissioner in discharge of statutory obligation is to see as to whether the type of work done by the workman of the contractor and the workmen of the principal employer is the same, if not whether it is similar. It is true expression "same" or "similar" is not statutorily defined in the rules. Therefore, plain dictionary meaning can be resorted to.

The underlying purport and design of the aforesaid provision appears to be that equal wages should be paid to the workmen of the contractor, same as that of the wages paid to the workmen of the principal employer, if the type of work done by the workmen of both the categories is same or similar in nature. Otherwise, apart from the fact that there will be discrimination between the company labour and the contractor labour, there will be an exploitation and employment of unfair labour practice.

The expression "same" as per the dictionary means: (1) resembling in every way, (2) not different in relevant essentials, (3) conforming in every respect, and (4) having one nature or

individuality; whereas the expression "similar" means (1) having characteristics in common, (2) very much alike in substance or structure.

An object or an operation can be said to be the same as another if it is absolutely identical to it or resembles it in every way. It may happen that there may be a few points of dissimilarity, but if there are such few points of dissimilarity existing between the two, that would not *ipso facto* mean that same is not covered by the said rule. Though there may be dissimilarity between a nature of work of contract labour and the employer labour, yet on the whole, the majority of symptoms or characteristics may be alike or common. In such a factual situation, it could be said that they are similar.

In reality, the word "similar" connotes the existence of two objects with some dissimilarities. If there was no dissimilarity, it would obviously be the same kind of object. But the preponderance of similarities as compared with the microscopic or insignificant dissimilarities entitle that object to be called of a similar nature. Although, the expression "same" is generally, loosely and frequently employed in the sense of "similar," the work "similar" would never mean "same" in its strict sense and, in fact, it cannot, since similarity implies existence of two or more objects for the purpose of comparison.

There is a distinction between the two expressions, "same" and "similar". If it was to be intended that absolutely identical kind of job employed by the company and by the contractor should be dealt with at par, then the expression similarity of work would not have been used or employed by the legislature in the said rule. It could safely be inferred that the legislature had contemplated situational reality that the work may not be exactly the same, but may be very much akin or alike and in such circumstances it found no justification for differentiating the services conditions of the labour employed by the company and by the contractor. Whether a particular work is same or similar in nature as another work could be determined mainly on the three considerations as per the settled proposition of law. In deciding whether the work is the same or broadly similar, the statutory functionary or the authority should bear in mind a broad view; next, in ascertaining whether any

differences are of practical importance, the authority should take an equally broad approach for the very concept of similar work implies difference in details, but these should not defeat a claim for equality on petty grounds. The authority is obliged to consider the duties actually performed, not those theoretically possible. In making comparison, it is also, obviously, necessary for the authority to look to the duties generally performed by the employees of the contractor and the company.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE

The substantive issue framed by the authority was: "Whether the petitioner workmen who are contract labour are doing the same type of work as being done by the regular workmen of the Cochin Shipyard Ltd, and if they are not doing the same type of work as performed by the directly employed workmen, then whether they are performing similar type of work as performed by the directly employed workmen?"

The Authority finally held that the contract workers in Cochin Shipyard Ltd engaged in the categories of Mazdoor, Helper, casual Worker, Fire Watchman, Gardener, Sweeper, Painter and Attender are all doing either the same or similar jobs like the regular workers and hence they are entitled to have same wage rates, hours of work, holidays and other conditions of service at par with the regular workmen. The Authority further concluded that the welders, fitters, fitter structural, fitter pipe and electricians among the contract workmen are not performing exactly the same or similar jobs as done by the regular workmen. However, since they are at the jobs for the past several years and they are practically controlled and supervised by the management of Cochin Shipyard, they should also be paid wages as paid to the least category of regular employees in the respective category. The Authority further clarified, quoting the provisions of Sub Section 4 of Section 21 of the Contract Labour (R&A) Act, that if the contractor fails to pay the wages or made short payment viz, paid less than the wages required to pay, then the principal employer has to pay the wages or the difference as the case may be and get himself reimbursed/indemnified from the contractor. The Authority also gave the ruling that the order will take effect from 1st January 1999.

GOLD PLATING OF FERTILISER COMPANIES

NISHITH CHOUDHURY

After years of hedging on the issue, the Government of India finally decided to act on a gigantic scam. It was only in May 2000 that the Minister of Fertilisers, Suresh Prabhu ordered a CBI ENQUIRY into excess drawing of subsidies by some of the top Corporates of the country in Fertiliser Manufactory. Simultaneously, the Government slashed annual subsidy payment to the Companies by a whopping Rs.506 crore. The companies hit by this order are: Tata Chemicals, Nagarjuna Fertilisers & Chemicals (NFCL), Chambal Fertilisers Ltd., Oswal Chemicals & Fertilises Ltd., Indo-Gulf (Jagadishpur) and SPIC (Tuticorin).

RETENTION PRICE SCHEME

The Retention Price Scheme (RPS) was launched viz., to provide chemical fertilisers to the farmers of the country at affordable prices and to assure the fertiliser manufacturers a fair return on investment on a sustained basis.

Unfortunately, distortions soon crept in. Unscrupulous industrialists looked for and found loopholes in the scheme to hijack the benefits of subsidy for their own ends. Over the years, what started as petty fudging of accounts snowballed into a scam of gigantic proportions.

FOUR COMPONENTS

Basically, there are four components of RPS, viz., the

Variable Cost (VC); the Conversion Cost (CS), Selling Expenses (SE) and Capital Related Charges (CRC). The RPS is operated by Fertiliser Industries Co-ordination Committee (FICC), a wing of the Department of Fertilisers (DOF), Govt. of India.

* The **Variable Cost** takes into account the cost of various inputs that go into the production process for manufacture of the particular fertiliser in a particular unit. Mainly these are the costs of feedstock and utilities like coal, oil, water, Power etc. Depending upon the technology adopted, suitable norms of consumption of such inputs are generally available. Once such norms are scientifically determined, variable cost of production can be fairly fixed for any individual unit.

* **Conversion Cost** is basically the fixed cost, which again varies from unit to unit. Whatever might be total quantum of Conversion Cost, the unit cost (i.e. cost of each tonne of the product) will depend upon the annual production capacity of the plant. Herein lies a major loophole for malpractice.

* **Selling expenses** are more or less uniform for all units and, therefore, a standard can be determined and allowed for all units.

* **Capital Related Charges** seek to incorporate the costs of interest on loan (the fertiliser industry being a highly capital

intensive one, there is always large component of loan in any project), depreciation and return on equity. Among these only depreciation is normated. No norm existed as regards the overall project cost. This is another major weakness of the RPS and crafty manipulators have exploited this weakness to the hilt.

HOW THEY DEFRAUDED

The key to the scam is the factor of capacity utilisation. What is the capacity of a fertiliser plant? Experts in the fields are of the unanimous opinion that a fertiliser plant can be accurately designed to produce an intended capacity. However, any designer will provide some reasonable cushion, say 7 to 10% in all major equipments and machineries to take care of service induced deterioration in later years. But look at what the clever operators have achieved:

| Company | Period | Capacity utilisation |
|----------------|---------|----------------------|
| NFCL | 1979-98 | 143.66% |
| Tata Chemicals | - do - | 129.00% |
| Chambal | - do - | 123.00% |

Superbly efficient, are not they? In reality, it is plain cheating. The cheating started from their very inception. The declared name plate capacity was much less than the capacity for which the plant was actually designed. No designer worth his salt will build a plant capable of producing at 140% plus of its capacity, for the basic reason that the project cost will grow up considerably without any apparent gain. It is

a competitive world. The designer has also to stay in the business. It he quotes a high project cost, who is going to buy it? But he will over design if only his client specifically requests for it.

The clever Indian Industrialist spotted the flaw in the RPS early and pounds to take advantage of it. In the RPS, there was no standard project cost for a certain capacity plant. On the other hand, profits will spiral if a plant could over produce. Since 12% return was assured at 90% capacity utilisation, obviously fixed cost will stand fully recovered at even lower level. As capacity utilisation reaches unbelievable levels, return becomes many times more than 12%. Moreover, in the absence of any standard project cost or any restriction on the scale of capital employed, higher the project cost, higher will be capital related charges, which is a component of Retention Price. Thus, the murky deal is complete. Inflate the project cost as much as you can and you get a high retention price. Then operate the plant at seemingly magical load in terms of nameplate capacity, and your profits become astronomical. How much the scam, on going as on date, has cost the national exchequer? FICC reckons that NFCL alone by suppressing capacity by about 21%, have drawn till 30.06.1997, unmerited and undue, if not illegal, subsidy to the tune of Rs.444 crore. A rough estimate reveals that these super achievers of the fertiliser industry are looting the exchequer for an amount of

Rs.1000 crore annually at present. Since 1992, the exchequer has lost no less than Rs.9 to 10 thousand crore by even conservative estimates. Robbing the benefits of 25 to 30% of the nameplate capacity on a regular basis - what can it be termed as - GOLD PLATING? No less than Platinum plating it is.

UNMASKING THE FRAUD

The role so far played by the Government to stop the fraudulent practice has been highly questionable.

* As early as on 1992, the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Fertiliser Pricing pointed out that the absence of a normative capital cost has led to the installation of 'surplus capacity' in many new plants and recommended a maximum limit of 110% for payment of the benefit of RPS. No action was initiated by GOI and the 'Gold Plating' continued unabated.

* During early 1994, the Pricing parameters for the 6th Pricing Period were fixed by FICC in its 66th meeting. Although this empowered the FICC to revise the system to be used from design capacity to re-accessed capacity, no action for reassessment of the capacities of the units in question was taken. Rather, a two member committee was constituted during August, 1995 by FICC which recommended the exact procedure for such reassessment. Based on it a Technical Committee headed by Adviser (Fertiliser) recommended the assessed capacities of seven Gas Based Plants during November, 1996.

Still, no action was taken for stopping this fraudulent practice. * Yet another High Powered Fertiliser Pricing Policy Review Committee was set up in January, 1997 under the Chairmanship of Prof. Hanumantha Rao which submitted its report during April, 1998 with very caustic remarks and recommendations on Gold Plating. During April 1999, yet another Expert Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Adviser (Fertiliser) for the same purpose, which submitted its recommendations with five methods of reassessment, in November 1999. This was again reviewed by FICC in its 84th meeting during Feb. 2000 and as usual, the meeting ended without any decision and the reports/deliberations of FICC thereon, continued to remain under examination of the Govt. * That a scam was in full swing have thus long been established but powerful vested interests prevented any action for many years. Dipankar Mukherjee, MP CPI(M), wrote many a time to the Ministers, on his initiative, the Parliamentary Standing Committee and the Consultative Committee deliberated the issue and remarked on the matter on various occasions. The matter was deliberated in detail on 5th May, 2000 in the Rajya Sabha and the Minister declared the formation of yet another committee headed by Y.P.Alagh for final reassessment of the Nameplate capacities of various units. Again, on 16th May 2000, replying to the Call Attention

(Cont. on page 17)

ECONOMY ON RAILS ! HEADING WHERE ?

PROJECTS ABANDONED....

A severe funds crunch has nearly sealed the fate as many as 46 central projects, the biggest casualties being railways and department of telecommunications. The latest report of the Union Ministry of Statistics Planning and Implementation's Project Monitoring Division says, most of the 427 projects of the MOSPI monitor last November, have been dropped or frozen because of non-availability of funds and reprioritisation.

Most of the projects dropped in the communications sector belong to the DoT and promised new exchanges and infrastructure, approved between 1990 and 1994....

Twelve Railway projects including construction of double-lines in AP, MP and UP, grand chord line in Rajasthan, yard remodelling in Burdwan, West Bengal, workshop modernisation at various places, electrical/locomotives augmentation work at Chittaranjan and Wagon factory modernisation at Karnataka etc.... Similarly Twelve coal sector projects, two projects in petroleum sector, two projects in power sector and also various projects in mining, newsprint and cement have been either dropped or frozen....

(The Statesman, 24-06-2000)

POWER GENERATION TO FALL SHORT OF TARGET

Planning Commission has warned that India would badly miss the power capacity additional target of 40000 MW during the 9th Plan period by a whopping 15000 MW largely due to failure of private sector to come up with their projects....

Out of the total planned target of 40245 MW.... the central sector would be able to come up with 9704 MW (out of the total assignment of 11909 MW), the state sector will be able to add 9851 MW...while the private sector is likely to add only about 6000 MW capacity against the target of 17588 MW for the plan period (1997-2002)...., the draft mid term appraisal on the energy sector reveals...

(The Financial Express, 18-07-2000)

DECLINING FDI INFLOWS.....

The Govt has set the target of \$ 10 billion for the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country every year.... This target was set in the backdrop of FDI inflows of \$ 20.19 billion during the entire decade of 90s characterised by liberalised economic policy regime.... But the annual FDI inflows have been observed to register progressive declines in last two years. The FDI inflows, having youched a high of \$ 3.56 billion during 1997-98, declined to \$ 2.46 billion in 1998-99 and then to \$ 2.15 billion in 1999-2000....

(Editorial, The Observer, 18-07-2000)

GRAPPLING WITH FDI...

It may be a coincidence, but foreign direct investment has fallen for three months in a row in the current financial year. The relaxation (in FDI) announced with much fanfare in February, seem not to have had any effect on inflows in next two months.....

Over and above all the reasons for encouraging FDI, one more has been added by the coming end to quantitative restrictions on imports. This will reduce the need for global manufacturers to set up shops in India to access its large market, because the market can be accessed from supply bases in other economies. Industrialisation will suffer....

(Business Standard, 18-07-2000)

POVERTY TO CONTINUE.....

In a marvellously closely argued paper, written for ADB(Asian Development Bank) and to be presented on July 20 at the Delhi School of Economics, K Sundaram and Suresh Tendulkar have found that in 2012 about a quarter of India's projected population of 1.2 billion will still be poor — even under the most optimistic growth scenario. What is worse, they say, fully 282 million of these people will be in rural areas.....

(Business Standard, 18-07-2000)

KOREA: DETENTION CENTRES OVERFLOWING

4 o'clock in the morning, more than 3,000 special troopers of the police stormed the Lotte Hotel, downtown Seoul, to drag out some 1,000 striking workers. The Lotte Hotel Workers Union has been on strike since June 9 demanding 17% wage increase, change in employment status of temporary workers to permanent employees, 40 hour working week, and extension of retirement age.

The Lotte Hotel took the spot-light of the world media when it was used as the main press centre for the south-north Korea Summit between President Kim Dae Jung and Chairperson Kim Jong Il. The striking union cooperated with the management by suspending the sit-in strike at the Hotel and deploying staff to the press centre during the period of visit to North Korea by President Kim Dae Jung.

THE CARNAGE

More than 3,000 riot police stormed the second, thirty-sixth, and thirty-seventh floor of the Lotte Hotel where striking workers were maintaining their sit-in action in the large ball rooms. Police sprayed and fired tear gas into the rooms where striking workers were sleeping. They beat the workers with their truncheons causing serious injury to some 70 workers.

10 pregnant women workers were also brutally dragged out by the riot police. The tear gas and fire extinguisher sprays turned on workers by the riot police caused serious concern for the health of the pregnant women and their unborn babies. Newspapers reported that the riot police was seen wielding unnecessary violence against workers. Workers, including women workers, were forced to kneel on the floor with their head between their knees as the riot police herded out more than thousand workers into police buses to take to police detention centres.

BEATING BACK WORKERS

The police raid lasted more than three hours. The resistance by more than thousand workers forced police to prolong their raid. The news of the police attack brought hundreds of workers and unionists of the KCTU.

The ensuing protest action outside the hotel led

to another spate of police violence as they tried to drag away the protesting workers blocking the police operation. Police operation, which included dragging away even those unionists who gathered to protest, concluded just before 8 a.m. The detained workers were released on June 31 just before the expiry of 48 hours of detention allowed without warrant of arrest.

However, 7 leaders of the union, who had been issued with warrant of arrest were formally charged and detained. One of the vice-presidents of the union escaped being captured by police by hiding in a air vent duct for more than 9 hours.

THE FURTHER OF POLICE RAMPAGE

The police rush against workers continued in the morning of July 1, when the riot police stormed the National Health Insurance Corporation building where more than 1,600 workers were holding sit-in strike. The National Health Insurance Corporation Workers Union began its strike on June 28 as a part of the collective bargaining agreement campaign. At 3 a.m., July 1, only two days after the storming of the Lotte Hotel, more than 3,000 police stormed the building breaking down doors and windows, firing tear gas, to drag away the striking workers. The arrested workers are now held in some 20 police stations around Seoul, which were only hours before the "home" for striking Lotte workers.

As the police had issued warrants of arrest against some 30 leaders of the union prior to the raid, it is expected that they will be charged and held in detention even after the 48 hour period allowed for detention without warrant of detention.

FUTURE ACTION

The KCTU organised immediate protest actions in front of the Lotte Hotel and Lotte Department store on June 29 and 30.

The KCTU decided to step up the protest actions and explore the possibility of undertaking a boycott of all Lotte services and products (Lotte operates a number of luxury department stores, hotels, and beverage and biscuit manufacturing companies; it has its headquarters in Japan) in solidarity with consumer groups and unions in Korea and other countries.

(courtesy: ICFTU online)

CONFERENCE OF UCATT

Chittabrata Majumdar

On behalf of the Construction Workers Federation of India, I attended the 15th National Delegate Conference of the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT) from 5th to 9th June 2000, at Killarney, Republic of Ireland as guest. The Conference impressed me very much because of its various features.

UCATT is the joint union of construction workers of both the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. The union is affiliated to IFBWW, the construction wing of ICFTU. They are also affiliated to the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW).

UNIQUE SOLIDARITY

But apart from trade union representatives of European Federation, 7 foreign delegates from 4 continents were invited and attended the conference as guests. These delegates were: 2 from Construction & General Division of CFMEU, Australia; 1 from Construction Workers Federation of India; 2 from General Trade Union for Building & Wood Industries Workers, Egypt; 1 from Zimbabwe Construction Trade Union Workers Union and 1 from Teamsters, Canada. It is to be noted that all the representing unions belong to Left and most of them are either affiliates of UITBB, the construction wing of WFTU or work with them. This is to be mentioned here that 2

delegates from UCATT attended the National Conference of Construction Workers Federation of India in April 1999. It is important to note that the struggling unions all over the world, cutting across their ideological lines and international affiliations are joining the united movement against attack of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation, which is of vital importance today.

UCATT, the organised union of construction workers of UK and Republic of Ireland, which is a wing of the European TUC, the British TUC, the Scottish TUC and the TUC of Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, is following the same line. This is definitely a step forward towards strengthening of international solidarity of the working class.

DEBATE ON GLOBALISATION

Before the conference, on 4th Comrade **George Brumwell**, General Secretary of UCATT, met with the foreign delegates and discussed about the programme and procedure of the conference and arrangements for the foreign delegates. He informed that a debate on globalisation has been arranged in the afternoon session on 7th June, where delegates from foreign countries will take part along with the delegates.

With the presidential address of Comrade **John Thompson**,

Chairman of UCATT, the business of the conference started. Apart from construction workers' related issues, he criticised the policy of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation and the role of WTO to gain an unfair social comparative advantage in international competition.

When industrial activities in the manufacturing sectors are gradually reducing; the construction industry is one of the major industrial sectors in UK and Ireland. From the Executive Council Report, it has been noted that in 1999, around 14,54,000 workers were employed in the Construction industry of which 9,45,000 were employees and 5,09,000 were self-employed. Within this, around 96,000 are employed in public sector. Between 1998 and 1999, the membership of UCATT has increased from 1,11,804 to 1,22,579. Incidence of privatisation of this sector is increasing.

Executive Council observed that after the Labour Government came to power, certain long standing demands of the trade union movement, such as the National Minimum Wage, devolution in Scotland and Wales and reforms of the House of Lords etc. has been introduced. Despite these achievements, the Labour Government has disappointed the trade union movement in many other areas.

MOTIONS ADOPTED

About 65 delegates representing all the regions attended the conference. Apart from the report of the Executive Council, 54 motions along with some amendments were also taken up by the conference. These motions were on the issues like Wages and Conditions, Health and Safety, Employment Law, Construction Industry Scheme and Bogus self-employment, National Health Service, Training, etc. Apart from these, issues like Privatisation, Discrimination of Ethnic Minorities, Under Representation of Black and Asian People in Industry, Equality of Treatment between the Local and Migrant Workers, the Northern Ireland Peace Process and Devolution, Relations with Labour Party, Opposition to US Blockade against Cuba etc., were also part of motions. These motions came from various units of UCATT and submitted before the Standing Order Committee. After scrutiny,

the Standing Order Committee submitted these motions before the conference for discussion and adoption. This indicates the nature of democratic functioning within the organisation.

The conference decided to support the Labour Government, whenever they act in the interest of UCATT members and the wider trade union movement, and to act independently in defence of the membership of UCATT when they do not. They reserved the right to criticise Government policy and campaign to preserve and enhance the interests of the members of UCATT. The conference decided to use all possible means to promote and sustain the image that a Labour Party committed to pro working class, socialist policies is the only political force which can effectively represent construction workers.

DEVELOPING STRUGGLES

The debate on globalisation was of much interest. The debate started with my speech. After

me, other delegates from foreign countries and the delegates from UCATT spoke. All the speakers opposed the policy and criticised the role of World Bank, IMF and WTO. All the speakers stressed the need to develop struggles against the policies and build international solidarity amongst those struggles. To build global unity of the Construction workers, UCATT was requested to take initiative to develop a joint platform of IFBWW and UITBB. I, on behalf of the Construction Workers Federation of India and CITU, submitted a written paper against globalisation, which was circulated among the delegates. The delegates appreciated the paper.

After Construction, Software and Tourism are the major industries in Ireland. Natural beauty of Ireland is wonderful.

During our stay in Killarney, UCATT organised 2 outing programmes for the foreign delegates and guests. We enjoyed both the programmes very much.

(Cont. from page 13) - Notice tabled by Basudeb Acharya and Laxman Seth, MPs in the Lok Sabha, the Minister finally agreed to refer the matter to the CBI for finding out whether deliberate under statement was done with the intention of defrauding the Govt. About a week after this declaration, the Govt. revised the Retention Prices of the Units and slashed the annual payments referred to in the opening para as an interim measure.

CONCLUSION

The Economic Policies currently in fashion and being pursued by successive Govts at the Centre forebode many calamitous events on the national scene in the near future. The millions of downtrodden in the country expect relief and succour from the Govt., which has been brought to power by their votes. In Feb. 2000 the price of urea was increased by 15% with the intention of reducing the subsidy burden of the Govt. by about Rs.1250 crore. But the erring Fertiliser Companies continued to overdraw at the rate of no less Rs.1000 crore annually. The total revival cost of sick plants of HFCL and FCI at Durgapur, Barauni, Haldia, Ramagundam, Talcher & Gorakhpur would hardly cost of Rs.3000 crore. But this is not to be done. While the reduction of subsidy to the poor farmers and closing of the sick Public Sector Units is unavoidable, recovery of illegally drawn subsidies by big Companies is negotiable. The continuing fraud with fertiliser subsidies is a national shame. The Govt. must intervene firmly and quickly to end the malpractice and at the same time roll back the decision of enhancing the urea price and come forward to allocate funds for the revival of the ailing Public Sector Fertiliser Units.

REPORTS & EVENTS

CITU: KARNATAKA STATE CONFERENCE

Factors affecting growth during the last three years, in spite of very many struggles conducted in the State and the cause for comparative lull in unorganised workers' activities were subjected to a vigorous debate in the just concluded Karnataka State 8th CITU conference. It was held in Bangalore from 13th to 16th July 2000. M K Pandhe, General Secretary and W R Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU, observed, intervened and guided the conference. The conference simultaneously debated the problems connected with facing the challenges of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, in the context of disinvestment, downsizing, closures, etc. S Surayanarayana Rao, President of the State CITU chaired the sessions.

The report presented by VJK Nair, General Secretary, covered the aspects of political developments, the working class struggles, the impact of liberalisation on State politics and consequently on the working class, etc. It noted that the liberalisation in labour administration had led to reappearance of forced labour in mills, quarries, etc with several reported cases.

In spite of certain organisational weaknesses, the CITU was the only trade union centre active and catering to the needs of the workers in Karnataka. It is reflected in large number of

workers freshly unionised and active. This has made State CITU to gain more members than it lost, thus making it to register marginal increase in membership during this period.

The conference reviewed the extent of participation and effectiveness of CITU and other constituents, workers and mass organisations in the two general strikes i.e. 11th Dec 1998 and May 11th, 2000.

The conference held separate discussions on six specific subjects in the commissions. A separate report on the state of CITU organisation was also presented. The report of the working women coordination committee was also placed for discussion by S Varalakshmi. The conference debated these reports for three days.

The conference resolved to earnestly take up the campaign, the call for which was given by the Kozhikode meeting of the CITU General Council.

The conference debated several issues affecting workers in the State like ineffectiveness of Provident Fund, ESI and welfare facilities and decided to chalk out sustained struggles in every one of these segments. It endorsed the recommendations of various commissions. First to organise the fight against Govt policies relating to privatisation unitedly by public sector unions, not only of the Central Engg Public Sector Units,

but including others like financial institutions and service sector as well. To hold a workshop, to concretise action plans, to hold a convention, to attend to the specific sections like young workers, women workers and contract workers in all these establishments, to generate and sustain a general movement against privatisation. Second to take up the problems of small scale units and to generate a general struggle in that sector. Third to take up the minimum wages and other issues relating to beedi and other segments of unorganised workers. Fourth to attend seriously to training and developing cadres, including working women cadre. Sixth to strengthen the State centre, to strengthen the existing district centres and to develop CITU organising committees and working groups in various districts, areas and other places. The conference re-elected Suryanarayana Rao, VJK Nair and K V Srinivasan as President, General Secretary & Treasurer, as part of a 65 member State Committee.

The conference was inaugurated by M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU, who in his inaugural address not only explained the ill effects of globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation besides the danger of communalism. He also pinpointed the role of the working class. He

REPORTS & EVENTS

also paid a visit to Bangalore central jail and met the leaders and workers of the BPL Union. In his address to the delegates, W R Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU, emphasised the need to tone up the organisation

to meet the challenges in the coming period.

The conference ended with an impressive rally on the 16th which demonstrated the strength and organisation of the CITU in

Karnataka. The rally was addressed by M K Pandhe, Suryanarayana Rao, VJK Nair and B Madhava.

(Report from V.J.K. Nair)

DEMONSTRATION AGAINST 2nd LABOUR COMMISSION

Workers organised in different centres under the banner of CITU staged a militant demonstration in Mumbai on 4th July against the Ravindra Varma Commission on Labour. This was a demonstration to register CITU's protest and to boycott the 2nd Labour Commission. The venue was Senapati Bapat Marg, very close to the Kamgar Kalyan Kendra, which was the meeting place of the 4 day long proceedings of the Commission in Mumbai. This is a working class area which lies between Dadar and Elphinston Road Railway Stations in Central Mumbai. The Commission, with invitees from employers federations and some of the trade union organisations, had just begun their deliberations, when the workers from different localities started coming in processions and gathered near the entrance to the meeting hall of the Commission. Those present in the meeting hall including the Chairman and the Commission members could very well view the demonstrating assembly of workers with red banners, flags and placards in their hands from the corridors of the meeting hall. The Govt officials, the

representatives of the trade unions and employers federation who came to present their views and the Commission members and the Chairman could also very clearly hear the angry slogans militantly raised in the demonstration: "Anti Working Class Commission Go Back".

This demonstration was in response to the call given by the CITU's Maharashtra State Council meeting held in Mumbai on 17th June 2000. It has to be specially mentioned here that the call for this protest action was rightly taken up and joined by a good number of other trade union organisations in the city. Such organisations and workers were from Sarvasramik Sangh, Thekedhari Padhati Virodhi Manch, Sarvasramik Sanghatana and Trade Union Solidarity. It has, however, to be noted here that though the AITUC at the national level was a party to the decision to boycott the Commission, there was no participation from AITUC in the demonstration.

The whole questionnaire circulated by the present Commission, unlike the previous labour commission, is framed in such a way as to make the working

class accept the unavailability and inevitability of liberalisation, globalisation, disinvestment of Public Sector and contractorisation in workplace.

The plain perusal of the 641 long questionnaire will reveal the real face of the servile attitude of the Commission towards the industrial and business lobby, the monopolists in India, the foreign multinationals and their transnational bosses in the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation and their political masters of the imperialist camp.

Addressing the militant assembly of protesting workers, CITU's Maharashtra State General Secretary K.L. Bajaj narrated the anti-national and anti-working class features of the present Commission. Others who spoke on the occasion were M.A. Patil, (Sarvasramik sangh), Franklin D' Souza, Deepti Gopinath, N. Vasudevan and Abhyankar (Thekedhari Padhadti Virodhi Mandh), Jayant Chavan (Sarvasramik sanghatana), Mahendra Singh (CPI-M), Vivek Monteiro and P.R. Krishnan (CITU).

(Report from P.R. Krishnan)

REPORTS & EVENTS

ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF BEEDI WORKERS

The Third Triennial Conference of All India Beedi Workers Federation (CITU) will be held at Farakka (W.Bengal) on October 11, 12 and 13, 2000.

This decision was taken by the Working Committee of All India Beedi Workers Federation in its meeting held at Solapur on June

30, July 1 and 2, 2000. There will be a total number of 250 delegates, based on membership of 1999 and one delegate for 800 members. Delegate fee will be Rs.100/- for each delegate or Observer. The Conference will be preceded by an open rally of Beedi Workers at Farakka on 11th October.

As a part of the Conference, a

Seminar will be held on October 12 on the following subjects and speakers:

- 1) The Globalised Economy and its impact on India - Nirupam Sen
- 2) Communalism and Emergence of Neo-Fascism in India - Chittabrata Majumdar
- 3) Problems and Issues in Beedi Industry - P.K. Ganguly

SOLAPUR: 10,000 HOUSES FOR BEEDI WORKERS

The Lal Bapta Beedi Kamgar Union, (CITU) Solapur, an affiliated union of All India Beedi Workers Federation (CITU) has achieved an unique feat of getting sanction of building ten thousand housings for the Beedi workers of Solapur. Through longdrawn struggles, they could snatch the sanction of Rs.20,000/- from the then Shiv Sena - BJP State Government of Maharashtra. Then through further struggles, helped by P.K. Ganguly, General Secretary of all India Federation

and MPs like Basudev Acharya and Abul Hasnat Khan, and by continuous pressure given by Md. Nizamuddin, the Federation representative in the Central Advisory Committee on Beedi Workers Welfare Fund, the BJP Central Minister of Labour had to give the Central Govt's sanction for another Rs.20,000/-. The rest of Rs.20,000/- being contributed by the workers for each house costing Rs.60,000/-. The houses are being constructed in the name of Godu Tai Parulekar Mahila

Beedi Kamgar Sahakari Griha Nirman Sansthan in memory of late Com. Godavari Parulekar.

The Working Committee members of the Federation visited the housing site at Solapur during the meeting on July 1. A big rally was organised on July 2, which was attended by about 5000 women. The rally was addressed by Ranjana, Md. Nizamuddin, Suman Sunzgiri, P.K. Ganguly, Ahilya Rangnekar, P.P. Sanzgiri and Narsiya Adam.

MADHYA PRADESH: BEEDI WORKERS CONFERENCE

The Madhya Pradesh Beedi Mazdoor Ekta Federation held its Second State Conference at Balaghat on July 15 and 16. About 60 delegates including 20 women from different parts attended the Conference. The Conference was presided over by Badal Saroj, the President. The General Secretary, Tanulal Mandalwar placed the report,

which was discussed by about 25 delegates including 5 women. P.K. Ganguly, General Secretary of the All India Beedi Workers Federation addressed the delegates. The Conference resolved to strengthen the organisation by increasing membership and launching movements. It elected Ajit Kumar Lal as President, A.T.

Padmanabhan as Working President, Tanulal Mandalwar as General Secretary, Laxmi Naryan Namdev as Assistant General secretary and Ram Raj Patel as Treasurer. The Conference also elected three delegates and three observers for the All India Beedi Workers Federation Conference to be held at Farakka (W.Bengal) on October 11, 12 and 13.

REPORTS & EVENTS

MALWA REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF CITU

The Malwa Regional Conference of the Madhya Pradesh State CITU was held at Neemuch on 25th June. The Conference was inaugurated by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU. It was attended by about 200 delegates. The Conference was

addressed by S. Kumar and Badal Saroj, President and General Secretary of M.P. State Committee of CITU, and other fraternal delegates.

Naryan Bharati, the Convenor placed the report, which was discussed by about 30 delegates

including women. The Conference elected a 25-member Committee with Naryan Bharati as the Convenor. Earlier, the Regional Conferences of Chattisgarh, Bhopal, Vind and Mahakaushal were held.

WOMEN BEEDI WORKERS' CONVENTION

Tripura Beedi Shramik Sangha organised a State level convention of women beedi workers at Agartala on the 28th of May, 2000. It is remarkable that in the present atmosphere of terror, created by the terrorist outfits in Tripura, the Union has successfully implemented the decision of the All India Beedi Workers' Federation to hold conventions and form women's sub-committee. 106 women delegates were

elected in the local meetings. Out of these, 98 women from different parts of the State attended the convention, despite inclement weather and threats from the employers, who wanted to sabotage the convention. They discussed the problems they were facing as women and the steps to be taken to strengthen the organisation. A struggle programme was decided upon by the convention. The convention elected a 17 member sub-

committee. Sandhya Das and Also Acharjee were elected joint convenors of the sub-committee.

The sub-committee met on 17th June and finalised the struggle programme. As decided in the meeting mass dharnas were held in front of the main office of the Sikha beedi factory on 22nd June, demanding regular work, minimum wages etc. The dharna was a big success participated by large number of women workers.

BANK EMPLOYEES AGAINST PRIVATISATION

The representatives of the nine unions constituting United Forum of Bank Unions, representing the entire bank officers and employees working in commercial banks in public and private sector, foreign banks, gramin banks, cooperative banks, met today in Calcutta under the presidentship of Tarakeshwar Chakroborty, General Secretary, AIBEA. After detailed

discussions in the context of government's declaration in course of budget speech on 29.2.2000 to the effect that the Government equity in all public sector banks would be brought down to 33%, the meeting resolved to fight back this move of privatisation of Nationalised Banks. The meeting declared its firm resolve to build up a nationwide campaign against

Government move of privatisation and called upon the employees and officers of banks to prepare themselves for agitational programmes and direct action as the UFBU would chalk out for the purpose. The UFBU has also decided to build up an immediate campaign against VRS in any form or manner in any bank. All the constituents of the UFBU will resort to a strike action in the event

REPORTS & EVENTS

of the Government moving a bill in the Parliament proposing dilution of its holding in the equity

of the PSBs below 51% and unleash a sustained programme of agitation against privatisation and

VRS.

(Report from S Bardhan, BEFI)

NPCC WORKERS UNION CONFERENCE

The 19th bi-ennial central conference of NPCC Ltd Workers' Union of India was held at Dilip Bhattacharjee Mancha, Majia(WB) on 8-9 July 2000.

The conference was attended by 89 delegates all over the country, besides 6 fraternal delegates. Basudeb Acharya, Binoy Mukherjee, Bisheswa Paswan, Md. Naim and Biseswar Sinha

were elected to the presidium. Jibon Roy MP, Secretary CITU, inaugurated the conference.

Anup Kumar Roy, General Secretary, presented the report which reviewed the experiences gained in implementing the decisions of last conference and also set forth certain tasks for the period ahead.

The conference elected a central

committee with Basudeb Acharya, MP as President, Binoy Mukherjee as Working President, Anup Kumar Roy as General Secretary and Gurupada Das as the Treasurer, alongwith 21 other office bearers and executive members.

The conference concluded with the speech of Basudeb Acharya.

CEMENT: CITU/AITUC RESERVATION ON MOU

The industry level negotiations between the Cement Manufacturers Association (CMA) and the five central trade unions held on 7.7.2000 at Chennai ended in a fractured conclusion. While the BMS, HMS and INTUC signed the Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU), the CITU along with the AITUC recorded reservations over the MOU. Both the AITUC and CITU have written letters to the CMA Negotiating Committee conveying the dissatisfaction of the workers and raised some specific issues for further discussion. The MOU has to be

formalised in a settlement before the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central). The AITUC and CITU have demanded all-round improvement in the MOU, particularly increase in basic pay in the first year of the settlement. Campaign and agitation had been planned in pursuit of this demand.

TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR WORKING WOMEN

A CITU-ILO Regional Training Programme for Working Women activists was held in Bangalore, 23-25 June 2000. 25 women from the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu participated. They were from insurance, banking, postal, telecom, ICDS, state Govt.,

teachers, nurses etc. sectors. Kanai Banerjee, Hemalata, (both Secretaries of CITU) Hema (Prof. of History), Ranjana Nirula, Working Editor, Voce of WW, and Susamma Verghese from the ILO conducted the training sessions. The subjects included: 1) ILO Conventions & Recommendations for Working

Wmone; 2) Working Women in Capitalist Society; 3) Working Women & Trade Unions and 4) Existing Legal Provisions for Working Women and their implementation. The participants took an active interest in the discussions that followed each presentation.

REPORTS & EVENTS

BIRLA TEXTILE MILL WORKERS ON STRIKE

Over 1200 workers of Birla Textile Mill at Baddi, Himachal Pradesh had been on continuous strike from 12th July 2000 under the leadership of CITU union.

This textile mill had been relocated from Delhi to Baddi at Himachal Pradesh consequent upon Supreme Court Order to close down and/or shift the factory from Delhi on ground of pollution. The award of the Supreme Court also stipulated that the workers of the relocated factories will have continuity of service and their service condition will not change on relocation.

But after closure of the factory in 1996 and followed by relocation of the Birla Textile Mill from Delhi to Baddi, HP IN January 1999, the Birla Management stopped paying Dearness Allowance to workers. Practically, the wages of the workers working for more than two decades have been freezed at 1996 level at the relocated factory. There are cases that even after working for 35 years in that Birla concern, some workers are getting only Rs 1900/- per month. Moreover, the Birla

Management recruited around 500 workers in the name of trinees and have been paying them Rs 1050/- per month in lieu of 12 hours' work. This is much below than even the statutory minimum wages prevailing in the State.

The workers of the Birla textile mill have been pursuing the management since long for proper implementation of the Supreme court judgement and re-introduction of DA for them. The CITU union in the factory held number of agitation to highlight the genuine demands of the workers but nothing could move the Birla management. In that situation the workers had to go in for indefinite strike from 12th July to press for their demands.

The strike called by the CITU union has been joined by almost all the workers of the factory irrespective of affiliations. Despite repeated provocation by the management and their agents, and threats for repressive measures being given by the police authorities, 99% workers are still continuing on strike. On the fifth day of the strike, prohibitory order on the strike was issued by the

Labour deptt.

On 20th July 2000, a massive demonstration of thousands of workers of the entire Baddi industrial areas was held at the textile mill gate in solidarity with the striking workers. To disrupt the rally, stones were thrown from inside the factory on the assembly of the workers by the agents of the management and police force stationed at the factory gate remained silent onlooker. When the workers chased the miscreants, the police became suddenly active to charge on the striking workers. Owing to tremendous restrain exercised by the leadership, the furious mob could be controlled and the rally was held successfully.

The rally continued for long hours and was addressed by Tapan Sen, Secretary CITU, Kashmir Singh Thakur, General Secretary, Himachal State CITU, N D Ranaut, Secretary, Solan District CITU, Ganga Prasad from Punjab State CITU, besides the trade union leaders of the Baddi industrial area from INTUC, AITUC and BMS and also by the Local MLA.

BHEL WORKERS STAGED MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION

The workers and executives of Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd at Bhopal have staged a massive demonstration on 21st July 2000 demanding immediate wage

revision of employees and executives which has been delayed for more than three and half years due to retrograde Govt guidelines. The rally was

organised by 18 unions and organisations of workers, supervisors and executives and CITU was one of the main constituents.

REPORTS & EVENTS

The rally started from the foundry gate moved in procession all through the plant and converged into a massively attended public meeting at the Jubilee Gate. The rally was attended by several hundreds of workers, supervisors and executives and it was named as "Hahakar Rally".

The leaders of 18 unions of

workers, supervisors and officers' associations addressed the rally and condemned the anti-worker policy of the Govt and the retrograde Govt guidelines on wage-negotiation affecting the workers and officers of the public sector as a whole. The speakers also denounced the policy of the Govt to privatise the PSUs at any

cost much to the detriment of national interests. Among those who addressed the rally were JL Nandy from CITU, Dr K M Shrivastava from Officers' Association Karnail Singh from Supervisor's Union, Mahesh Malaviya from Supervisory Staff Association, JS Puri and MW Siddiqui from other BHEL unions.

DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF COM SAROJ VASISTH

The first death anniversary of Com Saroj Vasisth and her daughter Visakha was observed by a thousand strong gathering at Sriram Trust Hall at Rohtak, Haryana. Com Saroj was the State secretariat member of Haryana State CITU and General Secretary of Haryana Anganwari Workers and Helpers' Association and a frontline organiser of the working women movement in the State. She was brutally murdered along with her daughter one year ago.

The memorial meeting was jointly sponsored by Haryana State CITU, Sarba Karmachari Sangh, Anganwari Workers' & Helpers' Union and Janavadi Mahila Samity. A presidium consisting of S N Solanki, President of State CITU, RC Jagga, President Sarba Karmachari Sangh, Jagmati, President, Anganwari Workers and Helpers' Union and Vimla Chowdhury, President, Janavadi Mahila Samity conducted the meeting. Satvir Singh, General Secretary of Haryana State CITU moved the main resolution

demanding punishment of the murderer of Com Saroj and Visakha. He also spoke about the struggling life of Com Saroj and her immense contribution in the trade union movement and in organising the working women braving all odds and obstacles in a feudally dominated State like Haryana. In the process of such struggle only she laid down her life, Satvir Singh stated.

Com Ranjana Nirula, the editor of Voice of Working Women and the leader of All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) spoke in the memorial meeting on behalf of CITU. She reminded all concerned about the indomitable spirit and determination of Com Saroj who remained active in the TU and democratic movement braving all hurdles and repression. Carrying forward the task of organising the womenfolk in Haryana in the democratic movement, in the struggle against atrocities on them and for their rightful place in society with all

seriousness is the best way of honouring the memory of comrade Saroj, Ranjana asserted. Among others who addressed the meeting were comrades Satyapal Siva from Sarba Karmachari Sangh, Jagmati Malik from Anganwari Workers' Union, and Jasvir Kaur from Janavadi Mahila Samity.

The meeting has decided to form an Organisation after the memory of the departed comrade, named "SAROJ-VISAKHA MAHILA SANGSTHAN" which will work as a centre of the women's movement in the state.

CITU CONFERENCES

Madhya Pradesh:

23-25 September 2000

Tamil Nadu:

27-30 September 2000

Haryana:

13-15 October 2000

Rajasthan:

14-16 October 2000

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

* In pursuance of the decision of the 14th World Trade Union Congress, a month of Solidarity with the workers and people of Korea was observed from 23 June to 25 July 2000. This coincided with the North-South summit towards peaceful reunification of the Korean people.

* The World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU) has called for observance of 1 September 2000 as a Day of Action to lift all blockades and sanctions against countries and peoples.

* At the 88th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILO) in Geneva (June 2000), the Workers Group representing trade unions from all parts of the world, condemned the acts of the terrorist groups in Fiji, by using arms and holding hostages to

forcibly overthrow of democratically elected Government of the country. Despite lifting of siege on Parliament and release of hostages, Fiji still remains under terrorist coup. The trade unions all over the world have expressed solidarity with the trade unions and democratic movement in Fiji.

* The 3rd National Congress of General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) was held at Kathmandu, 1-3 May 2000. Kali Ghose, Secretary, CITU, participated as a fraternal delegate.

* The trade union movement in Nepal registered a significant victory in the abolition of *Kamaiya* (bonded agricultural labour) system, announced in the Nepalese Parliament on 17th July, 2000. GEFONT was in the

forefront of the movement for abolition of *Kamaiya* system. This has set the stage for freeing 2 lakh bonded labourers in Nepal.

* In Pakistan, 4563 employees have been offloaded under a so-called Voluntary Retirement Scheme by the Pakistan Steel (PS). Another batch of 970 employees are targeted to be offloaded by September. The Chief of Pakistan Steel told the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 8th July, 2000, that the company had decided to outsource all non-core activities and as a result wound up Pakistan Steel Fabricated Co. Transport and Security Departments. He admitted that the world financial institutions, World Bank and IMF, had been insisting on the Govt. that public sector owned industries should be closed down.

ATTN: STATE COMMITTEES ANNUAL RETURNS & AFFILIATION FEES

The General Council Meeting held at Kozhikode in April last had decided that the State Committees would submit the Annual Returns of the affiliated unions for the year 1999 along with the Affiliation fees, including outstanding dues of the previous years, if any, by 30th June 2000. This decision was taken to enable the centre to decide the Statewise delegation to the forthcoming CITU Conference to be held in December at Hyderabad.

The State Committees are requested to ensure that the affiliation fees for the year 1999, as well as the outstandings of 1997 and 1998, are cleared at the earliest.

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

| Sr. No | Centre | Mar. 2000 | Apr. 2000 | May 2000 | Sr. No. | Centre | Mar. 2000 | Apr. 2000 | May 2000 |
|--------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1 | Gudur | 434 | 442 | 442 | 45 | Amritsar | 382 | 389 | 383 |
| 2 | Guntur | 426 | 438 | 438 | 46 | Ludhiana | 383 | 392 | 398 |
| 3 | Hyderabad | 412 | 422 | 424 | 47 | Ajmer | 429 | 433 | 435 |
| 4 | Visakhapatnam | 432 | 436 | 440 | 48 | Jaipur | 398 | 403 | 406 |
| 5 | Warangal | 424 | 435 | 437 | 49 | Chennai | 467 | 473 | 477 |
| 6 | D D Tinsukia | 381 | 386 | 387 | 50 | Coimbatore | 422 | 426 | 433 |
| 7 | Guwahati | 451 | 457 | 459 | 51 | Coonoor | 434 | 432 | 434 |
| 8 | Labac-Silchar | 366 | 369 | 378 | 52 | Madurai | 433 | 423 | 432 |
| 9 | Mariani Jorhat | 421 | 419 | 415 | 53 | Salem | 431 | 436 | 434 |
| 10 | Rangapara-Tezpur | 402 | 406 | 405 | 54 | Tiruchirapally | 472 | 480 | 476 |
| 11 | Jamshedpur | 397 | 400 | 405 | 55 | Agra | 407 | 407 | 399 |
| 12 | Jharia | 360 | 356 | 359 | 56 | Ghaziabad | 446 | 446 | 445 |
| 13 | Kodarma | 370 | 372 | 370 | 57 | Kanpur | 430 | 426 | 423 |
| 14 | Monghyr Jamalpur | 421 | 417 | 409 | 58 | Saharanpur | 399 | 403 | 398 |
| 15 | Noamundi | 396 | 399 | 398 | 59 | Varanasi | 470 | 470 | 465 |
| 16 | Ranchi-Hatia | 418 | 418 | 417 | 60 | Asansol | 401 | 405 | 409 |
| 17 | Ahmedabad | 434 | 439 | 439 | 61 | Calcutta | 434 | 434 | 439 |
| 18 | Bhavnagar | 458 | 466 | 473 | 62 | Darjeeling | 369 | 376 | 379 |
| 19 | Rajkot | 427 | 444 | 441 | 63 | Durgapur | 448 | 456 | 460 |
| 20 | Surat | 442 | 447 | 449 | 64 | Haldia | 482 | 480 | 478 |
| 21 | Vadodra | 413 | 429 | 434 | 65 | Howrah | 477 | 484 | 494 |
| 22 | Faridabad | 437 | 441 | 440 | 66 | Jalpaiguri | 392 | 397 | 395 |
| 23 | Yamunanagar | 403 | 409 | 409 | 67 | Raniganj | 369 | 376 | 377 |
| 24 | Srinagar | 477 | 471 | 467 | 68 | Chandigarh | 452 | 456 | 453 |
| 25 | Bangalore | 415 | 422 | 425 | 69 | Delhi | 512 | 517 | 518 |
| 26 | Belgaum | 470 | 473 | 478 | 70 | Pondicherry | 467 | 475 | 476 |
| 27 | Hubli-Dharwar | 429 | 435 | 438 | | | | | |
| 28 | Mercara | 460 | 458 | 459 | | All India | 434 | 438 | 440 |
| 29 | Alwaye | 437 | 439 | 442 | | | | | |
| 30 | Mundakayam | 453 | 450 | 453 | | Additional Series of Labour Bureau | | | |
| 31 | Quilon | 454 | 450 | 455 | 1 | Kothagudem | 426 | 433 | 437 |
| 32 | Thiruvananthapuram | 490 | 496 | 501 | 2 | Himachal Pradesh | 418 | 428 | 426 |
| 33 | Balaghat | 373 | 378 | 380 | 3 | Bhilwara | 432 | 436 | 436 |
| 34 | Bhilai | 381 | 388 | 390 | 4 | Chhindwara | 415 | 417 | 415 |
| 35 | Bhopal | 449 | 452 | 451 | 5 | Tripura | 396 | 319 | 424 |
| 36 | Indore | 436 | 452 | 446 | 6 | Goa | 505 | 520 | 523 |
| 37 | Jabalpur | 443 | 451 | 450 | | | | | |
| 38 | Mumbai | 491 | 501 | 511 | | | | | |
| 39 | Nagpur | 447 | 451 | 454 | | | | | |
| 40 | Nasik | 446 | 452 | 455 | | | | | |
| 41 | Pune | 483 | 488 | 492 | | | | | |
| 42 | Solapur | 467 | 465 | 466 | | | | | |
| 43 | Barbil | 394 | 403 | 406 | | | | | |
| 44 | Rourkela | 400 | 401 | 401 | | | | | |

Government of India
Ministry of Labour
Labour Bureau
Shimla - 171 004

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

**Working Committee Meeting
Haldia (W.B.), September 18 to 20, 2000**

NOTICE

A meeting of the Working Committee of the CITU will be held at Haldia on 18 to 20 September, 2000 to consider the following Agenda.

- 1) Condolence Resolution
- 2) Confirmation of the minutes of the Working Committee meeting at Jaipur.
- 3) Presidential Address.
- 4) Report of the General Secretary
- 5) Statement of Accounts from June to August, 2000.
- 6) Review of the preparation for the 10th Conference of the CITU to be held at Hyderabad (A.P) from 27 to 31 December, 2000.
- 7) Programme of Jathas to be organised from various centres to reach Hyderabad on 26th December, 2000.
- 8) Consideration of the application for new affiliation.
- 9) Resolutions.
- 10) Report of the All India Convention of Working Women.

All Members are requested to reach Calcutta and avail local train from Howrah to Mechheda where they will be received by the volunteers of the reception committee.

Several long distance trains from South, North, East and West pass through Kharagpur. Comrades may also reach Kharagpur and then go the Mechheda by local trains. To assist the Comrades, volunteers will be present in both Kharagpur and Mechheda.

All Members are requested to book their return tickets from Kharagpur in advance through Computer Reservation system so as to avoid eleventh Hour difficulties.

Members are requested to inform their arrival to the reception committee on the following address.

**Com. Lakshman Saith (M.P)
Reception Committee,
All India CITU Working Committee Meeting,
Shramik Bhawan, Haldia, Dist. Midnapur,
West Bengal**

The meeting of the Working Committee will commence on 18th September, 2000 at 10 AM
With greetings,

M.K. PANDHE
General Secretary

(Neera Thakur, nominated by the CITU, participated in the 'International Meeting at the Threshold of the Third Millennium' held at Havana, Cuba, 28-29 April, 2000. She reports on her visit to the Editor)

CUBA: MEET ON WOMEN & TRADE UNIONISM

The International Meeting on Women & Trade Unionism at the threshold of the third Millennium was participated by 200 delegates from 15 countries.

The discussions were lively and participants were very well informed and up-to-date vis-a-vis the deteriorating conditions of the millions of working women all around the world.

The conference delegates were unanimous in declaring that 340 million people will not survive more than 40 years of age due to capitalism and neo-liberal trends. There is rampant economic failure, social chaos and absence of political will on the part of the Governments. A casino economy has emerged and in the global financial market 1.5 billion dollars are marketed every day, out of which 25% are financially speculated. The National Govts are bound by the new or modern actors like NGOs, MNCs and the TNCs which do not allow true increase in production.

Technical innovations are controlled by the ideological hegemony of Group of 7 and within the Group, by the USA.

The very role of Trade Unions in economic labour markets determining the wages is sought to be denied. Now the talk is controlling wages to low levels to increase the flexible-labour market and adopt hire and fire. Most political parties around the world do not support the TUs. Right-wing TUs are competing with us, causing further complication and disunity. There is significant decrease in TU membership in most countries.

Though women work more than men, it is essential to train women to actually contribute decisively and influence the transformation. Neo-liberalisation is increasing backwardness. This in turn reduces their contribution in society.

Two separate Commissions were formed. The first Commission discussed the Neo-liberal trends and their impact on labour with specific reference to women workers.

The second Commission discussed the socio-political rights of women in the context of the feminisation of poverty.

The collective impact of globalisation is decreasing job opportunities for all, especially women. It leads to wage inequalities, reduce the economic possibilities within families, increase extreme living conditions and violence in homes.

The meeting gave a call to women to stand up against gender race disabilities and child labour. Special significance to be placed on equal pay for all workers, collective bargaining, health care, education, misinformation of mass media, etc. serves the capitalists only and lack of access to new means of communications were the issues which it was felt, had to be tackled. The Conference came to its end.

May Day was celebrated in the millennium with great fanfare and was a true celebration of workers day. Many delegates from various countries participated in the function.

The Cuban President, Fidel Castro addressed a massive gathering and the entire audience was enthralled and spell-bound by his speech. The delegates from abroad were invited to a reception where they met Fidel Castro. It was felt that the CTC workers were felicitated and awarded medals for their work.

It was a unique experience to witness a nation united so collectively and fighting against imperialism against all odds. The spirit of the people of Cuba, who are facing tremendous economic hardship, is still intact.