



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

May Day Manifesto of the CITU 1991

On the occasion of May Day 1991, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions renews its pledge to hold high the banner of proletarian internationalism and carry forward the revolutionary traditions of May Day to struggle against capitalism and imperialism for socialism, democracy and world peace.

The CITU extends greetings to the working class of the Soviet Union and expresses deep concern at the continuing economic and ethnic problems faced by the Soviet Union. The CITU is confident that the working class of the Soviet Union will rise to the occasion and will successfully take the country out of all difficulties strictly adhering to the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The CITU warmly greets China, Cuba, DPRK and Vietnam for their steadfast adherence to the path of socialism despite all difficulties.

The CITU greets the working class of the advanced capitalist countries for their relentless struggles against unemployment, closures, inflation and the so called austerity drives resorted to by the capitalist governments.

It greets the working class of the Eastern Europe for their struggles against retrenchment, unemployment, closures and reduction in social security measures, which they have experienced after following the capitalist path of development by the new Governments. The present set back to socialism is only a temporary one, and capitalism is bound to meet its ultimate doom. The CITU greets the working class and the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America for their intensified struggle against neo-colonial exploitation.

Gulf War

May Day 1991 has come in the wake of a savage war unleashed by the USA and its allies against Iraq. The CITU warmly greets the working class and the people of Iraq, Palestine and other Arab countries for their defiant resistance to the aggression by

the US imperialists and their allies, sacrificing thousands of lives. It greets the working class of India and all over the world including the USA for launching massive anti-war movements.

Carry Forward Struggle against Imperialism

The Gulf war has amply demonstrated that imperialism has not changed its character. The CITU calls upon the working class of all countries to carry forward the banner of proletarian internationalism and smash US dream of a new world order and imperialist global domination.

The CITU greets the working class and the people of South Africa for their continuing struggle under the leadership of ANC to dismantle the apartheid structure and expresses confidence that they will unitedly realise a formation of a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

The CITU extends unqualified support to the struggle of the Palestinians for their homeland under the leadership of PLO and to all national liberation movements.

The CITU greets the working class of Nepal and Bangladesh for their successful struggles for restoration of democracy and wishes further success to them. The CITU expresses concern over the continuing strife in Sri Lanka and is confident of the success of the struggle of the Sri Lankan people for preservation of unity and integrity of the country and for safeguarding the rights of the ethnic Tamils.

The CITU notes with concern that the new Government of Pakistan continues to play into the hands of the US imperialists by supporting the secessionists of Punjab and Kashmir. The CITU fervently hopes that the working class and the people of India and Pakistan will unitedly defeat all US conspiracies to create hostilities between the two neighbouring countries to serve their imperialist interest to dominate the sub-continent. It extends full support to the struggle of People's Democratic Republic

Defeat Congress(I), BJP; Vote for Left-NF Candidates

of Afganistan in its struggle to safeguard its sovereignty.

Counter Deideologisation Theory : Defend Socialism

Today when imperialism continues its offensive against socialism, when it has launched a renewed offensive against the third world countries, when the capitalist Governments all over the world have concentrated their attack on the militant trade union movement, attempts are being made to deideologise and depoliticalise the trade union movement with a view to give a free reign to the bourgeoisie to continue their rule of exploitation.

On this May Day the CITU calls upon the working class to reject and counter this pernicious propaganda with its own class ideology and unitedly carry forward the struggle against capitalism and imperialism in defence of socialism.

Greetings to Working Class Struggles in the Country

On this May Day, the CITU warmly greets the working class in India, for carrying forward united struggles for their economic demands, against unemployment, price rise, closures and against growing attacks on their trade union and democratic rights.

It appreciates the growing mobilisation of the workers in the vast unorganised sector for their vital demands for minimum wage, implementation of labour laws, social security measures and bringing them in the mainstream of the common trade union movement.

The CITU welcomes the growing struggles of the public sector workers for self-reliance, against privatisation and for full neutralisation of Dearness Allowance.

The CITU greets the working women including Anganwadi workers for their militant united struggles against discrimination, for betterment of their service and working conditions and to safeguard their jobs.

The CITU expresses concern at the growing authoritarianism in the country and warmly greets the working class and people for their massive protest actions. West Bengal, Tamilnadu, Bihar, Kerala Andhra Pradesh and Pondicherry organised successful bandhs and other states held protest demonstrations against the dismissal of the Tamilnadu Govt.

The CITU sends its warm greetings to the peasants and agricultural workers and extends firm solidarity with their struggles for genuine land reforms, remunerative price, minimum wage, gainful employment, etc.

Fight the Communal and Divisive Forces

The CITU condemns the semi-fascist terror launched by Cong-TUJS regime by resorting to torture, brutal killings, rape and burning of union offices and extends warm greetings to the working class

and the people of Tripura for their undeterred struggle against it.

It greets the working class of Punjab, Assam and Kashmir for their struggle against the secessionist extremists. It especially greets the Punjab comrades for their grim struggle braving the extremist depredations. It pays homage to all those comrades who laid down their lives to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country.

The CITU sends warm greetings to the working class and the trade union movement for launching struggles against the communal forces in the wake of the ghastly riots following the Kar Seva and the Ratha Yatra by BJP-RSS-VHP combine which entered even the industrial cities. It especially greets the working class of U.P. for organising massive rallies all over the state against the highly inflammatory provocations by the RSS-BJP-VHP combine. It warmly greets the working class in W. Bengal and Kerala for maintaining communal harmony throughout the period, despite the spreading of the communal virus in major parts of the country.

The BJP defied the secular fabric of the constitution and openly and deliberately mixed up religion with politics with the slogan of Hindu Rashtra to divide the country on the basis of religion. Its demand for construction of Ram temple by demolishing the Babri Masjid and the decision to carry forward the movement to "liberate" other temples at Mathura and Varanasi and the highly provocative campaign against the minority muslim community are fraught with serious danger. The CITU demands that the Temple-Masjid issue should be resolved by negotiations or the court verdict must be abided by. The BJP's demand for abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution and the Minorities Commission has threatened further alienation of the Muslim and the other minorities.

On this May Day the CITU calls upon the trade union movement and the working class to maintain its class unity and come out as the biggest organised force to intervene to stop the communal riots, protect the minorities and defeat the divisive role of these communal organisations and safeguard the unity and integrity of the country.

Fight for Social Justice to Backward Classes

The CITU extends support to the socially and economically oppressed backward classes and demands implementation of the Mandal Commission report for reservation of jobs for them in the Central services, by applying economic criterion. The CITU holds the BJP and the Congress (I) parties responsible for misleading the students and the youth belonging to the upper castes causing death to many by self-immolation. The CITU, however, points out that without ensuring right to work to all persons in the society through a planned programme in the long run, the reservation alone will not solve the problem.

Critical Economic Situation

May Day 1991 has come with the country in a critical economic situation. The long rule of the Congress on the capitalist path of development under the dictates of the IMF and World Bank have landed the country into an economic morass. Following the dictates, the Rajiv Government progressively embarked upon the path of denigration of the public sector, privatisation, invitation to multinationals, and import liberalisation, thereby undermining a self-reliant economy.

The external debt has reached an alarming figure of Rs. 1,25,000 crores with the debt service ratio at 40 per cent of export earnings. The internal debt likewise is over Rs. 1,44,536 crores with interest payment at Rs. 12,199 crores. The debt trap is thus closing in both externally and internally.

Inflation has crossed the double digit figure to reach a new height of 12.5 per cent resulting in steep hike in the prices of all essential commodities. Total unemployment in the country has reached an astronomical figure of about 105 millions, with urban unemployment at 35 millions and rural at 70 millions. Closures and sickness of industries in the same manner have reached the alarming figures of 2.41 lakhs at the end of 1988, accentuating the unemployment situation.

The defector Chandrasekhar Government followed these policies more vigorously. The IMF loan has pushed the country nearer to the debt trap. To get the second instalment of the IMF loan, the Government has accepted its conditionalities as reflected in its interim budget. Subsidies in food grains have been cut spiralling the prices in the ration shops. Privatisation has been given a further stride by disinvestment in public sector units. There has been more deregulation of industries, more liberalisation, more encouragement to foreign investment and wage freeze of workers. The policy is an indication of the Government's surrender to the threat of US Super 301 and Special 301.

Return to Authoritarian Policies

Within its short tenure of four months, the miniscule Chandrasekhar Government functioning with the support of the authoritarian Cong(I) and following its dictates went ahead with the murder of democracy utilising Article 356 of the Constitution without any compunction and dismissed the elected Governments of Assam and Tamilnadu. It followed up with dismissing the Bihar Governor. The Tamilnadu Governor also had to resign in the process.

Surrender of Non-Aligned Foreign Policy

The CITU recalls how the Chandrasekhar Government surrendered the long established non-aligned foreign policy and the anti-imperialist tradi-

tion of the country before the altar of the US imperialists by allowing their war planes to be refuelled in India. It further refused to link the demand for withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories and the homeland for Palentinians with Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. The opportunism of the Cong(I) was also exposed in the issue. While protesting against the refuelling, it voted for the Chandrasekhar Government when an adjournment motion was moved against it. On this May Day the working class must condemn this surrender by the Government and reiterate its pledge to carry forward its anti-imperialist tradition and explicitly support the country's non-aligned foreign policy.

Fall of N F Government

On this May Day the working class must recall that the National Front Government fell because the N F Government refused to surrender the principles of secularism and allow the construction of Ram temple by demolishing the Babri Masjid and stopped Advani's Rath Yatra. Chandrasekhar on the other hand split the Janata Dal, voted against the Government and floated his miniscule Government with the support of the Cong(I).

The responsibility of worsening the Punjab situation also rests squarely on the Prime Minister following an appeasement policy in line with the Cong(I). Despite open declaration by Simranjit Singh Mann for Khalistan and his renunciation of the Indian Constitution under dictates from the Panthic Committee, the Prime Minister went ahead to talk with him and thereby giving a boost to the secessionist forces. Defying the opinion of the majority of the political parties, his decision to recommend elections in Punjab is fraught with the danger of handing over the state to the secessionists. The CITU holds the Cong(I) responsible for foisting this defector government on the people to carry forward its reactionary and opportunist policies and condemns its claim for stability.

Positive Role of N F Government

The working class must recall on this May Day some positive steps taken by the V P Singh Government to accept their several long pending demands like workers' participation in management, central legislations for agricultural workers and construction workers, secret ballot for recognition of unions, etc. The Govt. also withdrew the retrograde Industrial Relations Bill earlier introduced by the Rajiv Gandhi Government. The demand for Right to Work as a fundamental right was also accepted. The Government also initiated a dialogue to determine a need based criterion to fix minimum wages for the workers of the vast unorganised sector. It further constituted a National Commission on Women for the welfare of women. But the Chandrasekhar Government did not move a step forward to get these vital demands materialised.

Corrigendum

In the last issue of the Working Class, i.e. Vol. 20, No. 8, the month has been printed as March by mistake. Please read it as April, 1991. The mistake is regretted—Ed.

The CITU further recalls that to restore democracy and to dismantle the authoritarian structure of the Cong(I), the V P Singh Government repealed the 59th Constitutional amendment, repealed the Press Bill, constituted the Inter-State Council for realignment of Centre-State relations and reconvened the National Development Council. To strengthen the process of national integration, it reconstituted the National Integration Council and invited the Central Trade Unions in it. But the Cong(I)-supported Chandrasekhar Government subverted all these democratic processes and undermined the National Integration Council.

Performance of the Left Front Governments

On this May Day the CITU hails the performance of the two Left Front Governments of W. Bengal and Kerala. They are upholding the democratic and trade union rights of the people and the workers and refusing to implement the draconian laws like the NSA and ESMA. They have set exemplary example of implementation of land reforms, which are totally ignored by the Cong(I) Governments. While the country was burning under communal inferno, these two Governments have maintained communal harmony and unity of the people. On this May Day the working class should welcome the achievements of these Governments and extend full support to them.

The Elections : Defeat Congress(I), BJP; Vote for Left-NF Candidates

The May Day has come this year with the elections in the forefront, calling upon the working class and the people to play an important role in shaping the destiny of the country. The return of the Cong(I) or Janata Dal(S) means a return to the authoritarian policies, surrender of the non-aligned foreign policy at the altar of the US imperialists, appeasement and compromise with the communal and divisive forces and subversion of self reliance, which heaped miseries on the people, and the working class and attack on their democratic and trade union rights. Rise of BJP will lead the country towards a Hindu Rashtra and communal inferno and national disintegration. The only viable alternative is the combination of the Left and National Front which can uphold the secular and united fabric of the country and build up a self-reliant economy, free from the dictates of the World Bank and IMF and deliver social justice to the backward classes,

minority communities, the women and the weaker sections. Under these circumstances, the working class must pledge to devote its entire energy and resources to defeat the Cong(I), the Janata Dal(S) and the BJP and secure a decisive popular mandate for the Left-NF combine.

For United Actions of the Working Class

With its immediate task of changing the Government at the Centre in favour of the toiling people, the working class must play its leading role for solution of the basic problems facing the country. The CITU appeals to all the central trade unions and industrial federations irrespective of affiliations to come together and meet the challenging situation by developing powerful countrywide united movements in defence of their common interests. The developing united approach on common issues facing the working class and the urge for united trade union actions among the workers was clearly seen during the observation of unity week in March as per the call of Seventh Conference of CITU. The CITU is of the firm opinion that this common understanding could be further strengthened and carried forward with the formation of a Confederation of the central trade unions and the industrial federations. The CITU hopes that the leadership of all central trade unions and industrial federations would come forward and have a national dialogue on the issue so that all in unity of the working class is achieved to resist the growing attacks on its living standards. The CITU appeals to all its unions and activists to campaign for this so that such a magnificent unity can be achieved in the country.

Com. Jamini Saha

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses profound grief at passing away of Com. Jamini Saha, Working Committee member of CITU and member of the Secretariat of the North 24 Parganas District Committee of CPI(M) in W. Bengal. Com. Saha died at Calcutta on April 18 at the age of 66.

Com. Saha joined the freedom struggle against the British imperialism at a very early age of 17 and was jailed in 1942. He was restituted from the school for hoisting the Congress flag. He joined the communist movement in 1946. Since then he had to spend about 10-12 years in jail or underground.

He developed the trade union movement in the industrial areas of Calcutta and worked extensively to organise the textile workers in Bengal in a federation and became its president. Since 1962 he got elected as a member of the W Bengal Legislative Assembly of the CPI(M). On his death the CITU has lost a veteran leader.

The CITU dips its red banner to pay homage to Com. Jamini Saha and conveys its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family

Revive Revolutionary Traditions of May Day

Samar Mukherjee

The international May Day originated in America from the struggles of the workers for a legislation limiting hours of work in a day to 8 hours at Chicago in May 1886. At that time there was no limitation in the hours of work for any worker working in any factories or shop. The workers were forced to work for 16, 18 even 20 hours a day. Even a child and woman had to work for such long hours for a small pittance as wage.

With the growth of capitalism struggles started against the inhuman conditions of work, and for reduction of working hours. Through these struggles gradually the workers organised themselves into trade unions first in Europe, later on in America and other countries where capitalism developed. Before the events in Chicago in 1886 the struggles for reduction of working hours spread in England, Australia, Russia, France, Italy, Sweden, Chile, Hungary, Mexico and in some other parts of America. In England a legislation was passed in 1850 restricting the hours of work to 10 hours a day. So the struggles for limitation of working hours assumed an international character of class battle between the workers and the employers without any international organisation having a common centre. The first international organisation was the International Working Men's Association which came into existence on September 28, 1864 under the initiative of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. This Association was popularly known as First International. What role this Association has played in uniting and revolutionising the world working class movement at its initial stage is explained by F. Engels while reviewing the significance of International May Day in 1890 in the following sentences:

"Working men of all countries unite". But few voices responded when we proclaimed these words to the world forty two years ago, on the eve of the first Paris Revolution in which the proletariat came out with demands of its own. On September 28, 1864, however, the proletarians of most of the western European countries joined hands in the International Workingmen's Association of glorious memory. True, International itself lived only nine years. But that the eternal union of the proletarians of all countries created by it is still alive and lives stronger than ever, there is no better witness than this day because today, as I write these lines, the European and American proletariat is reviewing its fighting forces, mobilised for the first time, mobilised as one army, under one flag for one immediate aim: the standard eight hour working day to be established by legal enactment, as proclaimed by the Geneva Congress of the International in 1866, and again by the Paris workers Congress in 1889. And today's spectacle will open the eyes of the capitalists and landlords of all coun-

tries to the fact that today the working men of all countries are united indeed. If only Marx were still by my side to see this with his own eyes:

(Preface to the German Edition of Communist Manifesto, London, May 1, 1890.)

The famous Communist Manifesto jointly written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels was first published in 1848 pointing out the historic role of the working class in overthrowing the capitalist system by revolutionary class struggles and building a new class-less society, called a socialist society by ending all exploitations. In this Manifesto they issued the call "working men of all countries unite". The First International tried to put into action this call by developing the outlook of internationalism and organising solidarity actions. Simultaneously they developed and enriched the theories and ideology of scientific socialism from the outlook of historical and dialectical materialism. This became a very powerful weapon in the hands of the working class and the toiling masses to adopt correct path and tactics in their fights for liberating the toiling masses from all types of exploitation and social oppression. But to make the working class conscious of their revolutionary ideology requires time and sustained efforts. The outbreak of strikes and struggles in the period of 1864 to 1871 took greater momentum before new ideology enlightened the struggling workers. Very rapid developments took place in Europe and in 1871 war broke out between France and Germany.

The workers were opposed to this war. The developments arising out of the war led to the insurrection of Paris workers and emergence of the first working class state called Paris Commune. Marx wrote about the Commune:

"The Commune was thus a true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore, a truly national government, it was at the same time, as a workmen's government, the bold champion of the emancipation of labour, emphatically international. Within sight of the Prussian army that had annexed Germany, two French provinces, the commune annexed to France, the working people all over the world. The commune admitted all foreigners to the honour of dying for an immortal cause. The commune made a German Workman its Minister of Labour."

Engels wrote on the Commune:

It was only after eight days fighting, when the last defenders of the commune succumbed and then

the massacre of defenceless men, women and children which had been raging all through the week on an increasing scale, reached its zenith. The breach loaders could no longer kill fast enough. The vanquished were shot down in hundreds. The wall of the federals where the final mass murder was consummated is still standing today, a mute but eloquent testimony to the frenzy of which the ruling class incapable as soon as the working class, dares to stand up for its rights. When slaughter of them all proved to be impossible, came mass arrests, the shooting of victims arbitrarily selected from the prisoners ranks, removal of the rest to the great camps where they waited trial by court martials."

Comrade B. T. Ranadive in one article on May Day wrote :

"These were the great predecessors of May Day movement and they invested May Day observance with rich revolutionary content which went far beyond for an 8 hour day and other partial demands. It is this tradition that laid down that May Day observance should not only put forward certain important partial demand but announce the determination of the working class to end the capitalist system through a revolution and protect the international unity of the working class by opposing all instruments of defeating its unity."

The Paris commune and the growing influence of First International frightened the governments of Europe—they started a new round of repression on the International. The organisation and its national units every where were outlawed. In effect the organisation disintegrated in 1872, although formally some of its units continued to exist on American soil until 1876. After 1875 the growth of political parties was linked with developments of the classics of Marxism and scientific socialism. This gave rise to new type of working class solidarity.

Events of Chicago

In may 1886 the industrial countries of America were involved in an upsurge of mass actions of workers on the demand for the eight-hour working day. A progressive historian Phillip Foner wrote in his Labour History that for the time being there had never been any other slogan so popular among US workers than that of 'Eight Hour Working Day'. The preparations for the nationwide May Day strike were most successful in Chicago—then Centre of the Left Wing Labour movement. A united organisation—Labour Association for Eight Hour Day was then acting in Chicago.

The strike was simultaneously started on May 1, 1886 by hundreds of thousands of people all over the United States. It involved not less than 380,000 workers employed at 11,000 factories. The May Day actions by the American workers gave a powerful impetus to the trade union movement in the country. The capitalists of Chicago were frightened by the

scale of workers actions and the resoluteness of their leaders. They organised a counter blow. The bourgeois newspapers raised bogey of red danger—Communist threat.

The situation in the city became very tense on May 3 when the workers of McCormick Harvesting Machine Company launched action against the lock-out lasting for over two months along with their support to the demand for 8 hours working day. When the workers organised a counter meeting against the strike-breakers brought by the management the unarmed workers were fired upon by the police guards two workers were killed and many injured. The attacks were continued next day. A protest mass meeting against these atrocities was fixed on 4th evening at the Hay Market Square which was then the place of the city's main market with due permission from the mayor.

The meeting started at 8 PM. when about 3 thousand people assembled. In their speeches A. Parsons and A. Spies called upon the workers to be firm and organised to continue the struggle. They condemned the police repression. The Mayor also attended the meeting. When the third speaker Samuel Filder began his speech it was about 10 PM. Rain came down in torrents. A. Parson and A. Spies left the meeting. The Mayor also left. The audience depleted to 200 people, the meeting was almost over when a team of 180 patrol men marched into Hay Market Square and their Captain Bonfield ordered the audience to disperse. The meeting was very peaceful and when this was told to the Captain suddenly a bomb was thrown as if in to the response to a signal. Though the bomb was aimed at the workers but as the police had already moved in so the blast hit the police, one was killed and five seriously injured, the infuriated patrolmen opened fire indiscriminately into the crowd. Six workers were killed and 200 injured. The city was swept by mass round ups and suspects were beaten, interrogated and tortured. Hundreds were arrested Eight of them were prosecuted. They are; Albert Parsons, August Spies, Samuel Filder, Michael Schwab, Adolf Fischer, George Engel, Luis Lingg and Oscar Neebe. According to historian P. Foner, they were the people whom Chicago capitalists hated most of all not because they were anarchists but rather because they with their combat spirit and organisational talents made Chicago a major centre of labour movement.

Out of eight of them only S. Filder was present when the bomb exploded but all were accused of the charge of murder. That all were the victims of the capitalist vengeance and the action of throwing the bomb was the act of an agent provocateur was quite clear from facts—But the Chicago court pronounced judgement on August 20, 1887 of death by hanging for seven and for one (Oscar Neebe) of hard labour for 15 years. This shows how is the bourgeois freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and independence of judiciary. All these

revealed their class character. According to historian Foner a partner in a large Chicago clothing firm reported to have said "No, I don't consider these people to have been found guilty of any offence but they must be hanged, I do consider that the labour movement must be crushed."

The trial made a mockery of justice based on fake accusations but the behaviour of the accused was very heroic, exemplary and worthy of true revolutionaries. Augustus Spies said in the court; "If you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labour movement...the movement from which are the down trodden millions who toil in want and misery, if this is your opinion—then hang us; Here you will trigger upon a spark, but here and there, behind you and in front of you and everywhere flames will blage up; It is a subterranean fire, You can not put it out.

When the trial began, there were seven Hay Market martyrs in the dock. For one and a half months Albert Parsons was in hiding from the police. In all judgements he could have escaped capture but his consciousness could not bear to be at liberty while innocent friends were being framed. Parsons himself came to the courtroom and told the judge Josef Garg; "I have come to stand trial your Honour, with my innocent comrades."

The cruel sentence evoked burst of indignation among workers and prominent public figures in USA and many countries. The US Supreme court denied the appeal. It was only the Governor of Illinois who made some concessions and commuted death sentences for Filder and Schwab to be imprisonment for life. On November 10, 1887 the police provocation caused the tragic death in the prison on cell of Luis Lingg who was the youngest among the accused. The next day (Nov. 11, 1887) Parsons, Spies, Engel and Fischer were executed in the cook cowny Jail in Chicago.

"The heroes went to the scaffold singing the Marsei noise. In front of the gallows erected in the jail yard there were some 200 people invited by the authorities to watch the death of the labour leaders. A Chicago journalist, who was present, described the proceeding; "With complete unconcern the four took their position on the gallows. The nooses were placed to adjust his, spies, noose was too tight. He smiled a 'thank you' when it was made more comfortable. Spies then cried out "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you st angle today." Parsons was the last to speak, he said. "Will I be allowed to speak—oh, men of Ame ica. let me speak—let the voice of the people be heard. But at that moment the traps opened and an abeyss descended..."

The funeral of the four prosecuted, Parsons, Spies Engel and Fischer, on November 13 developed into a great rally of Chicago workers. More than half a million people went on to the streets to pay their last respect to the heroes.

In June 1893, the new Governor of Illionios John Altgeld granted amnesty to the remaining three accused stating that they like the four executed martyrs, were not guilty but were the victims of an unjust trial.

(From "Hay market heritage—by Anatoby Repin —p. 6")

May Day Internationalised

Chicago events made a very great impact and generated wide sympathy and solidarity in the labour movement throughout the world. The fight for 8-hours working day continued with new vigour after the Chicago events and assumed an international character. The May day was formally internationalised as a day of international solidarity of the working class from the international conference held at Paris in 1889 on 14th July on the occassion of the centenary celebration of the great French Revolution and fall of Bastille. This conference was attended by the delegates from various socialist and working class parties. This conference was known as First International Working Men's Congress. It gave rise to the second International. Among those who attended this congress were wellknown popular leaders of the proletariat such as Wilhelm Liebknecht, August Bebel, Eléanor Aveling Marx, Clara Zetkin, Jules Guesde, Edouard Vaillant, George Plekhanov and Paul Lafargue. F. Engels took a prominent part in influencing the decisions of this congress. The text of the resolution is as follows :

"On the fixed day, a large international demonstration will take place in all countries and cities in which the working people will simultaneously demand of the authorities legal reduction of the working day to 8 hours and the implementation of the other decisions of the Paris International Congress.

"Taking into account that the American Federation of Labour has, at its Congress in St. Louis in December 1888 already adopted a decision to conduct such a demonstration on May 1st, 1890, this date is hereby approved.

"Working men in various countries must carry out this demonstration in accordance with specific conditions of their country.

"Since 1890 the observance of International May Day played an important part in intensifying the class struggle and developing the international workers' movement. Engels wrote: "The 1st May resolution was the best our Congress took. It proves our power all over the world, is a better revival of the International than all formal attempts at reorganisation."

This year is the 101st Anniversary year of the observance of May Day as international day and 105th year of anniversary of the Hay Market events. During this long period of more than a century very big changes have taken place in the socio-eco-

conomic conditions of many countries. From the struggle for 8 hours working day the working class of Russia and some other countries have been able to overthrow the capitalist classes from state power and establish socialist system under the banner of Marxism-Leninism. So the fight for socialism and world peace has become the part of the revolutionary tradition of May Day. Long before November Revolution Comrade Lenin pointed out how the revolutionary tradition of May Day to be utilized to fight the capitalist system and the imperialist war in order to build a new system free from exploitation. Lenin said in 1900 :

“Throughout the year, the workers first in one place and another continuously present a variety of partial demands to their employers and fight for their achievement. In assisting the workers in this struggle socialists must always explain its connection with the proletarian struggle for its emancipation in all countries. And the first of May must be the day on which the workers solemnly declare that they realise the connection and resolutely join in the struggle.

Comrade B.T.R. in one of his special articles written on the revolutionary tradition of May Day in 1986 pointed out :

“The fact that May day which was originally to rally support for 8 hours work was now invested with the content of the general line of the revolutionary working class movement. It was, therefore, inevitable that those who stuck to the line in conducting the struggle of the working class should be successful in organising socialist revolution while those who departed from the line should land themselves into the morass of reformism. The Marxist-Leninist parties remained at the head of the socialist revolution transforming one third of the world. Reformist social democratic parties became prisoners of the capitalist order unable to break through the prison with their illusions about peaceful and parliamentary path to socialism.” (Marxist, Vol, IV No. 2, April-June, 1986).

Present Situation

A new epoch started in the world situation after the successful proletarian revolution in Russia in November 1917. The success of this revolution proved the correctness of the creative application of Marxism under the direct guidance of Lenin. The historic role of the working class as was visualised by Marx and Engels in Communist Manifesto and the inevitability of Socialism after capitalism under the leadership of the working class strengthened the ideological basis of Marxism-Leninism on a world scale. Attraction towards Marxism-Leninism, emergence of Marxist parties in various countries became the feature of the new epoch. The contradictions between the two social systems capitalism and socialism became sharpened. More and more socialism became the growing force. The world bourgeoisie to counter this process took the path of anti-Communist

and communist-baiting in various countries. But they failed to stop the historical process. This process was much more hastened after the second world war. The war began as an imperialist war but later on turned into anti-fascist war when Hitler attacked Soviet Union in a drive to crash the Communist forces and establish fascist dictatorship over the world. But result of the war has proved the superiority of the strength of the soviet power and socialist system.

After the defeat of Hitler and the fascist forces world co-relation of forces have changed in a big way. In Eastern Europe the countries which were under the occupation of Hitler turned Socialist countries. East Germany became socialist. In Asia both North Vietnam and North Korea turned socialist and later on China the biggest country in population became socialist. In Latin America Cuba emerged as a socialist country. These changes encouraged the national liberation movements and within a few years many colonial and semi-colonial countries achieved independence including India.

Now a new, phase is evident in some of the socialist countries particularly in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union which is passing through a deep crisis. These are no doubt a big set-back for socialist system. There may be various reasons for this which require deep analysis but in no way this set back proves that Marxism-Leninism is wrong and socialism has no future. One of the main reasons behind this set back is the failure on the part of the leadership to apply correctly the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the concrete conditions of these countries in background of the new world situation. It is evident from the new thinking in the leadership of the Soviet Union which are deviations, from the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. The new thinking projects imperialism in a compromising and conciliatory manner thereby denying the necessity of fight against imperialism, the new thinking is also denying the necessity of class struggles. Leadership of the party is advocating depoliticalisation and deideologisation of the working class and their mass organisations etc. These dangerous deviations unless fought ideologically will disarm the working class ideologically and detract them from revolutionary path. This is the path of revisionism in a new form. That is why the need to revive the revolutionary tradition of May day is very urgent.

The Gulf war has thoroughly exposed the reactionary character of imperialism and the threat to future war inherent in the character of imperialism. It also revealed the weakness of the Soviet Union in failure to intervene to prevent the war. Soviet Union is now threatened with disintegration due to ethnic conflicts and now shifting to market economy.

India, though in its Constitution has declared itself socialist, it is pursuing the path of capitalism in compromise with feudalism and foreign imperialism

(Cont'd on page 32)

Conditions of Working Class In U.S.A.

M.K. Pandhe

After the set back to socialism in Eastern European countries and serious developments in USSR the capitalist press is full of encomiums for the US type capitalist system which is being characterised as a real democratic system for the working class. They often point out that in USA one can see what market economy and free private enterprise means to the working class. The fallacy of the arguments for free private enterprise can be easily seen if we look at the conditions of the working class in USA today. One has only to refer to the data collected by the AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research. As is well known, American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) a united trade union of U.S. workers, does not believe in class struggle or socialism and always talks of co-operation with the employers. However, as the report itself has noted :

“Unfortunately, workers’ buying power has been seriously eroded over the past decade. Hourly earnings have gone up, but the buying power of these dollars adjusted for inflation has gone down. The gap between rising productivity and falling buying power of workers’ earnings raises the danger of under consumption causing production slow-downs and recession”. The report further notes: “The rich are getting richer, middle income families are barely holding even, and low income families were actually worse off in the 1980’s than in the 1970’s. This unfair income-distribution situation has dangerous implications for the nation’s political stability and for its economic welfare”.

The workers belonging to former GDR and other East European countries are already experiencing the fruits of market economy and the attack on their standard of living. They are now forced to come on streets. The myth about richness of capitalism cannot last longer. The experience of the U.S. working class is vividly clear before all of us.

Dwindling Job Opportunities

During 1976-88 period 25 million jobs were increased in USA, but the projections for the future indicate that between 1988 to 2000 the addition to the jobs is to be of the order of 19 million only. The annual growth rate of jobs during 1976-1988 was 2 per cent per annum which would be reduced to only 1.2 per cent per annum. This shrinkage of job opportunities would only aggravate the problem of unemployment in the country “Unemployment will hit millions of workers in the 1990s”, admits the AFL-CIO study. The unemployment in 1990s is likely to grow up higher than the highest during 1980s i.e. in 1982 it reached 13 million jobless which works out to be 9 per cent of the total workforce. The young work-

ers between 16 to 24 years of age constituted 24 per cent of the workforce earlier, but during 1988 their proportion came down to 19 per cent while during 2000 AD the workers in this age group will be further reduced to 16 per cent. The reduction of younger workforce would certainly pose serious problem for the new generation and the social stability will be adversely affected.

During 1988 women constituted 45 per cent of the total workforce however, trends in employment pattern indicate that the share of women workers will increase to 47 per cent of the total unemployment. During 1988 the black workers contributed 11 per cent of the total workforce which is likely to be increased to 12 per cent. The increase in the Mexican workers is likely to be raised from 7 to 10 per cent during the same period. The employment trend indicates that the proportion of Asian workers is also likely to be raised from 3 per cent in 1988 to 4 per cent by the year 2000. The minorities which in the year 1988 accounted for 22 per cent of the total workforce will be reaching a level of 26 per cent by the end of the century. The major cause of increase in the employment of women and minority workers is that “fastest growing occupations in the 1990s are mostly low paid”. Despite development of the so called hi-tech industries the addition to the job is taking place to a great extent in low paid jobs only. Most of the job increase during 1990s will be in services and retail trade while in manufacturing and agricultural sector there would be decline in number of jobs.

Decline In Real Earnings

Despite rise in wages of workers their purchasing power has been continuously declining year after year. Between 1976 and 1989 the real wages of the workers have declined by 8 per cent, while productivity increased by over 16 per cent. In manufacturing industries the decline in real wages works out to 7 per cent while in the service sector it stood stagnant. In retail trade however the decline in real wages as high as 14 per cent. The decline in the real wages of the workers show the serious inroads in their standard of living due to high inflation in the economy. The fact that the real wages are on decline and the productivity of the workers is increasing at a faster rate, indicates intensification of exploitation of the working class. Thus the myth that with the introduction of new technology the living conditions of the workers are improved does not hold good even according to the findings of the AFL-CIO.

Inadequate Educational Standards

Though modern technology demands better edu-

educational facilities, the USA is seriously lagging behind in spending on elementary and secondary education. While countries like Sweden is spending 7 per cent of gross domestic product on education from kindergarten to 12th grade class, the USA is spending only 4.1 per cent. Several advanced capitalist countries spend more of its GDP on education such as Austria (5.9%), Switzerland (5.8%), Norway (5%), Belgium (4.9%), Denmark (4.8%). As a result of this low spending on education, standard of education is much lower in USA according to the AFL-CIO survey. The data published by U.S. National Centre for Education statistics the proficiency levels based on 1989 report by International Assessment of Educational Progress showed that the average Mathematics proficiency of 13 year old students in 1988 was lower in USA compared to South Korea, Canada, Spain, Britain and Ireland. Average Science proficiency of the same age group students in USA was also lower than these countries. Less spending on education means more profits for the capitalist class.

Less Earnings For Women

The AFL-CIO study on the basis of data published by Bureau of Labour Statistics for the year 1988 has pointed out the average wage of a woman worker in USA works out to be only 66 per cent of male worker. The gross discrimination against women workers continues unabated in the top most capitalist country in the world. We have seen earlier that the proportion of women among the workforce is increasing due to this cheapness of female labour.

Growing Inequalities

The growing inequality is most shocking in the USA. The AFL-CIO study notes that the top 20 per cent of US families got 44 per cent of all family incomes in 1988 while, the lowest 20 per cent of the US families got only 4.6 per cent of all family incomes. The break of all groups according to family incomes as below highlights the acute inequality in the present day US society :

Share of Different Groups of Family Incomes in US (1988)

Top Fifth	44 per cent
Fourth Fifth	24 per cent
Third Fifth	16.7 per cent
Second Fifth	10.7 per cent
Lower Fifth	4.6 per cent.

The study of average family earnings according to these groups and gains of the richer classes are seen from the following data :

Growing Incomes of rich in USA (1988)

Group	Average family incomes (in US \$)	Rise in real incomes between 1976-88
Top Fifth	84,940	18 per cent
Fourth Fifth	46,330	9.6 per cent
Third Fifth	32,240	4.4 per cent
Second Fifth	20,660	0.2 per cent
Lowest Fifth	8,880	6 per cent

The data further shows that the top 5 per cent of the families have the average family income of \$132,800. The lowest 40 per cent of the families in US society have actually suffered a decline in their living standards while the top 5 per cent families have increased their real incomes by 21 per cent in the last 12 years. No preachings about the virtues of US society can conceal the hard realities of life.

Decline in Union Membership

Between 1977 and 1989 the union membership in US has declined from 19.3 million to 16.9 million. It has been reduced by 12.3 per cent in 12 years. During 1977, 23.8 per cent of the workforce was unionised but in 1989 it came down to 16.4 per cent. The data covers only the employed wage and salary workers. Though US trade unions consider themselves to be champions of free trade unionism but they are unable to explain why the membership is declining so rapidly. The workers perhaps are getting disillusioned about the class collaborationist trade unions. It is more interesting because due to closed shop arrangements and additional benefits given to the union membership this decline shows the growing lack of faith in the union leadership.

The revealing picture of the US society only shows that Karl Marx is much more relevant today than ever before. The development of capitalism in USA is taking place only at the cost of the working class and the toiling masses. The so called prosperity of the society ultimately becomes only the prosperity of the capitalist class while the working class has to suffer decline in their living standards. It is only under socialism that these conditions can be materially changed. The set back in socialism in Eastern European countries will therefore be only a temporary phenomenon. The working class will soon realise what capitalism means to them. The struggle for socialism all over the world will continue despite hurdles and difficulties !

Comrade Satwant Singh

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses deep sorrow at the passing away of Com. Satwant Singh, the Central Committee member of CPI (M). He died at the age of 73 at Jalandhar. Com. Satwant Singh was a veteran communist leader and had to undergo jail life both during the freedom struggle and thereafter. The CITU dips its red banner paying homage to Com. Satwant Singh.

Appeal to Women For the Elections

Vimal Ranadive

People in our country are asked to vote for the political parties in Parliamentary elections to be held in May 1991. There are many important issues which came up during the last few years affecting our lives on which women have to express their opinion. Election manifestos of political parties have mentioned as to what they intend to do for women if they come to power. The Indira Mahila Yojana, Perspective Plan for Women, Equal Remuneration, pattas of land to women, jobs for women, smokeless Chullah programme and other promises have been given in Congress (I) manifesto.

Sometimes one wonders as to what these bourgeois parties take women for. Have they not got a conscience to think about the difference between the promises given and the actual deeds? Have they no knowledge that the prices are increasing daily during last so many years? Have the dowry deaths decreased? Have the number of molestations and rapes on Harijan and other women come down? The working women has the right to ask why they get unequal wages for the same type of work. A perspective plan for women was published by the Congress (I) Govt and propagated among public and women. Has any progress been made?

Deep Economic Crisis

Now take the issue of price rise, which affects women most. When Pranab Mukherjee tells the press that "the Govt will roll back the prices of essential commodities to the level of July 1990, within 100 days of coming to power", nobody would be fooled by such foolish propaganda. The price rise has become one of the most important issues for the election and women will definitely not vote for Congress (I), which is responsible for the price rise because of its long rule.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank from whom the Congress and Chandrasekhar Governments took huge loans, compel them to accept their conditions which are not in the interest of the common people. The subsidy for food items is stopped. Welfare benefits available to workers are curtailed. The huge amount of foreign debts have gone beyond Rs. 1,25,000 crores. Over and above this, our internal debt comes to Rs. 1,40,000 crores. When already our country is mortgaged to IMF and World Bank, the Chandrasekhar Govt was negotiating a second instalment of the IMF loan. The steps the Congress (I) Govt took during the last many years were not to nationalise the basic industries but to go in for privatisation. Introduction of new technology means no more recruitment of the people in jobs. Unemployment figures will continue to rise with many more facto-

ries being closed. Unless alternate policies of self-reliance, more employment, opening of the factories, land reforms and so on are adopted, our people are bound to suffer. Working women will be the first victims of this attack.

The CPM manifesto has rightly pointed out that strict measures are to be taken to curb the high prices. No increase in indirect taxes be made which affect common people. State trading in food grains and public distribution system to cover 14 essential commodities. If the National Front and Left Parties Govt comes to power, the CPM will fight for these policies to bring the pressure on the Govt.

The Question of Unemployment

The question of unemployment has become very much important for all including women for their livelihood. About 3.5 crores of the urban people are unemployed. About 2,40,000 factories are closed. The working women become the first victims, since they have to be paid maternity leave, to provide a creche by the employers or the governments. They will be the first to be retrenched when new technology is introduced in the offices or industry. As per the figures, the number of women job seekers in 1988 were 57 lakhs on the register of employment exchanges among whom many were graduates and engineers. 6 lakh women in Anganwadi are paid only Rs. 250-300 and Rs. 110/-. Thousands of women are working in small scale industries getting not more than Rs. 5-10 daily on temporary basis. Under such conditions, "creating 10 million jobs or one job in every family which Indira Mahila Yojana had propagated, cannot be believed. The experience during the Congress rule is just the contrary. The Right to work as a fundamental right is basic demand of the working class today, which the Congress (I) had refused. The National Front had accepted this in principle. In the absence of this, unemployment benefits are to be paid as they are paid in other capitalist countries.

Molestation of Women and Sati Issue

Any other Govt in the country should have resigned on the issue of burning of Roop Kanwar. But Govt did not feel ashamed to keep such a Minister as Kalvi who supported Sati. Mrs Vijaya Raje Scindia of BJP does not feel ashamed to speak about the moral right of a woman to perform sati along with her husband. There is no end of heaping insults on poor, unprotected women and girls who are daily murdered and molested by anti-socials. Harijan women are made a special target of landlord's goondas if they demand wage increase. But who cares for them except the women's organisations and the left parties? Have the manifestoes of the Congress

(I), Janata (S) BJP said what should be the remedy ?

Tripura Atrocities—No Parallel

The glaring instances of gruesome killings, rapes etc are in Tripura during last 3-4 years of the Congress (I) regime. The Ujan Maidan rape cases are well known. No judgement is delivered even after 2 years. The stooge govt of Rajiv Gandhi in Tripura did not listen to the voice of women and women's organisations. The common people all over India came against such semi-fascist terror by the Congress (I) TUJS regime and came out in support of the tribal people and against the atrocities on workers and middle class employees: including women. A question will be asked by women, should people vote to such a party which openly allows and encourages atrocities on women and tribal people? Does the slogan of stability mean continuation of such episodes?

Land Distribution in W. Bengal & Kerala

The distribution of surplus land to the landless is a basic pre-condition to improve the conditions of the rural poor. It is under the Left Front Govts of W. Bengal and Kerala that can claim unique achievements in land distribution. Women too were given pattas and land. The important point to be noted here is that due to land distribution to rural women they had now achieved respectable place among the villagers. There are a large number of women in the various panchayat levels in these two states. Every person in the country will be proud to hear that the only state where 100% literacy was achieved was Kerala.

Women & Communal Situation

Women are very much prone and sensitive to the communal campaign in the country. The deep ignorance and illiteracy keep them in dark and sometimes they fall easy victims to any religious propaganda. The political parties like BJP, Muslim League etc do take advantage of such backwardness of women for political purposes.

The issue of Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid has become a crucial issue in the election. The way it is being propagated, sharply points out the purpose of rousing the flame of Hindu communalism, leading to the division of our country on the religious basis. The communal propaganda of BJP, VHP, RSS on this issue, their Rath Yatra throughout the country, the terror created among the minorities, the riots at many places created bitter feeling among the minorities. It is forgotten that the sacrifices made by Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians to ether resulted in our achieving independence against British rule. The happenings at Punjab, Kashmir and the communal riots are a serious concern to all people. Do we wish to have a Hindu Rashtra? Do we want to drive out all other communities under the name of religion. Every person has right to stay in India and believe in any religion. While the BJP engineered the riots, the Congress (I) compromised with all the divisive forces in the country.

This is a big challenge for all of us and we have to face it, by upholding secularism and national unity. The best examples are W. Bengal and Kerala where communal harmony is maintained. The experience of these states has to be brought before the people. Women will have to be convinced about it.

Stability for Whom

The oft repeated slogan of Cong (I) is that they only will be able to provide stability. If stability means increase in prices, molestation of women, atrocities on Harijan, division of our country on communal basis, we have been experiencing this stability for the last 40 years. No Congress Govt could give any relief to the common people of our country in the name of stability. Our women should not be misguided by such propaganda.

Women Launch struggles for their Rights

It is welcome feature that women from below to upper classes are coming together to launch struggles for their rights, against molestation, against communalism and for national unity in a large number. All India women's organisations have appealed to women all over India to vote for those parties who stand for secularism, national unity and for the protection of women's rights.

The National Front Govt has tried to fulfil some of the demands of women. It has formed the National Commission on Women. Its stand against communalism and for secularism and democracy is welcomed. It has set up planning commission on which representation to women including AIWA was given.

No Authoritarian Rule

Women would not like to vote for those parties who imposed 'Emergency' in 1975 and created semi-fascist rule in W. Bengal in 1971-72 and in Tripura in 1989. Women would not vote for them who dismissed Tamilnadu Govt in a day. In the manifesto of NF it is also promised for the rights of women in parental property and for review of all laws which discriminate women and those concerning marriages, divorce, maintenance, custody, adoption and inheritance. Efforts will be made to ensure 30% share for women in legislatures and in government jobs.

Every vote is costly. It is found that women's vote is sometimes a decisive factor. We are sure, women will come out in large numbers to exercise their vote with a firm decision to cast votes for the parties which protect national unity and women's rights. National Front and Left Parties led by the CPI(M), if voted to power, will try to solve our economic and communal problems, try to fight for national unity and for democracy.

Haryana Brick-Kiln workers' dispute settled. Report will be published in the next issue—Ed.

Unity Week Observed in Tamilnadu

Responding to the call for a nationwide campaign on trade union unity given by the Seventh Conference of CITU, the unions in Tamilnadu conducted massive campaigns all over the state from 15th to 21st March.

More than 2.5 lakhs of leaflets were distributed by the unions. Hundreds of meetings were held in each district. In Madras city alone 83,000 leaflets were distributed. Areawise preparatory meetings were held. Gate meetings were conducted even in factories where there are no CITU unions. On 21st March, huge meetings were conducted in industrial estate areas. In Madurai, in addition to the distribution of leaflets and gate meeting a procession was also organised. In Coimbatore district also, explanatory meetings were conducted in large numbers. In Neyveli, an extensive campaign was conducted among the workers of public sector undertaking. The campaign concluded with a well attended seminar which was attended by State CITU leaders, T K Rengarajan G Ramakrishnan and C. Govindarajan. Reports of campaigns have also come from various other districts.

In the meanwhile, meetings of leading cadres and activists are being held in all parts of the state, where the State leaders are reporting on the seventh all India conference.

Binny Mill Closure

While the workers are conducting struggle for reopening the closed mills, one of the oldest mills, the Buckingham and Carnatic mills in Madras has 'stopped their operations' with effect from 1st April and 'removed' all the 8000 workers from the rolls of the company.

For the past few months, the management has been trying to shift the processing department to a far away place and to pressurise them to accept this, they had applied for premission to close down which was rejected by the State Government and hence the stoppage of operation and removal of entire workers from the rolls. The unions, one for the whole workers and the other for the staff, now under the leadership of W.R. Varadarajan, Secretary of the State CITU had unanimously rejected the move to shift.

The unions have been demanding appointment of a special officer to continue the operations and also to take steps for nationalisation which alone can save the lives and future of the 8000 families.

On 1st April, when the workers reported to work, they were informed of the management's decision. They held protest meetings and squatted on the roads blocking traffic in the area. Later a procession of more than 5000 workers led by W.R. Varadarajan was taken out to the State Secretariat and a memorandum was submitted to the Governor. A K Padmanabhan (CITU), C Kuppasami (LPF), T R Balu MP (DMK), Anbarasu, (Cong-I), and others addressed the workers and ensured their support to them. R. Umanath, General Secretary of State CITU has issued a statement calling for solidarity to the wor-

kers and demanding immediate steps from the state government for running the mill under a special officer and for nationalising it.

Defence of Public Sector

On 15th March the day for campaigns in defence of public sector-meetings were conducted in various public sector units in the states. Leaflets explaining the demands were distributed and gate meetings were held.

Reports of observance of the day has come from BHEL, Trichy and Ranipet, Steel Plant, Burn and Standard and IOC refilling unit in Salem, Hindustan Teleprinters in Madras, Hindusthan Photo films in Ootty and Veyveli Lignite Corporation Meetings were also conducted in towns like Madurai, Coimbatore etc.

The day was observed by the Steel Employees Trade Union at Rourkela by staging a massive dharna before the administrative building of the steel plant.

CITU Condemns Peerless Management's Highhandedness and Injunction against Demonstration

P K Ganguly, Secretary of CITU has issued the following statement on April 10 :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the management of Peerless General Finance and Investment Co. Ltd for bringing in a court injunction restraining the employees from staging a demonstration and dharna in front of the office at Nirmal Towers, New Delhi.

It is to be noted that the management has been refusing to operate under the guidelines given by the Reserve Bank and indulging in speculative investments by floating subsidiaries without any prior consultations with the recognised CITU union viz., Peerless Employees Union. The management has been siphoning away the funds of the parent body to these subsidiaries, thereby threatening the viability of the parent body.

Recently, the management has floated another subsidiary, namely Peerless Abasan Finance Ltd. When objected to by both the CITU and INTUC unions, the management threatened the employees with mass scale charge sheets and other punitive measures. Having failed to operate the new subsidiary from their Head Office at Calcutta, the Management has decided to operate it from Nirmal Towers, New Delhi with the help of a section of officers. To restrain the employees from launching agitation the management has obtained a court order under fictitious charges against the employees, prohibiting any demonstration dharna, slogan shouting, etc within 50 meters of its offices at Delhi. It is a direct attack on the basic trade union right of the employees.

The CITU demands immediate lifting of the ban and resolution of the dispute through peaceful negotiations with the union.

Meeting of Assam State Committee

The Assam State Committee of CITU met at Guwahati on 19th March under the presidentship of Dhani Ram Khosla. The meeting discussed the critical situation in the state arising out of the imposition of Presidential rule, the terroristic activities of the ULFA and its threat to all political parties (except CPI and CPI-ML) and the acute economic crisis. The meeting decided to hold the 5th State Conference tentatively between September and November, 1991 depending on the elections being held in the state. It decided to organise seminars on the first death anniversary of Com. BTR, organise solidarity actions in support of the Juga Sankha employees who are fighting against closures, and observe May Day in a befitting manner. The meeting further decided to organise a joint trade union convention on April 6 demanding election in Assam and withdrawal of the Disturbed Areas Act, TADA and Armed Forces Special Power Act.

The convention of 6th April was attended by over 300 delegates representing 25 organisations covering public and private sectors, state and central Government employees, etc. It was presided over by a presidium consisting of Amal Ghosh Dastidar (CITU), Bimal Nandi (UTUC-LS) and Achyut Deka (GDIEA) and inaugurated by the distinguished intellectual, Dr. Hiren Gohain. A joint telegramme and memorandum was sent from the convention to the Prime Minister demanding elections in Assam and withdrawal of the above draconian laws.

Meeting of Orissa State Committee

The Orissa State Committee of CITU met at Bhubaneswar on 5th April under the presidentship of Shivaji Patnaik. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU attended the meeting and briefed about the serious economic situation in the country and threat to its unity and integrity caused by the communal and divisive forces. He called for mobilisation of workers for the coming elections and ensure defeat of the Cong(I), and BJP and victory of Jsnata Dal and left candidates.

Lambodar Nayak, the State General Secretary placed the report. The meeting reviewed the struggles by the forest workers, tea plantation workers, in mini cement and heavy waters, spinning sponge iron, construction and mine workers and also the organisational position. It decided to work whole heartedly and raise funds for the victory of Shivaji Patnaik from Bhubaneswar, and also to ensure defeat of the Cong(I) and BJP at all places. The meeting adopted a resolution condemning the firing on brick kiln workers of Haryana and extended support to their struggle. It also decided to collect funds for BTR Memorial Trust and Re 1/- per member as CITU fund by 30th May, the CITU foundation day.

Haryana Brick-Kiln Workers Carry Forward Struggle

Despite killing of two workers by firing by the owners, the brick kiln workers of Haryana are carrying forward their struggle under the leadership of the Lal Jhanda Bhatta Mazdoor union (CITU).

It is to be recalled that about 70,000 brick kiln workers of Haryana organised under the CITU went on indefinite strike from March 5 demanding wage of Rs 90/- per 1000 bricks, i.e. at par with that in Punjab. They were beaten up and kidnapped by the organised goonda force hired by the owners and the Cong (I) at different places. The Hissar CITU union office was ransacked by the hirelings. On March 14 the employers opened fire on the workers in Hissar in presence of the police, which killed one worker, Hawa Singh. Then again on March 22 firing was resorted to at Rohtak, killing another worker, Surat Singh, also in presence of the police. But no action has been taken by the authorities against the culprits, despite the visit of Hannan Mollah, M.P.

The brick-kiln workers of Haryana are working under deplorable conditions. The strike was launched when all efforts to get their demands resolved through peaceful negotiations were rejected by the owners. There are a series of long pending grievances. Despite the owners garnering a profit of Rs. 850/- per 1000 bricks as compared to those in Punjab, who earn about Rs. 625/- only, the workers get a paltry of Rs. 50/- only for 1000 bricks, whereas their counterparts get Rs. 90/- at Punjab. Besides, there is no PF, no medical facilities, no housing arrangement, no schooling for children, no working hours, no labour laws applicable to them. The conditions of the women workers are worse. In this background the state CITU organised them and launched struggles to alleviate their conditions. The Government authorities and the owners joined hands and unleashed the ruthless repression on them with the help of the hired hoodlums supported by the police.

But remaining undeterred by the killings, the workers are carrying forward the struggle with rallies and demonstrations. A massive rally was again held at Rohtak on April 2, which was addressed among others by M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU. A continuous dharna is going on before the DC's office with slogan shouting. All other sections of workers and unions have come forward supporting the movement by giving financial and material help. Responding to the call of the CITU Centre, large number of unions and State Committees from Tamilnadu, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, etc have sent telegrammes to the Haryana Government condemning the firing and demanding immediate resolution of the dispute.

Demand for Accountability by the Former IDPL Chairman

P. K. Ganguly, Secretary CITU; D. P. Dubey, General Secretary, FMRAI and J.S. Majumdar, Vice President, AICAPEF have issued the following joint statement on April 3 from Calcutta:

It is reported that Mr K. Venkataraman, the Chairman and Managing Director of Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd., a Central Government undertaking has resigned. It is further reported that he was asked to quit by the Government.

While welcoming his dismissal from IDPL, we urge upon the Government of India to inform the public about the reason for his dismissal. No public servant should be allowed to resign quietly without fixing the accountability for their misdeeds.

Our organisations had made several representations to the Central Government bringing to their notice the instances of corruptions, financial mismanagements and unfair labour practices indulged by Sri Venkataraman as Chairman and Managing Director of IDPL in gross violation of laws of the land which contributed further in creating unstable condition in IDPL and huge losses. Sri Venkataraman had been getting political patronage during Congress regime and support of the top level bureaucrats in the Chemical Ministry since the time he was a liaison officer of a multinational company at Delhi acting as their agents to get approvals from the Government.

Sri Venkataraman's misdemeanour were revealed in the enquiry commission appointed by the Government of Karnataka, on the floor of the Parliament and through letters by several members of the Parliament, articles in various news papers and journals. When the medical representatives under the banner of Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives' Associations of India (FMRAI) and supported by CITU and All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation gave slogan against IDPL and started expounding such corrupt practices of Sri Venkataraman and company, he started victimising the medical representatives by way of dismissals, transfers, false chargesheets, wage cut., which have been found illegal by the High Courts and also derecognise their union and supportive unions. Against such unfair practices the workers and our organisations had to launch serious country wide agitation which ultimately compelled the Government of India to take action against Sri Venkataraman.

We, therefore, urge upon the Government of India to make Sri Venkataraman accountable for his misdeeds in IDPL, resolve all victimisation issues and restore normalcy in IDPL at the earliest.

Conference of Karnataka Plantation Workers

The 4th Conference of Plantation workers in Karnataka held on 28th February 1991 at Sakleshpur in Hassan District, pledged to carry forward the decisions of the Calcutta conference of the CITU and decided to popularise the same among all sections of the plantation workers in the State.

The conference demanded implementation of Rs. 2.50 as minimum wage as advised by Karnataka State Minimum Wages Advisory Board. The conference further demanded implementation of Plantation Labour Act 1951 in all the plantations failing which the owners should be punished.

While addressing the open session, Vimal Ranadive, General Secretary, All India Plantation Workers Federation, condemned American imperialism for its devastating war against Iraq and greeted the workers for coming out massively against it. She further called upon them to intensify the struggle against the imperialist backed divisive and communal forces in the country to safeguard its unity and integrity.

Com. Bimal Singha narrated the atrocities committed by the Congress (I) regime in Tripura, and emphasised that the democratic people of Tripura under the leadership of CPI (M) and CITU were repulsing these attacks. A sum of 5.30/- collected on the spot from plantation workers was handed over to Com Bimal Singha as a token of solidarity with the democratic people of Tripura.

Com, S Sooryanarayana Rao, Vice President, CITU urged upon the plantation workers to fight unitedly for the implementation of minimum wages as recommended by the Advisory Board. C. Nanjundappa, the newly elected President of the Plantation Workers Federation in Karnataka urged upon the workers to strengthen the organisation.

The delegate session was inaugurated by Com. Vimal Ranadive and addressed by Com. Bimal Singha, Com. N. K. Upadhyaya and others. There was a lively discussion on the brief report placed by Com. V. Sukumar. In all 22 delegates including 5 women spoke and gave valuable suggestions to develop the organisation. In the total strength of 152, including delegates and observers, 44 were women. The conference elected a 17 member committee including C. Nanjundappa as President and V. Sukumar as the Secretary. Fraternal organisations like SFI, DYFI, Bangalore Jilla Hoti Karmkara Sangha, extended greetings to the Conference.

NPCC Management Plays Fraud with CITU Union

The management of central public sector undertaking National Projects Construction Corpn. played a fraud on the CITU affiliated NPCC Workers Union of India and the NPCC Staff Association belonging to the INTUC, in collusion with the AITUC affiliated NPCC Employees Federation.

It is to be noted that the CITU union, supported by the Staff Association was engaged in a long drawn battle against the management for their inclusion in the wage negotiations. The management refused it at the behest of the AITUC federation, which wanted to impose the wage agreements on all the workers as arrived at with AITUC. The last agreement expired in December, 1986. The management complicated the matter during the period by converting 1064 employees to security guards and then retrenching them, when they refused to accept the retrograde change. The CITU union repeatedly invited the AITUC federation to launch united actions on both the issues of wage settlement and reinstatement of the retrenched employees, which the federation refused. The staff union belonging to INTUC however supported the CITU's call.

The management however was compelled to call the CITU and INTUC in negotiations. But the AITUC federation refused to sit along with CITU and INTUC, and the management broke down the negotiations, resulting in a stalemate for a long time. It however resumed negotiations with the CITU and INTUC about a couple of months before without AITUC, which continued till April 10 on a draft prepared by the management. The fraud played by the management in collusion with the AITUC was revealed on the day, when it was found from the AITUC journal "Trade Union on Record" of the 5th April that the management had already signed an agreement with the AITUC federation on 22nd March. Keeping this concealed, the management in fact was trying to get the signatures of the CITU and the INTUC on same agreement signed with the AITUC.

The agreement was retrograde in several respects on which the AITUC federation had surrendered. It denied reinstatement of all the retrenched employees. It denied back wages, continuity of service, PF, gratuity, etc to those employees who have been taken in. Moreover, the AITUC agreed to their reemployment as Security Guards only, which the employees had refused to accept. The CITU demanded their reinstatement within three months, but the AITUC agreed to their reemployment in six phases by six months, subject to vacancies. Further, the AITUC has agreed to link their employment with the wage settlement, the negotiations for which would start from July, thereby under-revising their wages. Even before the start of the wage negotiations, the AITUC has also agreed that the new wage settlement will be for a period of eight years, i.e. double the usual period. There are many other retrograde

clauses in the agreement like barring of promotions for three years, curtailment of existing benefits like accommodation, medical reimbursement, etc.

By playing fraud with the CITU and the INTUC and all the employees in general in collusion with the management, the AITUC has termed this agreement as "NPCC Worker's Victory". In a joint letter to the management, the CITU and INTUC rejected the agreement and decided to carry forward the struggle.

Meeting of Coal Federation

The Working Committee of the All India Coal Worker's Federation met at Calcutta on March 17 and 18 under the presidentship of M. K. Pandhe. The Meeting discussed the developments since the last meeting held in October and the impact of the bi-partite agreement signed on December 27 at Delhi. Explaining the significance of the agreement, M. K. Pandhe pointed out that the proposed strike of 7th January was primarily against the surreptitious agreement between the coal management and the INTUC bypassing the JBCCI. The subsequent bipartite agreement scuttled that agreement and provided an additional benefit of 250/- as bonus, enhancement of PF contribution to 10 percent and also gave a concrete shape to pension. He also explained the principled stand of the federation regarding production and productivity linked bonus scheme and dispelled the misgivings of the workers on this.

The meeting decided the following future course of actions :

- (a) NCWA-IV is going to expire on 30.6.91. Charter of Demands for NCWA-V to be prepared and submitted to Coal Management;
- (b) Federation should release its own initiative for campaigns on new Charter of Demands and involve the workers at all levels for preparation of the demands;
- (c) Campaigns and movements for implementing the non-implemented provisions of NCWA-IV are to be strengthened, including that of achieving Rs 185/- where it is yet to be fulfilled;
- (d) New heavy machines are coming in large numbers. Problems of extensive mechanisation are to be studied in depth and action to be evolved, keeping in view the interest of the new set of workers employed for the purpose;
- (e) Central Govt should be moved to take measures for containing environmental hazards due to heavy mechanisation and opening of more and more O.P.s on the line of steps taken by West Bengal Government in this regard;
- (f) Land-losers problems should be sought to be settled in line with the agreement achieved in West Bengal through the state government;
- (g) Efforts should be made for

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Remembering Comrade B.T.R.

E. Balanandan

On Sixth of April a year will be completed since Comrade B.T. Ranadive breathed his last. A year that has seen dramatic changes in the international scene and has also stood witness to tumultuous developments in the national political arena. This was a year when for the first time we greatly felt the absence of the stalwart of the Indian working class movement, Comrade BTR. Initiating himself to the working class movement by organising textile workers in Bombay, Comrade BTR chartered a long and arduous path in the working class movement in the country. After the break from the reformist AITUC, it was Comrade BTR, who in the main nurtured the CITU to strength and moulded it to the position of being an important contingent of the Indian working class movement, together with other leaders and the countless cadres of the CITU.

On the occasion of his first death anniversary, I join with all others in paying homage and deep respect to this great architect of the Indian working class movement. We recall his contributions, the revolutionary zeal and vision that he represented; the class spectacle through which he viewed and analysed each individual event, his teachings, the single-minded devotion and dedication to the cause he pursued. Comrade BTR epitomised everything that a communist and his cause is. Even when he lived he was a symbol of inspiration to us; his life and work will continue to inspire generations and generations of communists and progress loving humanity.

Volumes upon volumes can be written about Comrade BTR and his contributions. Confining myself to the Trade Union movement, I shall make a humble effort to recall some issues that he had sought to highlight, the pressing tasks that he had called upon the working class to discharge in pursuance of the objective of putting an end to the exploitation of man by man.

In the pre-independence days, working among the workers of Bombay, while raising their day to day demands and organising them to struggle for better living conditions, BTR did not fail to draw them into the struggle for freedom from British imperialism. The strike by the workers of Bombay in support of their brethren among the naval ratings who rose in revolt against the British in 1946, is a classic example of the deep insight and importance he attached to drawing the working class into the freedom struggle. He always emphasised the need for linking up the day to day struggle of the working class with the final objective of social transformation and the leading role that the working class has to play in the fulfillment of this objective.

Today when US imperialism has launched a

renewed offensive against the Third World and is seeking to establish a new world order and its hegemony world-wide, one recall Comrade BTR all the more. An anti-imperialist to the core and never letting an opportunity pass without reminding the people about the character of imperialism, Comrade BTR led and guided several anti-imperialist struggles during the post second world war period. During the war itself, when initially it was characterised as "inter-imperialist", it was from detention at Deoli jail that he wrote the thesis observing the changed character of the war. After Hitler embarked upon a suicidal path of self-annihilation by attacking the Soviet Union.

On another vital question we recall Com. BTR today. He repeatedly warned against the communal and divisive forces and pointed to the weakness of the trade union movement to unitedly fight back the booming offensive. "When the country is being plagued by the communal forces", he said, "our trade unions are engaged in militant struggles on their economic demands, and the RSS and Shiv Senas enter the trade unions to disrupt the class unity." In the Bombay Conference in 1987 he said, "the Ramjanam Bhoomi issue intensified the communal atmosphere all over the country and many cities and localities have become a power keg ready for explosion". What he said has come true. Exhorting the working class movement to go beyond the economic demands and defend national unity against the imperialist backed divisive forces, he wrote in the March 1989 issue of the Working Class, "the initial process of unity which the trade union movement starts is to be consolidated by continuous ideological propaganda that the oppressed sections have to stand united whatever may be their afflictions. That is why the working class movement of our country today is to be understood as a great force of uniting people irrespective of religion and faith and leading the battle for national unity against the communal and divisive forces." Giving the example of W. Bengal and Kerala, he said, "it is not accidental that wherever the working class movement is strong and wherever the Left and CPI(M) influence is strong, communalists of all shades are deprived of their mischief making capacity. These are examples to show that once the working class is roused, it can become the most consistent defender of national unity, wage a fight against communalism and intervene with its mass strength in communal riots and put all fundamentalists to flight". The situation demands that Com. BTR's guidelines have to be implemented practically to put the communal forces into straight jacket.

Comrades will recall BTR's struggle against right revisionism and Left deviationism and sectarianism. When the line of collaboration with the Congress

was advocated, Com. BTR rejected this line pointing out the fallacy of the pursuit of such a course and advocated instead an alternative line, which eventually led to the parting of ways in the united Communist Party. When ultimately after a fierce and consistent struggle the CPI (M) came into being, Comrade BTR was elected to the C.C. and P.B. while still under detention, for advocating the line of peaceful settlement of the border dispute with China. This was a period when leaders and cadres of CPI (M) were hounded throughout the country for committing the sin of advocating a peaceful solution. Today, the whole country has reconciled to this line. What for then was Comrade BTR and others detained and persecuted? What for were we termed anti-national and as agents of China? and yet again during the spurt of the naxalite movement when we termed it as "Left Deviation, we were scoffed at. What remains today of this movement?

When we parted company from the united CPI and formed the CPI (M), Comrade BTR advocated that in trade union we should continue working in the AITUC. However, our desire to maintain unity within the trade union movement could not succeed. The then dominant leadership of the AITUC was determined to disrupt the unity of the TU movement and foiling all attempts to ensure democratic functioning, left us with no other option but to leave the AITUC. The convention held at Goa on April 9-10, 1970 in preparation for the founding conference of the CITU observed: "the AITUC, which over long years had grown as the rallying centre for all militant trade unions in the country for carrying forward the united struggle of the working class has ceased to be so due to the class collaborationist policies...and is serving as an instrument in their hands for splitting the trade unions and disrupting the united struggle of the workers...", and concluded, that, "a new all India trade union centre should be established to carry on the struggle for unity and to rally the entire working class around consistent policies of class struggle, and for unleashing the united struggles of the workers against the offensive of the ruling class.

At the founding conference in May, 1970 itself the CITU raised the slogan of "unity and struggle". In his speech marking the conclusion of the conference, Comrade BTR observed: "Our struggle is struggle for the unity of the working class, unity of the T.U. movement...T.U. unity, unity for resistance means every worker whether he belongs to some organisation or not, whether he is organised or unorganised, must be rallied, on this or that issue, to join the common class struggle. And that is why we must see today that the struggle for unity, which we want, becomes the foundation of our activities... unless it is united, the offensive cannot be met." The unity that was sought to be achieved then, in spite of the advances made in this direction in the form of the formation of the National Campaign Committee of trade unions, the unity within the ranks of the workers in various sectors, and the united struggles that have been conducted on a host of issues, still remains to be achieved. It is with the view of achiev-

ing a broader unity of the working class that we had mooted the idea of the formation of a confederation of trade unions. This all encompassing unity is to be achieved at the level of the factory is not only with the objective of fighting on day today demands of the workers, but for effectively intervening in the political struggle within the country and with the ultimate objective of social transformation.

In conference after conference both at the State and national levels, Comrade BTR used to emphasise on the need for democratic functioning of trade unions. He used to remark that the absence of democratic functioning of unions is 'a basic disease' of the trade union movement in our country. Another such remark that holds good even today, is, "in most of the unions, is it a fact or not that the ordinary worker is more of a guest in the union than the man whose fortress it is, whose house it is, well intentioned, honest men of integrity, but some of them slowly become trade union bureaucrats, they dominate the unions." It is indeed a tragedy that even today in spite of the best of intentions, there is a tendency amongst us to head several trade unions at the same time. In the process not only is the democratic functioning of the concerned unions suffering and there is over-concentration of power in a few hands, but it also leads to a state in which the leaders are not able to do justice of their responsibilities thereby betraying the purpose for which the workers had elected them to such high positions. In today's conditions when the trade union movement is called upon to discharge more and more responsibilities, it can shoulder these and do justice to the same only if proletarian methods of functioning and democratic methods of functioning are followed.

Elected as president of the CITU at its founding conference. Comrade BTR continued to hold that position till his death. A relentless crusader against the capitalist system, Comrade BTR used every occasion that came his way unfailingly remind us of the plight of the unorganised workers, the discrimination and harassment of working women, the untold misery of the unemployed millions, of the miserable and impoverished peasantry etc. He called upon the working class to be in forefront of the struggle for employment, to come to the aid of the peasantry and fight against all sorts of discrimination.

Over the years, when he nurtured the CITU and guided it from strength to strength and saw the working class movement through thick and thin, he used to congratulate us for the advances that we had made and at the same time pointing out the huge tasks that remain to be accomplished. Time and again he used to point out that merely organising the workers and fighting for their day to day demands is not the sole goal of the CITU. While we should organise workers primarily for the fulfilment of their economic demands, we should not forget even for a moment, the heavy responsibility that the working class has to discharge for achieving social transformation. It is with this objective in mind that he

used to emphasise the need for raising the level of political consciousness of the working class. This is a task that has to be taken up with seriousness.

Even after a year of his passing away we are still filled with the deep sense of loss that his parting has inflicted. To thousands of us who received sustained guidance from him for decades, the loss has been difficult to bear, a void that has been difficult to fill. He was a pillar of strength to us. His contribution to the working class movement in the country will continue to inspire us. On the occasion of Com. BTR's death anniversary, I join with all of you in saluting this gigantic hero of the working class, whose dedication, single-minded devotion and revolutionary zeal and fervour we will forever remember. His is a memory we will cherish for long. While paying rich tributes to him, we will have to pledge to carry forward the unfinished tasks and follow along the path shown by him and also pledge to uphold Comrade BTR's rich legacy.

Death Anniversary of Com. BTR Observed All over India

In pursuance of the decision of the Seventh Conference of the CITU, the first death anniversary of Com. B T Ranadive, the founder President of the CITU and an outstanding stalwart of the Communist movement of the country, was observed on April 6 all over the country by the unions and the State Committees.

In Delhi a mass meeting of workers was organised by Delhi State CITU at Constitution Club, which was presided over by Samar Mukherjee. Among those who spoke were H. K. S. Surjeet, M. Basavapunniah, E. Balanandan and S B Bhardwaj.

In W. Bengal the day was observed in all the districts and unions by holding innumerable programmes. A central meeting was held at Shramik Bhawan Calcutta which was presided over by Rabin Mukherjee. Manoranjan Roy, the State CITU President spoke elaborately on Com. BTR calling upon the workers to follow his revolutionary guidelines in their day today struggles.

Kerala and Tripura in the same manner observed the day all over the state with central meetings at Trivandrum and Agartala respectively.

Bihar observed the day all over the state and industrial cities. A mass meeting was held at Patna which was presided over by A N Singh and addressed among others by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarti, the State Secretary of CPI(M), Krishna Kant Singh, Sachidanand Singh and J S Majumdar, the State CITU General Secretary. At Hatia in Ranchi a public meeting was held which was addressed among others by Niren Ghosh, Secretary, CITU and Chand

Prasad, the State CITU President. At Jamshedpur a big meeting was jointly organised by various industrial unions and other mass organisations like DYFI, SFI and Janwadi Mahila Samity, which was addressed among others by K K Tripathi, Jwala Singh, T N Singh and Narendra Mishra.

The CITU organised a mass meeting at Meerut which was presided over by D P Sharma and addressed by Satpal Singh, Satya Prakash Sharma, Lakshmanlal Sharma, C P Singh, Rajendra Prasad Sharma and others. At Dehradun the union in ONGC, Bank, LIC and others organised a meeting which was addressed among others by S Debroye, Working Committee member of CITU.

The Haryana State Committee organised a public meeting at Rohta, which was presided over by Dharam Dev and addressed among others by Ragnuvir Singh Huda, the State CPI(M) Secretary and Inderjit Singh, the State CITU President.

The Orissa Forest Mazdoor Union (CITU) organised a meeting at Bhanjanagar, which was presided over by K Praful Rao and addressed by Dandapani Mohanty, Bimal Raha, Abhimanyu Goud, Alok Mohapatra, Prashanta Bishnoi and Prafulla Nayak.

The Steel Workers Federation of India observed the anniversary from April 5 to 7. At Calcutta hundreds of the city based employees of the steel industry attended a meeting which was addressed among others by Jibon Roy, Secretary, CITU and Vice President of SWFI. In the steel township of Durgapur a two-day programme was held. On 6th April a meeting of working women was held, which was presided over by Dipali Bose and addressed by Shyamali Gupta, General Secretary, AIDWA, Jibon Roy and A Dakshi. On 7th April the general meeting was presided over by Dilip Majumdar and addressed by Mrinal Banerjee and Chittabrata Majumdar, the W. Bengal State Committee General Secretary.

The Federation of Medical & Sales Representatives Association of India (FMRAI) organised a TU class at Vishakhapatnam on the occasion, which was addressed by M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU and Sukomal Sen, General Secretary of the All India State Government Employees Federation.

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intervention in the following matters: (i) Problems arising out of deployment of contract workers in Bhatti; (ii) Corruption in the management inviting employment on disablement clause (4.4.3); (iii) increase in workload and multi-job problem; (iv) welfare, wage of teachers, female workers problems, job description and new categorisation problems at Dankuni Coal Gas Plant, problems arising out of diversion of job of Clearing & Forwarding from Calcutta to Madras Port; (v) The Federation should be strengthened both organisationally and in terms of activities by removing snags and achieving better co-ordination among its units.

Challenges before the Working Class

P K Ganguly

The May Day, 1991 has come with the working class standing face to face with new challenges both in the international and national situations. In the international arena, the old battle of reform Vs revolution is at its sharpest contradictions. This battle is as old as the beginning of the 8-hour-work movement itself during the second half of the Nineteenth Century when the ideological moorings were given to it by Marx and Engels. The Hay Market episode therefore instead of confining the movement to the demand for eight hour work only, gave birth to the pledge of ending the capitalist system itself and capture of political power by the working class. The capitalist class and its Governments therefore lost no time to unleash an onslaught on the working class. The reformist leadership of the trade union movement acting as the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class tried to emasculate the May Day pledge of its revolutionary kernel. Yet, the Second International guided by Engels and participated by a host of revolutionaries internationalised the May Day in 1889, and decided that it should be observed internationally from 1st May, 1890 with the revolutionary pledge.

However, reformism took over again and the American Federation of Labour which had spearheaded the May Day movement and gave the original call for its observance internationally from 1st May, 1890, virtually withered away. The Second International as well developed rightist orientations after internationalising the revolutionary pledge and put stress only on the immediate partial demands of the working class to be focused in the May Days.

It was only Russia under the leadership of Lenin, that carried forward the revolutionary pledge of the May Day. In his famous Kharkhov speech of May Day in 1900 Lenin demarcated the partial demands as the demands of each category of workers placed before their respective employers in the day to day struggles with those demands of May Day having revolutionary significance placed by the entire proletariat before the State of the capitalist class. Struggle by the entire proletariat with such demands symbolised the class struggle with the pledge of capturing power by the working class to end the system of exploitation.

History has recorded that wherever the pledge of the May Day was carried forward with revolutionary moorings given by Marx and Engels and the practical guidelines given by Lenin, like in Russia, China, Vietnam and other countries, the social system was changed and the working class became the ruling class. One-third of the world became socialist in the process.

However, history is replete with facts of intense

struggle between reform and revolution as already said. Dilution of the revolutionary essence of May Day by the reformists enabled fascist Hitler to utilise it to smash the trade union movement in Germany, albeit temporarily. The point is, only capturing of power by the working class does not automatically lead to disappearance of the class enemy. The revolutionary tradition of May Day and the Marxist-Leninist tenets of dictatorship of the proletariat are valid for all the times to eliminate the class enemy. Otherwise the table can be turned again by imperialism. It is worthwhile to quote Lenin in this respect :

“And classes still remain and will remain in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship will become unnecessary when classes disappear; and without the dictatorship of the proletariat, they will not disappear” and further, “the transition from capitalism to communism takes an entire historical epoch. Unless this epoch is over, the exploiters inevitably cherished the hope of restoration and this hope turns into attempts at restoration.” (Vols. XXX and XXVIII).

The present international situation proves the truth. It has revealed how reformism and revisionism and deviation from the Marxist Leninist path helped imperialism to turn the table again. With a new concept of dialectics, by the Soviet leadership, the presence of classes is being ignored and class struggle abandoned. With a renewed onslaught of reformism, attempts are being made to deideologise and depoliticise the trade union movement to dislodge it from its class moorings and to make proletarian internationalism a casualty. The teachings of May Day to struggle against war as a part of struggle against imperialism is being derecognised, that gave a handle to US imperialism to unleash a most savage war against Iraq.

However, the truth of Marxism-Leninism and scientific socialism will confirm that the present situation is only a temporary phase of ascendancy of reform over revolution and imperialism over socialism. In this period of sharpening of contradictions of imperialism with socialism and with the third world, the working class must recall and revive the revolutionary pledge of the May Day and launch intense struggle against imperialism, against U.S dream of new imperialist world order, against reformism and defend socialism and the Marxist-Leninist path. Obviously the CIU, which is wedded to this path of scientific socialism, has to take the lead in the country.

National Situation

In the national sphere the working class and the

people are faced with the most critical situation ever since the independence. The long rule of the Congress developing capitalism in compromise with the feudal remnants in an era when world capitalism, despite the so called technological advancement is faced with a phase of general crisis, has landed the country in this critical situation.

The rule of Rajiv Gandhi and his formulation of the new economic policy in 1985 have accelerated the process of deterioration. The policy was a surrender to the demands of the World Bank and IMF. Digging the grave of a self-reliant economy, he announced unbridled development of capitalism and went ahead with systematic destabilisation of the public sector. The result was indiscriminate liberalisation, deregulation, decontrol, invitation to multinationals, high technology and computerisation. Now his puppet Government of Chandrasekhar has gone in for the IMF loan, decided for its second instalment also and cut down the subsidies on food grains. The conditionalities of the IMF have further pushed him to go ahead aggressively with all the above measures only to further boost the private sector, dig the grave of a self-reliant economy further deep and heap further miseries on the people and the working class, making their tolerance go beyond the elastic limit.

The net result of this economic policy can be seen at a glance : Prices of all commodities going beyond the reach of the common people. Inflation at a double digit figure. Unemployment reaching an alarming figure of 35 millions, catching up with that of all the OECD countries taken together and tending to smash the economy. Industrial closures and sickness galloping to more than 2.5 lakhs throwing tens of thousands of workers jobless on the streets. The rural poor have had to bear the worst brunt of the economic policy. In absence of any land reforms their pauperisation has deepened with rural unemployment at over 70 millions.

The external debt of the country has reached a whooping figure of Rs. 1,25,000 crores with debt service ratio reaching the dangerous level of 40 per cent. Internal debt likewise has reached Rs. 145,000 crores. Rajiv and his cohort Chandrasekhar have brought the country to brink of a debt trap. Besides, deficit financing and indirect taxation are being resorted to in an un hindered manner to fleece the common people. While this is the condition of the people, the monopolists are having a bonanza under the Congress rule, having doubled their assets during Rajiv's tenure.

The CITU had warned against the IMF tuned policy on another count, that it is going to endanger the non-aligned foreign policy of the country. This came true when we saw the Congress supported Chandrasekhar Government taking a shameless pro-US policy during the Gulf war by giving refueling facilities to the US war planes to Iraq.

The authoritarian character of the Cong(I) was laid bare again immediately after it imposed the

miniscule puppet Government on the people. The Janata Dal(S) had no organisation in Assam and Tamilnadu. But at the instance of Rajiv Gandhi it dismissed both the elected Governments. The Congress(I) during its rule had kept the states virtually in bondage under the centre. Its intolerance of the left front Governments of W. Bengal and Kerala making economic blockades against them and the overthrow of the left Front Government of Tripura and unleashing a semi-fascist terror there, are all that the working class has seen. The working class itself experienced the worst attack on trade union rights during Rajiv's tenure. The most obnoxious Industrial Relations Bill was introduced to put all trade union activities and right to strike under straight jacket.

But that is not the end of the story. In such a deteriorating economic situation and growing attacks on the democratic and trade union rights, when the working class struggled for trade union unity trying to develop united movements, the communal and divisive forces of all sorts created havoc in the country. The RSS-BJP-VHP with their communal outcry, the Khalistanis in Punjab and the Jamaite-Islamis and J K Liberation Front in Kashmir and the ULFA in Assam with their secessionist demands threatened to divide the people and the unity and integrity of the country. In this situation, the Cong(I) and then its puppet Chandrasekhar went on compromising with these divisive forces only to remain in power, sacrificing national interest at their altar. They even ignored the presence of imperialism at the doorsteps conspiring and boosting these divisive forces to destabilise the country. It was Rajiv Gandhi's regime that removed Farooq Abdullah and installed G M Shah, known for his secessionist connections which worsened the condition in Kashmir. It was Congress(I) that certified Bhindrawale as a Saint, and then had to kill him when he became a Frankenstein. It was also Rajiv Gandhi's regime that dismissed the Barnala Government throwing Punjab into the grip of the Khalistanis. It was the same Rajiv Gandhi against that gave permission to shilanyas at the disputed spot in Ayodhya boosting the RSS-BJP-VHP combine to create a communal holocaust.

In this situation of political crisis that followed the economic crisis, the fall of Governments in quick succession, the Cong(I) which is responsible for the fall of the NF Government by voting with the communal BJP against the secular stand of V P. Singh, has the audacity of claiming for stability. The Cong(I) itself is responsible for the unstable situation due to its pro-monopolist, pro-multinational and pro-feudal economic policy and its compromise with divisive forces. The Cong(I) stability means stability for the monopolists, stability for the multinationals, stability for the authoritarian forces and stability for the divisive forces and sacrifice of the non-aligned foreign policy.

Out of this crisis of course, the silver lining has emerged in the form of the Left-N.F. combine. The

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Stability and Social Justice

Jibon Roy

A horrendous crime committed in a village under Mathura Distt of UP just at the very recent past got spilled away with the campaign dust of 10th Lok Sabha election. All the New Delhi morning editions of 31st March, 91 have reported with descriptive details on the barbaric lynching of two young men and a teen aged girl in Mehrana village. The so called offence of the victims was that one Harijan youth developed an affair with a girl from higher caste and another friend of them helped their association. The press has vouched without any ambiguity that the crime is executed to satisfy the upper caste revenge against 'untouchables'. The flogging was ordered by a self proclaimed village panchayat made of a particular caste which dominates the village.

The crime is bestial in character and exposes the most heinous state of psyche. The village, probably a model one in the promised Ramrajya of Advanji. The incident, as usual, could cause very little public concern. The divisive ideologies which since long being planted in the psychogenic structure of Indian people with all precisions seems to have started to deluge the very bottom level of society. Persistent process of divisive activities, intermittent violence in different parts of the country combined with ideologisation of such violence probably have already created enough social tolerance towards outrages against backward classes and religious minorities. The passive attitude of the democratic masses, not exclusive of the working class, towards hundreds of communal and caste atrocities pin points the colossal blackhole in the domain of national unity and also the greatest impediment to our trade union movement.

Criminalisation is Inherent in the System

The country which is accredited with the record of 58, 505 numbers of heinous atrocities on scheduled castes between 1946 & 1989, atleast 42 riots which claimed 993 valuable lives and 6215 dowry deaths during 1988 & 1989 is being offered stability both by Cong(I) and BJP without presenting any socio-economic alternatives. Afterwards during Advanji's Rathayatra in 1990 heads rolled all over the country. It is amusing being unconcerned of the ground realities the political platform of BJP has sought expressively a type of stability which would establish the hegemony of the majority community over the religious minority. The Cong(I) party wants the people to believe that its blank rituals of secularism divorced from the question of eliminating the basic causes of communal disharmony would automatically place the country in stability. It is incontestable that the current instability in our political system flowing from precarious economic situation having found its expression through caste and communal ridden society is bursting out of serious fusion. This situation is being utilised by divisive forces and

the imperialists.

Engulfed With Cruelty

The process is engulfing the entire social system with inhuman cruelty and the incident in Mathura is its expression. It is horrifying that the parents of those three unfortunate young boys and girl had been forced to tighten the noose around the necks of their kinds. What a terrible downfall of humanity! The social tolerance to such cruelty forms the basis of such degradation of human sense. The big bourgeois which manages state power, mainly led by the Congress Party, has manipulated such degraded values into the social polity. This has resulted in the intermittent continuity of atrocities against the backward classes and the Muslim minorities. Still, it is amusing, the ruling parties of our country boast about administration, judiciary and other organs—about the neutrality of state power in world's biggest democracy.

The Source of Primitive Accumulation

The Congress(I) party which has assured stability have allowed the ruling classes during the course of its 40 years rule to cultivate the archaic feudal fabric for ruthless exploitation of the poor peasant mass in the name of communal and caste divide of society. Except in the left-front ruled states like West Bengal and Kerala or erstwhile left front ruled Tripura all states concerning land reform generally remained unimplemented in the country. Feudal lords are allowed to the contrary to rob the lands of millions of poor peasants who belong to backward classes and muslim minorities. The stride of industrial developments, construction of dams, communication networks have uprooted millions more from even their dwelling places. Their labour have been ruthlessly entrusted to form the basis of industrialisation but the system of filling the Govt coffer through indirect taxation makes the people further paupers.

The social cruelty is nothing but the reflection of the cruel process of primitive accumulation of capital by Indian capitalists. The backward classes and the Muslim minorities together represent more than 80 per cent of the Indian population. But the budgetary provisions in the Union and States on account of education, health, social welfare etc plough almost nothing to these section of the population. Except in those cases of provision for statutory reservation, the percentage of employment in public sector and govt offices is almost negligible and is further declining. The feudal, monopoly and imperialist exploitation have made the backward classes and the Muslim minorities in the countryside not proletariats but paupers and destitutes. Millions of such peasantry evicted from the lands have not been simultaneously absorbed in the industries, because the Indian industrial growth is itself in doldrum under bourgeois-

landlord rule.

Almost the entire strength of 10 crores child labour in India have come from these stratas of the society. The overwhelming majority of Indian illiterates are supplied by them through which the country ranks first in the world of illiteracy.

Responsibility Lies With the Congress

During the periods of entire anti-imperialist struggle and its post independence rule, the Congress party allowed itself to be haunted by the theory of dual nationality theory of the religious fundamentalism, though as a party it has never officially compromised with that position. During independence struggle it had refused to bring out the movement from the revivalist moorings and practically denied its linkage with the anti feudal struggle. After independence, its dominant section of leadership actively fanned communalism of all shades to suit its narrow electoral interests. It will not be inappropriate to mention that the origin of the very Khalistani fundamentalism and its flourishing is the result of opportunism of Congress party. Even during the 1989 election it has allowed Shilanyas at the disputed land of Ayodhya and started election campaign from the very place chanting Ramrajya slogan.

Overwhelming section of the Congress leadership believes in the sanctity of caste division in the Indian society. This, alongwith the party's compromise with landlordism has ultimately rendered even its campaign against untouchability into hoax. This wrong ideological perception combined with the policy of compromising with the feudal and imperialist interests by a political party which had been the guiding factor of the independence struggle and ruled the country for long forty years have fragmenting effect on the Indian nationalism which itself is multinational in character. These compromises have again restricted the newly independent country to emerge as a nation, with all of its requisites in modern world.

New Awakening

Advancement of democratic movement coupled with the amazing progress of communication and spread of media system have brought about a new awakening amongst backward classes, specially of its educated youth detachment. The very sense of indignity is chasing them to the quest of self-respect. Progressive participation of backward classes in democratic movement, developing resistance to exercise franchises against muscle powers and above all growing militancy amongst the agricultural and other unorganised workers reflect the new trend. On the other side, as a part of the dilectical process the opposite forces initiated mobilisation with unprecedented vengeance.

Desperate Landlordism—Danger to Parliamentarianism :

Floating of private army by the rural elites has emerged as a regular feature in the country. Besides,

the Senas like green brigade of Haryana, purely caste oriented private armies are being built up. Senas like Brahmarish (Bhumihar), Kunwar (Rajput) etc., are ruthlessly penetrating into the rural areas of Bihar to protect landlordism.

What is most dangerous is that the feudal lords and the princes have come out in a massive way in support of all type of parochial ideologies. Either it is Hindu fundamentalism, Khalistani or Muslim fundamentalism or other type of separatism. Working over that reactionary ideological base, imperialists are flourishing the theory of religion based nationalism, which BJP has made the main platform for the ensuing 10th Lok Sabha election. It is of concern that despite the failure of having nation on the basis of Islamic identity not only in the composite states like Cyprus, Lebanon, Sudan but also religiously Muslim dominated countries like Pakistan (undivided), Egypt, Syria and Iraq the slogan of Hindu identity could find some way in India. Thanks to Indian feudalism and its obscurantism. The countries which choose religious identity as the basis of formation of nations have finally made the path to autocracy.

No Alternative to Equity and Social Justice

Despite the current condemnation of the policy of equity, the history has amply proved that no country in third world can survive without it. Main cause of the current instability in India is the refusal of the ruling parties primarily Congress, to extend minimum semblance of social justice to millions of Indian people stigmatised as backward classes and muslim minorities. Congress party in its election manifesto for the ensuing election has put forward no alternative proposal to reverse their old position while the platform of BJP is to dismember India. In such a situation only the new platform of the National Front- Left combine has put forward the alternative programme based on social justice and equity

(from page 22)

May Day has come this year under such critical situation calling upon the working class and the people to choose a Government in the wake of its observance. The election is crucial. With the revolutionary pledge of the May Day, the working class must reject the Cong(I) and BJP and ensure victory of the Left N F candidates in every state to ensure a self reliant economy, free from the dictators of the World Bank and IMF, democracy and social justice to the backward classes and safeguard of the unity and integrity of the country and non-aligned foreign policy, which are the pre-conditions for a stable govt. that can deliver the goods to the people.

The May Day pledge however exhorts the working class to carry forward the struggle beyond the elections with the slogan of left and democratic unity by mobilising all the trade unions to wage united mass movements to bring about a change in the correlation of class forces. National integration has to be kept at the forefront of the struggles, because even if defeated in the elections, the divisive and communal forces will continue to create havoc.

Resolutions

(We are printing hereunder the third and final set of resolutions adopted in the seventh CITU conference—Ed).

On Unorganised Workers

The Seventh Conference of the CITU congratulates the workers in the unorganised sector of industries for the militant struggles launched since the last Conference held in Bombay, braving all repressive measures by the police and thereby improving their minimum wages in several states. The conference congratulates the various state committees for their efforts to penetrate in this vast sector of the most down trodden sections of the working class and having increased their membership in several states.

The conference particularly appreciates the militant strike struggles organised during the period at Delhi which created an all India impact. Big struggles including strike actions were waged in UP, Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala etc., West Bengal organised the biggest rally of unorganised workers in the country mobilising over one lakh workers.

The struggle launched by the CITU could mobilise various sections of the unorganised workers and several other trade unions into joint actions in several states. The conference however, notes that an all India action programme could not be launched under the banner of NCC despite the efforts made by the CITU.

The conference however, draws the attention of the state committees that the struggles of the unorganised workers are yet to take an all India shape. Efforts to mobilise these workers into continuous actions are still lacking in several states. Despite wresting concessions from the employers the minimum wages of most sections of these workers still remain below the poverty line even. In various sections their wages are delinked with the consumer price index. Exploitation of women workers and child labour are worse. Social security measures and other demands are still denied. Working conditions are deplorable. Since over whelming majority of the unorganised workers belong to the backward castes, they are victims of caste exploitation.

The Conference, therefore, calls upon all the state committees to redouble their independent activities to penetrate into the various sections of the workers in the unorganised sector in a systematic manner, form their unions and mobilise them into militant struggles, so as to launch all India movements including strike actions. The charter of demands for the unorganised workers as formulated in the Kanpur

General Council meeting in July 1990 should be taken as the general guideline. However, considering the varying service conditions prevailing in the states, the states have to plan their approach in a flexible way accordingly to achieve the demands through a coordinated movement on an all India level. While carrying forward independent actions, efforts to draw in other trade unions should be made simultaneously to launch joint actions in every state, which will facilitate the launching of all India action programmes jointly with other trade unions.

On Workers Participation in Management

The Seventh Conference of CITU welcomes the step taken by the National Front Govt in introducing a Bill in Parliament on Worker's Participation in Management.

The conference considers that the bill has to be improved upon to bring in line with the conclusions arrived at the seminar held in Delhi on 8th & 9th January 1990. The bill must provide for 50% worker's participation in all the three participative levels, instead of the provision made for only 13% representation to workers at the Director's Board level.

As agreed to in the bi-partite committee for new industrial relations law, all employees, except the executives, should be treated as workmen for the purpose of the Bill, and there shall be no separate category based constituency. Worker's representatives will be directly elected by secret ballot from a single constituency. Provision may be made for representation of the executives, in proportion to their strength at all levels. The Bill must specifically provide for equal rights and authority for the worker's representatives with the management in all the participative levels as well as access to all books of accounts and documents.

The conference wishes to point out that the National Front Govt was in constant discussions with the Central TU and political party representatives on these amendments and other lacunae till it was unseated.

The conference views with grave concern, the conduct of the Chandrasekhar Govt of discontinuing the process and shelving the Bill itself. The conference demands that the Government immediately resume the process of discussion, rectify the lacunae and take steps to pass the Bill in the current budget session itself.

The conference calls upon all trade unions and workers, irrespective of affiliations to mobilise the

workers and compel the Government to accede to this demand.

On Right to Work

This 7th all India conference of Centre of Indian Trade Unions being held on 12-17 February 1991 at Calcutta, notes with serious concern the menacing growth of unemployment in the country consequent upon the capitalist path of development followed by the Congress since independence and calls upon the working class to develop powerful movement for "Right to Work" for all, ensuring broad mobilisation behind it. The registered urban unemployment has already reached 3.5 crores and if the rural unemployment figure is added to it, the same would exceed 10 crores which accounts for 25% of the total workforce. Again increasing sickness and closures of industrial units has been adding further to this huge reserve of the unemployed.

The situation has already created severe restlessness in the society and if not given due attention by the democratic movement with working class in its leadership, it would be wholly utilised by the divisive forces to fan the flame of the separatist movement by dechannelising the mounting discontent of people.

The decision by the National Front Govt to enshrine 'Right to Work' as fundamental right in the Constitution has generated high expectations among the people. But the economic policy followed by the National Front Govt did not indicate any reorientation to make the Right to Work meaningful. Present Chandrasekhar Govt is totally blind to his problem.

The conference likes to stress that without basic structural reforms in the economy by way of socialisation of means of production, "Right to Work" cannot be guaranteed meaningfully. Nevertheless even within the present set up, measures like radical land-reforms ending monopolistic landholding and effective steps to curb the monopoly houses and multinationals can create enough vitality within the economy to generate a much better employment situation. Hence it is the task of the organised working class movement to develop such social movement which would expose the real face of the ruling party and the same time put pressure on the Government to reorient its policy in the required direction. The conference notes with satisfaction the initiative taken by the Steel Workers Federation of India on the issue of 'Right to Work' and organising the all India convention at Durgapur, wherein the Approach Paper on the subject was adopted. This conference endorses the Approach Paper, which would form the basis to develop a common understanding among the entire TU movement. The conference commends CITU's initiative in organising a seminar on the subject, in which other Central TUs and mass organisations of youth, students, peasants and agricultural labourers participated.

The conference urges upon the working class to

regenerate the pace to unite the entire democratic movement in a broad based struggle on "Right to Work" for all and calls upon the trade union movement to extend active support to the call given by the students and youth organisations to observe 28th March, 1991 as 'Anti-Unemployment Day' all over the country so as to create the stage for a broad platform in the struggle.

On Construction Workers

The Seventh Conference of CITU held at Calcutta from February 12-17, 1991 notes with anguish the deplorable condition of the workers of the construction industry, one of the biggest job producing industries in the country, dominated by the private sector.

The trade union movement have since long been demanding a Central Legislation for the construction workers in view of the specific nature of the industry, which the Cong (I) Governments had consistently denied. The apathy of the Government to bring in any legislation encouraged the employers to perpetrate ruthless exploitation of the workers. There is no job security, no wage policy, no fixed hours of work and no social security measures. There is open discrimination against the women workers. Their specific demands like creche, maternity benefits etc. are totally denied. Due to total lack of safety rules, the number of accidents in the construction industry in India is the largest in the world. Conditions of the major section of the contract and migrant workers engaged in various sectors of the industry are like bonded labour. Even the few public undertakings in the industry engage contract labour.

To satisfy the Builders' Association of India, an organisation of the private sector employers, the Rajiv Government had introduced a legislation in the Parliament which was rejected by the CITU, the National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation in Construction Industry and by other trade unions, as it did not take into consideration the workers' demands for a Construction Labour Board with the power to recruit and regulate employment.

The National Front Government however, decided to introduce a legislation as per the conclusions of a national seminar convened by it on the subject. But it could not be materialised as the Government was toppled.

The conference demands of the Chandra Sekhar Govt to introduce the Bill forthwith, which must include among other demands the provision for a Construction Labour Board with powers to recruit and regulate employment. The Conference calls upon the workers in industry to step up their struggles in pursuance of the demands.

On Contract Workers

The Seventh Conference of the CITU held at

Calcutta on 12-17 February, 1991 notes with serious concern at the growing deplorable conditions of the contract workers all over the country.

The conference notes that side by side with the shrinkage of permanent force, the number of contract workers is increasing in leaps and bounds in all sectors of industry—private, public and Government run departmental undertakings, which off load more permanent jobs to contractors.

The conference is distressed to note that this vast section of workforce is most ruthlessly exploited. Substantial sections of workers in the work of perennial nature are yet retained as contract workers for years. They are denied occupational wages, the labour laws, statutory security benefits like PF, ESI, maternity benefits gratuity, etc. and have no security of service.

In most cases they virtually work like bonded labourers. Even the so-called Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970 has proved to be a hoax even in its limited sphere. The enforcement machinery of all these legislations remain on paper.

The CPWD under the Government of India even defy the supreme court order to pay the contract workers at par with permanent workmen. The SAIL management has threatened to close the SAIL stock yard, if workers insist on implementation of Supreme Court order to discontinue contract system of employment. In a most atrocious discriminatory practice, undertakings like Railways, Port & Dock, BHEL etc refuse to admit contract workers in their own hospitals for treatment.

The conference demands that (1) A legislation be brought forward prohibiting contract system in the work of permanent nature in all sectors of industry. (2) All existing contract labour in all industries be regularised. (3) Immediately, all contract workers in all sectors be paid occupational wages; all statutory benefits and all labour laws and other service conditions be applicable to them. (4) All basic amenities like drinking water, rest sheds, canteens etc be extended to the contract workers.

This conference while extending all support to the fighting contract workers throughout the country calls upon all TUs and permanent workers to organise and lead their struggles to win the above demands.

On Textile Industry

This Seventh Conference of the CITU congratulates the workers in the textile industry for waging continuous struggles to protect their service security, for better service conditions and in pursuance of the demand for nationalisation of the industry.

During the period after the Bombay conference CITU made efforts to launch joint actions with other trade unions in the industry, and mass signatures

were placed to the Lok Sabha Speaker demanding a new textile policy and nationalisation of the industry. Through independent actions, however, the CITU was successful in giving an all India shape to the movements taking all the three sectors of the industry together. A successful rally was held before the Prime Minister's place at New Delhi which was participated by about 3000 workers from all the three sectors and the NTC mills from all the textile centres of the country. An All India Co-ordination Committee was also formed to carry forward the movement on all India level. Several strikes struggles were launched in several states by the CITU.

However, the conference notes with concern that due to the new textile policy formulated by the Rajiv Government, the crisis in the industry continues to deepen, equally affecting the mill sector, powerloom and handloom sectors, as well as the NTC mills. Closures and sickness have become the feature of the industry. While large number of workers are being thrown into the ranks of the jobless, those still in job are under constant threat of losing it. Over 150 mills are closed now and more than two lakh workers are jobless. The badli and casual workers are worst affected. Modernisation has helped neither in increased production by mill sector, nor in increased exports. On the contrary, production in the mill sector has been progressively declining, it has created redundancies and increased the prices of cloth, hitting hard the common people who are already hard pressed due to lack of purchasing power, leading to glut of cloth in the market.

The powerloom sector experienced similar deterioration. There has been a mushroom growth of powerlooms, as the mill owners are switching over to powerloom for cheap labour. Despite producing over 50 percent of the total cloth production, the workers have no protection of the labour laws or any social security measures and have to live on extremely low wages.

The situation in the vast handloom sector is still worse. The weavers are in a state of pauperisation earning wages below the poverty line. They do not get even the required 50 percent quota of hank yarn from mills according to the Government's scheme of hank yarn obligation. Most of the 22 items reserved for the handloom sector are produced in the other sectors, thus adversely affecting the weavers. At the same time, the pro-synthetic policy has adversely affected the cotton growers making them destitutes. A number of suicide cases were reported during the period.

Sickness in the public sector NTC mills is growing. The Government has started merging together several NTC mills, which is a virtual closure affecting thousand of workers. The workers are denied wages and other service conditions at par with other public sector undertakings.

In the above circumstances, the conference calls upon the state committees and the unions to step up the struggles for a new textile policy in consultation

with the trade unions, which will benefit the workers and the people, with the central demand for nationalisation of the industry and its functioning with genuine participation of workers in the management.

On Coal Industry

The Seventh all India conference of Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses serious concern over the non-fulfilment of targets in the coal industry particularly when the country is passing through a serious energy crisis.

The conference notes that it is the mismanagement and corruption in the management coupled with totally misconceived approach of mechanisation and modernisation with utter disregard to the geomining conditions of the mines, that has brought the industry to crisis in all fronts—its productivity, profitability and safety etc. And taking advantage of the situation, the pro-privatisation lobby in the country have been making an alibi for denationalisation of the Coal Industry.

Today the coalfields, even after nationalisation, particularly the older ones have been facing severe problem of subsidence and inundation of underground mines, gas, fire etc owing to the legacies of unscientific and uncontrolled mining operation. The situation is being further aggravated by haphazard and unscientific mechanisation. There is no perspective planning for modernisation; machines are being brought more in the interest of its sellers—the multinational and foreign companies, with loans from World Bank. Such imported machines often prove unsuitable, such as Longwall machines imported from UK which resulted in fatal accidents in the ECL, WCL collieries due to collapse of the machine. Further, interest is being shown by the authorities to highly mechanised open cast mining which may show relatively higher output immediately but would endanger the very foundation of the industry in the long run.

The conference further notes that the import of coking coal at a prohibitive price by the Govt is also having severe negative effect on the industry and the economy as a whole. It also wipes out thousands of jobs in the mines, washeries with consequential reduction of job in the engineering, services and the ancillary industries. The unholy collusion between the contractors and management leading to the regular off loading of permanent jobs to contractors in the industry is also assuming alarming proportion.

The conference notes that the neglect by the management of the problems of the displaced persons created due to expansion of mining operation by the managements and the Govt has created a serious situation of restlessness in the entire areas. The conference demands that the land owners and the occupants of the taken over plots should be treated as displaced persons eligible for compensation employment, and rehabilitation. The Central Govt

should make arrangements for stabilisation of the affected mining areas which have become unuseful for the inhabitation. The Govt should also adopt measures for reclamation of the left out open cast mines, to restore normal condition. The conference greets the trade unions working in coal industry under the leadership of CITU for their remarkable endeavours for this. The conference hails the full support of the left front Govt of West Bengal for the purpose.

The conference notes with concern the increasing spate of accidents and rising toll of lives which expose the miserable position of safety in the industry, leading to loss of production besides human lives.

The conference also notes with concern the alarming ecological imbalances being created by indiscriminate cutting of trees in the mining areas and due to greater stress on open cast mining etc by the coal managements.

The situation demands most broad based and determined struggle of the workers against the disastrous policies and practices of the managements. The trade union movement in the industry is called upon to adopt alternative approach on each and every vital issue relating to the industry. It should fight for modernisation in the form that suits mining conditions and at the same time ensure full utilisation of man power available and takes care of the potential of indigenous industry. It should fight for ensuring safety of workers and the public, for effective management for investment, production, distribution and pricing with import substitution approach.

The conference notes with satisfaction the initiative taken by CITU unions in the coal industry in fostering broadest unity of the coal workers' movement. It greets the coal unions for the success in defeating the attempt of the management-INTUC combine to impose on the workers, a most retrograde agreement signed with INTUC bypassing the JBCCI and concluding a fresh agreement ensuring higher benefits to workers. The conference also endorses the 12 point charter of demands adopted by joint front of coal workers' for fighting against disruption disunity, malpractices of the management and apathy of the Government.

On Steel Industry

The Seventh Conference of CITU held at Calcutta expresses its grave concern at the basic policy shift by the Govt of India in production of steel and mass consumable steel products to export orientation and consequent scaling down of the plan target of steel production. It further condemns the Government's decision to further open the steel industry to private sector.

The conference notes with resentment that des-

pite only 22 kg per capita consumption of steel in India which is extremely low compared to the world average, the Cong (I) Govt at the centre has shifted the priority of industrialisation based on mass consumables of steel product and has abandoned the policy of massive augmentation of steel production capacity in public sector which has hitherto been the general policy frame. This has reflected in the low percentage of budgetary allocation for steel during the 6th plan and 7th plan and also in setting the target of only 22 million tonnes of steel production to be achieved by the end of the twentieth century. The negative attitude of the Govt has resulted in shelving of the proposal for steel plant at Paradip and Vijaynagar and delay in commissioning of Visakhapatnam plant and also modernisation of Rourkela and Durgapur plants. Further, the decision for modernisation of IISCO has been stalled, thereby threatening the very existence of this pioneer steel plant of the country.

The denigration of public sector steel industry by the Central Govt has been further manifested in the fact that licensing limit for the private entrepreneurs has been increased from 2.5 lakh tonnes to 1 million tonnes. Added to this, is the almost open door indiscriminate licensing to the private sector for special steel production which has threatened the viability of the Alloy Steel Plant Durgapur and the Salem Steel Plant. Further extensive licensing to private sector for sponge steel and scrap-based mini steel plant has provided base for the private sector in steel industry and exposed the public sector to unequal competition because of various advantages enjoyed by the private sector including low overhead expenditure.

The public sector's share of saleable steel production has slid from 77.80% in 1982-83 to 54.07% in 1988-89 and in 1990 it could cater only around 48% of total demand of home market. Whereas in 1979-80 the share of steel industry in the total investment in public sector was 19.21% in 1988-89 it has come down to only 8.69%.

Import in the form of special steel and capital goods including those under OGL has been casting a severe adverse effect not only on the public sector but also on the total steel industry in general and this situation is further aggravated due to indiscriminate export of precious iron ore from the country, the quantity being 33.7 million tonnes in 1989-90 which constitutes around 8 to 9 per cent of total export.

Apart from the foregoing facts the common phenomenon of corruption at the top level of management, political jugglery in the appointments of executive posts and the menace of off-loading jobs to contractors are also greatly hampering the growth of public sector steel industry.

All these denote a departure from the basic policy of expanding the core sector of industries like

steel in public sector, and thrust of industrialisation relying on expansion of home market, preservation of scarce resources from being flushed out of the country and thus constitute a threat to self-reliance.

The conference demands of the Govt to restore the policy of preservation of the steel sector. It demands concrete measures to be taken by the Govt to augment the steel production capacity of the nation and modernisation of the old units combined with expansion of capacity. It calls upon the trade union movement to raise its voice against the conspiracy of the World Bank-IMF and multinationals monopoly capital nexus to sabotage the public sector steel industry with the intention to privatise the entire steel sector.

On Oil & Petroleum Industry

The Seventh All India Conference of CITU held at Calcutta expresses concern at India's growing dependence on petroleum and petroleum product import and at the Government of India's callous attitude towards attaining self-reliance in this vital sector of industry. It notes with anxiety that during eighties when the consumption of petroleum and petroleum products in the country increased by 100% to reach 58 million tonnes, in the current year the indigenous production is almost stagnating at 34 million tonnes since 1985-86 with the consumption trend showing evidence of further rise in future. According to Energy Ministry's estimate by 1999-2000, the demand will go to 101.26 million tonnes.

The Conference expresses further concern at the sudden rise of the petroleum prices in the international market shooting India's import bill by Rs. 5000 crores which may multiply further if the Gulf war lingers. The Gulf crisis has once again vindicated the urgency of reaching self-reliance in the industry at the earliest.

Since the nationalisation of the petroleum industry in 1956, no effective steps were taken to achieve self-reliance in the field of exploration which has resulted not only to the excessive foreign dependence, but also in the non tapping of the existing resources. This weakness is leading the country towards dependence also in other fields. Notwithstanding the fact that the Govt. had allowed the retention of a number of foreign oil companies in the exploration and distribution till 1981, many more are being invited in various forms of expertisation.

The conference further registers its vehement protest against the Central Govt's decision for allowing the multinational companies and big business houses to enter the oil industry and that too on production sharing basis. It is alarming to note that 71 blocks have been identified by ONGC to be allotted to foreign companies and further there is proposal to lease out refining capacity to overseas companies. Conference further demands that the reported decision

of ONGC to minimise exploration work at Tripura by withdrawing the rigs should be reversed and necessary investment must be made to continue the operation.

The Conference demands of the Govt to take vigorous initiative in the field of exploration, and also conservation of petroleum and natural gas through which India can become self sufficient. The raising of production rate to 1.5 per cent of the established geological reserve of 3700 million tonnes can shoot up the ONGC's annual production to 50 million tonnes from existing 33 million and this rate is achievable if proper administrative and technical measures are taken and meaningful workers' participation in management is ensured. Similarly, Oil India can produce another 4 million tonnes. Due to lack of planning and absence of conservation technology, for every 12 million cubic metre of gas produced at Bombay High, 4 million cubic meters are burnt up and in Assam out of 6 million cubic metre more than 3 million cubic metre is flashed out which together costs Rs. 1800 crores annually. Besides, there is wide scope for conservation of petroleum and petro-product. According to Kapoor Committee report, petroleum product constitute 28.3% of the total energy conservation basket.

The Seventh Conference of CITU calls upon the workers in the petroleum and allied industries to take up the issue of self-reliance in petroleum industry alongwith their economic demands. It calls upon the State Committees to take all possible steps in organising the petroleum workers in this direction.

On Fertilizer Industry

The 7th Conference of CITU held at Calcutta expresses grave concern at the government's anti-people policy on a vital industry like fertilizer which is closely linked with the question of foodgrain availability to our people.

The National Commission on labour in its report as far back as in 1976 had observed that 80% of the additional foodgrain in production could come only from the increased use of fertilizers since the possibility of bringing more land under cultivation is limited. As per the Planning Commission, by 2000 AD the country's population would be about 100 crores for which the foodgrain production would have to be pushed up from the present 173 million tonnes to 240 million tonnes.

To increase the foodgrain production to the said level the use of fertilizers would have to be increased to 20 million tonnes from the present 11.5 million tonnes. The indigenous production last year was 8.5 million tonnes and the balance had to be met through import costing the country's exchequer to the tune of Rs. 620 crores.

The conference notes with deep distress that on the one hand there is no proposal of the govern-

ment to increase the indigineous production and on the other hand the public sector plants of Durgapur, Haldia, Barauni, Sindri, Gorakhpur, Namrup etc are facing closure due to ageing and lack of revamping decision. Again the Government is allowing the private sector and multinational companies to enter this vital core sector, which had insignificant role till the year 1987 but now have surpassed the share of public sector.

The government's reliance on import of the product, input and technology for the industry has already created very serious situation and due to gulf-crisis large number of plants have been forced to stop production. Thus unless the necessary remedial steps are taken the country may have to face famine situation and go back to PL 480 days.

The conference urges upon the government to reverse its dangerous fertilizer policy of relying on import and private sector and calls upon the CITU unions and its State Committees to launch a vigorous campaign to mobilise public opinion for compelling the Government to reverse its policy.

On Struggle Against Illiteracy

This 7th Conference of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions held in Calcutta on 12-17 Feb. 1991 notes with anxiety that inspite of tall official claims the number of illiterates in the country have been increasing by leaps and bounds from one five year plan to another. While the population of the country is increasing at the average rate of 2.4% per annum, the rate of growth of literacy was only 0.5% during the fifties, while in the sixties it was almost stagnant. The situation hardly showed any improvement in the seventies and onwards. This is the precipitous result of the criminal neglect by the successive governments of the primary education which has been given high priority in the Directive Principles of Indian Constitution. While only a negligible percentage of total budgetary provision is allotted for education as a whole, the share of primary education has been extremely miserable.

The Conference notes that abject poverty of the people, particularly of the vast rural population, consequent on feudal and colonial exploitation of centuries, refusal of the bourgeois-landlord governments at the centre and states to adopt effective measures to alleviate poverty, the inevitable backwardness of the rural population, all these provide ideal condition for perpetuation of illiteracy in the country. The permanent eradication of illiteracy is closely linked with the alleviation of poverty. The conference urges on the Govt to launch effective programme for poverty alleviation without which the permanent eradication of illiteracy will ever remain a far cry. However, intensified effort backed by increased allocation of fund is capable of substantially reducing illiteracy in the country. The conference therefore demands of the Govt appropriate measures including adequate budget provision for fighting the scourge of illiteracy. It further urges the

Govt to adopt appropriate policy for ensuring effective participation of the organisation of workers, peasants, women, youth, students and other sections of people in the programmes to eradicate illiteracy.

It appreciates Left-Front Govts of W Bengal and Kerala for their commendable role in mobilising the initiatives of different mass organisations representing Kisans, working class, youth, student, women, etc in the drive of illiteracy eradication. The conference appreciates those CITU unions who have responded to the call for performing one of the primary tasks for emancipation of the working class.

The 7th Conference of the CITU calls upon the Trade Unions and the Industrial Federations to declare war against illiteracy and to release all organisational initiative for effective drive against illiteracy amongst the adults belonging to all sections of toiling people of our country.

On Child Labour

The 7th Conference of CITU expresses its grave concern at the phenomenal increase of Child Labour despite the legislation of about 250 Central and State laws against it. Notwithstanding the fact that Article 25 of the Indian Constitution prohibits child employment and Article 39 guarantee protection against child abuse, physical or mental whatsoever may be and also protected the freedom and dignity of childhood against exploitation and the Central government having legislated the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act 1936, children are employed in quarries, mines, stone breaking, head loading besides being engaged as domestic servant, hotel boys and in agriculture.

Child labour is increasing in an alarming proportion. Against the census figures of 13.5 millions in the year 1981 the number has reached the peak of 113 million according to a current estimate. Children contribute 26% of the Indian labour force today.

The conference expresses grave anxiety at the deteriorating service and working conditions of child labour and also at the collapsing of machineries against violations of law concerning child labour and at the Government's failure in effecting whatever meagre welfare measures are provided in the law. Their intellectual growth is cramped through deprivation of educational opportunities minimising their chance for vocational training and condemning them to lower than subsistence wages throughout life as unskilled. They are subjected to inhuman labour, running to 12-13 hours a day. Working children suffer from tuberculosis, malnutritions due to working with noxious chemicals. And once they outlive usefulness they are shown out of jobs. In the system of labour supply, which exists in our country, wages are transferred to the supplier with-

out paying for the bare necessities to the working child.

The 7th conference of CITU urges upon the Government of India to ratify the ILO convention of 1973 which seeks the abolition of labour by children and also stringent application of Child Labour (prohibition & Regulation) Act 1936. Government should also amend the existing law, pending total abolition of the system, to guarantee human treatment to them including provision of education, vocational training through non-formal system, and nutritious free meal at the cost of the employers.

The conference calls upon the trade union movement, specially the CITU unions to take up the cause of child workers with all earnestness.

Other Resolutions :

Apart from the above resolutions, the Secretariat approved the following resolutions also as authorised by the conference as deemed to have been adopted by the conference :

On South Africa : extending support to the struggle of the working class and the people under the leadership of ANC to dismantle apartheid and establish a free, democratic and non racial South Africa.

On the Struggle in Central and South African Countries : supporting their struggles against US intervention and for democracy, peace and socialism.

On Afganistan : in support of their grim struggle to safeguard the sovereignty of the country against the counter-revolutionaries support by the US imperialists and Pakistan.

On Reunification of Korea : supporting the struggle of the people of North and South Korea and the proposals of DPRK for the reunification and condemning the conspiracies of the US imperialists and their puppet Government of South Korea to subvert the effort.

On Sri Lanka : extending support to the struggle of the working class to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country and safeguard the rights of the ethnic Tamils.

On Restoration of Democracy in Neighbouring Countries : The resolution greeted the working class and the people of Nepal and Bangladesh for restoration of democratic system in their countries. It greeted the people of Burma for their continuing struggle for democracy. The resolution expressed concern at the return of a military backed Islamic fundamentalist Government at Pakistan and expressed solidarity to the struggle of the people for restoration of democracy in the country. The resolution called upon the working class of these countries and

India to strengthen the struggles for democracy unitedly and develop friendship among the countries to frustrate the imperialist designs to dominate the sub-continent.

On Abrogation of Articles 310 and 311(a),(b),(c) of the Constitution; demanding repeal of these Articles, which embody the notorious "pleasure doctrine" giving arbitrary powers to the authorities to dismiss the Government employees entirely at their discretion without giving any reasons and without giving any opportunity of self-defence.

On Fraudulent Price Index; demanding scrapping of the 1982 series and computation of a new index in consultation with the trade unions, which would truly reflect the price increase.

On Nationalisation of Pearless; extending support to the long drawn struggle of the employees demanding nationalisation of the company, which transacts business worth crores of rupees in a dubious manner, keeping the scores of certificate holders under uncertain future.

On Solidarity with Peasantry; The resolution greeted the peasant and agricultural workers for their struggle for land reform, remunerative prices, minimum wage and other demands and called upon workers to champion their cause and build up a fighting alliance with them.

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lism. In its foreign policy though it is following the policy of non-alignment but the present government has yielded to the pressure of World Bank and IMF and in the Gulf war, has provided over facilities to US war planes, provided concessions to foreign monopolies and encouraged privatisation instead of strengthening public sector and self reliance. The divisive, communal and caste forces are getting encouragements in various ways both from foreign imperialism and the present Government at the centre. The tendency towards authoritarianism is growing as a threat to democracy. The economic policies are leading to constant rise in prices, phenomenal growth in unemployment and industrial sickness, adverse balance of payments and all sided corruption.

The situation demands basic changes in policies, administrative set-ups and new alternative leadership with alternative policies to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country, to defend and strengthen democracy, to provide jobs for the unemployed and end industrial sickness and do social justice to all who are socially outcast and economically down graded. In this situation, opportunity to change the government at the centre through midterm poll should be fully utilised and the working class of India should take the pledge on the May Day to remove its internal weaknesses and come forward to take the lead by building all out working class unity and establishing firm alliance with the peasantry and other left and democratic forces.

Tamilnadu State CITU's Call to Defeat Cong(I)—ADMK Alliance

Two day meeting of the Tamilnadu State Committee was held at Salem on 11th and 12th April. K. Ramani, President was in the chair.

R. Umanath, General Secretary, in his elaborate report explained the importance of the ensuing elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislature.

The State Committee after a discussion on the steps to be taken, decided to issue an appeal to the working people of the State to defeat the Cong(I)-AIADMK front and ensure the victory of the National Front-Left Party candidates.

CITU unions will distribute lakhs of copies of this appeal among various sections of the working people in the State. CITU unions will also participate in the election campaigns all over the State. The State Committee also called upon the workers to donate to the election fund to their optimum capacity.

Homage to Com. BTR

CITU unions had organised meetings and programmes to pay homage to Com. BTR on the 1st anniversary on 6th April. Decorated photographs were placed at factory gates and union offices. Meetings were held. State Transport workers and workers in many other Industries went to work wearing badges with the photographs of Comrade BTR. In many centres, hall meetings were organised. April issues of CITU journals carried special articles on Comrade BTR. Various sections of working people all over the state took pledges to carry forward the revolutionary ideals for which Com. BTR had dedicated himself.

One Day Strike in Madras

Lakhs of Industrial workers in and around Madras city observed a day's strike on 16th April, demanding immediate reopening and nationalisation of the B&C mills in Madras city. The mill management had announced cessation of operations from 1st April and summarily removed all the 8000 workers from the rolls of the company.

A meeting of representatives of various trade unions was held on 8th April. All the major Trade unions, including CITU, AITUC, HMS, LPF (DMK), ADMK and many other local unions attended the meeting, which gave the strike call.

Workers enthusiastically participated in the strike. Almost all the major industrial establishments and the units in the industrial estate, participated fully in the strike action.