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THE WORKING CLASS

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11th Conference of **CITU**

**Intensify
Struggles**

**Repulse
Attacks**

**Defend
Rights**





THE WORKING CLASS

CITU MONTHLY

JANUARY 2004

BUSINESS AS USUAL

by UNNY



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EDITORIAL

RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH UNITED STRUGGLES!

We are entering the New Year 2004, after the successful conclusion of the CITU 11th Conference, which is yet another milestone in the chequered history of CITU, which was founded on May 30, 1970 with the battle cry of "Forward to Unity and Struggle". The inaugural session of the CITU Conference witnessed the convergence of leaders of different streams of the Indian trade union movement not only pledging support to the strike call given by the organisations of the Central and state government employees (on 11th February, 2004) but also emphasising the need to go in unitedly for another countrywide general strike.

Never before, we have witnessed such intensified attack on the hard won rights of workers and the mass of the people. These attacks are also met with increasing resistance by vast sections of the people. But, the ruling classes are increasingly taking a hostile attitude towards exercise of democratic right of protest by the people. It is in this context, the NDA government led by the BJP has maintained a stoic silence over the universal demand from all sections of the trade union movement, as also the liberal democratic opinion in the country, to nullify the pernicious impact of the Supreme Court judgement denying the right to strike of all workers. It is not an accidental lapse; rather the ruling polity consider such fetters on the rights of workers and people to be a complimentary necessity to their political and economic agenda.

The self-same government led by the Prime Minister Vajpayee had moved the apex court in post-haste to review the decision in the case of disinvestment of public sector oil companies. But, the same PM has reneged on his commitment to hold a dialogue with the trade unions on the judgement of the Supreme Court on right to strike. On the other hand, the PMO had come out with an over statement favouring the ban on strike.

The working class can no longer remain silent spectator to this wilful mutilation of their unalienable right to strike. The challenge is serious and has to be met squarely by assertive action in the form of countrywide general strike. It is hoped that the central trade unions, who are parties to the declaration of the 26th September Convention on Right to Strike, will soon decide and declare the date of the strike. It is also hoped that the leaders of the Central and State government employees' organisations will synchronise their action on the date unitedly with the central trade unions.

So, let us prepare to ring in the New Year with a united strike action, with the widest participation of all streams and sections of the trade union movement in the country. Let us force the powers that be to heed the united voice of the working class of the country!

CITU 11TH CONFERENCE CALL:

INTENSIFY STRUGGLES, REPULSE ATTACKS, DEFEND RIGHTS!
FIGHT IMPERIALIST AND COMMUNAL OFFENSIVES!

W. R. VARADA RAJAN

'We can never even imagine of a confrontation with our employees. We, in the State Cabinet and our employees, work together like a family. We have given them the right to strike. We advise the employees that they should not surrender their right to strike at any point of time, as it was their right and their last weapon'. With this assertion the West Bengal Chief Minister, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee greeted the huge mass of the workers and the common

people who gathered at the mass rally held in Chennai on 13th December, in culmination of the 11th Conference of the CITU at Chennai. He also roudly pointed out that this friendly attitude and harmonious relations adopted by the Left front government was reflected by the fact that West Bengal Government's employees had not gone on strike in the last 27 years.

NDA GOVT FLAYED

The 11th Conference of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions

was held in "P.Ramamurthi Nagar" (Ram Lakshmi Paradise) from the 9th to 13th December, 2003. The inaugural session of the Conference was held as an open session, which was addressed by the leaders of the other Central Trade Unions. E. Balanandan delivered his presidential address. (*A detailed report was carried in our last issue*)

Buddadeb came down heavily on the policies of the Vajpayee led NDA government at the Centre, which he said was the worst in the country since Independence and its economic, foreign and nuclear policies were against the interest of the people, especially workers, women and minorities. "The country is on the threshold of communal danger and what had happened in Gujarat will spread to other parts of the country owing to the communal and casteist policies of the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre," he added.

The mass rally was presided by T.K.Rengarajan, Vice President, CITU and general convener of the Reception Committee of the Conference. The newly-elected president of the CITU, M.K. Pandhe, in his address, came down heavily on the Tamil Nadu Government and the Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa, for unleashing "repressive measures" against the State Government employees for their



M K PANDHE

M K Pandhe, the newly elected president, is a time-tested and veteran leader of the trade union movement in the country.

Pandhe joined the trade union movement in 1948 involving in

organising the textile workers in Sholapur, in Maharashtra. From 1958 he was working in the central office of AITUC and from 1966 was one of the secretaries of AITUC. From the foundation of CITU he was one of the secretaries and in 1991 was elected as General Secretary of CITU. After 12 years of general secretaryship he has now elected as the president of CITU.

Pandhe did his PhD in Economics in the year 1959. He has represented CITU in various government committees and wage negotiation committees of public sector establishments. He represented CITU in various meetings of International Labour Organisation. He is co-president of International Energy & Mines Organisation (IEMO) and has attended more than 50 international conferences and meetings.

agitation. He appealed to all trade unions to combat the onslaught of globalisation by supporting the nationwide strike called by Central and State Government employees on February 11, 2004. "There is no alternative to the working class to express our protest, not only against globalisation but also our protest against the Supreme Court observation. We have to fight to get the right of workers, including their right to strike for a genuine demand," he said. Chittabrata Mazumdar, who was elected general secretary, urged the need to form a system alternative to globalisation to save the people and for this the unity of workers, farmers and women and students was necessary, he said.

Others who addressed the rally included N. Sankaraiah, Chairman of the Reception Committee, R. Umanath, former vice-president, W.R. Varada Rajan and A. Soundarajan, secretaries of CITU.

'INTENSIFY STRUGGLES'

Earlier in the afternoon, the 11th conference of the CITU concluded with the unanimous adoption of the General Secretary's report and election of new office-bearers for the next three years. The conference called for intensification of the struggle to repulse attacks and defend rights, fight the imperialist and communal offensives.

CITU has emerged stronger in the struggle during the last 33 years and this conference has paved the way for making the organisation stronger. The discussion in the conference

stressed upon the need to build a powerful organisation to meet the challenges of globalisation. The necessity of further strengthening the global unity against globalisation was also emphasised by the conference. The participation of delegations from 23 countries covering all continents reflects the emerging scenario at global level.

Special discussion on the declaration on working women also reflected the strength of the working women in the CITU organisation.

Larger participation of women in struggles and organisational activities is a positive feature.

The need for a countrywide

struggle against the Supreme Court pronouncements on right to strike was reflected in the decision to go on strike at national level in defence of right to strike.

The strengthening of National Platform of Mass Organisation (NPMO) and Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions was stressed by large number of delegates. Steps to develop genuine mass movement all over the country were seen as the basic requirement today.

The new leadership is a combination of old, middle level and new leaders will take necessary steps in strengthening the organisation

CHITTABRATA MAZUMDAR



Chittabrata Mazumdar, the newly elected General Secretary of CITU, is a veteran trade union movement. Aged 68 he is involved in the trade union movement from the student days in 1959.

After graduating in science he obtained another the degree in Textile Technology.

While working as a teacher he actively involved in political and trade union activities. He was detained under DIR in January 1965 and was a detainee for 16 months. After his release from prison he became a full-time political activist and was involved in organising engineering workers in Howrah district of West Bengal.

When CITU was formed in 1970 he was elected as a Member of General Council. In 1990 he was elected General Secretary of the West Bengal State Committee of CITU and in the 7th all India conference of CITU in Kolkata in 1991 he was elected as one of the National Secretaries. Till the recent state conference in November 2003 he continued as General Secretary of State CITU. He was a minister in the Left Front Government from 1977-1982.

He represented CITU in various international conferences and meetings in different parts of the world.

and leading mass struggles. (See box)

The CITU will emerge stronger to unify the working class in the country and also to involve in the global struggle against the global offensive of the capital.

On 12th December, the Conference was divided into six commissions, where discussions were held by the delegates in separate sessions on the following topics: Imperialism, finance capital, globalisation and national sovereignty; Attack on labour rights; Unemployment – trade union perspective; Fight for a genuine social security; Unorganised sector and Child labour. Over 300 delegates presented their views in these Commissions. The conclusions arrived during the course of the Commission discussions were presented by the Rapporteurs at the concluding plenary on the next day.

During the five day long session the Conference adopted resolutions condemning the anti-people and anti-worker policies of the AIADMK government in Tamil Nadu; On the present situation in Palestine; On aggravating unemployment problem; On Agricultural Labourers and rural poor; On unorganised sector; Against bankrupt policies of privatisation; In support of Jute Workers' indefinite strike in West Bengal from 29th December 2003; extending support to the country wide strike by oil sector workers on 16 December, 2003; Against Electricity Act, 2003 and on Countrywide General Strike to Defend "Right to Strike" against the ban imposed by

Supreme Court.

The conference by another resolution extended support to the nationwide strike of the students opposing commercialisation and privatisation of education and called upon the trade unions to express solidarity with the striking students.

The Conference was greeted by K. Varadharajan, General Secretary, All India Kisan Sabha, A. Vijayaraghavan, MP, General Secretary, All India Agricultural Workers Union, Brinda Karat, General Secretary, All India Democratic Women's Association, Balagopal, President, Democratic Youth Federation of India, Kallol Roy, General Secretary, Students Federation of India and S K Vyas, General Secretary, Confederation of Central Govt Employees and Workers.

CREDENTIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Credential Committee report presented by Convener Ranjit Basu, shows that 2245 delegates representing unions with a membership of 33,65,868 from 24 states attended the conference. 11% of the delegates were women.

Majority of the delegates fall under the age group of 46-60 years, 591 in the age group of 36-45, and 74 delegates are in the age group of above 61 years.

956 delegates are matriculates, 553 are graduates, 178 are postgraduates and 112 are diploma/degree holders. 329 are factory workers, 359 are office employees, 919 are whole-timers.

905 delegates have joined trade union during 1977-1990 period, 456 have joined during 1970-76 while 400 have joined after 1991, 371 have joined during 1947-69. 22 joined before independence.

Out of total delegates, 153 have been dismissed, 134 were suspended and 138 were otherwise punished.

Com.Anand Pathak of West Bengal was in jail for 10 yrs and Com.R Umanath of Tamil Nadu spent 9 and half years in jail.

Com. Ganesh Shankar Singh of Bihar spent the longest underground period of 10 years in all.

The Credential Committee approved new applications for affiliations to CITU from 41 unions with a membership 62,634.

BTR CENTENARY

The Conference adopted a resolution for a year long observation of the birth centenary of Com. B.T.Randive, founder-president of CITU and a great teacher of the working class. It decided to educate the workers on teachings of Comrade B T Ranadive on various issues and strengthen CITU as an organisation by enhancing the membership to 40 lakhs by 9th December 2004. The inauguration of the B T Ranadive Birth Centenary year will be held at Kolkata on 19th December 2003 and the concluding function will be held at Mumbai on 19th December 2004. The Conference directed all the State Committees, industry-wise federations and co-ordination Committees to chalk out massive programme

of holding educational classes, organisation of seminars or symposium on various subjects of topical importance,

publication of important writings of Com. B T Ranadive in local languages and various other methods of celebrations. The

entire year would be utilised to increase the level of ideological consciousness of the working class.

CITU 11TH CONFERENCE:

FRATERNAL DELEGATES FROM ABROAD

NAME OF THE DELEGATE	COUNTRY	NAME OF THE DELEGATE	COUNTRY
Lee Changgeun Director, International Dept.	South Korea	Rieko Asato Interpreter	Japan
Dong Li Director General Auditing Committee	China	Masaya Sawanaka General Bureau of People's Affairs Director, Political & People's Movement Bureau	Japan
Wang Zhonghan Deputy Director Auditing Committee	China	Khalifa El Ghatawi	Libya
Peng Yong Director International Dept.	China	Ali Yousif Abdussalam	Libya
Yao Li Interpreter	China	Purmansing Jhoomuck Organiser/Administrative Secretary	Mauritius
Ian Thompson Unions WA	Australia	Seemadree Gunganah Vice President	Mauritius
Stephanie Mayman Secretary, Unions WA	Australia	Eduardo del Valle Assistant to Secretary International Affairs	Mexico
Md. Jane Alam President	Bangladesh	Salim Kalkach Secretary General	Mexico
Md. Eyer Ahmed Bhuiyan Vice President	Bangladesh	Jose del Valle Secretary International Affairs	Mexico
Sushil Kumar Sarkar Member National Council	Bangladesh	Syed Shahir Executive Secretary	Malaysia
Mahbubur Rahman Moznu Secretary International Dept.	Bangladesh	Muda bin Ismail President	Malaysia
Julie Stylianov Member	Cyprus	Yogilal Yadav Member National Committee	Nepal
Elpiniki Stylianov Cashier	Cyprus	Uddav K C	Nepal
Nathanael Kyriacos Secretary General	Cyprus	Norma G Binas Vice Chairperson International Affairs and Member, National Executive Committee	Philippines
Ahmed Atef Hassan Vice President	Egypt	Meddage Sudath Wimalasoma Finance Secretary	Sri Lanka
Joubier Jean Michel International Dept.	France	D W Subasinghe General Secretary	Sri Lanka
Jean Piere Page	France	Chau Nhat Binh Deputy Director	Vietnam
Leopoldo Tartaglia International Department	Italy	Nguyen Van Dung Member of the Presidium	Vietnam

CITU 11TH CONFERENCE: REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The report presented by the General Secretary of CITU, MK Pandhe, analysed the experiences of CITU in carrying out the tasks set forth by the 10th Conference at Hyderabad, in the background of the policies being pursued by the BJP led NDA Government. Pandhe told that the country witnessed an all round degeneration of the social, political and cultural values, accompanied by total disaster on the economic front. Giving a go by to the general consensus on the consistent policy of non alignment, the BJP led Government embarked upon a policy of total subordination to the interests of US imperialism. Since the last conference, there was a resurgence of the worst communal incendiary violence, riots and lawlessness, inflicting serious damage to the secular fabric of our society. Communal terror, reminiscent of the horrific days of fascism in Hitler's Germany was in full blown action for more than a month in Gujarat under Chief Minister Narendra Modi. The enormous scams and scandals that are piling up with every passing day razed to the ground the tall claims of the BJP that it was a 'Party with a difference'. Giving vivid examples Pandhe disputed the claims of the Government that the country was on the road to progress. He told that after the last Conference not only had the down slide of the economy continued, but it has attained a terminal character. There was all round gloom in the industrial sector. The traditional industries were in doldrums. Unemployment was on the rise with lakhs losing their jobs due to closures, lock outs etc.

ATTACKS GALORE!

Attacks on the working class from different sections of the ruling classes have increased in this period. The recommendations of the Second National Commission on Labour sought to take away whatever protection the workers had enjoyed due to their struggles. Attacks, not only the workers' rights, but also on the democratic rights of the people have increased during this period. In spite of the opposition from all the democratic sections, the Government enacted the draconian

POTA. The summary dismissals and the arrest of thousands of the striking State Government employees in Tamil Nadu were unprecedented. In tune with the thinking of the ruling classes in the era of globalisation, the judiciary was coming out with anti organised worker rulings. The unwarranted comments of the Supreme Court on the right to strike was the most recent and blatant example of this. The Prime Minister remains totally unresponsive to the demand to undo the damaging impact of the Supreme Court's pronouncements on the workers' right to strike. The CITU has tried to intensify the struggles during this period as per the call given by the 10th Conference. Analysing the struggles, Pandhe told that the BALCO workers wrote a new chapter in the struggle against privatisation through their 67 days' strike. Though it could not stop privatisation of BALCO due to vacillations by the other unions, it remained a land mark and inspiration for the working class in India. Though CITU is a small force in BALCO, it played a major role in the struggle, locally as well as in mobilising support throughout the country. Similarly in NALCO, CITU took the initiative to bring together all the unions to oppose privatisation. The united struggle and the support from the general public could successfully thwart the attempts of privatisation of NALCO at least temporarily.

The report highlighted the participation of women in the various struggles and in the general calls of CITU. Specific mention was made of the role of anganwadi employees, who not only participated in the struggles, but in several places ensured the success of the CITU programmes. Pandhe emphasised the importance of organising the working women, training women cadres and promoting them to leadership positions. He urged the delegates to overcome the weaknesses in the work among working women at the earliest.

OVERVIEW OF STRUGGLES

Enumerating several struggles in different States, Pandhe pointed out that the working class had to wage prolonged struggles and had to face the

wrath of the State machinery even to protect the existent rights. But in spite of this, when the workers were united and they could mobilise the support of other sections of the people, they could achieve some success.

Analysing the efforts of CITU for developing united movement, the report observed that whatever the public stance, some trade unions were working with tacit understanding with the NDA Government. Though they some times publicly protest against some of the decisions of the Government,

they stay away from joint struggles, on one or other pretext. The report underlined the importance of independent activities and campaigns and developing

a strong CITU, in order to bring pressure on these unions from their own ranks and members for their active participation in united struggles.

Pandhe noted that though struggles are gaining momentum, yet they were not enough to bring about any reversal in the policies of the Government. In this connection he emphasised the importance of involving all the sections of the society who were adversely affected by the Government policies, like the peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth, women etc, in the struggle against these policies. The importance of activating the National Platform of Mass Organisations (NPMO) was particularly stressed. The CITU should take more initiative in this respect.

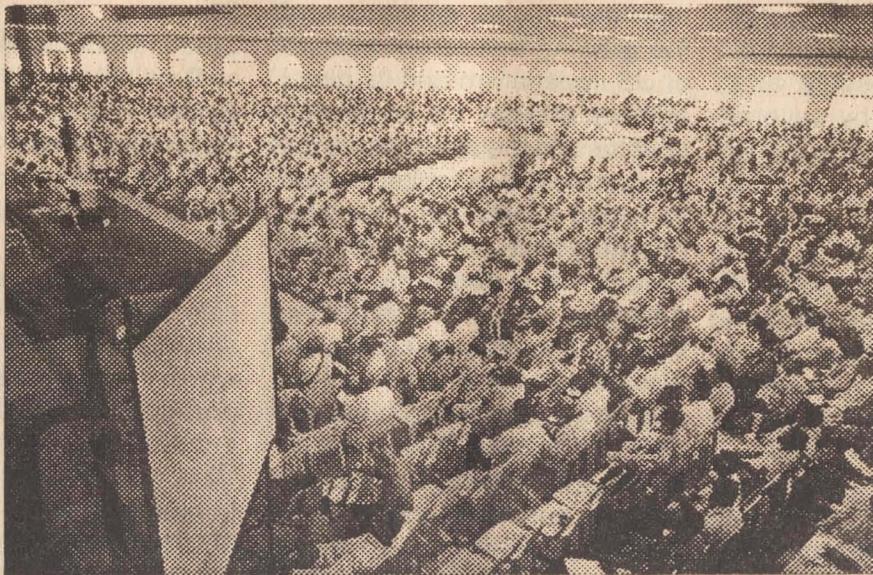
IMPERIALIST OFFENSIVES

The report cautioned the working class against losing sight of the mounting pressure of World

Bank, IMF and other imperialist agencies on the Government to implement these policies. Pointing out at the growing world wide resistance against these policies, Pandhe told that the working class of India need not be frustrated or fall a victim to the so called theory of irreversibility of the policies of privatisation, globalisation and liberalisation. He told 'we have before us the opportunity to strengthen the voice of such opposition rising world wide to tilt the balance against the neo liberal policies, to make it powerful enough to ensure

the reversal of these policies. This is possible as 'another World is possible' is gradually becoming the war cry of people world wide'.

Pandhe reminded the delegates about the decision of the CITU General Council at Cuttack which has outlined the CITU perspective on the course of the future



movement - 'In our perspective for a long drawn action, we must keep in mind the role of strategic sectors in the operation of the capitalist economy. The major sectors can be defined as Energy Sector including coal, oil, and power, Financial Sector comprising Banks, Insurance and other financial institutions, Transport Sector covering water, air, road and rail transport, and Communications Sector comprising telecommunication and postal services. If the workers in these sectors can be mobilised for long drawn simultaneous actions, the major operations of the economy is bound to come to a stand still, thereby compelling the Government to retrace its suicidal policies'.

Pandhe concluded his report by outlining the immediate future tasks for intensifying the struggles and building a strong CITU in the coming days.

DIARY OF EVENTS

The 11th Conference of CITU started in a festive atmosphere in 'Ramamurthy Nagar' (Rama Lakshmi Paradise) in Chennai, on the 9th December 2003. Cultural performances started at 8.00 in the morning with the traditional playing of 'Nadaswaram' followed by progressive and revolutionary songs by several groups of workers and employees.

INAUGURAL SESSION

An impressive gathering of delegates and a large number of people from different walks of life assembled in the vast ground in the complex, to witness the inaugural session. The six jathas which traversed the whole length and breadth of the country, taking the message of CITU to millions of people on their way to Chennai, were received by E Balanandan and MK Pandhe, President and General Secretary of CITU. Kanai Bannerjee, Secretary, CITU introduced the leaders and members of the jathas, who were honoured by Balanandan. The inaugural session commenced with men and women in khaki pants and red shirts marching in columns to the sound of drums. As they reached the venue of flag hoisting, Balanandan hoisted the red flag of CITU amid resounding shouting of 'CITU Zindabad' and 'Inquilab Zindabad'. The members of the CITU

Secretariat led by Balanandan and Pandhe paid tributes at the Martyr's Column. N Sankaraiah, Chairperson of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates. In his Presidential address, Balanandan dealt with the international situation and the growing belligerent attitude of US imperialism and its direct military attacks on sovereign countries, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington. He also referred to the continuing down swing in the economy of the developed countries including USA, Japan etc and contrasted it with the vibrant economic growth in Socialist China. He called upon the CITU to work for uniting the working class in the country and lead them in the struggle against imperialism and for the establishment of a Socialist society free from exploitation.

A resolution condemning the anti worker, anti people and authoritarian policies of the Jayalalithaa Government was passed unanimously in the inaugural session.

KL Mahendra, President of WFTU, Gurudas Dasgupta, General Secretary of AITUC, A. Subramanian, Secretary of HMS, Krishna Chakravarty, President, UTUC (LS), Shiva Shankar, Vice President, TUCC and Kuppuswamy, President, LPF greeted the Conference on behalf of their respective organisations.

DELEGATES' SESSION

The delegates' session of the Conference started at 3.00 PM with the placing of the condolence resolution by Hemalata, Secretary, CITU. The Secretariat of CITU acted as the Steering Committee. A Credential Committee consisting of Ranjit Basu (CITU Centre), Somen Kundu (West Bengal), Padmalochanan (Kerala), and P Roja (Andhra Pradesh) was elected, with Ranjit Basu as the Convenor.

42 foreign delegates from 18 countries and 23 organisations attended the Conference. They were introduced to the delegates and cheered enthusiastically as Umanath, Vice President of CITU honoured them.

MK Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU placed the report reviewing the activities of CITU in the background of the national and international situation since the last Conference. The report also outlined the future tasks for uniting the working class and intensifying the struggles to push back the liberalisation and globalisation policies of the BJP led NDA Government, to resist the attacks on the working class and to protect and unity and integrity of the nation. Pandhe also emphasised the need to strengthen CITU and launch independent activities along with striving for united movements, in order to achieve the above

objectives. Ranjit Basu, Treasurer of CITU placed the statement of accounts.

48 delegates, including 8 women participated in the discussion on the General Secretary's report and fully supported it. Many speakers explained the experiences in their respective states to illustrate and strengthen the points made in the report.

ON WORKING WOMEN

In the afternoon session on the 11th December, the entire Conference discussed the 'Declaration on the Tasks among Working Women'. Hemalata, Secretary, CITU introduced the 'Declaration', which contained the Charter of Demands of Working Women and the future tasks adopted by the 7th Conference of the AICCCWW held in Mumbai on 11-12 October 2003, as part of the CITU Conference. 27 delegates, including 13 women participated in the discussion.

The Conference broke into six Commissions on 12th December, which were held in halls named after six luminaries of the trade union movement. The Commission on 'Imperialism, Finance Capital, Globalisation and National Sovereignty' was chaired by PK Gurudasan, while Chittabrata Majumdar, Secretary, CITU acted as the Rapporteur. Kanai Bannerjee, Secretary, CITU chaired the Commission on 'Attacks on Labour Rights' and Tapan Sen, another Secretary of CITU acted as the Rapporteur. The Commission on 'Unemployment - A Trade Union Perspective' was chaired by

Shyamal Chakraborty, Secretary, CITU. Swadesh Dev Roye was the Rapporteur. S Veeraiah, SK Bakshi and Kali Ghosh, all Secretaries of CITU, chaired the Commissions on 'Unorganised Sector', 'Fight for a Genuine Social Security' and 'Child Labour' respectively, while P.K. Ganguly, Hemalata, and W.R. Varada Rajan, all Secretaries of CITU were the Rapporteurs in these Commissions. Around 300 delegates participated enthusiastically in each of the full day discussions on all these subjects in the various Commissions. The points raised by the delegates in these Commissions were placed before the plenary session of the Conference on 13th December by the respective Rapporteurs. The newly elected Secretariat was authorised to finalise the documents on the basis of the discussions.

A book on the life of the founder President of CITU B.T. Ranadive, published by 'Prajashakti', and a Souvenir published by the Reception Committee on the occasion of the 11th Conference were released in the Conference.

After Pandhe replied to the points raised in the discussions, including the ones in the special session on the 'Tasks on the work among Working Women', the Report along with the accounts, was adopted unanimously amidst thunderous applause by the delegates.

LEADERSHIP ELECTED

On behalf of the outgoing Secretariat, R Umanath, Vice President, proposed the panel

for the new Secretariat, which was elected unanimously by the Conference. MK Pandhe was elected as the new President of CITU and Chittabrata Majumdar was elected as the new General Secretary. E Balanandan will continue to serve the CITU as its Vice President. Four women were elected as Office Bearers by the Conference. The new General Council and Working Committee were also elected.

CONCLUSION & RALLY

In his concluding address Balanandan called upon the delegates to go back and plunge into activities to implement the calls of the Conference. He reminded them of the vision and role of CITU in changing the society and establishing an exploitation free society. Chittabrata Majumdar thanked the delegates and assured that with the help of the leaders and cadres of CITU he would do his best to discharge the responsibilities which the Conference has given to him.

A massive rally was held on the evening of the 13th December at - grounds. Lakhs of workers from different industries, including a large number of women participated in the rally with their colourful banners, flags and festoons. Many displayed caricatures of the World Bank, IMF and WTO. The public meeting was presided over by T.K.Rengarajan. Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Chief Minister of the Left Front Govt. in West Bengal, M.K. Pandhe, E. Balanandan, R. Umanath, A. Soundara Rajan, WR Varada Rajan, Chittabrata Majumdar addressed the rally.

CITU 11TH CONFERENCE:

[Com. E. Balanandan, delivering the concluding address at the end of the delegates' session on 13th December, 2003, exhorted the delegates to carry the message of the Conference to the rank and file of the CITU organisation throughout the length and breadth of the country and also thanked the host committee and volunteers. Here are excerpts from his address. - Editor]

'SOCIALISM IS THE ALTERNATIVE'

Comrades,

I am glad that our conference has come to a successful end; however I wish to tell you a few things by way of concluding remarks.

Before I proceed, let me make a reference about two of our outstanding leaders, who are retiring from official position of our organisation due to indifferent health. One is Com. C. Kannan of Kerala and the other is Samarda (Com. Samar Mukherjee). Their contribution to the development of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions from its very inception will go in golden letters in our history and they are very rare models. Allow me to salute them on your behalf. Com. R. Umanath, Com. Chandi Prasad and Com. Balwant Singh have also opted to be relieved from the CITU Secretariat. Let me place on record the immense contribution made by them during all these years.

We have decided to go for an all India strike action unitedly with other trade unions of the country by mid February'04, the date of which will be decided by consensus. We wholeheartedly support the proposed strike by the Central and State government employees and teachers which is to take place on 11th of February'04. The proposed actions are for the restoration of right to strike and a complete reversal of the anti - people and anti working class policies which are being vehemently pursued by the centre and many of the state governments, the policy of imperialist led globalization. These actions for policy change, for meeting the challenges before us, needs all embracing unity with the required courage and zeal. When the crisis develops and the attack against the workers and the people becomes very serious, the reformist nature of some trade union leaders come to the fore and they will try to escape from the battlefield leaving their own followers and try to shield the enemies of the working class. At

such a juncture the CITU should show its metal and surge forward to see that the total working class is brought to the fore in this battle, ignoring the vacillation being shown by their leaders. This dictum, all of us must should keep in mind.

We have organized the Centre of Indian Trade Unions exactly with the aim of it becoming the real centre of the Indian working class. The fact remains that we have to go a long way to achieve this aim. I must remind you about one point made by our leader and teacher Com. B.T. Ranadive during 1983. He said that while the CITU unions formulate their demands the draft should be circulated among the members of other trade unions in the industry and also among those who are non-unionized; to get their suggestions and amendments to our proposed memorandum, so as to make it the common demand of the total workers of the industry. I am sorry to say that the import of this suggestion, many of our comrades still do not keep in mind even today. The main intention is to treat the workers as a class irrespective of their temporary political or organizational affinity which is part of their backwardness and we want to bring them together, unify them as a class in the fight for immediate demands and the fight for policy change. This approach exactly makes the difference between the other unions and us.

Comrades, we have accepted a resolution welcoming the World Social Forum 2004 being held at Mumbai from 16th to 21st of January '04. This gathering is being held with the new slogan of "another world is possible - Let's build it" against the imperialist led capitalist globalisation, which we welcome. At the same time we must not forget that the event is being held within the framework of the WSF charter of principles. It is necessary for us to work with redoubled vigour to bring about the required transformation. There

are issues like political parties not to be associated in the Forum and adherence to peaceful non-violent means to achieve the objectives of the Forum. These have been cited by some people who have chosen to stay away from the WSF event, as being not in tune with the living realities of the world today. These are ideas, which I do not wish to deal in detail now. However, we believe that the alternative to imperialist globalisation is socialism! Another world, in our vision, is a socialist world and nothing else. We are clear about it. However, we have consciously decided not to distance ourselves from the Forum and the people who gather there with the idea that "a new world is possible and necessary" from their own experience. We are for encouraging them. We cooperate with them. We are of the definite understanding that in the course of interaction and developing realities in the world, all those who are opposed to imperialist globalisation will soon be convinced that the social change needed is socialism and around it all sections must unite. With this idea in mind we want all of you to cooperate with the World Social forum being held at Mumbai in January next.

Before I close, with your permission let me refer to one more point. Comrades of Chennai North District Committee of SFI has brought out and distributed to all of us a picture of Shri V.O. Chidambaram Pillai (1872-1936) who was a freedom fighter and a legend of the working class movement in Tamil Nadu reminding us the first political strike in the Indian history was on 30th March 1908 protesting against the arrest of VOC and also they wanted us to remember "socialism is the alternative". While thanking them on your behalf for their vision, we must remind ourselves the objective of socialism enshrined in the CITU constitution. Comrades, we

pledge ourselves to uphold socialism. From this Conference, we go with the determination to intensify our resistance struggles against the onslaught on the democratic rights of the people in general and the hard won right of the working people in particular.

Now it is my duty to thank our Tamil Nadu State Committee for organising this conference with utmost care and skill. I must thank the volunteers, men and women, who tirelessly work for weeks together to make this conference a success especially their dutifulness exhibited in attending the needs of every comrade. We must be proud of the army of youngsters who were part of the volunteer core. I thank every one of them and offer them our revolutionary greetings. With these words, I declare this conference closed.

CITU: NEWLY ELECTED OFFICE BEARERS

President:	M K Pandhe
General Secretary:	Chittabrata Mazumder
Treasurer:	Ranjit Basu

Vice Presidents:	
Jyoti Basu	E Balanandan
Shyamal Chakraborty	T K Rengarajan
P K Gurudasan	V J K Nair
Deben Bhattacharya	Arati Dasgupta •
Raghunath Singh	Mercykutty Amma*

Secretaries:	
Md Amin	Kanai Banerjee
W R Varada Rajan	K N Ravindranath
M M Lawrence	Kali Ghosh
Jibon Roy	A K Padmanabhan
Ardhendu Dakshi	Swadesh Dev Roye
Tapan Sen	K Hemalata
K L Bajaj	S B Bharadwaj
S Veeraiah	S K Bakshi
Manik Dey	A Soundararajan
K K Divakaran	Dipankar Mukherjee
K O Habib	P Roja

(This 35 member Secretariat includes 4 women. The Conference elected a General Council comprising 413 members, including 121 members of Working Committee)

ECONOMY DERAILED ...

IS INDIA REALLY SHINNING ?

...even if we accept that India is indeed shining, how good is that shine? Is it a burnish that reveals the quality of the metal beneath or is it a thin coat of varnish that just puts a superficial gloss? To understand that we must go into how good the years after the so called reforms have been. Very simply the decade after the launch of the so called reforms has not been very much better than the decade before it. GNP growth for the post reform

period (1992-2001) crept up by a mere 0.2% to 5.9%.....Certainly not enough to warrant outpouring of self congratulations, for it is the indices for infant mortality (69 per 1000), life expectation (63 years), literacy (65%), as well as energy sufficiency (527 billion kwh) and energy consumption (a mere 379 kwh per capita) that make the reality....

(The Hindu, 03-12-2003)

CHRONIC HUNGER STILL HAUNTS INDIA ...

One in every 200 households in rural India and one in every 1000 households in towns go "chronically hungry", not getting enough to eat in any of the months. Since the country is having about 200 million households with five persons each, the number of people going hungry must be huge.

These facts brought to light by the latest round (57th) of the National Sample Survey (NSS) pertaining to the year, June 2001 to June 2002, provide sobering thoughts for the country which is in a celebratory mood with the much-touted "feel-good factor" about the economic

performance.

The Report on "Household consumer expenditure and employment-unemployment situation in India, 2001-2002" also highlights that 16 out of every 100 households and three out of every 1000 urban households went seasonally hungry-they did not get enough food in many of the months of the year...around only two-fifths of the population in the villages and more than one-thirds in the towns was employed... only 52% in villages had access to electricity...

(The Times of India, 18-12-2003)

FEEL GOOD ECONOMIC SITUATION? FOR WHOM?

Sensex has vaulted over 5500 mark....On the other hand, National Sample Survey data on consumption expenditure on 2001-02 point to a further widening of disparities between urban India and rural India. Nothing captures this reality more than the fact that the monthly per-capita consumption expenditure in urban India is 87 per cent higher than the rural....

This widening rural-urban divide has also coincided with worsening inequalities in consumer expenditure within urban India—with the top 30 per cent of population gaining the most. The relative position of rural India has, thus turned

adverse over time, which has further corroborated by NSS data. Reversing these disturbing rural-urban disparities is therefore a major challenge. The NSS data also indicates a steady decline in the share of food and food grain or cereals in total consumption expenditures in both rural and urban India....the share of food has fallen 64.5% in 1972-73 to 43.1% in 2001-02. Does this downtrend point to greater prosperity for the consumers ?.....The evidence however seems to suggest the contrary since this trend is also happening in rural areas where food-energy levels of the poor is far from being nutritionally

DOWN THE DISASTER LANE !

adequate..... Professor R Radhakrishnan observed that, unlike earlier, this loss of food energy intake could not be compensated by higher increased consumption of non-cereal food. Clearly there are doubts whether diversification

in consumption away from food and food grain has improved the nutritional status of rural India, especially the poor.

(Editorial, Indian Express, 22-12-2003)

SOLVING JOBLESSNESS !

If here is indeed a FICCI way to solve the India's unemployment problem, why shouldn't the Govt of India give this apex chamber a crack at the problem?How effective will their policy-revamp be? Not very much. Industrialists believe that easier hire and fire policies improve the employment outlook in manufacturing. But

reforming labour laws is not sufficient to generate additional manufacturing jobs. To create them there must first be investments. This has not been happening of late to underpin the nascent recovery in Indian manufacturing.....

(Editorial, The Financial Express, 19-12-2003)

ORGANISED SECTOR JOBS SHRINK FIVE CONSECUTIVE YEARS ...

Call it a coincidence or whatever, but every single year of the tenure of the present as well as preceding BJP led Govt. has witnessed a decline in organized sector jobs.

Since 1997, every single year has seen the organized sector employment figure end March shrink-to 281.66 lakh in 1998 (from 282.45 lakh previous year) 281.13 lakh in 1999, 279.60 lakh in 2000 and 277.89 lakh in 2001.

According to a recent statement made in Parliament, by the Union Labour Minister, Sahib Singh Verma, the year ending March 31, 2002 recorded a further drop of 4.2 lakh, making it the

fifth consecutive year of decline. In all, in the five years between 1996-97 and 2001-02, there has been a destruction of about 8.8 lakh organized sector jobs.

Seen Over a longer time frame, the 1980s generated over 4 million new organized sector jobs, whereas the cumulative increase for the subsequent period (after March 1990) works out slightly over a million. Much of the dismal record for the latter period (post liberalisation) is attributable to negative job-growth trend that set in from around 1997....

(The Hindu Business Line, 19-12-2003)

ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT IS REQUIRED

"Most developing economies are focusing on growth without addressing the vital issue of employment generation. This is disturbing given the huge requirement for job creation in the Asia Pacific region and calls for a focus on creation of alternative model of development.... As per estimates, joblessness varies from country to country and on the average, this is estimated about 7 per cent....But if you take overall unemployment in in the Asia Pacific region, this

works out to be two to three times particularly for people in the age group of 15-24 years....Benefits of development are not percolating to the rural areas. The rough side of globalisation can be seen impacting the rural artisans, handlooms, weavers who are on the verge of being wiped out due to the factor....Political commitment is absolutely necessary to transform the rural areas...We need to look at alternative means and model..... *(Dr Hafiz A Pasha, Assistant Secretary General, UNO, Director, UNDP in The Hindu Business Line, 21-12-2003)*

The 11th Conference of CITU, which was held in Chennai on 9- 13 December 2003, discussed the tasks among working women in a special half day session on the 11th December. The discussions were carried on the basis of a 'Declaration' presented by Hemalata, Secretary of CITU.

Presenting the note Hemalata reminded the Conference that the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women was formed in this very city more than 24 years ago. She told that the main purpose of forming the AICCWW was to organise working women, particularly in sectors where there was not organised, train women activists and promote them to leadership positions and spread the message of CITU among the vast sections of working women, including those who were in unions that are not affiliated to CITU. She told that there was some improvement but still lot more needs to be done.

PROGRESS ACHIEVED

Because of the efforts of CITU during all these years, the membership of women in CITU has increased and now according to the membership figures on the basis of which this Conference was being held, women constituted 20% of CITU members. In several States like Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, women membership in CITU crossed 50%. Women delegates to State Conferences

in some States constituted around 30 - 40 % of the total delegates. More women were elected into the State Committees and as Office Bearers in the recent State Conferences. In Assam women formed 33% of the State Committee members. The number of women delegates in this Conference was also higher than the last Conferences.

But still several weaknesses existed. She pointed out that some stronger States did not bring women delegates as per their quota. As a result, women in this Conference constituted around 11% as against the overall quota of 17%. The CITU is yet to organise a large number of working women in the unorganised sector and engaged in home based work, which is increasing by the day. The number of women in the leadership positions is still far less than the women membership. Women in some States still find it difficult to meet their travel expenditure to attend State and national level committee meetings. Several decisions of the CITU and the AICCWW remain unimplemented.

INFORMAL SECTOR

Hemalata told that the organised sector was shrinking and the unorganised sector was expanding in the era of liberalisation. Women formed a large section of the unorganised sector workers. She

emphasised the importance of organising the women workers to unite the working class and effectively fight against the policies of liberalisation. She outlined the tasks adopted at the 7th Conference of AICCWW at Mumbai for adoption by the CITU Conference. She told that it was the responsibility of CITU and not only that of the Coordination Committees of Working Women, to implement these tasks.

27 delegates including 14 women, from 19 States, participated in the discussion that followed. While endorsing the 'Declaration', the speakers raised some important and interesting points. It was pointed out that women activists find it difficult to balance their union and domestic responsibilities. Many men, including CITU cadres, do not share the domestic responsibilities of women. Many men even today think that demanding help in domestic chores is 'feminist' and resist such demands. It was suggested that CITU should cultivate the culture of sharing domestic responsibilities among its cadres. The importance of overcoming feudal and obscurantist ideas, both among men and women, was also highlighted in the discussion. Several speakers stressed the importance of trade union education for women activists, observation of International Women's Day by the trade

unions, organising the unorganised sector women workers etc.

'EVINCE SERIOUSNESS'

M K Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU addressed these points in his reply to the discussion on the General Secretary's report. He emphasised the importance of sharing women's domestic burdens by men, particularly the CITU activists. He also told that women activists should be trained and promoted and encouraged. Pandhe reiterated that the work among working women was a priority task of CITU and the 'Declaration' should be taken seriously for implementation by all the State

Committees of CITU.

The 'Declaration' along with the Charter of Demands of working women was unanimously adopted by the Conference. The Conference demanded equal remuneration and equal opportunities for jobs and promotion. It demanded that retrenchment of women workers in any form should be banned immediately; maternity benefits should be implemented to all the women workers, including those in agriculture. The Conference has opposed the blanket ban on night work for women, which the Government wanted to introduce through an amendment to the Factories

Act. The Conference also demanded that the Government immediately enact legislation against sexual harassment at work place that covers the workers in the vast unorganised sector and ensure that complaints committees are formed in all the establishments immediately.

It has decided to launch a wide campaign among all sections of working women on the Charter of Demands of Working Women and organise a massive mobilisation of working women in Delhi in the month of April 2004 to submit a memorandum to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

'INDIAN WORKER' ON STRIKE

The INTUC journal, "Indian Worker" (16-31 December 2003), has carried a write-up titled "CITU shedding crocodile tears". While showering abuses on CITU, the journal has noted that the declaration adopted in the 26th September convention "nowhere mentioned that there would be strike." It also accused CITU of imprudence and its insistence for strike as 'weakening trade union unity'. It also complained that CITU had "given a call for all India strike on 11th February 2003" unilaterally!

Knowing the instincts of the INTUC leadership, CITU prefers to ignore the same. But certain facts need to be placed on board.

CITU perceives trade union unity not as an abstract concept. Unity is for united agitation and action against the hostility perpetrated on the rights and livelihood of the working class.

The Declaration referred to in the "Indian Worker" was moved by none other than the INTUC President himself in 26th September Convention which clearly stipulated strike action as quoted in the foregoing paragraph. Hence the statement made in the "Indian Worker" that "no where it was mentioned that there would be strike" is not correct.

The call for all India strike on 11th February was given by the Govt employees organisations, not affiliated to any central trade unions.

The "Indian Worker" noted that "for ensuring proper economic growth of the country there should be no work-stoppage in any form, be it lock-out, lay-off, closure or strike..." In view of this decision (of the INTUC working committee) the INTUC cannot oblige CITU by participating in the strike unless there are compelling grounds."

CITU cannot agree with bracketing "strike" along with "lock-out, closure and layoff" and declaring a virtual moratorium of strike for the sake of so called "economic growth" of the present kind. INTUC should note that in 2001, man days lost due to lock-out had been three times more than that due to strike. In 2002 (January-September) lock-outs wasted four times more man days than the strikes. How does INTUC propose to stop the "work-stoppage by the employers? Does staying away from "work-stoppage" or strike in any way help the workers to defend themselves from the wrath of work-stoppage by employers' class through retrenchment, lock-out, lay-off or closure? What else may be the parameters for the "compelling ground" for INTUC which may qualify for united strike action?

MEMBERS OF GENERAL COUNCIL/WORKING COMMITTEE

ANDAMAN

TO BE KEPT VACCANT

ANDHRA PRADESH

1. CH.NARSINGHA RAO **
2. R.SUDHABHASKAR **
3. Y.SIDDAIAH **
4. G.RAMULU **
5. K. VENKATESHWARLU **
6. S.NARSIMHA REDDY **
7. R.LAXMAIAH **
8. N.RAMA RAO **
9. ALLURI SATYANARAYANA
10. M.A.GAFOOR
11. B BIXAMAIAH
12. NARU KRISHNAIAH
13. RATNAKARAM KOTAM RAJU
14. P.RAJA RAO
15. B LALITAMMA (f)
16. M DHANALAXMI (f)
17. G JYOTHI (f)
18. A AJAY SARMA
19. D.V.KRISHNA
20. M.CHUKKAIAH
21. B.RAMANJANEYULU
22. K RAJARAM MOHAN ROY
23. ANANTHA RANA SHARMA
24. M.SAIBABU
25. J MALLIKHARJUN
26. M.SRINIVASA
27. N.PRABHUDAS
28. EDA MADHAVA REDDY

ASSAM

1. MICHAEL LUGUN **
2. ASHIT DUTTA **
3. NAGEN CHUTIA
4. MAMANI DUTTA (f)
5. TAPAN SARMA
6. PRAKASH RAJKHOWA
7. SUSHIL CHOUDHURY

BIHAR

- 1.CHANDI PRASAD **
2. ARUNKUMAR MISHRA
3. SHIV SHANKAR SINGH

CHHATISGARH

1. S SUDEVAN
2. M.K.NANDY

DELHI

1. SUDHIR KUMAR
2. KRISHNA MOHAN TIWARI
3. MOHAN LAL **

GOA

1. S.S. NAIK

GUJRAT

1. SUBODH MEHTA **

HARYANA

1. SATVIR SINGH **
2. PARBHAT SINGH
- 3 TO BE FILLED UP LATER

HIMACHAL PRADESH

1. KASHMIR SINGH THAKUR **
2. RAVINDER KUMAR

JAMMU & KASHMIR

1. K.K.BAKSHI

JHARKHAND

1. MIHIR CHOWDHURY

To be filled later

2. D.D.RAMANANDAN
3. MITHILESH SINGH
4. A.K.ROY
5. VIJAY KANT LAL DAS

KARNATAKA

1. N.SUKUMARA PILLAI
2. B MADHAVA **
3. J.BALAKRISHNA SHETTY
4. VASANTHA CHARI
5. RAMANI (f)
6. E.K.N. RAJAN **
7. MEENAKSHI SUNDARAM
8. S.VARALAKSHMI ** (f)
9. SYED MUJEEB
10. K SHANKAR
11. S.PRASANNA KUMAR
12. V.SUKUMAR

KERALA

1. T SIVADASA MENON **
2. M CHANDRAN **
3. K PADMANABHAN **
4. K.M. SUDHAKARAN **
5. ANATHALA VALLOM ANANDAN **
6. N. PADMALOCHANAN **
7. T. RAMAKRISHNAN
8. C.J.JOSEPH
9. K.K.CHELLAPPAN **
10. A.NAZEERUNNISSA ** (f)
11. K.ANIRUDHAN **
12. PEROORKADA SADASIVAN **
13. S.S.POTTI **
14. R.PARAMESWARAN PILLAI
15. NANNIODU RAVI
16. KATTAKADA SASI
17. M.R.RAVI
18. K.RAJAN BABU
19. THIRUVALLOM SIVARAJAN
20. SREEKUMARI (f)
21. PULLUVILA STANLEY
22. B.SATHYAN
23. P.VAMADEVAN NAIR
24. A.SAMBATH

25. P.KESAVAN NAIR **
 26. E.KASSIM **
 27. K.THULASEEDHARAN
 28. MURALI MADANTHACODU
 29. P.LALAJI BABU **
 30. V.RAVEENDRAN NAIR
 31. S.PRAKASAN
 32. K.SUBHAGAN
 33. K.P.KURUP
 34. OCHIRA THANKAPPAN
 35. P.S.CHERIAN
 36. V.V.SASEENDRAN **
 37. K.C.RAJAGOPAL **
 38. P.K.SOMARAJAN
 39. P.J.AJAYAKUMAR
 40. V.S.MONEY **
 41. K.PRASAD **
 42. B.RAJENDRAN
 43. P.P.CHITHARANJAN
 44. A.ABDUL KHADIR
 45. N.RAMAKRISHNAN NAIR
 46. N.R.BABURAJ
 47. V.R.BHASKARAN **
 48. V.N.VASSAVAN
 49. K.P.SUGUNAN
 50. K.J.THOMAS
 51. P.R.GOPALAKRISHNAN
 52. K.K.JAYACHANDRAN **
 53. O.G.MADANAN
 54. S.SUNDARAMANIKYAM
 55. V.K.MONI
 56. K.CHANDRAN PILLAI **
 57. K.A.PUSHPAKARAN
 58. K.R.GANGADHARAN
 59. S.KTRISHNAMURTHY
 60. K.J.JACOB
 61. K.N.GOPINATH
 62. V.S.MOHANAN
 63. S.SARMA **
 64. K.A.CHACKOCHAN
 65. V.HAMSA
 66. C.O.POULOSE **
 67. BABY JOHN
 68. K.F.DAVIS
 69. V.RAMAKRISHNAN
 70. K.A.KOCHAPPU
 71. K.V.JOSE
 72. A.K.BALAN **
 73. A.PRABHAKARAN
 74. N.P.SAIDALAVI
 75. M.S.SKARIA
 76. P.NANADKUMAR **
 77. GEORGE K.ANTONY
 78. K.RAMADAS
 79. V.PRABHAKARAN
 80. K.MOOSAKUTTY **
 81. T.P.RAMAKRISHNAN **
 82. ELAMAROM KAREM **

83. M.VASU
 84. P.T.RAJAN
 85. K.DASAN
 86. KUNHIKRISHNAN
 87. P.KUNHIKRISHNAN **
 8. C.KANNAN **
 89. K.P.SAHADEVAN **
 90. P.RAMACHANDRAN **
 91. P.V.KRISHNAN
 92. C.KRISHNAN
 93. VADI RAVI
 94. T.P.SREEDHARAN
 95. ARAKAN BALAN
 96. K.V.VASANTHA KUMARI (f)
 97. A.K.NARAYANAN
 98. P.RAGHAVAN **
 99. K.BALAKRISHNAN
 100. T.K.RAJAN
 101. A.P.VASU **
 102. NEDUVATHOOR SUNDARESAN
 103. C.C.JOY
 104. E.B.KALIDAS
 105. P.DAS
 106. T.N.RAJAN
 107. D.VIJAYAN
 108. P.A.RAJU
 109. S.SUSEELAN
 110. M.SUKUMARAN
 111. P.S.MADHUSOODANAN
 112. K.CHANDRASEKHARA PILLAI
 113. K.SUKUMARA PILLAI
 114. K.SUKESAN
 115. C.B.C.WARRIER
 116. R.RAGHAVAN PILLAI
 117. K.A.ALI AKBAR
 118. P.V.VANGADHARAN
 119. LINDSAY MELVILLE (f)

MADHYA PRADESH

1. BADAL SAROJ **
 2. PRAMOD PRADHAN
 3. KAILASH LIMBODIA

MAHARASHTRA

1. SAYEED AHMAD **
 2. D.L.KARAD **
 3. AMRUT .M.MESHRAM
 4. UDHAV BHAVALKAR
 5. NARSAYYA NARAYAN ADAM
 6. SUMAN .P.SANZAGIRI (f)
 7. SURYAJI SALUNKHE

ORISSA

1. LAMBODAR NAYAK
 2. BISHNU MOHANTY **
 3. SIVAJI PATNAIK
 4. DUSMANTA KUMAR DAS

PUNJAB

1. VIJAY KUMAR MISRA **
 2. BALWANT SINGH
 3. TARLOCHAN SINGH

4. DEV RAJ VERMA

RAJASTHAN

1. R.K.SWAMY
2. RAVINDRA SHUKLA **
3. V.S.RANA

TAMIL NADU

1. J.HEMACHANDRAN **
2. P.M.KUMAR **
3. R.SINGARAVELU **
4. P.MARIMUTHU **
5. T.N.NAMBIRAJAN **
6. S.PANCHARATNAM **
7. U.K.VELLINGIRI **
8. K.CHELLAPPAN **
9. MALATHY CHITTIBABU ** (f)
10. M.CHANDRAN
11. K.PALANIVELU
12. G.SUKUMARAN
13. P.N.UNNI
14. N.KASINATHAN
15. K.RAMASAMY
16. S.S.SUBRAMANIAN
17. K.KANAGARAJ
18. M.RAJESWARI (f)
19. P.INDIRA (f)
20. MALAVELAI BASI
21. R.KARUMALAIYAN
22. S.K.THIYAGARAJAN
23. T.A.LATHA (f)
24. P.THIAGARAJAN
25. A.P.ANBZHAGAN
26. R.VISWANATHAN
27. R.S.RAJENDREN
28. A.JANAKIRAMAN
29. E. PONMUDI
30. V.KUMAR

TRIPURA

1. PIJUSH NAG **
2. TAPAN CHAKRABORTY **
3. SUDARSHAN DAS **
4. SANKAR DATTA
5. MADAN DAS
6. INDUBALA DAS (f)
7. KANU GHOSH
8. SUDHAMAY MAJUMDER (PANU)
9. MADHAB SAHA
10. SADHAN BASU

UTTAR PRADESH

1. KAMALAPATI TRIPATHI
2. K.N.BHATT
3. DAULAT RAM **

UTTARANCHAL

1. BIRENDRA BHANDARI **

WEST BENGAL

1. SOMEN KUNDU **
2. MRINAL BANERJEE **
3. SHANTASREE CHATTERJEE **
4. DILIP CHATTERJEE **

5. DILIP MAJUMDAR **

6. BIKASH CHOUDHURI **

7. NIKHIL MUKHERJEE **

8. JAGADISH DAS **

9. DIPAK DAS GUPTA **

10. LAKSHMAN SETH **

11. ANANDA PATHAK **

12. MANIK SANYAL **

13. SUBHAS CHAKRABORTY **

14. AJIT CHOUDHURI **

15. RAJDEO GOALA **

16. MRINAL DAS **

17. NEMAI SAMANTA **

18. PRASANTA NANDI CHOWDHURY **

19. NIRANJAN CHATTERJEE **

20. DEBANJAN CHAKRABORTY **

21. SUBHAS MUKHERJEE **

22. GOPAL BHATTACHARYA **

23. T.K. TEWARI **

25. AMITABHA NANDI

26. RAMALA BHATTACHARYA

27. LAKSHMAN BHATTACHARYA

28. NIRMAL MUKHERJEE

29. KINKAR POSHAK **

30. SK.ISLAM

31. HARADHAN JHA

32. HARADHAN ROY **

33. BAMAPADA MUKHERJEE

34. GOUTAM GHATAK

35. LAKSHMAN BAGDI

36. DEBABRATA BANERJEE

37. DILIP SARKAR

38. JITEN DUBEY

39. P.K. DAS **

40. BINOY CHAKRABORTY **

41. RATHIN SEN **

42. BIMAL CHATTERJEE **

43. NARAYAN SAHA **

46. MD. NIZAMUDDIN **

47. SHIBANI SEN GUPTA (f)

48. PRALAY DAS GUPTA

49. ANUTOSH SARKAR

50. BARUN GHATAK

51. AMAR GANGULY

52. TARINI ROY

53. SUSEN SARKAR

54. AJIT SARKAR

55. BIREN BOSE

56. ZARIMAYA TOPPO (f)

57. SUNIL SARKAR

58. AJIT BHOWMIK

59. SUKHENDU BISWAS

60. DEBI PATHAK

61. K.K. ROY

62. MANTU BASU **

63. JIAUL ALAM **

64. ADITYA MISRA

65. RAMLAL MURMU

66. BIDYUT GOON
 67. RABIN RAI
 68. SUKHOMOI ORAON
 69. CHANDRAMAYA BRAHMIN
 70. PUSHPENDU GUPTA
 71. TUSAR DEY **
 72. ABUL ASNATH KHAN
 73. CHITTARANJAN SARKAR
 74. KANAI MISRA
 75. BIJAI BHOWMIK
 76. PRANAB BISWAS
 77. DIPAK SARKAR
 78. BISWANATH DAS
 79. GURUPADA BURMAN
 80. HIMANGSHU DAS
 81. AMIYA SAHOO
 82. PRODYUT SEN
 83. KRISHNA PRASAD SINGH DEO
 84. SUBIR BISWAS
 85. BISWANATH MITRA
 86. SUBODH GANGULY
 87. GOBINDA GUHA **
 88. TARIT BARAN TOPDAR **
 89. BASDEO MONDAL
 90. P GANGAMMA
 91. RAJEN ROY
 92. MD.ISRAIL
 93. DIPAK MUKHERJEE
 94. JAHAR SAHU
 95. HEMMAL CHATTERJEE
 96. KABITA SARKAR ** (f)
 97. SADHAN KANJILAL **
 98. ASHUTOSH BANERJEE
 99. JAHAR GHOSAL
 100. LAGAN DEO SINGH
 101. SUJIT GHOSH
 102. SWAPAN SAHA
 103. BAIDYANATH CHAND
 104. SHYAMAL PAUL
 105. PRANAB DAS
 106. BIJAN MITRA
 107. S.B.KARMAKAR
 108. PRANAB MAJUMDAR
 109. KALI NAYEK
 110. SUJIT MUKHERJEE
 111. RADHA MADAN HENSE
 112. NEPAL DEV BHATTACHARYA
 113. SUDHIR SARKAR
 114. MURARI BOSE
 115. RABIN PAUL
 116. KALI SHANKAR PAUL
 117. PRODYUT SEN
 118. NIRMAL MAJUMDER
 119. BATA KRISHNA ROY
 120. PRASANTA RAHA
 121. BHASKAR SEN
 122. SHIHARAN ACHARYA
 123. ASIM BANERJEE **

124. NIRMAL JANA
 125. RANJIT KUNDU **
 126. KRISHNA SWAPAN MITRA
 127. PIJUSH SARKAR
 128. PRASANTA GHOSH
 129. ALOKE BHATTACHARYA
 130. ANADI SHOW
 131. AJIT SARKAR **
 132. SIDDHARTHA SEN GUPTA
 133. CHHAYA CHATTERJEE (f)
 134. RATNA DUTTA ** (f)
 135. NIRUPAMA CHATTERJEE (f)
 136. NILIMA MOITRA (f)
 137. MALINA GHOSH (f)
 138. MANISHA CHAKRABORTY (f)
 139. URSALIN MOLLA
 140. BASUDEB ACHARYA
 141. PRASANTA GHOSH
 142. BIKASH BHATTACHARJEE
 143. SUBHAS CHAKRABORTY (PORT) **
 140. KEDAR MUKHERJEE
 145. NISHA RAY (f)
 146. TARAPADA ROY CHOWDHURY
 147. DEBASHIS MOITRA
 148. AJAY KHATRI
 149. JOYDEB GHOSH
 150. BIJAY TEWARI
 151. HARIDAS MALAKAR
 152. SHANTI MOY BHATTACHARYA **
 153. RUNU CHAKRABORTY
 154. DIPAK MITRA
 155. RAGHUNATH KUSARI
CENTRE
 1. R.UMANATH **
 2. SAMAR MUKHERJEE **
 3. SUKOMAL SEN **
 4. P.K.GANGULY **
 5. P.SINGH **
 6. ASHOK VASISTH
 7. RANJANA NIRULA (f)
 8. A.R.SINDHU (f)
 9. K.DAMODARAN

** Working Committee Members
 (f) Women

READ & SUBSCRIBE

**THE VOICE
 OF THE
 WORKING WOMAN**

WHITHER STRIKE TO DEFEND RIGHT TO STRIKE ?

Tapan Sen

Much water has flown after the supreme Court, in its 6th August judgement pronounced that "...right to strike-whether fundamental, statutory or equitable/moral right - in our view, no such right exists with the Govt employees....Even the trade unions who have a guaranteed right for collective bargaining, have no right to go on strike."

All the trade unions in the country had stoutly opposed the judgement and demanded the government to take prompt action in negating the impact of the said judgment through suitable legislation.

The All India Trade Union Convention on Right to Strike held on 26th September 2003 at New Delhi, participated by the trade unions of various sectors of all affiliations except BMS, unanimously adopted a Declaration which, inter alia, stated: "The Convention, therefore, declares that the Right to Strike is sacrosanct and is not subject to any judicial interpretation.....The Convention demands upon the Central Govt to take appropriate steps to negate the pernicious impact of the SC Judgement on the right to strike. The Convention declares that if the Central Govt remains insensitive to the demands of the entire trade union movement, there will be no other alternative for the trade unions but to intensify the movement including going on strike."

GOVT INDIFFERENT

The NDA government has not only remained insensitive, it also revealed an attitude of arrogance. While addressing the 39th Indian Labour Conference, held on 16-18 October 2003, the Prime Minister, in a callous posture did not bother to respond to Hasubhai Dave of BMS and Sanjeeva Reddy of INTUC in their intervention just before the Prime Minister's speech. They had expressed their serious concern over the SC Judgement on right to strike and repression on Tamilnadu Govt employees and requested the Prime Minister to suitably respond. It was only after intervention of M K Pandhe of CITU, followed by Gurudas Dasgupta of AITUC, the Prime Minister had to rise again and state evasively that like all

others, he also may not be happy on the development and ways are to be found out through dialogue.

Months have passed on; but the promised dialogue with the Prime Minister has not materialized yet, despite a categorical commitment by the Union Labour Minister. Meanwhile, on 13th December 2003, the BMS leadership had a suo moto meeting with the Prime Minister and announced as an outcome of that meeting that the Prime Minister assured to review the matter pertaining to right to strike. On the same day, the Prime Minister's office (PMO) issued a Press release giving out a rejoinder. The PMO release categorically mentioned: "The Prime Minister had not given any indication that the Govt was not in favour of banning the right to strike...The spokesman of BMS had wrongly attributed to the Prime Minister having said that the Govt was not in favour of banning the right to strike and had sought the opinion of legal experts on the issue." (The Hindu, 14-12-2003) Is anything more required to assess the "insensitivity of the Govt"? It is not mere insensitivity but a clear-cut refusal by the Govt to take any legislative action to "negate the pernicious impact of the SC judgment."

ASSERTION NEEDED

In this background, it has become imperative that the working class must react by a powerful countrywide strike action in pursuance of the 26th September 2003 Declaration.

The government employees are most directly affected by the SC judgement. The All India State Govt Employees Federation and the Confederation of Central Govt Employees and Workers have appealed to all the Central trade unions in writing, once in September and again in November 2003 to decide on a countrywide strike action on the issue. Following that they have proposed to go for countrywide strike on 11th February 2004 and started preparing for the same. Many of the Central Trade Unions have extended support to this timely initiative.

But the situation demands not mere support; the government employees are not be left alone to go on strike, but the entire working class must also assert effectively. A common date for the countrywide general strike must be decided at the earliest.

The situation is getting worse everyday and the SC judgement started acting upon the working class movement in many places. The Ranchi High Court has imposed ban on the strike action by the Bokaro Steel plant workers in October 2003 referring to the SC judgment dated 6th August. Many more such prohibitions will pour on unless the working class retorts by a powerful strike action. Hence, the strike decision brooks no further delay.

While the apex court prohibits right to strike by the toiling people, the employers' "right to kill" is being upheld. In a recent judgment pronounced in December 2003, the Supreme Court acquitted one employer in the state of Kerala of all the charges who shot dead two workers sitting in the picket line before a factory on the day of a general strike on 15th March 1998. The acquittal by the apex court from such day-light murder charge is justified on ground of self-defence. While pronouncing this judgment, the Court has directed the Govt. to tackle the strikes by "iron hand". (Times of India, 18-12-2003) But the seat of wisdom and judgment remains conspicuously silent about retrenchments, lock-out, closures, lay-offs etc. by the employers and business class.

DENIAL OF ALL RIGHTS

This is not all. The onslaughts started crossing the boundary of the workplace. The attack on the journalists of "The Hindu" and their imprisonment order is pointer to the intolerance of those in power towards the democratic system as such. Instances of ban on processions, rallies and refusal to grant permission to hold meetings and rallies in the Chennai City by the Tamilnadu Govt. - all signal the beginning of a more atrocious process of curbing democratic right of expression of dissent even.

Stripping the toiling people of all their rights and arming the employers/capitalists with unfettered powers to retrench, close-down, lay-off and even with "right to kill" has become the order of the day under neoliberal policy regime and the whole state machinery is fully tuned in that direction. This regime is run by the capitalists and for the capitalists and corporates, both domestic and foreign, and those subservient to them. Expecting "sensitivity" from operators of such a regime is an illusion, which will never come true. Sense can dawn on the only through sustained united countrywide action by the working people.

In such a situation, united strike action remains the task before the working people to assert its right to self-defence. Yes, it brooks no further delay.

CITU appeals for expeditious decision fixing a common date for strike general strike by all those trade unions agreeing for a strike action.



REPORTS & EVENTS

Against Privatisation

MASSIVE STRIKE ACTION BY OIL SECTOR WORKERS

Far beyond expectation, the entire public sector oil industries throughout the country witnessed a gigantic strike on 16th December 2003 against the anti-national move of the NDA Government to privatize the oil PSUs strategically important for the economy and national security of the country. More than one lakh and fifty thousand workers of the industry have participated in the strike while the Officers' Associations have extended solidarity support. In many units the officers also stayed away from workplace in solidarity.

The strike has been historic in the sense that this is the first ever joint strike action by the entire oil sector workers that too on such a basic issue of national importance. This is also the first strike action by the central public sector workers after the 6th August judgment of the Supreme Court banning the right to strike.

The strike has been spearheaded by the NATIONAL UNITED FORUM Against Privatisation of Oil PSUs comprising trade unions affiliated to AITUC, CITU, INTUC, Hind Kishan Kamgar Sena, Maharashtra General Kamgar Union and several major independent recognized trade unions functioning in the oil PSUs. In all the seven refineries of IOC the strike has been total. So also the BPCL refinery in Mumbai.

However, the strike has been partial the HPCL refinery in Mumbai and Vishakapatnam. In Southern region states of Tamilnadu, Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala, in IOC, HPCL and IBP the strike has been complete, while in Vizag, it has been partial. The Numaligarh Refinery and the Bongaigaon refinery have witnessed full strike. Overwhelming majority of the workers in the Pipelines Division of IOC throughout the country the strike has been a great success.

Again the marketing network of all the public sector oil refining companies the strike has been a big success. In the Northern Region the IOC, BPCL and HPCL offices, installations and bottling plants the strike has been complete success. In the North Eastern Region hundred percent workers in the refineries, pipelines and marketing installations and bottling plants have participated in the strike. In the Western Region, while IOC marketing workers did not go on strike, majority of the workers of HPCL and BPCL marketing have joined the strike. Similarly in the Eastern regions, covering West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa etc, despite opposition of some trade unions, the strike call has been responded to by overwhelming majority of the workforce in IOC, BPCL and HPCL. In the southern states, the

strike in the marketing net work of all the oil PSUs the strike has been near total.

In the two upstream oil PSUs i.e., ONGC and Oil India Ltd. the response has been mixed. While in Oil India Ltd. the strike has been hundred percent successful in all its units throughout the country, in ONGC full strike has been observed in the different offices and drilling locations in all the places in Assam and Tripura. However, the two major locations of ONGC in Mumbai and Boroda the recognized unions affiliated to INTUC and BMS respectively have extended support to the strike with demonstration and meeting at the workplaces.

While the oil sector workers throughout the country have been in the picketing line enmasse denouncing privatization move, the matter has been raised in Lok Sabha and Rajyasabha by the opposition MPs namely Ramjilal Suman, Basudev Acharya, Roopchand Pal, Sunil Khan, P R Dasmunshi, Jibon Roy, Dipankar Mukherjee and others. In Lok Sabha, the hon'ble Speaker admitted necessity of a separate discussion on the issue in view of the countrywide agitation on the issue.

The strike decision was taken in the national convention of the oil workers under the auspices of the NATIONAL UNITED FORUM

REPORTS & EVENTS

Against Privatisation of Oil PSUs held on the 16th of November, 2003 at Guwahati attended by trade union representatives functioning in the public sector oil companies in the upstream and downstream i.e., ONGC, IOC, BPCL, HPCL, Oil India Ltd, Bongaingaon Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd., Assam,

Numaligarh Refinery Ltd, Assam, Kochi Refinery Ltd, IBP Ltd, IOBL and Balmer Lawrie. The convention has also decided that, "If the Government continues its exercise of privatisation of Oil PSUs, the workers will be compelled to go for indefinite strike."

The failure of the Government to

pay any heed to the three-day strike by the HPCL and BPCL workers on 25-27 March, 2003 has resulted in today's strike and if the Government further fails to take any lesson from the today's strike, the workers will have to launch indefinite strike as decided in the Guwahati convention.

Gujarat: CITU Holds Tenth State Conference

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) held its tenth Gujarat state conference on November 29 and 30, at Bhavnagar. The venue was named after one of its founders, the late Comrade Harikrishna Shah.

On November 29, after the CITU flag was hoisted, delegates paid floral tributes at Sheheed Bhagat Singh's statue, amid shaheed vandana songs recited by a Mahila Sangh group, followed by slogans. Present on the occasion were state leaders of various trade unions, CITU state executive members and reception committee members, among others.

Former Supreme Court Judge and Press Council of India's former Chairman, Justice P B Savant, inaugurated the open session in the afternoon. He said that the problems we are facing today demand more wisdom and sacrifices that what was required during the freedom struggle.

For, during the struggle of independence, we had to fight only

one enemy, but today we have to face several enemies, outside and inside. The main problems of today can be broadly identified as globalisation, communalism, criminalisation and corruption.

CITU secretary and Mumbai working class leader K L Bajaj was the main speaker at the open rally that was huge, because when one end of the procession reached the venue of the public meeting, many were still to start from the initial point. Thus the meeting at Bhagat Singh Chowk at Ghogha gate was undoubtedly huge. Subodh Mehta presided over the rally where Navin Shastri (former labour minister), Rajkumar (AITUC), Satubha Gohil (INTUC), Jayanti Panchal (HMKP), Mukul Sinha and Ambrish Patel (GFTU), H I Bhatt and K M Rami (LIC), Dushyant Trivedi (AIBEA), Pragjibhai Bhambhi (Gujarat Kisan Sabha), Kishor Bhai Bhatt (S T Union), and Nalini Jadeja and Ivababen

Mehta (AIDWA) were among the other speakers.

State CITU president Subodh Mehta presented the report to the conference.

The CITU state conference adopted resolutions on proposed labour law amendments, on small, medium and cooperative industries, on cuts in PF and ESI benefits, against communalism, and on other burning issues. It elected a new leadership with Subodh Mehta as president and Naginbhai Patel as general secretary, apart from five delegates to the CITU's national conference that was to be held at Chennai.

After the credentials committee presented its report, Bajaj made his concluding speech while Naginbhai Patel proposed the vote of thanks. Later, Justice P B Savant and Subodh Mehta also addressed a well attended press conference at Bhavnagar.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS ON BASE 1982=100

State	Sr. Centre No.	Month	State	Sr. Centre No.	Month
		Sept.' 03			Sept.' 03
		Oct.' 03			Oct.' 03
Andhra Pradesh	1 Gudur	469	Maharashtra	38 Mumbai	583
	2 Guntur	476		39 Nagpur	585
	3 Hyderabad	504		40 Nasik	509
	4 Visakhapatnam	501		41 Pune	532
	5 Warangal	502		42 Solapur	534
Assam	6 D.D.Tinsukia	488	Orissa	43 Barbil	556
	7 Guwahati	490		44 Rourkela	504
	8 Labac-Silchar	528	Punjab	45 Amritsar	442
	9 Mariani-Jorhat	419		46 Ludhiana	438
	10 Rangapara-Tezpur	509	Rajasthan	47 Ajmer	446
Bihar	11 Monghyr	389		48 Jaipur	438
Chhattisgarh	12 Bhillai	431	Tamil Nadu	49 Chennai	446
Gujarat	13 Ahmedabad	448		50 Coimbatore	454
	14 Bhavnagar	452		51 Coonoor	486
	15 Rajkot	487		52 Madurai	492
	16 Surat	487		53 Salem	454
	17 Vadodra	508		54 Tiruchirapally	456
Haryana	18 Faridabad	455	Uttar Pradesh	55 Agra	536
	19 Yamunanagar	465		56 Ghaziabad	533
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Jharkhand	21 Jamshedpur	510		58 Saharanpur	493
	22 Jharia	511		59 Varanasi	485
	23 Kodarma	579	West Bengal	60 Asansol	493
	24 Noamundi	458		61 Darjeeling	573
	25 Ranchi-Hatia	409		62 Durgapur	466
Karnataka	26 Bangalore	410		63 Haldia	502
	27 Belgaum	440		64 Howrah	483
	28 Hubli-Dharwar	446		65 Jalpaiguri	508
	29 Mercara	480		66 Kolkata	479
Kerala	30 Alwaye	496		67 Raniganj	430
	31 Mundakayam	488	Chandigarh	68 Chandigarh	565
	32 Quilon	496	Delhi	69 Delhi	593
	33 Thiruvananthapuram	491	Pondicherry	70 Pondicherry	572
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	35 Bhopal	526			549
	36 Indore	555			435
	37 Jabalpur	532			538
		513			581
		504			544
					ALL-INDIA
					499
					503

Additional Series of Labour Bureau

State	Centre	September 2003	October 2003
Andhra Pradesh	1 Kethgudem	508	
Himachal Pradesh	2 Himachal Pradesh	474	
Rajasthan	3 Bhilwara	487	
Madhya Pradesh	4 Chhindwara	460	
Tripura	5 Tripura	441	
Goa	6 Goa	589	



11th Conference Concludes With Massive Rally

