

Opening Speech

At CITU General Council Meeting (Dec. 27-30, 1972)

Comrades,

The General Council of Coimbatore reviewed the economic and political situation facing the trade union movement.

Since then, a number of important, even vital changes have taken place confronting the trade union movement with a serious and critical situation.

Before I turn to them, I offer my salutations to the memory of our comrades who have fallen while defending the rights of the workers and the trade union movement.

Comrades, the largest number of our martyrs come from West Bengal, where our movement has to face the terror challenge of the Congress rule. All honour to our martyrs who refused to haul down our flag and defied the terror gangs of the ruling class. We will always remember the names of these brave comrades of ours who have fought in the best traditions of the Indian working class.

I cannot but remember with deep emotions the martyrdom of our well-beloved Comrade Azhikodan Raghavan who fell victim to the assassin's dagger in Trichur. Coming straight from the ranks of the worker, Com. Raghavan rose to the leadership of the trade union movement of Kerala, became a top leader of the CPI(M) and was elected to the General Council of the CITU in its foundation session. His name will ever shine in the annals of our movement, an unforgettable and imperishable name.

Comrades, on behalf of all you, I send our condolence to the families of our martyrs; I also send our warm greetings to our

comrades, hundreds of them, languishing in the jails of West Bengal detained without trial under the MISA and other repugnant legislations. We will continue to fight for their release, the release of those who are prepared to sacrifice the best years of their lives for our common struggles. We also send our warm greetings to our fighting workers, trade union cadres and leaders in West Bengal who are courageous by defending our movement.

Last year's elections, following in the wake of the Bangla Desh struggle and war, have created an unprecedented situation whose full importance the trade union movement has yet to realise. The Congress Party, committed to serve the capitalists and landlords, has secured an electoral victory in almost all States and is using it with vengeance to attack the working class and the common man. The firings on students and workers, the lathi-charges and attacks on Government employees, teachers, the open help of the police to goonda gangs attacking the workers or committing atrocities on the untouchables prove the reactionary results of Congress victory.

The West Bengal developments, before and after the elections, bring out in full the sinister import of Congress victory and policies. It is well-known that despite the Bangla Desh euphoria the Congress was not in a position to win the 1972 elections in West Bengal. It therefore resorted to wholesale rigging, falsification of elections murders and gangsterism to ensure a fake victory for the Congress. In the course of this gangsterism, arson, loot and rape were resorted to and thousands were forced to leave their homes, refugees in their own country. A large number of trade union cadres, leaders of CITU unions were forcibly prevented from joining their work, under threat of murder. Hundreds were assaulted and wounded. More than two hundred union offices, offices of unions affiliated to the CITU have been forcibly occupied by Congress hirelings with the help of police. These attacks are continuing even now.

These developments show that the Congress Party when faced with an electoral defeat at the hands of the left democratic and working class parties, will not respect the verdict of the ballot-box. It will use gangsters methods to suppress the workers and peasants and falsify the election results. It will resort to every kind of illegal act to remain in power, to fulfil the wishes of its masters, the monopolists, the big capitalists and landlords. The Indian toilers are now face to face with the emerging threat of one party dictator-

ship. This will place all democratic rights, all trade union rights, the rights of agitation and strike at the mercy of a dictatorial Government. West Bengal developments show that the first sufferers is the working class, which has to bear the brunt of all the attacks.

We must all go from here determined to fight this danger, to rouse the working class against it, to rouse them in defence of our movement in West Bengal, to rouse to defend the democratic rights of our people.

Let there be no complacency about it. Our Comrade Azhikodan Raghavan fell a victim to the same gangsterism that has been ruthlessly practiced in West Bengal for the last two years or more. Our enemies are using the same weapon where we are strong, to prepare the way for the installation of a one-party rule.

In this connection Comrades, we cannot forget the heinous role played by the leaders of the Right Communist Party who control the AITUC. They not only split the common trade union movement in West Bengal. They lent a helping hand to the ruling party in its murderous campaign, screened the falsification of elections and became a party to the one-party rule. While we are determined to pursue the line of trade union unity, to extend our hands to all who are prepared to fight the Government and the employers on economic or political issues, we cannot forget the role of the AITUC and other reformist leaders on this issue and cannot but educate our and their ranks on the dangerous and reactionary consequences following from it.

Against the spreading danger, it is absolutely essential that all trade union organisations make a common front. I am confident that the United Council of Trade Unions will take initiative in mobilising all trade unions to defeat this threat. It is all the more necessary for all left and democratic parties to come together to stem this menace.

Starvation and Famine

Last eighteen months since Coimbatore have been months of misery, starvation and prolonged struggle for the workers. They have along with the peasants and the employees borne the burden of high prices, of mounting unemployment, of higher taxation, taxation to meet the costs of the Indo-Pak war and the Bangla Desh refugees. Above all, the working class along with the other toiling sections has been made the scapegoat of the bankrupt Congress policies and the recession.

Under the rule of the garibi hatao imposters, a major part of the country is today in the tight grip of famine.

In Andhra, Rajasthan, Orissa, U.P., Bihar and West Bengal, millions are actually starving, their bodies already a prey to disease.

Hundreds are now flocking to the cities uncared for and unattended. The thousands of famished men, women and children—honest peasants and agricultural labourers—reduced to beggary and camping in cities like Bombay brand the congress leaders and their Government as the biggest criminals.

Unimpeachable reports from several sources reveal that starvation deaths have already started. The leaders of the opposition in Maharashtra Assembly gave the places and names of those who died of hunger and slow starvation. On the floor of Parliament a list of thirty hunger victims was given by the CPI(M) spokesman. An Andhra minister himself had to admit starvation deaths in the affected regions of Telangana.

But the major concern of the Congress Governments at the Centre and the States is to conceal the truth about the sufferings and distress, to hide the slow deaths that are taking place and create a sense of complacency among the people.

In spite of repeated demands from all sections of the people including those from the ruling party, the State Governments under the instructions from the Central Government refuse to declare the affected areas as famine areas and accept direct responsibility for feeding the people under the Famine Code. Callousness cannot go further. The Congress Governments are only imitating the tyrannical British rulers who drew fine distinction between scarcity conditions and famine conditions to mock at the distressed and dying people. It seems the garibi hatao Indira Government has directed the Maharashtra State Government not to declare a State of famine in the affected districts.

In all the States, the relief workers that are provided and advertised constitute a big scandal and a farce.

Our trade union movement should unitedly demand adequate relief measures, adequate food supply and its effective distribution, and their supervision and conduct in association with opposition parties and mass organisations. The trade unions must be ready to supply their advanced cadre along with kisan sabha and other mass organisations to supervise the relief operations which alone will ensure their efficiency and integrity.

Given this, the trade unions will be in a position to give a confident and stirring call to all workers to contribute their best financially for the help of our peasants and agricultural workers.

Sinister Plan

The working class must realise the full meaning of Congress plan to combat food shortage and famine.

It is clear that in its own interest the capitalist class and its government will see to it that the cities and industrial areas continue to have more or less steady supply of foodgrains, though at exorbitant prices. But under their wholesale trade take-over, the rural masses will be left to shift for themselves, literally to starve and die. This is the fate that awaits the famine stricken population.

The working class will not and cannot tolerate this gruesome plan to starve out the rural areas. It must use its full striking power to see that the Government does not solve the famine crisis at the expense of the peasantry.

The peasant masses are the basic allies of the working class. The working class is born out of the womb of the peasant class. Its struggle for better living conditions, for socialism cannot succeed except in alliance with the peasantry, without protecting the agricultural workers and poor peasants against Congress depredations. The united working class movement which is growing, all Central Organisations, all trade unions must combine to protect the peasant and render every help to the rural masses and warn the vested interests that the rural poor are not without strong friends in the cities.

Production Sabotage

The country-wide electricity sabotage this year has further nailed down the bankruptcy of Congress policies, the utter inefficiency and criminal responsibility of those who are supposed to manage our economy. While the Government and especially Indira Gandhi and her satellite ministers have been sermonising the workers on the merits of keeping the wheels of industry moving, of increased production, they themselves have brought about the worst sabotage of production, which was perhaps difficult even for a CIA agent to achieve so easily. Thanks to this electricity famine, factories have closed, workers have lost jobs, the country has suffered loss of crores of rupees, industrial machinery in many cases has been ruined and electricity for vital agricultural operations had to be curtailed.

Wages and Incomes Policy

The so called wages and incomes policy is an instrument of all capitalist Governments gripped by economic crisis to make the workers pay for crisis. It poses to control both the wages of the workers as well as the incomes of the capitalists in order to control prices. In reality it neither guarantees the control of prices, especially workers cost of living nor is intended to do so. Similarly, it is never effective in restricting the profits of the employers. But it only effectively debars all wage increases unless the workers defy the law and reduce it to nullity.

This has been the experience of the wages and incomes policy which was introduced in the USA, in the midst of the recent crisis. The British experience is the same. Mr. Heath, British Prime Minister, announced standstill on pay, prices, rents and dividends in the beginning of November as a temporary measure which was expected to last for 90 days. The objective of the measure was described as "the maintenance of a high rate of growth and an improvement in real incomes; and improvement in the position of low-paid and pensions; and moderation in the rate of cost and price inflation."

The British TUC refused to accept the policy and demanded statutory control on prices. It naturally refused to accept a statutory control on working class incomes. The TUC leaders taking a flexible position than asked the Government to guarantee that retail price index in general, and food prices in particular would not be permitted to rise by more than 5 per cent in the course of the year. The Government refused and thereby made it clear that the policy meant that wages must be frozen while prices may rise.

The Indian Planners' incomes and wages policy as announced in the Approach Document follows the same pattern.

What is this policy, does it promise to nationalise monopolist concerns or bloated incomes of the big capitalists, the landlords and speculators and turn them into national assets? Of course, no. Does it promise to hold the price line, and all deficit financing and stop the continuous erosion of wages through the mechanism of rising prices? Again, no and a definite no. Does it promise to lower taxation—the colossal taxation on necessities of life which raises their prices and takes them out of the reach of the worker and the common man? No. Does it promise that rapid steps will be taken to ensure that all sections of workers will get the need-based wage

during the course of Fifth Plan, no.

What is the incomes policy—the policy which affects the incomes of the rich? Nothing more than self-discipline for the property-holders. They are only asked to discipline themselves—there is not even a verbal promise to mop up their ill-gotten gains. See how neatly the planners put it so as not to wound the susceptibilities of the monopolist profit-hunting crowd: “At the same time, the need for proper discipline on the part of those who draw their income from property and enterprise has been emphasised.”

And what is the wages policy for the workers, “There is emphasis on need to avoid rises in wages unrelated to improvement in productivity. An equitable national wage-structure, covering the public and private sectors has to be evolved.” Wonderful socialism which refused to mention living wage or need based wage even as objective during the five years of the plan. Equitable wage structure may therefore mean anything and justify the lowest wage. The linking of wages with productivity under Indian conditions is the introduction of a various principle against which the trade union movement has continuously fought. When the minimum conditions of living are not guaranteed, when even the need-based wage is not accepted, when there is no guarantee of full neutralisation against government-manipulated rising prices, making wage rise conditional on increased productivity means imposition of the worst type of exploitation. This means in future whatever profits the capitalists might make, however prosperous the industry might be, whatever might be, the condition of the worker, he cannot lay any claim to rise in wages unless he accepts increased exploitation.

How since Independence the worker is being defrauded while more work is being extorted from him will be clear from the following: With 1939=100 the index of real earnings fell to 92.2 in 1951. With 1951=100, the index of real wages rose to only 104.4 in 1964 while index of production per workers rose to 148 in 1964. The real wages in 1964 stood at 96 compared to 1939. Shri Dinoobhai Trivedi, Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad, in his note of dissent to Report of study Group for Wage Policy comments: “The final picture, therefore, compared to 1939 level is real wages are low by 20% and productivity has increased by 50%.

Situation has deteriorated since then.

The index number of estimated factory employment (base 1961

: 100) rose to 126.0 in 1970.71 while the index number of production in manufacturing industry rose from 109.2 in 1961 to 177.2 in 1971 while the index number of real earnings dropped from 100 in 1961 to 98 in 1970. With 26 per cent rise in the number of workers the rise in total production is more than 60 per cent, while the real wage has fallen by two per cent.

Having pocketed all the profits from this increased productivity, the planners now seek to deny the worker any relief unless he submits himself to further exploitation. The worker has a right to increased real earnings, to need-based wage here and now and cannot agree to make increases conditional on additional increased production.

A study of trends in finances of 1500 large and medium public limited (non financial) companies published in July 1972 issue of the Reserve Bank of India Bulletin reveals that "the wage costs (which include salaries) have declined albeit marginally from 14 per cent in 1965-66 to 13.2 per cent in 1970-71."

In the same period, the percentage of excise duty in the value of product has risen for the 1500 companies from 8.1 per cent in 1965-66 to 8.8 per cent in 1969-70. For 290 large companies the percentage was 9.3 per cent in 1965-66 and 11.2 per cent in 1971.

The consumer is being put up against the worker who is held responsible for the rise in prices. It is necessary for the working class to expose this fraud, and show how the excise duties peg up the prices of commodities. The following figures for 1970-71 as revealed by the study of 1500 selected medium and large nonfinancial, nor govt. public-limited companies are eloquent.

Industry	Wage bill (Salary etc.)	Excise (in lakhs)
Edible vegetable and hydrogenated oils	402	749
Sugar	2339	4972
Tobacco	1164	136,04
Cotton textiles	224,32	9874
Iron and Steel	4478	3174
Medicines & Pharmaceuticals	2798	943
Matches	369	1545
Cement	1773	3555

The excise duty at its lowest is at least 40 to 50 per cent of the total wage-bill. It is four, five, even ten times the total wage-bill in important necessities of life. On vegetable oils, it is more than 150 per cent; on sugar it is more than two hundred per cent; and so on. And yet the Government wants the people to believe that it is wage that are responsible for the high prices of necessities of life.

Struggle Against High Prices

In recent months, the working class has been unitedly struggling against the effects of the sky-rocketting prices. A number of united actions, conferences, demonstrations, and protests have taken place but there is no evidence of any positive response from the Government. The Congress Party and the Government made a show of moving towards take-over of wholesale foodgrains trade when public protests against the rocketting prices were mounting. Now it is evident that there will be no effective action from the Government side.

If the wholesale prices of food articles have arisen by 16 per cent, during the year ending October 1972, the retail prices have risen much more. And in the coming months, with artificial shortages, with one fair price shop among three, being a fictitious one existing on paper, as admitted by the Finance Minister, no one knows how high prices will rise. Today, the retail prices of cereals, pulses, milk, edible oils, vegetables, fish and sugar, have already gone beyond the reach of the worker and the common man. A major part of the pay packet—more than 70 per cent—has to be used for just the bare itmes comprise the two meals of the family.

Not satisfied with this, an obliging Government has sanctioned increase of 20 paise per kilo of sugar and another increase for Vanaspati.

It should be remembered that the free market prices of sugar has arisen by over forty per cent in the last year and a half. One of the reasons given for the fresh rise was, apart from the rise in the rate of bonus, rise in the bank's lending rates.

This touching solicitude for the profits of the magnates who are reported to be munificent contributors to Congress election fund, is really the most convincing testimony to Congress professions of socialism.

This deliberate policy inflation and price rise is reinforced by a fraudulence in compilation of working class cost of living index.

During the year ending July 1972, the percentage variation in

the wholesale prices index for food articles has been of the order of 14.1 per cent. The retail prices must have shown larger increases and the effect on the working class cost of living must be much more. But official index gives only a 6.2 per cent rise for the year.

The entire fraud consists in the collection of unrepresentative and bogus prices. Not only prices of foodgrains are doctored but prices of cloth, of sarees and other articles of consumption are openly manipulated. It was revealed that according to these scientific compilers, you can purchase a pair of sarees for only thirteen rupees, in W. Bengal. Bogus quotations price, substituting lower quality materials, arbitrary removal of one item of consumption and replacing it by another, for which these manipulators have no authority, reliance on prices declared in official fair price shops when the bulk of supplies have to be purchased from the black-markets—are some of the unashamed methods used to cheat the workers.

Thanks to these, the working class is being cheated systematically more so when a sudden price spurt takes place. Thanks to these methods, the entire 8.1/3% bonus earned by the working class has been neutralised, as has been the earlier wage increases.

We must demand and end of this fraud. All trade unions must unitedly demand a revision of the index number, overhauling of the compiling machinery, strict adherence to international norms in the compilation and full neutralisation and point to point increase. At the same time, on behalf of the people, we must demand an end to the present policy of fleecing through high prices, deficit financing.

The Challenge of Unemployment

Our Coimbatore session of the General Council had warned the workers against the growing menace of unemployment. Eighteen months back official statistics showed that there were four million registered unemployed in the cities. Today, the same statistics show that there are more than six million registered unemployed. Within a year and a half the number has increased by 50 per cent. It includes not only the industrial workers but also the educated, the graduates and under-graduates, the doctors who number (3000), engineers who number many thousands and others. The number of the educated unemployed is 6 lakhs in W. Bengal and more than two lakhs in Maharashtra. They also include a growing number of educated women, now totalling over a lakh.

This increased unemployment is not due only to closure of factories and concerns; though these also have added thousands to the workers of those without work. The basic source of this unemployment is the capitalist planning which can but create only a few jobs; while displacing many more from the jobs they are holding. Every year, a larger and larger amount of capital is required to employ a person. It is no surprise that under this capitalist planning with every plan, the number of unemployed has increased. Today, along with the rise in urban unemployment, the number of those without work in rural areas has increased to 30 million. According to one calculation, by 1980 there will be at least 70 million people without jobs in India.

A few figures about the implementation of one of the much-advertised crash programmes are enough to condemn the rulers. Under this programme, W. Bengal, the most unemployment-ridden State was allotted Rs. 299 lakhs but the expenditure was hardly more than Rs. 150 lakhs. The share of Maharashtra was Rs. 325 lakhs but its expenditure was only Rs. 126 lakhs. Bihar, perhaps, holds the record in inactivity, its allocation was Rs. 408 lakhs, its expenditure was less than Rs. 35 lakhs.

This is the seriousness with which rural unemployment is being fought.

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

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

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

of the computers?

To facilitate the execution of this self-sufficiency the Government has secured the help of the pliant Dandekar Committee which has left the introduction of automation to the tender mercies of a tripartite body where treacherous trade union leaders are now available to impose it on the workers.

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

The organised trade union movement, the employed workers can no longer ignore the plight of the unemployed and their demands. Till now except in Coimbatore, the organised workers have failed to fight through action for the demands of the unemployed, for jobs for them. Today unless the organised workers champion the right to work of the unemployed, the very existence of the trade union movement will be jeopardised. The young unemployed are easily turned against these with jobs often become a weapon of attacking the organised trade union movement. It is the minimum duty of trade unions to demand immediate unemployment benefits for all unemployed, or work for those without jobs; that the right to work be inscribed as a fundamental right, in the Constitution. The trade unions must lead the common struggle for these demands and forge the unity of the two sections.

The Bonus Unity

Comrades, the unity displayed by the working class on the bonus issue, the united demand of all organisations for a minimum 8.1/3% bonus resulted in a big victory for the workers. The Government, however, is depriving lakhs of Central and State employees, railway workers, and municipal, Corporation and local Self-Government workers of this right. After a clear court verdict that bonus is intended to partially make up the gap between the present wage and the living wage, there is absolutely no justification for withholding it from this vast section of employees. There is no reason for the Bombay Corporation or the Maharashtra Government to deny it to the Bombay Corporation or BEST workers who only a few months back had to fight a militant strike to secure it.

The Government has circulated the draft of the new anti-

working class bill to various Ministries. The Bill will be introduced in Parliament soon. It constitutes the most shameless attack on the freedom of trade union movement. It attacks the right to strike, denies recognition of unions on the basis of the ballot, imposes compulsory arbitration and puts an end to collective bargaining. The provisions of the bill are so reactionary that it has evoked protests from the leaders of AITUC and the HMS who have been collaborating with the Government.

The CITU, of course, fully reciprocates to the statement of the two organisations, to "reject these proposals which if enacted would sound the death-knell of trade unionism in India and to unitedly fight Government's efforts to impose a controlled trade union movement on the workers". We only hope that this is not just a left posture for getting some concessions from the INTUC and the Government but a genuine desire to fight the impending danger. All must unite to resist this wanton offensive of the reactionary Indira Government.

On behalf of all of you, I greet the formation of the UCTU which has brought together a number of fighting militant central trade unions whose collective strength is no doubt greater than that represented by the three collaborators. The UCTU, its formation, the initiative we took to bring it about all are evidence of our persistent efforts for uniting the workers. There is no doubt that with the UCTU in action, the efforts to forge unity will be strengthened many more times.

In the last year and a half, the weapon of linguistic chauvinism and parochialism is being deliberately used to undermine class solidarity and the unity of democratic struggles.

Such slogans as jobs only for the local people are being raised to make one worker fight another. Slogans of sons of the soil, jobs for the sons of the soil are deliberately roused to undermine class and national unity. Local Congress parties initiate or support this outlook and conflict.

Today, the grim results of this outlook are witnessed in Assam where under the Congress regime arson and murders of minority members are taking place with impunity. The reactionaries in Assam seek to suppress that language of the Bengali minority, refuse them the right to have it as its medium of instruction and forcibly uproot them from their jobs and professions. Democratic and working class unity is being disrupted in Andhra where

regional conflicts over the question of jobs has been roused by vested landed interests from Telangana with the open encouragement from the Central leaders of the Congress party. The Congress leaders who sermonise the people on the need of national unity are deliberately undermining it to keep themselves in power. Nothing will remain of the democratic unity of the Indian people, the class unity of the working class if it does not end this fight between toiler and toiler. The working class of Assam, the working class of Telangana, Andhra, the entire democratic movement will remain captives of the landlords and the vested interests, a plaything of the Congress party if they do not see through the game and defeat it by countering it with the unity of toilers from majority and minority linguistic groups and regions. There is no democracy, no socialism for the working class if it does not defeat this chauvinistic offensive, and realise that unemployment can be solved only by ending the Congress rule, the rule of capitalists and landlords.

In our foundation conference, we had warned against the sinister role of American imperialism. Last year, with the American Seventh fleet openly threatening us from the Bay of Bengal, with the USA declaring India to be an aggressor in connection with the Bangla Desh developments, the real face of the American imperialists was unmasked for all to see. Even the Government of India, for some time, adopted a critical attitude towards the American imperialists, developed closer relations with the Soviet Union and continued to help the Bangla Desh.

But all this was being done with a view to restore the old relations and once again a new free flow of goodwill, exchange of pleasantries and friendliness has started. American imperialism has not changed a bit and the desire of India's rulers to get in the good books of the US imperialists spells danger for the country. It is dictated only by a desire to get fresh loans from the USA because of the dependent character of our economy.

The Government of late has been talking about "self reliance". It is made to appear as if the Government is determined to end our dependence on foreign capitalist loans and collaboration, end our exploitation by foreigners and free our economy. The practice of the Government shows however that all this is more propaganda, than anything else. Though trade with Socialist countries has developed much more than before with the USSR becoming and biggest partner in our trade, every effort is being made to strengthen

the links with the West and seek more aid from them. The World Bank is being courted. The USA is being approached. The Japanese monopolists are being assured that India is not committed to nationalisation, i.e. there is no fear of nationalisation of their capital if they invest. British and other capitalists are entreated to ship complete out-dated plants promising them supply of cheap labour to export their products. The Government dares not nationalise the foreign oil concerns, who have been exporting huge profits, exploiting the people and the working class by manipulating crude oil prices and expanding capacity illegally. Other private foreign capital has been exporting huge profits over years as has been revealed recently. The accepted rate of profit on American manufacturing concerns in India was 14 per cent in 1970. Along with the increased debt-service payments of the Government of India this private drain has been making India more dependent on foreign aid, and the Government has done nothing about it. The Fifth Five Year Plan itself is dependent for its implementation on a substantial amount of foreign aid. As if all this was not enough the Govt. has recently announced foreign collaboration for beer, gramophone records, footwear with PVC soles, plastic toys, locks and latches and cigarette filters.

And recently it was further reported that a foreign company will transfer an entire factory from abroad to Agra where thousands of shoe makers working by hand are eking out their livelihood on foreign orders. This is also called self reliance as fighting unemployment through use of labour intensive methods.

The CITU trade unions must rouse the workers against this danger, of growing dependence, and economic slavery of the working class of foreign exploitation, prepared under the slogan of self-reliance.

True to its international outlook, the CITU stands for the support and freedom of the working class and democratic movement in the countries of the Sub-Continent, India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh, etc. and carries fraternal feelings of proletarian solidarity with the working class of Bangla Desh and of Pakistan.

Above all, it stands for peace and friendship between the countries of the Sub-Continent and welcomes every genuine effort and measure towards this end. We should express our warm appreciation of those democratic forces in Pakistan who are demanding recognition of Bangla Desh, friendship with India and democ-

racy inside Pakistan. We extend our warm hand of friendship to them. We also send our greetings to the fighting workers of Karachi and other places of Pakistan who like us are struggling for better and human conditions, whose goal is socialism and who have to bear the brunt of Government repression.

We send our warm greetings to the workers of Bangla Desh who after independence have to go through lot of difficulties and repression. Democracy and freedom in Bangla Desh will be jeopardised if the workers continue to be repressed. It will only help the American imperialists and the agents of Pakistan's military clique to undermine the hardwon freedom of Bangla Desh.

We must fight these like Jana Sangh in our country who stand for confrontation between India and Pakistan. The working class can never forget that American imperialists headed by Nixon seek to achieve their aims of domination in this part of the world by promoting antagonism between India and Pakistan. This is part of their policy of making Asians fight Asians.

Now that the dispute over the delineation of the line of control is over, quick steps are necessary to restore normalcy and create an atmosphere of friendship between the two peoples. It is the responsibility of the people and governments concerned to see that the Pakistan prisoners of war who have been in prison camps for a year except these who are required for trial for war crimes are repatriated and the great anguish felt by the people of Pakistan is set at rest. It is also clear that the great issue of establishing relations between two countries of the sub-continent should not be made dependent on what comes first—a meeting between two Statesmen or recognition. The workers of India must demand an end to the present state of affairs, demand friendly relations in the sub-continent so that the democratic and socialist movements in these three countries are no longer side tracked but are able to pursue their struggle uninterruptedly.

Before concluding, let me pay tribute to the glorious fighters of Vietnam. They have defeated the American imperialist on the battle-field; defeated them at the negotiating table. A treacherous enemy is trying to wriggle out of the agreement. Let the people of the world see that the agreement is implemented. Let our working class join its voice with that of the workers of the world. And may our Government at last get the courage to give up its vacillating equivocating position, stand four-square for the Vietnamese people

and recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.

Comrades, before I sit I would like you to devote proper attention in the course of your discussion to the

(i) Famine situation in the rural areas;

(ii) unemployment;

(iii) high prices;

(iv) the new legislative attack;

(v) the bonus agitation;

(vi) united struggles;

(vii) diversionary tactics;

(viii) UCTU;

(ix) functioning of our unions.