



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

CITU Working Committee

Calls for All Round Mobilisation for 29th September Strike

□ **P K Ganguly**

The Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Delhi from July 27-29 called for an all round mobilisation of all sections of workers for the success of the countrywide general strike and Hartal on September 29 against the new economic policies, as per the call given by the National Convention held at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi on 21st June.

The Presidential address delivered by E Balanandan, followed by the report of the General Secretary placed by M K Pandhe set the direction of the discussion towards the next phase of the countrywide mass actions culminating at the 29th September strike action.

Members participating in the discussion dwelt at length with the developing mass action by the trade unions and other mass organisations of peasantry, agricultural workers, students, youth and women, and their preparations for the series of action programmes culminating at the 29th September strike.

After flag hoisting by E Balanandan and placing of wreaths on the martyrs' memorial, the meeting started by adoption of condolence resolution on the comrades, who passed away during the period.

Presidential Address

E Balanandan in his address drew attention to the worsening economic situation in all the advanced capitalist countries and in the erstwhile socialist countries, now on the path of capitalism in the name of so-called market economy, which was marked by growing unemployment, closures, inflation and negative growth rate. He pointed out that reeling under such worsening conditions, while developing sharper contradictions with each other, they managed to put the burdens on the third world countries and India through the IMF, World Bank and

lly the GATT agreement. The entire exercise was being done to loot the resources of the third world countries and share them among themselves to recolonise these countries. India with its vast resources and developed indigenous technologies was obviously the special target for such loots. The US imperialists with their hegemonistic aim was the leader of this diabolical game. He explained how the supine Narasimha Rao Government surrendered step by step to all the anti-national and anti-people prescriptions of the IMF and World Bank culminating at the draconian GATT agreement which mortgaged the sovereignty of the country to the imperialists. He said that although the mounting struggles in the country had forced the Government to slow down the process of restructuring in pursuance of the policies to some extent, yet they could not break the commitment of the Government to these imperialist agencies, nor stop it from signing the GATT agreement. However, the way the Government was coming out to justify its surrender, was a proof that it was fighting the masses with its back against the wall. The only way to break its knees was to further mount up the militant struggles. He referred to the call of Civil Disobedience Movement by the left parties and action programmes drawn by the National Platform of Mass Organisations and called for participation in the programmes in a massive way, culminating in the 29th September general strike and hartal to make it a historic one.

General Secretary's Report

The report placed by M K Pandhe detailed the various facets of the implementation of the economic and industrial policies. It briefed about the restructuring process, which dismantled the public sector step by step and embarked upon the path of privatisation. This privatisation, the essence of which was liberalisation and globalisation, was paving the entry of multinationals in each and every sector of the

Forward To 29th September Strike and Hartal

national economy, be it in the organised core sector, or in the unorganised sector. While the public sector units were deliberately being made sick and referred to BIFR for liquidation, disinvestment was being resorted to in the profit making units as a matter of policy. He referred to the growing closures and joblessness as the direct result of the policies and the main objective of the restructuring process. Another direct result was the standing double digit inflation and the conscious dismantling of the Public Distribution System, which hit the common people below the belt. The report also showed with data how despite increasing foreign investments, the economy remained stagnant.

The report reviewed the 5th April rally which was a pointer to the rising discontent of all sections of the toilers and those affected by the policies like the workers, peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth, women, etc, who demonstrated their determination to force the Government to reverse the policies. The report also referred to the various mass struggles launched after the rally in various sectors and industries and the industrywise unity being forged against the policies in many cases of which the INTUC and BMS also joined the struggles.

The report reviewed the public sector strike of 14 July also, which was a success in several industries, particularly in coal industry, despite the treacherous withdrawal by the INTUC. It dwelt with the united strike against the privatisation of IISCO, which was joined by the INTUC, and it could stall the move of the Government to privatise it.

The report also dwelt with the struggle waged by the CITU in the unorganised sector and called for united struggle with other trade unions in this sector also.

It dwelt with the worsening situation in the Textile industry, which was one of the worst hit with closures and job loss, and hailed the unity developed by the trade unions in the industry including the INTUC and called for its consolidation and for struggles for implementation of the agreement on NTC mills.

The report at length reviewed the implementation of the Report on Organisation adopted by the CITU and called for carrying forward the twin task of strengthening the organisation in its democratic functioning and in membership, etc and advancing the movements. Simultaneously, it called for campaign and education of the cadres on trade union unity to culminate in the formation of a Confederation.

It called for expediting the donations of one day's wages for the BTR Memorial Trust to be completed by 19th December, 1994, the 90th birth anniversary of Com.BTR. It also focused on the growing international connections of the CITU. It further focused on the completion of 25 years of the CITU next year on 30th May, and called for celebration of the Silver Jubilee in a befitting manner.

Among the immediate tasks laid down, the report called for thorough discussions on the concrete plans for each and every action plans as chalked out by the 21st June Convention, which included a mass campaign week from August 3 to 9, all India Rail Roko on September 20, torch light processions on September 27, culminating on the 29th September countrywide strike and Hartal by forging greater unity with all other mass organisations.

Saroj Chowdhury placed the Treasurer's report.

Discussion on the Report

There was a lively discussion on the report by members. The discussion was divided on several topics, mainly on the report in general, on the implementation of the struggle programme and on Organisation. A total number of 50 members participated in the discussions on the subjects.

Those who participated in the discussions were N Padmalochanan, M Rajan, K K Diwakaran, V G Bhaskaran Nair, V B Cherian(Kerala), Santashri Chatterjee, Debanjan Chakraborty, Lakshman Seth, Sukhomoy Pal, Sunil Basu Roy, Tarit Topdar, Somen Kundu, Biren Roy, Kali Ghosh(W.Bengal), J S Majumdar, K K Tripathi, S K Bakshi, Ramnika Gupta(Bihar), R Singaralavelu, D Janakiraman, A K Padmanabhan(Tamilnadu), Sayeed Ahmed, K L Bajaj(Maharashtra), Vijay Mishra, Raghunath Singh, Balwant Singh(Punjab), S Kumar(MP), Satvir Singh(Haryana), P S Grewal, K M Tiwari(Delhi), K Venkatswaralu, N Prasad Rao, P V Ramdoss, P Satyanarayana(AP), Vijay Rawat(UP), Subodh Mehta(Gujarat), Kashmir Thakur(Himachal), Ravindra Shukla(Rajasthan), and S Suryanarayan Rao(Karnataka).

Members pinpointed at the disastrous consequences that followed the implementation of the economic policies in various sectors of economy.

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Working Committee Meeting New Delhi, July 24-26, 1994

Address By The President

E. Balanandan

Dear Comrades,

Before I proceed with my Presidential Address let us pay our respectful homage in the memory of the two great leaders of the world working class movement who passed away after our 8th Conference. Comrade Erich Honecker - an outstanding revolutionary who was heading the Democratic Republic of Germany for several years has passed away on the 29th of May, 1994 in Chile. He started his political career as an anti-Nazi fighter and finally after the defeat of fascism in the Second World War, he became the leader of the German Communist Party and later took over the governance of East Germany and he succeeded to a great extent in building socialism there. Even after the fall of Berlin wall and the overthrow of his government Comrade Honecker did not change his political convictions and stood firm in upholding the cause of the working class and refused to be bullied by the new German rulers. They fabricated charges against him and put him on trial after bringing him back from Russia inspite of his serious illness. In the course of the trial he declared in the Court in reply to the charges that he was discharging his duties and legal responsibilities in ordering the stopping the unauthorized crossing of Berlin Wall. Let us pay our respectful homage in his memory.

Comrade Kim Il Sung suddenly passed away on 8th of July, 1994 by a heart attack in Pyongyang. Comrade Kim Il Sung was a born revolutionary who led the freedom struggle of the Korean people against Japanese imperialism and after defeating them he became the President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and continued to hold that position till his death. Under his leadership socialism has been built in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and ensured a prosperous life for its people. The American imperialism was given a defeat in the war of intervention during 1950-53 which was an eye-opener for world that the American imperialists can also be defeated by smaller nations provided they are able to mobilise the people and the anti-imperialist forces. Of late he could spoil the American game of forcing North Korea to disband its nuclear capability. The American pressure has been

reversed by taking a resolute stand with the support of China. (I am dealing this issue separately later). The set backs suffered by socialism in Soviet Union and the East European countries did not deter him from the revolutionary path of building socialism. Comrade Kim Il Sung is no more with us. Let us pay our homage in his memory and wish all success, to the people and the government of North Korea in their endeavour for further strengthening socialism.

Let us pay our homage in memory of several of our Comrades who passed away during this period. Let us take the pledge once again that we will steadfastly uphold their cherished goal and continue our fight for socialism.

The period after, our 8th Conference was a period of hectic activities by the CITU, which are being dealt with in detail in the General Secretary's report. I am only confining myself to bring before you certain issues only.

Comrades, The big outstanding event after our Conference was the victory of African National Congress in the elections held in South Africa under the new democratic constitution wherein the blacks and whites were given equal right of franchise. This paved the way for giving a decent burial for the 3 centuries old rule of different types of imperialism including that of the hated system of apartheid. On 10th of May Dr. Nelson Mandela, the legendary figure of the South African freedom struggle became the President of South Africa which I need not say was a historic event. Out of the 22 million electorate the South African National Congress could muster nearly 65% of the votes polled. The African National Congress succeeded in persuading the different warring groups not only to participate in the elections but also could form a government giving representation to all the political parties and sections of the people. Though unity is established and a united team has taken over power still those who are in the Govt. are having their own sectarian preferences and objectives. This will be an obstacle for the smooth running of the government. The South African people especially the 27 million blacks who are denied human treatment for the last several

decades during the apartheid regime are expecting immediate solution to their problems and they are holding high hopes. For them employment, food, shelter, education, health care etc., are urgent necessities. Well off sections of the whites want to keep their privileges they were enjoying hitherto and also want further improvement. Such enormous problems are to be tackled by the new government of Nelson Mandela which is a herculean task.

The emergence of a free government in South Africa is a big event in itself. The vast natural resources that are there--- they are the largest producers of gold in the world and the second biggest in platinum and diamonds and third in uranium. Also, of late they have discovered off shore oil too. Together with this the human resources if properly utilised South Africa can develop into a strong country in that region which will definitely be a contribution for the strengthening of democracy.

The CITU and the trade unions of India together with our people were on the side of the African National Congress in their glorious freedom struggle, in which the trade unions, COSATU and the South African Communist Party were major constituents. The CITU especially took the lead for mobilising financial support for the struggle. Therefore we can be legitimately proud of the victory achieved by the African National Congress together with other democratic people of the world. A strong democratic South Africa will change the face of the African continent. Comrades with your permission I wish all success to Mandela and the African National Congress in their endeavour to build a new non-racial democratic South Africa.

The US had to make a retreat from imposing sanction against North Korea for defying the United States dictates to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect their nuclear installations and its demolition in case they desire so. North Korea stood their ground with the support of China and other countries including Russia. They declared that they will opt out of the IAEA in case the IAEA denies aid for the Korean nuclear programmes and they will not allow inspection by IAEA. The US attempt to impose sanctions using the United Nations did not succeed and they had to make a hasty retreat.

So also the threat they have made against China that China will be denied the most favoured nation status in the name of the so called human

rights violations. But China said that this is an interference in their internal affairs and they are not willing to discuss this issue with the US Govt. At last the American big business pressurised Mr Clinton that in this case US will be losers and therefore MFN status of China should not be disturbed and US had to beat a retreat.

I do not wish to deal with other developments in the international arena except what is happening in the economic front.

The 'World Economic outlook' released by IMF in May has projected the World out put growth for the year 1994 and 1995 would be 3% and 3.5% respectively. In the case of United States-- they have achieved a growth of 3% during 1993, which is projected to rise to 3.9% in 1994 and settle down at a sustainable level of 2.6% in 1995. For Canada the corresponding growth rates are 2.4%, 3.5% and 4.1% and for the UK it is 1.9%, 2.5% and 2.8% respectively. But for the continental Europe and Japan they have now reached the bottom of their recession. In the case of Japan and Germany in the range of 0.7%-0.9% and 2.1% and Europe as a whole 0.9% and 1.3% to 2.5%.

The projections made by the OECD comprising 25 developed countries of the world also agree with these projections though little more optimistic. The world average growth is worked out with the high rate growth areas of Asian countries too. The growth is still meager in many countries and the most disturbing fact is that the growth do not reflect in the growth of employment and unemployment and miseries are on the increase in the developed countries, which are called high tech ones.

According to official estimates, inspite of the recovery the number of unemployed in the OECD countries still remains at 35 millions and 8.5% of the work force in 1993. According to "Economic Outlook" published in May this year, the current rate of unemployment in the European countries are 3 to 4 times higher than that prevailed in 1960s and 1970s. In the EC countries the unemployment rate in 1993 was 10.5% and that will continue for 1994 also. In US the official rate of unemployment is 6.4%

The number of part-time employment is on the increase in all these countries and they are considered as employed. If this is taken into account the rate of unemployment will be 12.5% for Europe or 50 million people. In the United States the present

6.4% figure would be 9.3%, in Britain instead the 9.8%, it will be 12.3%. Japanese official unemployment of 2.7% will be 9.6%.

In Japan, part-time employment is more than the other countries. In Many OECD countries 2 to 3% of the unemployed are kept out of the unemployed register since they are undergoing some training or receiving some unemployment benefits. In Europe most of the unemployed did not get work for the last 12 months. The age group of this unemployed is 25 to 44 years.

Among the part-timers women are in large number. As stated earlier the problem of unemployment is alarmingly becoming serious consequent of the so called policy of "Jobless growth". I do not wish to deal with the situation in the erstwhile socialist countries especially in Russia, where the unemployment and miseries are developing in a devastating scale.

The remedies being suggested to meet the problem of unemployment are worse than that of the disease. This subject was discussed recently by the govt leaders. At the initiative of US President Mr Bill Clinton, a summit meeting was held in Detroit in June 1994. A committee of OECD discussed and a White Paper on unemployment was adopted. All these discussions and studies gave way for contradictory positions. In these discussions labour situation in Europe and America was compared and the US model was generally accepted. The US model suggests lesser benefits for the unemployed.

In US the unemployment figure does not reflect the actual situation. Due to the vast wage differences. 35 million or 14% of the American population is living below the poverty line. The wages of executives and officers are very high and the wage level of workers is very low compared to Germany. The inequality in income in US is projected in the following terms in the Herald International Tribune dated 8.7.94:

"Of all the rich democracies, there is only one, the United States, in which inequality of incomes rose sharply in the past decade and the wages of the working poor sank. There have been big gains in income for many Americans, but most of those gains have been concentrated in the richest fifth of the population.

"The drastic decline in union membership in the US is another factor accounting for greater inequality:"

It further went on to argue, "to devise ways to prevent the rise of inequality, and to keep the bottom end of the ladder out of absolute poverty, without interfering with the creation of new jobs. While the remedies seem expensive, it is worth considering the cost of the alternative: a country in which the distance between rich and poor grows steadily, with class

hostilities and the politics of resentment getting louder."

The above quotation shows clearly that in the developed capitalist societies unemployment and poverty are on the increase which leads to different types of social tensions. The tall claim which has been made that capitalism is the "only way for human progress" do not tally with the facts and the facts show that capitalism will lead to increasing inequality and poverty for the large majority of the population.

The Indian economic scene needs no explanation here since we have dealt at length in our Patna conference. I only wish to highlight certain issues which is going to eat away the vitals of our economy. However let me quote a small portion of an article published by The Economic Times dated 22 July 94 with the title unemployment: Lessons from Europe "In India too, product growth is out pacing employment. The experience of the 1980s is that of a welcome sharp rise in the growth of the product (5.3 per cent from 3.5 per cent) but a sharper and disastrous decline in the growth rate of employment (from 2.8 per cent to 1.5 per cent). The crisis of a glaring and growing mismatch between growth and employment generation facing the Indian economy, alas, does not figure in the analysis of our policy makers".

The people of our country have now come to realise the results of liberalisation and globalisation of our economy through daily increase in prices of essential commodities and services. As part of the new policy, a process is on to dismantle the public distribution system. The retail price of wheat and rice has increased to more than 75% from 1991 to 1994 in the open market. The price of sugar has risen from Rs 9/- to Rs 18/- This is partly because of the reduction of sugar quota for the public distribution system which has been reduced to 13% from 31% besides relaxing all the controls. The price of all the items of daily consumption has risen to unbearable levels. The price of all goods and services has also gone up. The official price index also gone up to more than 12%. All these are being justified in the name of market economy at work. The result is that large majority of our population is put to unbearable difficulties. Larger and larger sections are being denied the basic necessities of life due to increase in prices.

Our agricultural production is going to be adversely affected because of the new policy of cutting of subsidies for electricity, water, fertilizer, etc.

Allowing the foreign multinationals to penetrate into the basic sectors of the economy like power, oil, coal, banking, insurance, civil aviation and telecom etc where we have made substantial progress and are able to compete with their foreign counter parts is inviting disaster to our country. The production cost of electricity and oil in our country is about one

third of the international cost. Cheaper energy cost will help us to compete in the market and this specific advantage the foreign multinationals are interested to do away with.

The latest is that the US Energy Secretary with her team of multinational power companies had discussions with the Power Minister and others and reported to be agreed to invest Rs 75000 crores in the power sector for producing 25000 MW power in India, which was hailed as a big event. It is said that the Govt of India has conceded that they will be given assured profit of 16% and a counter guarantee by the Govt of India ensuring the same. This is what has been agreed to be done in the case of Enron Project, Bombay the consequences of which has been discussed by experts in detail and pointed out that the power cost in the country will be jacked up to a minimum of Rs 4 per unit if not more from the present cost of Rs 1.18 paise to Rs 1.50 paise. If this policy is pushed through the power engineering industry, another big public sector company which can produce world standard power machines at lesser cost which can meet almost our internal demand, is going to be starved of orders and the technology developed in the country will also be destroyed. The cost of production of goods will be increased due to high cost energy and our industries' competitiveness will have adverse impact and that will result in a process of de-industrialisation. This is true in the case of oil too.

In the oil sector govt is encouraging multinational penetration instead of trying to help improving our indigenous production. The cost of production of indigenous crude oil and the imported crude oil for the last 5 years is given below. Our crude oil cost is inclusive of the oil cess, royalty and tax which will be around Rs 1500/- per tonne.

Period	R/M	
	Imported crude	Indigenous crude
1989-90	3189.68	2269.12
1990-91	4447.15	2442.80
1991-92	4735.08	2442.80
1992-93	5137.83	
1993-94	5145.61	3295.76

The only argument the govt is making for this policy is financial crisis. If the Indian power producer, Electricity Boards and central establishments and the ONGC are given permission to slightly increase their cost they can easily mobilise resources for the development of these sectors. I do not wish to go into other details of the impact of new policies in other public sector industries.

In order to facilitate the attack against the

public sector the govt and their spokesman are always trying to denigrate its performance. But the annual survey of Central Public Sector Enterprise for the year 1992-93 released by Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Industry gives a different picture. In this it is said that "In the matter of profitability, mobilisation of internal resources and in value addition, etc public sector have had sizeable contribution. The gross margin of 133 enterprises for the last 10 years was showing a progressive increase from Rs 3761 crores in 1983-84 to Rs 25,217 in 1992-93, an increase of 36.96 per cent. The internal resources mobilisation made by 116 units in 1983-84 was Rs 3,278 crores, it rose to Rs 12,943 crores in 1991-92 involving 143 units and Rs 14,723 crores in 1992-93 involving 146 units. During the 7th Plan period the public enterprises have generated internal resources to the tune of Rs 37,677.71 crores. The manufacturing undertakings in 1983-84 made a value addition of Rs 10,048 crores. In 1992-93 it reached to Rs 13,150 crores, a rise of 8.24 per cent than the previous year.

The banking and insurance industry has played a crucial role in the planned development of the country. The industrial and agricultural development was facilitated by the public sector banking and insurance industries. In the name of improving efficiency "these sectors are under attack which is not in the interest of our nation. The rate of growth of our general insurance is the highest in the world and its performance is being praised by large majority of its clients. LIC has contributed Rs 16,000 crores for assisting different schemes for national development.

Therefore the denigration of public sector should be rebuffed by the trade union movement by increased propaganda among the people. The real impact and consequences of the attempt to privatise and winding up of the public sector case by case is to be taken up by the trade unions for educating the public.

After the signing of the GATT agreement the govt is treating the multinationals not only as equals with the Indian capitalists but in many cases "as more than equals". This was the reason for some of the big capitalists of the country beginning to crave for "equal treatment and level playing ground." We also see another disturbing feature. Many of the big companies holding big brand names for their products earning sizeable profits from their industry are being scared of the unrestricted entry of big multinationals in their field of operation to compete with them. Many of them are showing the "wisdom" not in competing with them to get defeated with their huge financial strength and market accessibility but to sell the industry itself for a handsome price and in many cases to become junior partners. This is the story of Parley, Kelvinator, Tomco, HLM, Diner's Club, Duke's, Kissan, etc which I do not wish to

elaborate further.

As noted earlier, after our 8th conference, the CITU was engaged in hectic activities of which a few I would like to mention here. The April 5th Delhi demonstration of mass organisations and trade unions was a unique event in its mass participation and militancy. This gave a big warning to the govt that the working class and the people will not tolerate the anti-national policies lying down. The July 14th public sector strike was a success in spite of the INTUC's vacillation and withdrawal from the strike. The June 21st Delhi convention of the mass organisations and trade unions was also a big success and in which very important decisions were taken including the general strike on 29th September, about which we are going to have full discussion today.

We have also to take note of the fact that the Left Parties are going to launch a massive civil disobedience movement against the govt's policy from August 16 to September 9th. In this movement the trade unions have to play a role in appropriate manner which we will have to consider today.

Comrades, during the period of four months after our conference, the organisational activities in different areas have improved. Before I conclude I wish to bring before you the question of developing sickness in many industries of which many are being referred to BIFR. The sick industries list has further increased and the Govt is implementing the so called Exit Policy through Voluntary Retirement Schemes in many sectors and sending out thousands of workers out of job.

We have to take special steps in the matter of meeting the increasing sickness which was already noted by our 8th Conference. The suggestions made by us with regard to the idea of trade union unity, the proposal of "Confederation of Trade Unions" has invited many comments which is a welcome sign. We have to take further steps to see that organisational cohesion of the trade unions with flexibility is brought about.

Comrades, our experience shows that we were able to make the govt change many of their policies with regard to public sector, when we were able to mobilise sufficient united pressure. IISCO privatisation is a case in point we were able to make the govt retrace from their proposal of privatisation. The INTUC also joined in the united strike action against privatisation of IISCO. The Govt could not push through the Trade Union Amendment Bill they have brought forth because of combined resistance put up in the Parliament and outside. So also in many public sector industries the proposals of the govt had to be withdrawn or suitably modified due to workers' joint resistance. We were able to give a rebuff to the theory of wage freeze in the public sector. We have also to note that the new announcement of the Vice

Chairman of Planning Commission Mr Pranab Mukherjee that a new fund is going to be created for revitalising the sick PSUs, details of which need to be looked into seriously. However, the single point remedy of referring sick industries to BIFR is now agreed to be insufficient. This is also due to the pressure exerted by our movement.

The joint movements are developing against the attack in the power, telecom, textiles, banking, insurance sectors, etc. Further strike actions are being discussed in the financial sector and a strike decision has been taken in the telecom sector against privatisation. Power workers and engineers together with the workers and officers of the power engineering industries also are moving for joint direct action against the govt policy. In the textile industry a Joint Action Committee has been formed with INTUC in it, and the JAC has taken a decision for march to Parliament by textile workers in November. If these joint movements are properly strengthened and carried forward in all other industries, I am confident that the govt policy not only in these industries, but also as a whole can be rolled back. While carrying forward united movements in the organised sector to save the industries and jobs, we have to concentrate our activities in the unorganised sector as well. It must be noted that with the IMF prescribed new industrial policy, the Government has embarked upon a path of deindustrialisation, undermining the organised sector and getting the goods manufactured in the unorganised sector, exploiting cheap labour. The Commission on Unorganised Sector and the recent workshop at Delhi have discussed these problems. Our work in the unorganised sector therefore has to be planned and movements launched according to the demands of the situation.

Lastly I wish to draw the attention that the implementation of organisational directives is not taken seriously by some committees. In order to enable the CITU to play a crucial role in these developing struggles it needs no stress that strengthening the organisational is a pre-condition for furthering the movements. There is no doubt that with the increasing prestige our organisational position can be improved substantially, if proper steps are taken.

Comrades let us march forward to bigger and stronger struggles, and make the 29th September countrywide strike and hartal a big success.

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They referred to the rampant sickness and closures and to the BIFR which acted as the legal institution for liquidation through a sort of summary trial without giving any value to the revival schemes

presented by the unions, VRS was being imposed on the workers as a mean to implement the Exit Policy. Systematic dismantling of the public sector had resulted in a jungle rule in the industrial sector. While foreign investments were increasing and the indigenous technologies were undermined, no new technology were being inducted. This had set in a process of de-industrialisation and loss of jobs, rather than industrialisation and employment generation.

Price rise, inflation, the sugar scandal and the conscious dismantling of the Public Distribution System were other areas focused by the members as the fall out of the liberalisation process.

Almost all the members dwelt on the unorganised sector. It was pointed out that with the gradual closure of the organised industries in pursuance of the new economic policy, the monopolists were slowly pushing the manufacturing process in the unorganised sector and in the home based units in particular. Thus they were garnering huge profits while fleecing the workers in the unorganised sector ruthlessly, where majority were women. They briefed about the struggles being carried forward in the unorganised sector in the states.

Members also narrated about the 14 July public sector strike and other major struggles in their respective states.

In their deliberations, members self-critically briefed about the implementation of the Report on Organisation. Although there was improvement in organisational functioning, yet there were several

State Convention of Mass Organisations at Bhubaneswar

At the call of the National Platform of Mass Organisations, Orissa Unit, a State level Convention was organised at Bhubaneswar on 17th July 1994.

The Convention was presided by Sivaji Patnaik, M.P., (CITU), Baishnab Das (HMS), Bhagawan Panda (AITUC), Gangadhar Paikray (Utkal Kishan Sabha), Uddhab Jena (KKMS), Subash Singh (DYFI), Tapasi Praharaj (AIDWA), Chhabi Mohanty (AIDSO), Saroj Das (BEFI), Kishore Jena (AIBEA), Yoginath Jena (Central Govt. Emp. Federation) and Radha Nanda of State Govt. Co-ordination Committee.

Lambodar Nayak, General Secretary CITU Orissa State Committee presented a 15 point draft proposal and the Antion programme in the light of the resolution adopted at the national convention held on 21st June at New Delhi and it was discussed by the delegates present in the Convention and adopted unanimously.

The long 4 hours discussions that generated high spirit and enthusiasm among the delegates was participated by Prabir Palit (AITUC), Baishnab Das (HMS), Mayadhar Nayak (UTUC(LS)), Jaganath

weaknesses which required concentration. Members emphasised on democratic functioning, increase in membership in each industry, both organised and unorganised and intensification of united struggles alongwith independent activities of the CITU. They made indepth discussion on the need to carry forward the educative campaign for the formation of a Confederation. They stressed for regular TU class and workshops also. The issue of development of the Hindi belt was also discussed alongwith the specific task of CITU's development in the industrially advanced states like Maharashtra and Gujarat. They made several suggestions to enrich the report.

On the implementation of the programme, the members briefed the actions being taken by the states and industrial federations and expressed their promise for massive actions in all the phases from the campaign work from Aug 3 to 9, Rail Roko on September 20, torch light procession on September 27, the civil disobedience from August 16 to September 9, culminating in the countrywide strike on September 29. The reports of the General Secretary and Treasurer were adopted unanimously. The meeting also adopted a resolution condemning the brutal attack by the CISF on the struggling workers and officers of Neyveli Lignite Corporation. The meeting ended with the clarion call for the strike both by the General Secretary in his reply to the debate and by the President in his summing up speech.

Mishra (Orissa Drushak Sabha), Suresh Panigrahi (SFI), Sisir Hui (DYFI), Chhabi Mohanty (AIDSO), Kumudini Behera (AIDWA), Suresh Mohanty (CPSTU), S.K. Das, (OSRU), Khetramohan Das (State Govt. Employees Co-ordination Committee), Lili Das (MSS), Kishore Jena (AIBEA), Pradeep Sadangi (BEFI), Bhaskar Jena (AIDYA), Uddhab Jena (KKMS), Ramachandra Nayak (LIC Employees), Basudev Samal, Dumana Das ... General Insurance Employees organisations alongwith Com. Surendra Jena of private college Teachers Association.

The Convention also took a special resolution of flood situation in Orissa demanding immediate and permanent measures. This resolution was moved by Gangadhar Paikray, UKS and Seconded by Uddhav Jena of KKMS.

The concluding address was given Sivaji Patnaik. He called on the delegates to go ahead to make success the 29th September strike and oppose the central Govt. economic policy taken at the pressure of IMF and World Bank and signing of GATT agreement.

Successful Strike of Public Sector Workers and Officers on July 14

□ M.K.PANDHE

The twenty three lakhs public sector workers and officers went on strike on July 14 in support on the demands for scrapping of DPE guidelines for wage negotiations, settlement of the pension scheme for the public sector workers, fixing up the multi-slab system of DA, removal of ceilings in the Bonus Act, enhancement of exemption limit in the Income Tax Act and against privatisation and disinvestment in public sector undertakings, against the Govt.'s policies towards sick public sector units etc. The call for the strike was given by the committee of public sector trade unions. The National Confederation of officers Associations (NCOA) supported the call and the officers of public undertakings joined in large numbers the strike action.

Earlier the INTUC gave a call for strike on almost identical demands but did not make any serious preparations for strike. The appeal of the CPSTU to prepare jointly for strike was rejected by the INTUC before it was hoping to settle the strike on the plea of getting some concessions from the Govt of India. However the INTUC leadership withdraw the strike on 6th July without achieving a single demand raised by the INTUC in its charter of Demands. The minutes of the meeting with P.A. Sangma, Union Labour Minister does not contain any acceptance of the demand. Hence the INTUC found the plea of the congress rally on 14th July and the strike was withdrawn.

This step by the INTUC leadership created resentment in the INTUC ranks and West Bengal unit of the INTUC had written to president INTUC opposing the withdrawal of the strike. Several local INTUC unions which could not justify before the workers the surrender of the leadership had decided to remain with the workers and join the strike.

On June 28, all over the country, public sector workers organised massive demonstrations and served strike notice. Several Dharnas were also organised all over the country which reflected acute discontent among the public sector workers.

The workers in sick public sector units were particularly active in this period since it was a question of their survival. Workers of all affiliations were moving united to fight the Govt. of India's policies to refuse any financial assistance to make them viable so that ultimately they are closed down. The anger of the workers was more visible since the Govt of India failed to implement the decisions of the special Tripartite Committee on the sick PSUS.

LEADING ROLE OF COAL MINERS

Coal miners who constitute the large single group of the public sector workers played a leading role in the strike. Out of seven and a half lakh coal miners working in 450 mines spread all over the country, more than 6 lakhs participated in the strike. The strike was very successful in ECL, BCCL, CCL and singareni collieries, and except in few mines the INTUC workers by and large joined the strike action. Even in the head offices of all the coal companies, good strikes were organised. Work in all the coal washeries and workshops was seriously affected.

OTHER MAJOR INDUSTRIES

Steel workers who constitute a strength of nearly 3 lakhs joined the strike in good strength. Work in Durgapur, Alloy, Steel Plant, Burnpur, Bokaro, Vizag, Salem was seriously affected while in Bhilai and Rourkela partial strike could be organised. There was total stoppage of work in all the captive mines under SAIL. The NMDC mines were also closed down due to strike. In the offices and stockyards of central marketing organisation of SAIL more than 70% workers took part in the strike.

In BHEL Trichy unit complete strike was organised while in Ranipet it was 80%. Both the units in Bangalore were completely closed down. Strike in Jhansi and Hardwar unit was between 80- 90 per cent while in Bhopal the strike was partial.

The strike in all the Fertilizer units were complete or near total. In several units officers participated in good numbers. For the first time all the unions in food corporation of India jointly campaigned for the strike. Out of 67,000 employees all over India more than 61,000 participated in the strike.

Good strikes were reported by Hindusthan Copper, Balco, Hindusthan photofilim, Instrumentation Ltd, Andrew Yule Co. Neyveli Lignite Corporation reported 95% workers joining the strike.

REMARKABLE ACTION BY BANGALORE BASED INDUSTRIES

The strike in bangalore based Industries was complete even according to official admission. All the officers also joined the strike action BEL, HAL, ITI, BEML were completely closed down while strike was partial in HMT. The Joint Act Front, Bangalore through several joint actions mobilised public sector workers well for the massive action.

OTHER PLACES

In West Bengal, in most of the public sector undertakings the strike was complete or near total, practically there was no Opposition to the strike by any union. Only in ECL area some groups of INTUC resorted to violence to obstruct preparations for strike. In Kerala also response to strike action was magnificent.

Indian oil corporation and ONGC workers observed strike in large number of centers in the country. The IDPL workers in Hrishikesh joined the strike action.

In Hyderabad 14th July was off Day for ECIL, HMT (Bearings) and HCL but workers expressed their support for the strike action.

The HSCL units observed strike action in several of their sites. NBCC and NPCC units also joined the strike action.

On the basis of reports received by the CITU centre, one can say that over 80 per cent of the workers in public sector participated in the strike action all over the country.

The BMS did not support the strike but the BMS workers in local places participated in strikes in several units and helped to make the strike successful.

The Union Labour Ministry in order to underestimate the impact of strike issued a press release stating that there was no strike in banks,

FIFTH CONFERENCE OF MADHYA PRADESH CITU

The fifth conference of Madhya Pradesh CITU held on 11-13 June in Nagda (Ujain). This conference could not held before the 8th conference of CITU due to the intensive campaign of mass organisations and left parties against the new economic and industrial policies of Government. Nagda is a famous town which known for the working class struggles Late Com. A.K. Gopalan came in this town after the Tenali plenum.

The conference started its proceeding with flag hoisting in the morning of 11th June and paying homage to the deceased and departed leader/...The venue of the conference was named after late Com. Motilal Sharma the founder president of state CITU. The inaugural session was commenced with the address of Com.M.K. Pandhe, the General Secretary of CITU. Com. pandhe while analysing the current international and national situation explained the various struggles of the working class in last three years against the new economic and industrial policies of the government. He said that due to the valiant struggles of working class govt had been forced to withdraw its certain schemes,Pranab Mukherjee had toMoracca that the people of India are angry over the Dunkle proposals. manmohan

insurance companies, railways, ports, road transport, state electricity boards etc. Which however were not covered by the strike at all. It was an action only by the central public sector industrial undertakings. Though the official electronic media repeated the official press release workers have already started disbelieving the official propaganda.

GROWING DISCONTENT AGAINST THE POLICIES

The successful strike action has once again proved the growing discontent among the public sector workers about the economic policies pursued by the govt of India. The New Economic policies, which are directed towards liquidating the public sector undertakings are only hitting at the self reliant development of the economy. The public sector workers are determined to fight this threat and the committee of public sector trade unions will again chalkout programme to carry forward the resistance to these policies.

FORWARD TO GENERAL STRIKE ON 29th SEPTEMBER

The public sector workers will again rise to the occasion and prepare for another strike action on 29th September as per call given by the 21st June convention organised by the National platform of Mass Organisations. They are determined to carry forward the struggle till the policies are reversed.

Singh goes on repeating the fear of working class struggles. Com. Pandhe suggested that in view of the geographical vastness of the state(Madhya pradesh) regional Co-ordination Committees may also be formed beside strengthening the state centre.

The CITU Secretary Com Jibon Roy MP stressed the need to develop the state leadership. CPI(M) MLA Ram Lalkan Sharma, MP State Kisan Sabha General Secretary Bahadu Singh Dhakad, SFI State General Secretary Zakir Ali, Rajasthan State CITU Secretary, R K Swami, AITUC leader Ambalal Swami, MP State Govt employees leader Sharma and Bengal immunity workers union leader P K Dey etc also spoke. Founders of the working class movement in the state Satya Narayan Tomar, Chandra Kumar Srivastav, Haridas Bhatia and Harnarayan Mamma were also attended. Com.Sheilandra Shaili, S Sudevan and P K Mukherjee were the members of the presidium.

General Secretary's Report:

Com. S Kumar presented the general Secretary's report. He told that the last three years were challenging for the working class movement in the state. The big struggles were launched by the

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Workers of Unorganised Sector to Join 29th Sept. Strike

The All India Coordination Committee of Unorganised Sector Workers in its meeting held on July 27 at Delhi decided to join the countrywide strike and Hartal on September 29 as per the call of the National Platform of Mass Organisations against the economic and industrial policies of the Government. The meeting called upon all sections of workers in the unorganised sector in all the states to join the strike and participate in all the other action programmes preceding the strike, including the weeklong campaign programme from August 3 to 9, the Civil Disobedience Movement of Jail Bharao from August 16 to September 9 called by the Left Parties, the All India Rail Roko on September 20, the All India Torch Light Processions on September 27, culminating in the strike and Hartala on September 29.

The workers joining the strike and the other preceding action programmes in the vast unorganised sector will include Beedi, Handloom, Powerloom, Brick Kiln, Quarries, Construction, Contract Labour, Casual, Work Charge, Extra Departmental Workers, Tanneries, Small Chemicals, Garment, Hosiery, Bakery, Shops and Establishments, Fire Works, Match Box, Bangles, Potteries, Stone Breaking, Gem Cutting, Agarbatti, Coir, Cashew, Toddy Tapping, Fisheries, Hotel Workers, Auto and Rickshaw Pullers, Small Engineering, Loading and Unloading, Self-employed, Home Based Workers, Forestry, Plantation, Anganwadi and others.

The meeting called upon all the State Committees and the unions of the unorganised sector in the country to make the concrete plans to mobilise these workers and start the preparations for the countrywide actions immediately.

The meeting was presided over by P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU and attended by the members of the Coordination Committee from West Bengal, Bihar, UP, Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. Mrinal Das, Convenor of the Committee placed the report of the movement of the unorganised sector in the meeting and all members participated in the discussion.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of the action programme in pursuance of the 22-point demands, as decided in the earlier meeting held on 26th June and the workshop held at Delhi from June 27 to 29. It noted that rallies and state level joint conventions were held in Bihar and Rajasthan. State level strike action was also held at Rajasthan on July 14. In Bihar the unorganised sector workers will go on strike action on August 2. In Haryana a two-day strike decision has been taken for August 18 and 19. A massive rally was held at Andhra Pradesh. Tamilnadu, Punjab, Delhi, UP and Karnataka have also decided for rallies and demonstrations.

Action Programme:

The meeting decided to carry forward the following action programmes immediately after the 29th September strike and to be completed by December, 1994.

1. State level workshops comprising of all sections of unorganised sector workers.
2. Industrywise workshops in Beedi, Handloom, Powerloom, Brick Kiln, Small Engineering, Loading and Unloading workers, Self-employed workers and on Working Women in the unorganised sector.
3. State level joint conventions of unorganised sector workers.
4. State level joint strike actions by all unorganised sector workers.

Unorganised Sector Workers' Rally in Hyderabad

Thousands of unorganised sector workers of Andhra Pradesh staged a rally in the state capital Hyderabad on July 14 in response to the call given by the State CITU. The rallyists who thronged the city from near and far, from Srikakulam adjoining Orissa and Adilabad bordering Maharashtra, demanded minimum wages revision, dearness allowance and ESI facility for unorganised sector workers.

Hotel workers, beedi workers, building and construction workers, hamalees, shop employees, fishermen, etc, participated in the rally. A number of women workers with their infant children also took part in the rally.

The rally culminated in a public meeting at Lal Bahadur Stadium amidst rain. Addressing the rallyists, CITU State President, P Satyanarayana, called for intense and united struggle for redressal of demands.

The State Minister of Labour, K Laxminarayana, assured at the public meeting that he would look into the demands. Memoranda of demands were submitted to the Labour Minister in the meeting by CITU leaders, N Prasada Rao and P. Satyanarayana.

Power Workers' Rally:

A big rally of power workers coming from rural areas was held in Hyderabad on July 13 demanding salaries to the rural power workers directly from the electricity board, and implementation of minimum wages. The rally was in response to the call given by the Electricity Employees Union affiliated to the CITU.

Later a delegation led by the union's General Secretary, V Srihari, held negotiations with Board officials.

Explaining the details of the negotiations to the protesting workers, V Srihari said that the officials had agreed to implement minimum wages and provide salaries to them through Panchayati Raj workers rather than Sarpanchas.

WORKSHOP ON UNORGANISED SECTOR WORKERS

□ P.K. GANGULY

The CITU Organised a National Workshop on Unorganised Sector Workers at Delhi from June 27-29. The Workshop was held at National Labour Institute, NOIDA, and was sponsored by the International Labour Organisation(ILO). The Workshop was attended by 24 Hindi knowing participants from West Bengal, U.P., Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, M.P., Orissa, A.P., and Karnataka. Bihar was the only state which remained un represented, although they sent the names of the participants including one woman. CITU had decided that 50% of the participants should be women. However, except West Bengal no other states could send the requisite number of women. In total there were only 5 women participants in the workshop. They were Ratna Dutta, Farida Begum,(West Bengal), Lata Singh (Delhi), Saroj Vasisth(Haryana) and Sayeeda Begum (Rajasthan).

The Workshop discussed the following subjects:-

1) The minimum wages, labour laws, social security measures, Child Labour, orientation on which was given by P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU.

2) Another orientation was given by Brinda Karat, General Secretary, AIDWA on working women in unorganised sector.

3) The other orientation was on safety, occupational hazards, T.U rights and ILO conventions, given by Sterling Smith, incharge of worker's education from ILO.

The workshop was inaugurated by E. Balanandan, President of CITU. He drew attention to the vastness of the unorganised sector which included nearly 90% of the work force in the country and laid stress on organising them in unions and mobilising them in country wide struggles for amelioration of their conditions.

On the question of minimum wage, P.K. Ganguly criticized the government for failing to determine the criterion for deciding minimum wages. He pointed out that the government had not evolved any national wage policy. It has been refusing to implement the decisions of the 15th Indian Labour Conference for need based wages. He emphasized for intensification of struggles against all discriminations against women, and for

implementation of all labour laws and social security measures in the unorganised sector. Regarding child labour he pointed out that this was a growing phenomena in the world and particularly in India, where according to rough estimates nearly one hundred million child labour were working in various unorganised sectors. Child labour was the direct result of capitalism. Therefore elimination of child labour required struggle against the socio-economic system along with education. Efforts were being made by the ILO and National Labour Institute for the progressive elimination of child labour in association with the trade unions.

Dr. Mahavir Jain, incharge of child labour from the National Labour Institute also spoke in the workshop and briefed about the efforts being made by NLI in collaboration with ILO in this respect.

Brinda Karat, General Secretary of AIDWA made the orientation on working women in unorganised sector. Apart from drawing attention to the question of discrimination against working women, and denial of their specific demands and equal rights, she dwelt upon problem of home based and self employed workers in the unorganised sector. She said that while 90% of Indian workforce were in the unorganised sector, 80 to 90 percent of working women were working as home based and self employed workers. She suggested that home based workers should be considered as a category within the unorganised sector and should be given special importance and attention. She pointed out that apart from the fact that home based industry was in vogue in our country and working women constituted the major work force in it, the new economic and industrial policies had contributed to further growth in the number of working women in these industries and their conditions were deplorable. She said that the organised modern industry, taking advantage of the new economic policy, were getting their products manufactured by the home based workers, fleecing them ruthlessly. The working women were the worst exploited in this category, which needs special attention by the trade union movement.

Sterling Smith from ILO briefed about the primitive conditions regarding safety and occupational hazards in the unorganised sector and stated that the government of India had not ratified the ILO conventions on these subjects as well as on minimum wages and on TU rights. He pointed out that safety and occupational hazards should be treated as issues of class struggle, and the workers should strengthen the unions and launch struggles for implementation of the minimum standards on safety and occupational hazards both by the government and the private sector managements. He emphasized on the point that "the stronger the unions, the safer the workplaces".

After each orientation the participants made indepth discussions in groups. All subjects were elaborately discussed by them. On the question of minimum wage, the suggestion was for intensification for struggle for need based wages, and equal wages for working women at par with their male counterparts. The participants also called for change of attitude in this respect by the workers. On question of child labour, safety and occupational hazards, the participants were of unanimous opinion that the trade union movement and CITU workers in particular should start working assiduously on the problems.

The problem of working women, particularly home based workers created particular interest among the participants. Their opinion was that CITU should include home based workers as a separate category in the unorganised sector and work in a planned manner to bring them under unions and struggle. It was also stressed that all State Committees the and All India Coordination Committee of Working Women should make special efforts to bring in the working women in the unorganise sector, particularly from the home based workers into the trade union movement. They noted that the non fulfilment of the quota of 50% of women in the workshop revealed the weakness of the State Committees in their work on working women. However, although the quota could not be fulfilled, yet the five women participants actively participated in the group discussions and other deliberations also. The deliberation on working women, which was set in motion by Brinda Karat created a good impact on all the participants and they took it as a problem for

all and the CITU at a whole and not merely for working women only.

The Workshop suggested the action plans as taken in 26th June meeting(see report on page 11 -Ed).

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU delivered the concluding speech. He briefed the problems of the unorganised sector workers and emphasized for intensification of united struggle in pursuance of their demands. He pointed out that the CITU had taken up the question of unorganised sector workers seriously and therefore all State Committees and unions should mobilise this section of workers in a planned manner and bring them in the mainstream of the working class struggle in the country against the new economic and industrial policies.

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working class under the leadership of CITU. He said that inspite of the brutal repression of BJP government in the state, the movement of the working class marched ahead. It had conducted struggles against the new economic and industrial policies of central government. The BJP government was totally vindictive towards the CITU and working class movement. Attacks of privatisation launched on electricity, transport and other public sector undertakings. There were scores of incidents of lathicharge on workers, repression of textile workers let loose and starvation deaths among them occurred. The wages and allowances of the workers were frozen, there was large scale retrenchment of workers. In one establishment the 387 members of CITU were dismissed. 52 delegates participated in the discussion on the report. The conference adopted resolutions on proposed civil disobedience movement, stopping exploitation of Dalits and tribes, revival of textile industries, against communalism, for fixation of minimum wage, regularisation of casual workers in government offices, e tc. The conference elected a 41 member Working Committee. Com.Badal Saroj was elected president, S Kumar General Secretary, Com.Sandhya Shaili treasurer, Com.Shailender Shaili, S Sudesan, P K MUKherjee, Balkrishna Vyas and Bansidhar Azad were elected vice presidents while Kameshwar Singh, P G Panikkar, J L Nandi Narayan Bharti and Ram Vilas Goswami were among secretaries.

Textile Workers Decide to March to Parliament

The joint action committee (JAC) of textile workers has decided to organise a March to parliament on the second day of the winter session of parliament in November 1994. The decision was taken at a meeting of the JAC held at the Maharashtra state CITU office in Bombay on July 18.

The JAC includes all major central trade unions in the country, and leaders of INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS, and BMS attended the meeting which was the first to be held after the joint national convention of textile workers held in Delhi on May 5.

The meeting reviewed the serious crisis facing the textile industry and noted that the unanimous agreement arrived at on April 9 regarding NTC mills was yet to be implemented. Meanwhile, the growing sickness in the private sector mills had affected tens of thousands of workers. Over two lakh workers had been rendered jobless with the closure of 132 mills in the private sector.

The levels of closures, joblessness and ruthless exploitation in the powerloom sector was also on the rise with the policy of switching over the weaving section to the powerlooms from the organised sector. The condition of handloom weavers was also becoming deplorable because of the high price of yarn and non-availability of hank yarn.

The meeting reviewed the mobilisation of workers in the textile industry in the country and noted that successful joint conventions were held in several places like Delhi, Indore, Calcutta, Kanpur, Hyderabad and Bangalore. At A Kola in Maharashtra a convention will be held on August 27 and 28. Another convention has been planned at Ahmedabad in August.

It emphasised the need for formulation of an alternative textile policy to benefit the common people, in consultation with trade unions, which should be an integrated policy to develop all the three sectors of the industry equally- organised will sector, power loom sector and handloom sector.

The meeting chalked out an action programme including joint dharnas and demonstrations in each textile mill, joint rallies of textile workers of all the three sectors in each textile centre, March to Parliament in the third week of November 1994 and preparation for a one-day countrywide strike. The action programme is to press for a new textile policy,

implementation of the agreement on NTC, opening of all closed mills and reabsorption of the workers.

The meeting also decided to meet the prime minister in a joint delegation to demand providing budgetary support to the NTC Mills till the agreement is fully implemented.

MEETING OF CITU CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

The CITU's all-India committee of textile workers also met at Bombay on July 19 and 20 and was attended by representatives from Bengal, UP, AP, MP, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka. Members from Tamil Nadu and Orissa could not attend due to cancellation of trains. The CITU all India secretary, P.K. Ganguly, represented the CITU centre.

The meeting decided to make all round mobilisation at all textile centres in the country to make the March to parliament successful. The CITU committee also decided to mobilise workers for all the programmes chalked out by the National Platform of Mass Organisations against the economic policies of the government including the countrywide strike action on September 29. All the CITU unions in textile in the private sector mills, in NTC mills, and in the powerloom and handloom sector will hold general body meetings of their unions and gate meetings at each factory gate, and hold processions and rallies upto September 28 to mobilise the workers to participate in the September 29 strike.

Thereafter, the mobilisation will be done independently and jointly with other trade unions including INTUC for the March to parliament programme of textile workers.

It also decided to hold an all India conference of textile workers of CITU in December. The committee was of the opinion that the conference should be held in West Bengal.

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Contract Workers in Steel Industry to Strike on Sept. 12 in All Steel Centres

□ **Manini Chatterjee**

The third all India convention of contract workers in the steel industry under the auspices of Steel Workers Federation of India (SWFI), which was held in Bokaro on July 17 and 18, chalked out an intensive action programme culminating in an all India strike of contract workers on September 12, 1994 in all the Steel plants all over the country to achieve the 12-point charter of demands prepared at the convention. The two day convention was attended by 206 delegates representing 26 unions of contract workers in steel plants, mines, railway sidings and stock yards. It was marked by a mood of militancy with the workers determined to strengthen their organisation to fight back the new economic offensive and secure rights at par with permanent workers.

The convention focussed on the new trend in the steel industry where employers were cutting down on permanent workers and hiring more contract workers because they were much cheaper to employ. The convention also highlighted the abysmal conditions of contract workers who undertook the most labourious, most dirty and most risky jobs and yet were paid a pittance compared to their permanent counterparts. They were also deprived of the most elementary statutory benefits such as payment on schedule, annual increment, variable D.A., P.F., compensation as per Workmen's Compensation Act, annual bonus, job security, retrenchment benefit, medical care etc. The Contract Labour (Abolition) Act was seldom implemented and some benefits could be wrested for contract workers only in those steel plants where the CITU unions were strong. For example, in the Durgapur Steel Plant, the SWFI had succeeded in getting several benefits including medical, variable D.A. higher wages etc for contract workers. Same is the case in the iron ore mines at Kalta where workers through struggle led by SWFI could achieve some rights. But the situation in other steel plants such as Bhilai, Bokaro, Rourkela, TISCO etc was far worse in comparison. Several delegates at the convention also pointed out that it was only the CITU which had taken up the issue of contract workers in a big way while other unions often

connived with the contractors in perpetuating the exploitation. At the same time, union leaders emphasised the need to broadbase the contract workers struggle and said other unions must be approached to make the September 12 all India strike a success.

Need for struggle:

The convention was inaugurated on July 17 by the CITU general secretary, M.K.Pandhe, who spoke at length on the implications of the new economic policies and its impact on contract workers in particular. He said though the steel industry was very modern and highly skilled, in recent years the number of contract workers was rising and permanent workers coming down. There were nearly one lakh contract workers in the steel industry and the SWFI had a big responsibility in strengthening their organisation. He also spoke of the larger struggles being launched by the mass of the Indian people and called upon the contract workers to link their own struggle with the larger battle against the new economic policies. The SWFI vice presidents Jibon Roy (MP), Ardhendu Dakshi, SWFI general secretary Mrinal Banerjee, CITU Bihar state president Chandi Prasad and SWFI secretary, Shankar Ghosh were among those who attended and addressed the convention.

RESOLUTION

The resolution, copies of which were available in Hindi, Bengali and Oriya, gave a detailed account of the state of contract workers and the work among them by the SWFI. It pointed out that only where SWFI unions were strong, some degree of regularisation of contract workers could take place. Thus in IISCO, in 1982 1550 workers were regularised, In Durgapur Steel Plant, 1451 were regularised in 1991 and 420 more in the second phase. Similarly, 165 were regularised in the Alloy Steels Plant in Durgapur. In rest of the units, the struggle for regularisation "never really took off," the resolution noted.

It also highlighted the terrible safety conditions of contract workers. Apart from the incidence of serious injury and loss of limbs, death of contract workers from accident during the last five years alone accounted for 34 in Bokaro Steel Plant, 30 in Bhilai, 36 in Durgapur, 6 in IISCO, 12 in Rourkela, 39 in Tisco and 31 in RINC, Vishakapatnam. These figures exclude accidents in mines and stockyards. No comprehensive compensation scheme exists and no movement for enforcement of safety rules has been undertaken, the resolution noted. In Bokaro Steel Plant, the dependent of a contract worker who dies at work is offered a permanent job. This provision must be implemented in all steel plants, it said.

The resolution also pointed out the difficulties of organising these workers in face of the reactionary nature of their employers, influence of mafia in some places, uncertain work atmosphere etc. In DSP and TISCO, eight contract workers and three permanent workers lost their jobs as a result of union activity. In TISCO, workers shanties were razed to the ground. In Bokaro, front ranking leaders were evicted and their gate passes seized. In several other units, false cases, intimidation, terror and even murder have been resorted to by contractors and their henchmen to prevent the organisation of contract workers but "even then the struggle could not be stopped."

The Convention also discussed at length the condition of women workers who are worst exploited by the contract system in the steel industry. The convention also pointed out that substantial portion of the contract workforce in Steel industry was drawn from the most backward and exploited section of society, mostly Adivasis and Scheduled tribes. Suggestion came up in the deliberation for formation of all India Subcommittees within SWFI for Adivasi workers and women workers, to help addressing their problem in effective manner.

Inter-relation between contract workers and permanent workers:

Another important point repeatedly raised at the convention was the nature of cooperation between permanent and contract workers. The resolution noted that in almost all the units, it is invariably the permanent workers who come forward to organise contract workers. However, it stressed that it is in the

larger interest of both categories that two separate unions should be formed. While both should work in close cooperation and jointly fight for some demands, a separate union for contract workers would focus on their problems, give them more confidence and imbue them with better leadership qualities, it was felt. At the end of the deliberations, a 20-member coordination committee for contract workers was formed with Com. Shankar Ghosh as convener.

Charter of demands and action programme:

Following detailed discussions over two days which included a public meeting at Bokaro which was addressed by M.K. Pandhe and

Jibon Roy among others, the convention concluded with a 12-point charter of demands and an action programme to achieve it. The demands include: all contract workers working in permanent or perennial nature of jobs in the steel industry be made permanent, minimum wages shall be same as that of regular unskilled workers in steel industry, variable dearness allowance at the rate of Rs 2.00 per point of CPI with effect from January 1, 1992, interim allowance at the rate of 10% of wages from Jan. 1, 1992, leave facilities at par with regular workers, transport, medical, children's education at par with permanent workers, payment of annual bonus at the rate of 20%, adequate safety measures, in case of death or permanent disablement, one dependent should be provided with a permanent job, all contractor workers must be brought under PF deduction shall be at the rate of 10 %, all statutory benefits for contract workers, and contract workers should be given adequate weightage during recruitment/absorption against permanent vacancies.

The action programme includes besides a series of agitational programme in all the Steel centres submission of charter of demands by a SWFI delegation to the Chairman, SAIL, RINL and TISCO, wearing demand badges on August 22-23, and one day all India strike on September 12 in all the Steel Centres all over the country. The convention also resolved to fully support the statewide strike of workers in the unorganised sector in Bihar on August 2 and participate in the countrywide general strike on September 29.

APPROACH TO FIFTH CENTRAL PAY COMMISSION

[While the staff side of the Joint Consultative Machinery have already submitted their general memorandum jointly, the different departmental units will submit their detailed memorandum within the broad framework provided by it. *Moni Bose* a leader of Telecom Employees prepared his approach paper at the early stage of the exercise. We print below an abridged version of the paper - Editor.]

The appointment of 5th Pay Commission by the Government of India has aroused the expectations of millions of Central Govt employees. With 37,74,336 regular employees on roll as on 31st March 1990, the Government of India is the biggest single employer in the country. For obvious reasons the effectiveness of the wage policy and the labour policies depend, in no small measure, on the actions and outlook of the Government in power as the employer. Even as the recommendations of the Pay Commission will pertain to those in Central services, they will have a profound impact on the employees of various state governments, and those employed by the local self-governments and will become trend-setters also for their wage demands.

The 4th Pay Commission asserted that as the Pay Commissions are appointed once in 10 or 15 years, periodical review of the pay and allowances of the central employees is essential and therefore they recommended setting up of a pay review body which should be responsible for maintaining and updating basic data on pay and allowances of government employees and to review the pay scales and rates of allowances and other related matters. The Govt declined to implement it when the central Government employees were compelled to decide to go on an indefinite strike for the realisation of the basic demands, that the government gave some meagre relief and announced decision to appoint another Pay Commission instead of a permanent wage review body. The Govt took six months to announce the actual appointment of the Commission though the decision was taken on 11.9.93. The main thrust of the Trade Unions for a specific limit of one year for deciding the revision of pay and allowances alone, has now suffered a set back. Only an organised united action of the C G Employees Union/Associations can safeguard the workers interest and create compulsion for submission of the recommendations within the reasonable time frame.

Fallacy in the terms of reference of the 5th Pay Commission

The Pay Commission has been asked to have regard "among other relevant factors to..... economic conditions and social developments, defence and national security and requirements of sound fiscal management." This is to warn the commission that

their's is a very restricted job. The specific mention of the State Govt employees and the wilful suppression of the reference to the Public Sector Employees' wage structure, is a clear indication that the commission cannot have a free play of their judgement regarding the reasonable entitlements of the Central employees. The terms of reference of the 5th Pay Commission includes the question of....."reducing redundant paper work and optimising the size of the govt machinery etc" which is out of the usual practice. The fall out of the current policies of the Central Govt is the reduction of the work force and it is r\ predominantly observed in almost each sector or arm of the central Services. It is quite likely that the Government's intention is to legitimise this aspect of their policy through the observations of the Pay Commission. Any serious study of the work method in all the Government departments particularly at a time when changes are taking place quite fast in work method with rapid changes in technology is a tremendous job which can be undertaken only by separate bodies of experts with full involvement of the employees. It is totally an area where a pay commission can hardly do any justice. There is reason to apprehend that the work of the commission will be prolonged in the name of examination of these aspects.

What should be our approach?

Every organised sector of the economy are securing better benefits through collective bargaining, but the Central Govt Employees have only to depend for wage settlement through the medium of Pay Commission which is appointed once in 12 or 15 years unlike in other sectors where wages are revised once in 4 or 5 years by bilateral agreements.

Experience about Pay Commissions

The 1st Pay Commission was set up in the year 1946 when the country was under alien rule. The commission better known as Varadachariar Commission propounded the theory of "fair relativity between rates of pay of civil servants of the Government and comparable outside rates, the parity being judged only with reference to long term trends in wage level." Lalington commission's report of 1915 based on the law of "supply and demand" applied in Indian situation was to result in securing

the cheapest service. The First Pay Commission report released in 1948 however brought in some tangible relief by way of Dearness Allowance, but the privileges were curtailed arbitrarily by the administrative order issued by the Govt. The employees urge for a fair wage was a far cry.

The Second Pay Commission is the one that was first ever set up by the Government of Independent India. Yet they could hardly free themselves from the hangover of the past. Basing on the infamous theory of "Demand and Supply" they rejected the idea of Government being the model employer as far as remuneration to Government employees was concerned.

15th Indian Labour Conference

During the pendency of the 2nd Pay Commission the 15th Indian Labour Conference met and accepted that the minimum wage was needbased and to ensure the minimum human needs accepted the norms - 91) A Standard working class family should be taken to comprise three consumption units for one earner, the earning of others - the children and adolescents being disregarded. (2) Minimum food requirement should be calculated on the basis of net intake of calories as recommended by Dr W R Aykroyd for an average Indian adult of moderate activity - (3) clothing requirements, should be estimated on the basis of a per capita consumption of 18 yards per annum which will give for the average family of four a total of 72 yards - (4) In respect of housing, the rent corresponding to the minimum area provided for under the Government's industrial Housing Scheme should be taken into consideration for fixing the Minimum Wage and (5) fuel, lighting and other miscellaneous items of expenditure should constitute 20% of the total minimum wage. Labour Conference had in mind an intake of 2700 calories, which Dr Aykroyd himself considered adequate in view of the somewhat lower metabolism of Indians.

The Second Pay Commission refuted the arguments in favour of "Need based Minimum Wage" by saying that it was impracticable in the case of "fruits, milk, fish, egg, etc the quantum recommended by Dr Aykroyd was unattainable in the prevailing economy.

Glorious struggles of 1960 & 1968

The first ever strike of the entire C G Employees for 5 glorious days took place in 1960 the main demand being the needbased minimum wage. This was followed by the token strike for one day on 19th September 1968 which also was a historic event. The Government repression took toll of the lives of several activities and millions were jailed and suspended.

3rd Pay Commission

In this background came the 3rd Pay Commission(1971-73). This Commission flatly

refused to go by the 15th Labour Conference norms of need based minimum wage. The Central employees were angered by the award of the 3rd Pay Commission and the Railwaymen who form a major part of the C G Employees went on their historic 20 days strike in May 1974. The basic wage demand on which the strike took place was for wage parity with public sector undertakings pending need based minimum wage. This emphasis was, of course, on parity. The Pay Commission rejected the demand for parity, rather the govt legitimised their decision through the Pay Commission. But the demand for wage parity became the demand of entire Central employees. They doggedly opposed the idea of another pay commission being set up and wanted settlement of the issue by bilateral discussion. But the govt imposed the 4th Pay Commission that worked for the years 1983-86.

4th Pay Commission

While not rejecting the theory of fair comparison, the 4th Pay Commission rejected the claim of the employees for parity with public sector. They, however, were not hesitant to observe that "civil service pay should be increased and the level of remuneration including fringe benefits should in the long run broadly match those available in the private sector for staff undertaking jobs of-comparable job weights." The main objective was to divert the issue of parity of pay of C G Employees with those in the public sector undertakings.

Resources and capacity to pay

The 5th Pay Commission has been asked inter alia, to make recommendations having regard to the economic conditions in the count the resources of the Central Govt and the demands thereon.

The term "resources of the Central Govt" referred to here should be interpreted not as the actual resources which the Govt may be raising but the potential resources which the government can reasonably raise. Otherwise the commission will fall into the trap of making the real salaries of the employees dependent entirely upon the whims and caprices of the Government's fiscal policy.

That the overall direction of the fiscal policy has been towards giving out large tax concessions and reliefs to the rich can scarcely be denied.

The spurt in Financial sector is unquestionably related to the increased activity of foreign institutional Investors (FIIS). Such hectic financial activity appears to be unrelated to real investments and production and hence basically speculative in character. The financial boom is not reflected in the expansion of the Industrial sector which still continues to be in the grip of severe recessionary pressure. A substantial portion of the direct foreign investment is involved in the purchase of

existing productive assets rather than in the creation of new ones.

Continuing industrial stagnation has not brought about the desired rise in Govt. revenue, rather, this has accentuated already wide spread unemployment and mass privation.

Needless to say that in the highly anomalous situation, there are two discernible trends. With the so-called New Economic Policy since 1991, the tendency of improving the position of the rich has been further strengthened. This is perceptible in the naked display of consumerism, speculative dealings in shares and securities and in real estates. On the other hand, the new policies have led to phenomenal rise in unemployment, lack of job security and especially social security due to planned phasing out of public Distribution system based on subsidy, privatisation of various infrastructural facilities and spiralling prices of essential commodities.

Caught in between, the Govt. Employees mostly those in the lower strata, are one of the worst victims of the situation. Given this perspective there is a solid case for Governmental intervention for improvement in the service, all-out conditions of the Government employees.

While allowing for certain distinctively negative trends in the economic scenario there is no denying the fact that given the political will and certain administrative measures, the govt can mobilise sufficient resource to meet the reasonable aspirations of the employees even without scaling down the various on-going and planned development projects.

The revenue receipts of the Govt had been progressively increasing over the years whereas the percentage of wages and salaries Bill both with reference to the revenue receipt and expenditure had been declining.

From time to time suggestions were made from various quarters indicating how the present resource-crunch can be overcome and a committee headed by Shri Pranab Mukherjee has recently been formed to explore the possibilities of mobilising

Meeting of Standing Labour Advisory Committee

The first meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Labour of the Planning Commission was held at New Delhi on July 15, 1994. The Committee has been formed in terms of a recommendation of the Indian Labour Conference. Pranab Mukherjee, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission presided. Representatives of INTUC,

resources internally.

It is our experience that the disproportionately large chunk of wealth generated over the years by the sweat of labour of the working people has been usurped by the rich---the industrialists, the landlords and the men at the higher strata. The poor have been deprived and impoverished. This imbalance has to go. Therefore in order to augment its resources further, rather than depressing the wages of the workers and depriving them of a reasonable standard of living, all out offensive has to be made to unearth the huge blackmoney that is currently estimated at anywhere between Rs 50,000/- crore to Rs 80,000 crores of rupees. There is a vast scope for netting additional revenue through direct taxation especially when we find that the number of Income Tax payers in this country is less than 1% of the country's population. The vast agricultural sector with rich landlords and Kulaks ruling the roost has by and large remained untapped. There is enough scope for saving revenue once astentatious public spending is curtailed.

The Govt has of course, been claimed success for the policy. If then, claims are right then there is no possible reason for denying the legitimate demands of the C G Employees by the 5th Pay Commission. But if, as we have reasons to believe, their claims are exaggerated and the health of the economy is not as good as is being projected by the govt, then the reasons for this lies in the faulty policies themselves and the C G Employees cannot be denied their legitimate demands because the govt has been pursuing such faulty policies.

Total unity of the C G Employees-Need of the hour

In the background of all past experiences the central Govt Employees have the responsibility to forge a total unity, submit a single memorandum on the basic issues, cement the cleavage that caused disunity in the past and create the foundation for wresting from the 5th Pay Commission a "Fair deal" in pay scale, allowances and all related matters.

CITU, AITUC, NLO, HMS, BMS and one local organisation from

Kerala participated. The CITU was represented by Saroj Chaudhuri. Besides Pranab Mukherjee, Union Labour Minister P A Sangma was present.

The meeting commenced with an introductory statement during which he referred to the new

economic and industrial scenario, dismantling of the system of licensing and regulatory controls by the government, the removal of restrictions on foreign companies, elimination of reservation of industries for the public sector, liberalisation and new approach to private capital, both Indian and foreign. Such far reaching changes naturally entail various effects for the labour as industrial restructuring takes shape. In fact, with structural adjustment programme under way, more labour is likely to be displaced in the coming 2 years. The government is anxious that hardship is mitigated. Suitable self-employment schemes are to be devised in consultation with trade unions and others.

INTUC's Ramanujam called for revamping of educational system with emphasis on training in trades. He called for creation of a national sector of economy, instead of either the public or private sector.

NLO's Baroch reported how several self-employment schemes were very successfully operating in Gujarat and called for more government help. AITUC's A B Bardhan expressed doubts about unemployment figures published by government. He called for protection of rural industries, handloom and village artisans and wanted a compendium of all self-employment schemes. BMS's G Prabhakar opined that if opting for socialism in the past was wrong, going headlong for a free market economy would be likewise wrong. India must have her own system consistent with her traditions. HMS's representative wanted more time to study the Agenda Papers. CITU's Saroj Chaudhuri wanted the meetings to be held regularly. Pointing to the Agenda paper, it was submitted that these contained many theoretical postulations. Referring to Agenda Paper No.2, he stated that aping the models of so-called newly industrialised countries (Taiwan Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea) was fraught with disastrous consequences owing to the very large differences in the historical background and nature of problems facing these countries. These submissions angered the Minister (Pranab Mukherjee) and he would not allow any discussion on economic policies. Saroj Chaudhuri's reply was that these were being raised because of inclusion in the Agenda papers. The Minister did not agree to remove these portions from the Agenda papers either.

On Agenda Paper No.1 about creation of 94 million jobs in agriculture, rural and agro-based industries between 1997 and 2002 to bring unemployment to a very negligible level, it was

submitted the Agenda paper did not mention land redistribution. This was the most essential pre-condition of any rural upliftment and rural industrialisation. Unless purchasing power is created by land redistribution, rural industries cannot be sustained. The following points were especially emphasised:

1. Agriculture's share in GDP and investments in agriculture have been declining. This has to be reversed;

2. crop diversification has become synonymous with emphasis on cash crop. This is dangerous for the country;

3. food processing industries are becoming highly capital intensive;

4. there has to be emphasis on small irrigation schemes;

5. dependence on imported fertilizer should be replaced by indigenous resources like baggase of sugar mills;

6. cowdung, available in plenty in India must be liberally used and proposals for import must be scrapped;

7. the whole basis of programme for rural upliftment has to be self-reliance to be purposeful.

The very reference to import of cowdung angered the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission who announced that no such decision had been taken.

Union Labour Minister Sangma addressed the meeting for some time. He expressed his happiness that the trade unions were taking a constructive approach to current problems. He appealed to the trade union representatives to study the various self-employment schemes and to suggest measures to improve them.

In his valedictory speech, Pranab Mukherjee said he was thinking of launching a new scheme with a corpus of Rs 100 crore or Rs 200 crore whose administration should be given to representatives of central and state governments, trade unions and reputed voluntary organisations. In respect of various machineries created such as those of BIFR or CAT, the experience is that these tend to proliferate and hence consume a large part of the funds allotted. He requested the trade unions to bestow proper thoughts on the approach and come out with more ideas about administering the scheme which would prompt but cost-effective.

Thus ended the first meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Labour.

COMRADE KIM IL SUNG

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses profound grief at the sudden passing away of Com. Kim Il Sung, the President of Democratic People's Republic of Korea and General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea on July 8, 1994.

Com. Kim Il Sung was one of the most prominent Communist luminaries of the world and a titan of the Korean revolution.

Born in a poor peasant family on April 15, 1912 at Pyongyang, Com. Kim Il Sung was involved in the anti-Japanese struggle at a young age. He became a staunch anti-imperialist and was at the forefront of the struggle of the Korean people for independence and liberation from the imperialist shackles. He formed the "Down with Imperialism Union" and rallied the Korean workers and the people behind it to fight the Japanese imperialists for liberation of Korea.

A dedicated Marxist-Leninist, he applied the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the concrete conditions in Korea and led the Korean revolution to the path of success.

During the course of the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle he had to remain several years in prison, from where he guided the movement.

In 1932 he formed the Korean Peoples' Revolutionary Army, the standing armed force of the people, and became its Commander.

After the formation of the DPRK, he conceived the Juche idea, a new revolutionary ideology under the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism, according to the Korean situations, and led the socialist constructions in Korea in a massive way. Having effected the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution he carried forward the socialist constructions with a three pronged strategy of ideological, technical and cultural revolutions and put these theories into practicality with brilliant success, heralding gigantic development of the DPRK. He assiduously struggled for reunification of the DPRK with the southern part under the principles of national unification despite the sabotages being engineered by the US imperialists.

Even just prior to his death he was actively leading the Korean peoples' struggles against the diabolical offensives launched by the US imperialists against DPRK on the issue of so-called nuclear inspection and against their threat of sanctions.

The CITU pays respectful homage to Com. Kim Il Sung and extends its heartfelt condolences to DPRK and its people. The CITU dips its red flag in honour of Com. Kim Il Sung. The CITU is confident that guided by the principles of Com. Kim Il Sung, DPRK will successfully resolve the issue and march forward under the able leadership of its new President, Kim Jong Il.

Struggle Against Privatisation Surges Ahead

With each passing day the struggle against privatisation of Insurance, both Life and General, on the basis of the recommendations of the Malhotra Committee is gaining fresh momentum and new dimensions throughout the length and breadth of the country. Within the framework of decisions of the Joint Action Committee of officers and employees of financial sector and the specifics decided upon by its General Conference at Ahmedabad in March last, the All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) is resolutely carrying the struggle forward through meetings and mobilisations, processions and demonstrations, largely participated conventions, articles and writings in the press, a massive mass signature campaign and every other conceivable form. The entire outlook is to reach out to as many people in many walks of life as possible, the workers and their trade unions, the peasants and the kisan organisations, the middle classes, the professionals, the legislators, the progressive intellectuals and every one else.

Each unit of AIIEA is agog with activities in a friendly competition. Approach is being made to central trade unions and national federations to address letters to

the Prime Minister requesting scrapping of the Malhotra report. Such letters from CITU, AITUC, UTUC(LS), TUCC, UTUC. All India Kisan Sabha, to name only a few, and more than a hundred major national federations have already been sent. More are to follow from different states and regions of the country.

A letter addressed to the Prime Minister has already been signed by more than 12 lakhs of citizens in cities and towns, villages and rural areas. Here the commons and the humble figure together with the famous. Some notable signatories include EMS Namboodiripad, former Prime Minister V P Singh, former Tamilnadu Chief Minister DR M Karunanidhi, former Pondicherry Chief Minister V Ramachandran, former Assam Chief Minister Sarat Chandra Sinha, former Supreme Court Judge V R Krishna Iyer, former Central Minister, Murasoli Mara, former Kerala High Court Judges, K K Narendran, T Chandrasekhara Menon, Janata Dal leader Jaipal Reddy, chairman of National Book Trust Dr Sukumar Azhikode, former Kerala Minister, A C Shanmugadas, CPI(M) Polit

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CITU CELEBRATES 25th ANNIVERSARY

The CITU will have to play a leading role in giving the right direction to the working class movement at this crucial juncture in the battle against the Rao Government's economic and industrial policies, the CITU general secretary, M K Pandhe reiterated here on Monday (May 30). He was addressing an impressive function held on the day to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the formation of CITU.

Narrating the history of the formation of the CITU, Pandhe said it was a history of great Working Class struggles. When the CITU was founded, it was dubbed as a divisive force in the working class movement but now its lead role was widely recognised. The CITU was moving forward on the path shown by its founder president, Com.B T Ranadive, and the 25th anniversary would be celebrated throughout the country, he said.

Com.Erich Honecker

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the passing away of Com.Erich Honecker, the president of the former German Democratic Republic and one of the frontline leaders of the international communist and working class movement at Chile on 28th May.

Born on August 25, 1912 in a working class family, a coal miner's son, at Saarland in Western Germany, Com.Honecker joined the communist Youth group at an early age of 14 and dedicated himself in building up working class and communist movement in Germany for socialism. Strictly adhering to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. He played a leading role in the anti-fascist struggle against Hitler and had to undergo barbaric tortures for ten years in Nazi prison.

After the defeat of fascism and installation of the German Democratic Republic, he gradually rose to the position of the President and also the General Secretary of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of GDR. He made important contribution in development of Indo-GDR friendship.

With his indomitable character as a communist, he fought till the end of the counter revolutionary upsurge which overwhelmed Germany in early 90s and termed it as the rise of Nazi style Fourth Reich. After the dismantling of socialism in GDR he was again thrown into prison and was put under trial with all fabricated and cooked up charges. The authorities were forced under pressure from progressive forces throughout the world to release him on the ground of failing health due to liver cancer. With the death of Com.Honecker, the world communist and working class movement has lost one of the front line leaders of the yesteryears. The CITU dips its red banner paying homage to Com.Honecker for his great contributions for the cause of socialism.

He spoke of the major challenges before the trade union movement today and emphasises the need to enrol new members in a big way into the CITU. He pointed out that mafia gangs were entering the trade union movement while India's economy was gravely threatened by the entry of multinationals. Contrary to the claims made by the government, the foreign companies had not introduced any new technology in their units in India and had instead taken over Indian companies. Pandhe also said the national convention of the Platform of Mass Organisations, which was being held on June 21, would announce the next phase of struggle against the new economic policies.

The AIKS leader, P K Tandon, DYFI General Secretary Md Salim, and Pramila Pandhe of the AIDWA also spoke on the occasion. Earlier, at the outset of the meeting, all the participants paid homage to the memory of Erich Honecker by observing two minutes' silence. Revolutionary songs on South Africa were also sung by Kajal Ghosh.

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Bureau Members, A Nallasivam and Prakash Karat, chairperson of Fish Workers' Forum Fr. Thomas Kocherry, Bishop P Mar Paulose and many many more. In West Bengal, signature collection is proceeding apace. All leaders and activists of Insurance Employees' movement led by AIIEA are busy collecting signatures and anybody who is somebody in West Bengal political, social and cultural life is being approached. It is fast picking up in other states too. It should be a common scene in many cities to see AIIEA activists going round offices and collecting signatures.

With a view to creating public awareness about the dangers of Insurance privatisation, district and State conventions are being organised. Eminent educationists, economists, scientists, political and trade union leaders and leaders of students, youth and women's movement are addressing. Novel methods of reaching out to the people are being adopted. In Thanjavur(Tamilnadu) a Van Jatha was organised. Vans decorated with explanatory posters, stopping at important street junctions, factory gates, villages and at bus stoppages covered a total 1200 kms. Leaders of AIIEA and of several fraternal organisations addressed at every such stop. The jatha covered 4 districts and became of subject matter of popular discussion.

As a part of creating popular awareness about the evils that will inevitably flow from privatisation of Insurance, a national convention is being organised jointly by all unions in Insurance at New Delhi on August 25, 1994. AIIEA is prepared to unite with anyone ready to oppose privatisation of nationalised insurance.

WAGON POLICY OF INDIAN RAILWAYS DESIGNED TO DOOM WAGON BUILDING UNITS

□ DIPANKAR MUKHERJI

There is no gainsaying the fact that the wagon industry in the country as a whole and the eastern zone in particular, where 80% of the capacity is located, is faced with an unprecedented crisis. And, the overall freight policy of the Railways and the Govt. of India as a whole, is totally lopsided bereft of long-term perception and planning.

1.0 DO THE RAILWAYS REQUIRE WAGONS?

1.1 It is observed orders have been placed for wagons during the current year with a lot of reluctance as late as last week of May'94, that too only a part of budgetary sanction for procurement of 18,000 Four Wheeler Units (FWU) which is 7,600 for the Industry to be precise.

But, surprisingly on 8.3.94 when order for even a single wagon was not placed, Joint Director Traffic Commercial (Mktg.), Railway Board, issued a letter No.92/TC(M&S)/23/3, dated 8.3.94, pleading the customer/user, M/s. Coal India Ltd. to enhance the rail transport capacity and to supplement the resources available with the Railways for acquisition of rolling stock through 'own your own wagon' scheme in spite of failure of the scheme introduced in late 1992 and early 1993. As per information, the request of Railway Board did not appear to be attractive to Coal India and there was no further progress on this scheme.

But, is it not apparently self-contradictory that while on one hand Indian Railways are decelerating the wagon procurement from the wagon industry developed at the expense of the Railways, on the other hand they are pursuing the users for acquisition of rolling stock?

1.2 TRADITIONAL FACTORS GOVERNING THE ROLLING STOCK REQUIREMENT OF RAILWAYS:

As far as I could gather, the traditional factors are:

- a) Condemnation of wagons;
- b) Erosion of wagon fleet due to accident;
- c) Additional requirement of BG Wagon due to large scale conversion of MG to BG track.
- d) Generation of additional freight traffic e.g. 381 million tonnes target in 1994-95 against 363 million tonnes achieved last year.

Will the Railway Minister state as to which of the above factors are contributing to the reduction in requirement of wagons. For example, in Eastern Railway only about 9,856 FWUs were condemned last year (1993-94) for sale. As per the figure circulated by Railway Board about last year's sale, it was more than 35,000 FWUs against the total holding in Indian Railways, which is roughly equivalent to 5.77 lacs FWUs.

Without going through the other three traditional

factors, the ground condition is that number of wagons demanded by the customers is far more than the wagons allotted by the Railways. In fact in the month of May'94, Coal India had demanded 19,021 wagons against which the Railways could allot only 15,600 odd wagons?

2.0 TRAFFIC EFFICIENCY

2.1 It is observed from various statements in the newspaper that Railway Ministry proposed to take certain positive steps in improving the traffic efficiency to reduce the wagon requirement. Any such move to improve upon the different operating indices leading to more efficiency and hence more loading is worth appreciating. As per reports, it is understood that two major indices, viz., turn-round of the wagons and the speed of goods train are being treated as the major area where efforts are concentrated as a part of the efficiency. In this connection, let us have a look at the available turn-round figures from Indian Railways Year Book 1992-93 (Annexure-1). During the last 40 years and more, the turn-round days could be reduced from 11.0 to 10.8!

What magic is being expected in this area to bring a drastic reduction in the same? What exactly is the target and how much has been achieved and is it safe to plan wagon procurement based on unachievable targets?

2.2 As for the speed of the goods train, the available figures show that the average speed has been stationary at 22.7 Km per hour in 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92 and became 22.6 Km per hour in 1992-93. This is in spite of the procurement of high speed locomotives from foreign countries at a greater cost to the National exchequer. I am, therefore, quite apprehensive that at the cost of indigenous availability of wagons more locomotives would be imported and this is where a National debate is necessary before any such arbitrary decisions are taken.

COM S.K. SANYAL

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions deeply mourns the death of Com. S.K. Sanyal, the Secretary of AITUC, who breathed his last at Nagpur on June 27. Com. Sanyal was a prominent trade union leader and made valuable contributions in the united trade union movement in the country and in the Public Sector Workers' movement. The CITU extends heartfelt condolences to the AITUC and the bereaved members of his family.

2.3 Net tonne Km. per wagon per day reflects the productive work done by a wagon. By that standard NTKM per wagon per day in BG was 1453 in 1988-89 which marginally improved to 1457 in 1992-93. What improvement is expected in 1994-95 and what has been achieved in the last three months?

3.0 ROAD/RAIL FREIGHT TRAFFIC IN INDIA - WHAT IS OUR TARGET BY 2000 AD?

The 8th 5-year plan envisaged a target of procurement of wagons at 1,50,000 FWUs or 30,000 per year. In fact, Ministry of Railways alongwith the planning Commission and the Ministry of Industry took such a policy decision so that there would be a suitable wagon procurement programme for a minimum period of 3 years. The reason was clear because according to Railway Board's own exercise, foreign exchange outgo on oil consumption by road is ten times higher compared to movement by rail. From the following figures, which speak for themselves, the rationality of the decision can be gauged.

FREIGHT TRAFFIC(BILLION TONNES Kms.)

	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1988-89
Railways	87.7	127.4	158.5	230.1
		(45%)	(24%)	(45%)
Roadways	17	57	98	250
		(235%)	(71%)	(155%)

(Figures in the bracket indicate % increase)

Similarly, the number of trucks on road had gone up to 14,79,000 in 1990-91 as compared to 5,28,000 in 1980-81 and 3,43,000 in 1970-71. The latest figures of the freight traffic through Roadways is bound to be much more alarming keeping in view the present policy of the Railway leading to reduction in freight traffic of Railways in proportion to growth in gross domestic product. Trends in relative Rail and Road Traffic show how the Rail traffic has gone down from 65% in 1970-71 to about 45% in 1989-90. What is our target by 2000 AD?

4.0 APPREHENSIONS/MISGIVINGS

The present policy decision of the Railways in the above context to cut down the procurement of wagons does not, therefore, bespeak of any proper planning both from the point of view of overall transportation policy of the country as well as dismantling of the existing wagon building capacity. One can envisage a scenario in a few months from now when all of a sudden there will be a cry for more wagons on the plea of non-availability of the same from the indigenous industry which, by that time, would be crippled because of 'switch on and switch off' procurement policy of Railways. This would be inspite of the fact that as per Consultant's report

appointed through World Bank for a study on Bhari Udyog Nigam Ltd., the cost of wagon produced in indigenous public sector industry of those in Eastern Europe and 65% of those in Western Europe and there is widespread recession in European wagonmarket. One should also shut one's eyes to the grim scenario from the environmental point of view. Impact of this policy on the environment scenario in the country specially in the urban areas should be examined by the Planning Commission and the Environment Ministry immediately.

Summarising the above, It is difficult to think about any mechanism for achieving additional loading every year by the addition of existing rolling stock fleet namely wagons and locomotives without succumbing to a scenario where importing of rolling stock would be imperative.

And with the whole of the wagon industry in industrially advanced Western Countries under acute recession, what may be the alternative before the Fund/Bank tutored economic reformers in the Indian rulers except offering marketing grants to those countries by destroying the indigenous wagon building capacities built up in phases since independence. And exactly that operation is being carried on by the Railway authorities, to convert India into a wagon-importing country by allowing indigenous wagon building industries a natural process of starvation of orders and neglect of investment although they are still in a position to produce at less cost than their western counterparts.

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