



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## Editorial

### THE YEAR THAT WAS

When these lines appear in print, the last month of the current year would commence to be soon followed by a New Year. But for the working class, the peasantry and other segments of toiling masses what sort of a year is being left behind and what may be in store in 1995!

Whatever the toil of the leading lights of the ruling elite to convince the countrymen that the new policies "chosen" by them have started bearing fruits and that the country has been firmly put on the path of steady progress and prosperity, the stark realities of life of the working class prove that the market friendly policies are friendly to the owning and employing classes, the monopolists and multinationals, the hoarders of black money and operators in financial underworld, the share market speculator and the ilk.

In 1994 the policy of dismantling the public sector and destroying the enormous production capacities created, infrastructural base laid down and indigenously developed skills has been carried out with greater gusto so as to enable the foreign predators to come in and expand their empires. The drive towards depriving even those public undertakings which could be nursed back to health of any support and starving them of orders has been intensified. The year saw more public undertakings in the death row to the delight of foreign creditors and the Bretton- Woods twins. The tripartite decisions on revival and regeneration of several industries did not enter the realm of actual implementation, while employers and their foreign collaborators have been shouting hoarse to get scrapped whatever little rights of workers still exist. Examples are too many to be cited. Even the critical defence production, telecom

and power sectors have been opened to private capital, while the strategic nationalised banking has already been substantially undermined and insurance waiting for privatisation. The vast mineral wealth of India has been thrown open to plunder. The foreign firms which are setting up industries are mostly concentrating on luxury consumer goods for the benefit of high- income minority while development of indigenous technology to suit India's conditions has been effectively blocked by the GATT agreement. 1994 witnessed escalation of the process of de- industrialisation of India, frittering away of her lucrative resources and a creeping dependence in areas where the country had achieved substantial expertise and experience.

Little wonder, in a scenario of this kind, not only employment generation has slumped next to nothing but also lakhs of the previously employed have been joining the dwelling ranks of unemployed. Indeed today India has the dubious distinction of having the largest army of unemployed in the world. For those in employment, while productivity goes up, the workers' share in production cost goes down, wage revision delayed or denied and mechanism for compensation for price rise grossly manipulated. Despite the unscientific methods of compiling the consumer price index and the massive manipulations that go into it, the index (1982 = 100) moved from 256 in August 1993 to 284 in August 1994, the last month for which the figure as available. It bears testimony to the back-breaking burden of rising prices.

If all this is happening in organised sector, what have been going in the unregulated informal (unorganised) sector or industries in far-flung

**Textile Workers' Rally before Parliament on December 15**

scattered areas or in rural regions can be easily guessed.

In agriculture, despite claims of a breakthrough, it is stagnation that has continued. With even the lip service to land reforms given up, the plans to make fallow land cultivable, expansion of irrigation and flood control measures remain on paper. While the rural rich continue to be outside tax net, for agricultural workers whose number is steadily increasing implementation of statutory minimum wages leaves much to be desired. The promised central legislation on agricultural workers has not seen the light of the day yet. The employment generation schemes for the rural poor each year end up with lesser man-hours created. The bulging food godowns represent the lack of purchasing power of the people which is getting steadily eroded by inflation despite statistical wizardry. As the year ends, it is hunger and unemployment, price rise, poverty and privation that smite the people.

Amidst the boast of India's international prestige, the Human Development Report 1994 published by UNDP puts India at the 135th position out of 173 countries in the reckoning. Of the 38 countries behind India only 6 are in Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Yemen and Cambodia) and rest in Africa. With the largest army of illiterates, an appallingly low literacy rate and high rate of drop-outs, sanitation available to only 15 per cent of population, very high infant mortality, 5,000 malnutrition deaths daily, between 60 and 68 per cent pregnant women suffering from anaemia, safe drinking water still remaining a pipe dream, the report reveals a pathetic portrait of India. Countries much smaller in size, resources and technical accomplishments have overtaken India in human development. For improving the living and being of Indians--- the basis of development and advancement, the government has no resources to spare. The budgetary allocations for people's health and education are eloquent testimonies.

While the axe of austerity measures fall on allocations necessary for building up a healthy and literate nation, the rich and owning classes receive bonanza of concessions year after year and 1994 has been no exception.

The Finance Minister never forgets to flaunt the 20 billion dollar foreign exchange reserve; it is not production or export incomes, but borrowed money every bit of which shall have to be repaid with interest. While the total external debt has risen to Rs.2,83,000 crores by the end of 1993, the internal debt has risen to the staggering proportion of Rs 5.33 lakh crore and the interest payments are eating up 32 per cent of government's total receipt. It goes back to those whom the system has fattened.

The government has refused to draw any lesson from the experiences of countries that embraced structural adjustments before. The fact is such adjustments only fortify the inequitous and exploitive structure to the benefit of the small minority that prosper on the ruination of the vast majority.

As the year passes out, the moral authority of the government to rule has touched the nadir. It is a government that protects the corrupt and remains busy in cover-up operations to hide persons found guilty by its own investigating agencies. Corruption was never as widespread as today.

In the year that is having its swan song, if any thing invaded new layers of society, it is poverty and privation; if anything scaled new heights, it is unemployment and loss of jobs; if anything spread faster than before, it is industrial sickness; if anything registered greater growth it is foreign loan; if anything moved fast it is price rise and if anything pleased the foreign creditors it is the drive for reckless privatisation.

In this surrounding sombre situation, the silver lining is the unity and struggle of the working class and other toiling masses. September 29 was a high watermark of such united opposition and resistance to the policy of selling India to international finance capital. Let the enemies of the people remember that legitimate anger is accumulating in the hamlets, otherwise apparently placid rural areas, in the shanty towns and workers' colonies, in the depths of mines and plantation fields, in the farms and factories and everywhere and it is going to give rise to a storm that will blow away everything that disfigures human life in this country. The storm may rise sooner than later. The apparent placidity that the ruling elite take comfort from may be elusive and shortlived.

# Textile Workers' March to Parliament on December 15.

As per earlier decisions, the Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers reiterates its call for March to parliament by Textile Workers from all over the country and decides to hold the rally at Delhi on 15th December, 1994.

About 15,000 to 20,000 workers from the NTC mills, private sector mills, powerloom sector and handloom sector from all textile centres in the country will participate in the rally.

The rally which is the culmination of long drawn statewide agitations of the textile workers, will be held in pursuance of the 9-point demands formulated in the Delhi Convention, which includes:

1. Implementation of the 8-point unanimous tripartite agreement on NTC mills.
2. Opening of all the closed textile mills in the private sector and reabsorption of the two lakh workers rendered jobless
3. Revival of all sick mills in private sector in consultation with trade unions.
4. Implementation of labour laws, social security measures and minimum wages in the powerloom sector
5. Supply of hank yarn and other raw materials at subsidised rates and minimum wages in the handloom sector
6. Formulation of a new integrated Textile Policy in consultation with the trade unions so as to ensure a balanced development of all the three sectors and generate employment.

The Joint Action Committee condemns the Government for its total apathy to the problems of the textile workers and calls upon all the Textile workers cutting across affiliations to join the rally at Delhi on 15th December and demonstrate the most massive trade union unity to save the Textile Industry.

Sd/- Haribhau Naik                      Sd/- A B Bardhan  
General Secretary                      General Secretary, AITUC  
Indian National Textile  
Workers Federation (INTUC)

Sd/- P K Ganguly                      Sd/- V Tiagi  
Secretary, CITU                      Secretary, HMS

Sd/Vishwanath Satam                      Sd/N M Barot,  
(BMS)                      General Secretary, NLO

## Ahmedabad Textile Workers Decide to Join Delhi Rally on December 15

A Joint Convention of Textile Workers was held at Ahmedabad on November 13 under the banner of Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers. The convention was attended by about 700 delegates from INTUC, CITU, AITUC and NLO (Mazoor Mahajan).

The convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of N M Barot (NLO), Ramlal Ruplal (INTUC), Subodh Mehta (CITU), Raj Kumar Singh (AITUC), Ershad Mirza (NTC-INTUC), Suresh Patel (NTC Staff Union) and Shankar Bhai Bharatiya (GSTC Staff Union).

The resolution of the convention was moved by Reghuvir Prasad Mali (CITU) and seconded by Hasubhai Mehta (INTUC). The resolution pointed to the all round crisis prevailing in the Textile Industry in all its three sectors, manifested by rampant closures, sickness, joblessness in lakhs and fleeing of the powerloom and handloom workers. The resolution held the policy of the Government of India for this condition in the Textile Industry and called upon the textile workers in the state to join the Parliament rally at Delhi on December 15 in large numbers.

The main feature of the convention was that it demonstrated a total trade union unity with the same cause, as for the first time all the trade unions including the Mazoor Mahajan joined the convention with a promise to further consolidate and carry forward the unity through joint actions. Representatives of the Officers Associations and Technicians also attended the Convention.

The main speakers in the convention were N M Barot (NLO), P K Ganguly (CITU) and B D Joshi (AITUC). Among others who spoke were Ramlal Ruplal (INTUC), Manohar Shukla (NLO), Ershad Mirza (NTC-INTUC), Subodh Mehta (CITU), Rajkumar Singh (AITUC), Suresh Patel (NTC Staff Union), Shankar Bhai Bharatiya (GSTC Staff Union), Mahendra Dave (NTC), Manu Bhai Brahmin (INTUC), Kubra Behen, Anil Parmar, Arun Mehta (CITU), G K Parmar (AITUC), J N Derasari (GSTC), Bharatbhai Visali (NTC), Chintaman Panjankar, Ashok Punjabi, Mahendra Patel, Surendera Rajput, etc.

The resolution was unanimously adopted. The convention ended with resounding slogans --- 15th December Delhi Chalo.

Earlier in the morning a crowded press conference was held. The press and TV gave good coverage of the convention.

## RESOLUTION

This Convention of textile workers of Gujarat held under the banner of the Joint Action Committee of Textile Workers at Ambedkar Hall, on 13th November 1994, expresses serious concern over the deep crisis, prevailing in textile industry in all its three sectors, viz Mill Sector, Powerloom Sector and Handloom Sector.

In the NTC mills, the unanimous Eight-Point Agreement arrived at, in the Special Tripartite Committee on 9th April 1994 has not been implemented by the Government of India, which has resulted in further losses in the NTC mills. Instead of implementing the agreement and starting the process of modernisation, the Government is still pressurising the workers for Voluntary Retirement Scheme(VRS).

In the private sector more than 132 mills are closed rendering about 2 lakh workers jobless. The dues of the workers have also not been paid.

Having closed down the weaving sections in the mills, the private sector tycoons are switching over to powerlooms and fleecing the powerloom workers by paying paltry wages, and without any labour laws or social security measures.

The handloom weavers are being deprived of minimum wages and are faced with acute shortage of Hankyarn and other inputs.

In Gujarat which has been the major textile centre in the country, nearly 30 mills in the private sector, GSTC and NTC are either closed or sick affecting nearly 30 thousand workers.

The convention expresses its deep dissatisfaction at the apathy of the Government of India and the Government of Gujarat towards the acute problems of Textile workers in the country including Gujarat despite long drawn struggles by the textile workers.

This convention supports the demands made by the Joint Action Committee, comprising of INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS, BMS and NLO which include,

- 1) Implementation of the 8-point unanimous Tripartite Agreement on NTC
- 2) Opening up of all closed mills of private sector and reabsorption of the workers.
- 3) Opening up of all closed mills in Gujarat and revival of sick units with full complement of workers.
- 4) Impelementation of minimum wages, labour laws and social securirty measures in powerloom and handloom sectors.
- 5) Formation of new integrated textile policy in consultation with trade unions to ensure a

balanced growth of all the three sectors.

The convention expresses full support to the call of Joint Action Committee for a March to Parliament at Delhi by textile workers on 15th December and calls upon all textile workers of Gujarat to join this massive rally and demonstrate their trade union unity cutting across all affiliations to save the textile industry and the job of the workers.

To mobilise the workers in large numbers for the Delhi rally the convention calls upon all trade unions to launch a massive joint campaign week in December from 7th to 15th and hold gate meetings and demonstrations in all textile mills for the succes of the Delhi rally.

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## 53rd Annual Conference of BCMU

The 53rd annual conference of Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union was held on 12th and 13th November at Khiti Burman Manch(Sukanta Sadan), Barrackpur, Calcutta. The flag hoisting was done on 12th by the working president Com.Md Amin.

The conference was inaugurated by Com.Niren Ghosh who is the president of the union.

The Gneral Secretary Com.Shiva Prashad Bhattacharya placed the report and then after the conference adjourned for the day because there was the open rally of the conference at Ananda Puri play ground which was addressed by among others, Com.Jyoti Basu. He spoke for 50 minutes before a massive gathering as the maidan was packed to capacity.

Com.Basu blamed the employers and the central government for the distressing condition prevailing in the jute industry. He also explained the new Industrial Policy of the West Bengal Govt.

Com Niren Ghosh presided over the conference. The speakers included comrades Tarit Topdar MP, Com.Shiva Prashad Bhattacharya, Com.Shanti Ghatak, the Labour Minister and Com.Md Amin.

On 13th November the delegate session was resumed. In all 45 delegates participated in the discussion on the report of the General Secretary.

The delegate session was addressed by Com.Chittabrata Mazumdar, General Secretary of the West Bengal Committee of the CITU and Com.Robin Mukherjee, President of the Federation of Metal and Engineering Workers Union of W.Bengal.

Com.Niren Ghosh was reelected president, Com Shiva Prasad Bhattacharya was elected Working President, Com.Md Amin was elected as the General Secretary and Com.Samir Banerjee was elected as Treasurer for the coming year.

In all 904 delegates and 50 observers attended the conference.

# 7 LAKH COAL WORKERS TO PREPARE FOR INDEFINITE STRIKE

A massive demonstration of twenty thousand coal workers from all the coal companies was held before the Headquarters of Coal India in Calcutta on 11th November 1994 to protest against the dilatory tactics adopted by the Coal India to settle the outstanding demands of the coal workers. The call for the protest demonstration was given by the All India Coal Workers Federation.

Though the last wage agreement expired on 30th June 1991 there has been not much progress in wage negotiations. The strong resentment among the workers has been increasing every day since the coal India management has been unilaterally withdrawing concessions given in the previous wage agreements. The provisions relating to medical facilities, construction of housing, educational facilities, welfare amenities are being curtailed drastically resulting in reduction in quality of life of the workers.

On the top of this rampant corruption prevalent in the coal mines has siphoned out huge funds into the pockets of a section of top bureaucrats and the unscrupulous contractors and led to resource crunch to the coal industry. Huge quantity of coal is being pilfered every day without any action by the Coal India management.

The safety of the coal mines is utterly neglected and open violation of safety rules is taking place in broad daylight. The statutory pit safety committees are functioning only on paper and suggestions given by the workers' representatives are generally being ignored callously.

Since early morning on 11th November thousands of workers who came in trains assembled in front of Coal India office and shouted slogans condemning the management for their callous approach. Large number of women workers also joined the meeting which almost turned into gherao of Coal India office.

The meeting commenced at noon which was presided over by M K Pandhe, General Secretary CITU. He congratulated the coal workers for organising 3 nationwide strike during 1994 on 31st January, 14th July and 29th September. The management however has been continuing this policy and the demands are raised from all coalfields that the coal workers should go in for indefinite strike

and therefore the AICWF has decided to prepare for an indefinite strike in coal industry. The announcement was welcomed with great enthusiasm by all the workers participating in the rally.

Pandhe appealed to all the Federations in Coal industry to jointly prepare for such an action which alone will force the management to accept the just demands of the coal workers.

Haradhan Roy, MP speaking in the rally gave a graphic picture of the worsening conditions of the coal miners and appealed to the workers to make the strike call a grand success.

Benoy Chowdhury, Land Revenue Minister, Government of West Bengal expressed full support of the Left Front Government to the legitimate demands raised by them and pleaded for building all in unity of coal workers for a nationwide struggle to achieve the demands.

Sunil Basu Roy, General Secretary, AICWF explained the contents of the Memorandum to be submitted to the chairman, Coal India Ltd on behalf of the participants in the rally.

S K Bakshi of Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union highlighted cases of corruption in coal mines and demanded stringent action against corrupt officials.

Mihir Chowdhury of Central Coalfields opposed the retrenchment drive of the coal managements and criticised the refusal of the management to give jobs to the land losers whose land has been taken over by the coal companies.

Bikas Chowdhury MLA from Raniganj demanded a high level probe into the working of several malpractices prevalent in coal mines. He condemned the reduction of import duty on coal and efforts to privatise the coal mines. He called upon the workers to resist the privatisation attempts.

Chittabrata Majumdar, General Secretary of CITU West Bengal Committee congratulated the workers for the massive demonstration and appealed to all the workers in different industries to rally behind the coal miners during their struggle.

Robin Sen Secretary CITU participated in the rally. When the rally was over workers shouted slogans on making the indefinite strike a grand success.

All the unions in BBD Bag area helped in making the rally successful.

# SUPER PROFITS THROUGH "LIBERALISATION"

□ M K PANDHE

The profits of big business houses in India have swelled abnormally following the so called liberalisation measures. A recent article published in Economic Times has revealed this trend in a crystal clear manner. The survey noted that half yearly results of companies indicate that in case of TISCO, Ranbaxy, Arvind Mills, Nippon Denro profits have more than doubled in just one year!

D H Pai Panandikar former secretary, FICCI has observed, "Profits earned by Corporate India in 1993-94 were higher than any other Asian countries. The only country that appears to be close to India is Taiwan." In another study it was pointed out that net profits of 1200 large private sector companies rose by 83 per cent in 1993-94.

These results succinctly point out what liberalisation means to private enterprises in India. The change in depreciation norms and fantastic tax concessions given to the corporate sector in previous budgets have contributed a great deal to these super profits. With the policy framework given by Dr. Manmohan Singh, the private sector today is in a position to charge a higher price to the consumer and earn more profits. The concessions given in excise duty for several industries have also been responsible for more profits for these industries.

Freddie Mehta, industrialist cum economist has observed, "The growth in profits is 50 per cent inflation driven, 20 per cent due to low rate of interest, 10 per cent due to change in depreciation norms and a mere 20 per cent due to high productivity." According to him increase in profits due to high productivity was only 20 per cent which means that the industry has been expecting more profits due to rise in productivity! Yet the captains of industry are lamenting for low productivity of labour in India.

It is necessary to note further that the high profitability has not led to more investment and employment opportunities in India. As a matter of fact some industrialists have claimed that high profitability was due to "shedding of jobs."

Rise of 8 per cent in industrial production during April- August 1994 compared to last year should not lead to the conclusion that recession is

coming to an end. The stagnant Indian economy during 1991-93 led to lowering down of production in several sectors which gave a lower base for industrial production. The industrialists themselves have expressed a view whether this rate would be sustained for a longer time.

One of the reasons for high profits for the big business houses is that they have driven out from the market a sizable section of the small sector manufacturers in the country. The small and traditional sector has been hit due to the economic policies since they were deprived of concessional finance through public sector financial institutions. While the small scale sector was put into difficulties, the large industrial houses got several tax concessions. The structural adjustment in India was thus in favour of large industrial houses and was heavily loaded against the small and the traditional sector.

The refusal of the Government to invest more in public sector has helped the private sector to capture a part of the market controlled by the public sector earlier. This added to their profitability during the year 1993-94.

Columnist Neeraj Kaushal has noted, "In a few industries-- soft drinks, soaps and detergents and refrigerators--- competition even unleashed price wars. But there are cases where, despite competition prices of products have gone up. And profits are steadily growing too."

It is also an acknowledged fact lowering the interest rates has been to some extent responsible for higher profitability of large scale industry. The small scale industry was not in a position to take advantage of this due to their inability to compete with big business houses.

The survey presented by the Economic Times has pointed out rise in profitability of some major industrial units. The net profits of Tata Chemicals registered a growth of 269 per cent, while Telco increased its net profit by 239 per cent. The Reliance industries alone earned net profits of Rs 576 crores. Recently press reported that the net profits of M/s Pressman increased by 175 per cent.

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# AP State CITU Conference

The 7th AP State CITU Conference held at Tirupathi from October 30 to November 1.

The conference was held in the background of the many struggles conducted by the CITU separately and jointly with others. Comrades M A Gaffoor, State Secretary, RAJESWARA REDDY State Committee member and Vijaya Mohan Reddy State Council Member of CITU went on a 16-days hunger strike for getting Rayalaseema Paper Mills opened. BIFR now has ordered for its renovation by a new promoter.

A statewide agitation was carried on for fixation of minimum wages in the State culminating in a huge rally of 30,000 workers in Hyderabad which resulted in compelling the government to raise minimum rates of wages and introduce for the first time in the State Variable Dearness allowance. Struggles of rice mill workers in many districts were conducted as a result of which wages were increased up to 25% in some districts. A united strike in which the CITU union placed an important role was conducted in the State Transport resulting in a wage settlement to the satisfaction of the workers. All CITU unions actively participated in all the all-India actions. All these actions and struggles were attempted to be suppressed by the government brutally. 5 workers of the jute mill in Nellimarla were shot dead during agitation. Many CITU workers are threatened with victimisation for participating in September 29 strike. Similar repressive measures were undertaken in Rajm, Anantapur, etc. Workers participating in civil disobedience movement were brutally lathi-charged.

About 500 delegates attended the conference. 38 among them were women. 75.1% of the delegates are educated above 10th standard, some of them being postgraduates. 62.3% were below 40 years of age, the youngest being Kumari Roshna and Kumari Sarada both being 22 years of age.

The conference was hit by a severe cyclone. In the entire state more than 130 people died. yet, the workers came to participate in the rally from far off places: 2500 came from Srikakulam district which 800 kms far from Tirupati and 1500 from Bellampalli 1000 kms away from Tirupati. They participated in the procession on the 30th Oct, in pouring rain. Comrades E Balanandan, Varadarajan, M Hanumantharao and Nandury Prasadarao spoke, while comrade Parsa Satyanarayana presided over the rally.

Two conference started with Com.E Balanandan, president, CITU unfurling the flag. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Chengal Reddi, Chairman of the Tirupati-Tirumala Devasthanam, welcomed the delegates in a brief speech. Condolences were paid to the martyrs and to the departed leaders.

Com.Syamal Chakrabarty, CITU Secretary and West Bengal Transport Minister inaugurated the conference. He enthused the delegates with the experiences of West Bengal in building a powerful movement in the state. He said that unity of the working class and the peasantry as well as the unity of trade unions were the basis of a powerful movement. The expansion of democracy to the lower level and devolution of power to the village panchayats and implementation of land reforms were the key for four successive electoral victories of the Left Front Government in West Bengal.

Fraternal delegates including Com.Prasad, general secretary of State IFTU, Com.Arjun, General Secretary of State BEFI, Com.S Punyawati, general secretary of Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham, Com.Y Venkateswararao, president of SFI gave inspiring messages. Messages received from other State units of CITU were read out.

Com.Parsa Satyanarayana, president of CITU State Committee read his presidential speech in which he dealt with the political developments in the international and national fields.

Com.N Prasadarao, submitted his general secretary's report which exhaustively dealt with the Economic and Industrial Policies of P V Narasimha Rao Government and the resistance movement that developed in the country. He said that the movement has to be continued and carried forward and the CITU organisation should be geared to discharge this patriotic duty. He said that CITU, since the last conference had spread to new areas and new fronts and the membership had increased from 1,08,799 in 1990 to 1,32,294 till the opening of this conference and the unions increased during this period from 412 in 1990 to 499. New federations of Beedi, Anganwadi and Building Workers were formed and District level committees were formed in all districts. The State centre was functioning with 6 office bearers and 4 state committee members and still needed some more to share the growing burden of work.

The report set the task of increasing the membership next year to 1,50,000 and by the next conference to 2,00,000 and the collection of Rs 5 lakhs fund for 1995 for the State Centre. Functioning of the unions democratically was stressed and promotion of cadre to responsible posts was also stressed. The principle of 10% inclusion of women in committees has to be followed.

The delegates were divided into 8 commissions in order to thoroughly discuss various issues before the movement. These commissions were (1) Organisation (2) Technology (3) Working Women (4) Unorganised Industries (5) public sector (6) Road Transport (7) Government Employees and (8) Energy. Comrades Raghavalu, PSN Moorthy, Hemalata, S N Reddi, A Satyanarayan, S Chinnappareddi, K Venkateswarlu, Sambasivarao were the successive reporters for these commissions. In all the commissions 442 delegates participated of whom 186 participated in the discussions. The printed drafts placed before these commissions were thoroughly discussed and finalised.

The reports of the Commissions and of the General Secretary's were put before the delegates session and adopted unanimously. The accounts were presented and sent for audit.

Com.Balanandan addressed the delegate session at the conclusion of the conference. In his speech he referred to the policies being pursued by the Central Government and narrated how the working class in alliance with all other toilers was fighting against those policies. He stressed on the importance of strengthening the organisation by overcoming the drawbacks and hoped that the State which conducted the glorious Telengana armed struggle, will discharge its duty to fight against the anti-people policies of the Government and save the country.

A resolution on the ensuing State Assembly elections was adopted. The Conference gave a call to defeat the Congress which was bartering away the independence and self-reliance of the country to MNCs and which had brought the State to the brink of utter ruin and to elect the candidates set up by CPI(M), CPI, TDP and Janata Dal.

Resolutions were passed on several issues facing the working class in the State. It demanded withdrawal of G O 366 which stopped payment of bonus to employees in State undertakings,

demanding the inclusion of CITU representatives in the State Minimum Wages Advisory Committee and called for a state-level rally in Hyderabad on the issue of fixation of minimum rates of wages, on the reopening of Rayalaseema Paper Mill and other important closed mills, and on the new economic and industrial policies of the government.

At the conclusion of the conference 17 new office-bearers and including them, a new State Committee with 68 members and a new State Council with 202 members were elected.

P Satyanarayana, was elected Hony. President, N Prasada Rao as president, and Com.B V Raghavalu was elected as the general secretary.

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## THE RISE.....

### Profits are going up...

Net Profits 1993-94	Percentage growth	(Rs in crore)
Tata Chemicals	276.6	269
Telco	101.8	239
Grasim	227.9	65
Bajaj Auto	145.7	183
Indian Rayon	97.9	124
Reliance Industries	576.0	79
Larson & Toubro	195.6	65
Essar Gujarat	182.2	77
Hindalco	157.9	37
Kirloskar Oil Engines	10.2	231

Source Economic Times Calcutta on 19th November 1994.

While the Government of India is talking of resource crunch and expresses its inability to find resources to revive the sick undertakings it is purposefully ignoring to take into account the super profits of some of the business giants. If the government mops up these super profit it will have sufficient funds to revive many of the sick units which are facing acute difficulties for want of working capital.

Trade union movement in India in its campaign against the new economic policies should highlight this robbery by the big business houses and bring pressure on the Government of India to impose taxation against profit hungry industrialists and raise resources for revival of the sick and closed industries whose number is swelling in the country with each passing day.

# CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

(BASE 1982 = 100)

Centre	Linking factor for Old Base		Centre	Linking factor for Old Base			
	July '94	Aug. '94		July '94	Aug. '94		
All India	281	284	4.93	Nasik	302	304	--
Gudur	269	272	4.33	Pune	298	303	--
Guntur	284	285	5.60	Sholapur	292	295	5.03
Hyderabad	260	262	5.23	Barbil	281	280	5.00
Visakhapatnam	263	265	--	Rourkela	259	259	3.59
Warrangal	282	278	--	Amritsar	260	264	5.19
Doom-Dooma				Ludhiana	262	269	--
Tinsukia	248	261	4.05	Ajmer	284	287	5.01
Guwahati	285	290	--	Jaipur	275	276	5.17
Labac-Silchar	251	256	3.96	Coimbatore	273	277	5.35
Mariani-Jorhat	263	269	3.95	Coonor	292	295	4.80
Rangapara-Tezpur	263	271	4.29	Madras	285	289	5.05
Jamshedpur	264	267	4.68	Madurai	279	279	5.27
Jharia	248	251	4.63	Salem	289	287	--
Kodarma	243	254	5.43	Tiruchirapally	302	307	--
Monghyr	264	269	5.29	Agra	268	273	--
Noamundi	260	260	4.58	Ghaziabad	270	274	--
Ranchi-Hatia	274	278	--	Kanpur	284	284	4.69
Ahmedabad	283	286	4.78	Saharanpur	269	274	5.06
Baroda	284	290	--	Varanasi	295	295	5.12
Bhavanagar	302	308	4.99	Asansol	264	266	4.77
Rajkot	284	290	--	Calcutta	284	286	4.74
Surat	297	298	--	Darjeeling	256	260	4.5
Faridabad	274	280	--	Durgapur	287	291	--
Yamunanagar	266	276	5.53	Haldia	294	295	--
Srinagar	277	278	5.47	Howrah	296	297	4.12
Bangalore	275	275	5.66	Jalpaiguri	257	261	4.16
Belgaum	292	292	--	Raniganj	250	252	4.40
Hubli-Dharwar	282	285	--	Chandigarh	275	281	--
Mercara	269	274	--	Delhi	302	311	4.97
Alwaye	277	278	5.19	Pondicherry	314	318	--
Mundakayam	284	280	--	<b>Additional series of Labour Bureau</b>			
Quilon	296	298	--	Kothagudem	283	286	3.25
Trivandrum	309	311	--	Himachal Pradesh	269	272	3.75
Bhalaghat	280	283	5.24	Bhilwara	302	302	3.20
Bhilai	255	258	3.49	Chindwara	285	287	2.59
Bhopal	293	299	5.46	Tripura	272	273	4.37
Indore	298	304	5.18	Goa	316	316	3.40
Jabalpur	298	304	6.41	<b>Note:</b> Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number.			
Bombay	312	314	5.12	—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series,			
Nagpur	295	301	4.99				

# CONFERENCE OF ANGANWADI WORKERS

The 2nd conference of All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and helpers was held at Com. Bijoy Pal Nagar (Moulali Youth Centre) Calcutta, from October 27-29. Com. Vimal Ranadive hoisted the flag at the Matrys column. After paying homage to the departed comrades, the conference began with 248 delegates, who came from 16 states. The future of the ICDS was seen by all to be closely linked to the new emphasis on the liberalisation of the economy. As more and more areas of state control and responsibility are being privatised, the conference deliberations were held in the context of the very real threat of privatisation. 190 workers, 10 helpers and 46 Trade Union activists participated in the discussions. The credential committee report showed the growing strength of the organisation of the Anganwadi staff, since 124 delegates were linked to the union from 91 onwards. 151 delegates had been members of their unions for less than 5 years, whilst 95 delegates had more than 5 years of activist experience. Whilst this indicated that the movement was not very old, it certainly had a sizable number of militant and experienced cadres.

Com. Ahylia Ranganekar gave her inaugural address at the Girija Potti Manch after the Presidium was elected. The presidium included Vimal Ranadive, Bhabatosh Roy, Nirupama Chatterji, Ahilya Ranganekar, Usha Sharma, K.N. Vijaya Lakshmi and Rajeshwari. Condolence resolutions remembering Com. Manoranjan Roy and Com. Girija Potti were moved by Bhabatosh Roy, the Working President.

Com. Kamal Mukherji greeted the conference on behalf of AIDWA. Niren Ghosh, President of CITU, W. Bengal, and Shejali Bhattacharya greeted the conference on behalf of AITUC, R.K. Dutta greeted the conference on behalf of NFTU and Amarjeet Kaur sent greeting to the conference on behalf of AITUC-Central office. Com. Chittabrata Majumdar greeted the delegates on behalf of CITU, West Bengal.

The delegate session opened with a welcome speech from Prasnata Chatterji, Mayor of Calcutta and Chriman, Reception Committee.

Com. Vimal Ranadive then delivered her Presidential address. She thanked West Bengal for hosting the conference and appreciated the response from 16 states who sent such good delegations. She was critical of the exploitation of the

Anganwadi workers. With 2500 project running, there were more than 6 lakh women working in the ICDS scheme. She reported on the success of the June 17th strike and analysed the actions of S.S.S. in developing a strong protest movement all over the country.

The Gen. Secretary, Com. Nilima Maitra placed her report and reviewed the Anganwadi movement since the first conference. She discussed the changes in the international and national situation and pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation to evaluate how far it has achieved the goals. The treasurer presented the a/c's and requested state units to pay affiliation fees by March every year. The whole of the 28th was devoted to the delegates discussion on the Gen. Secy's report. 36 speakers participated in this discussion.

Kerala and Haryana delegates reported about their struggles in building the organisation and pointed out the extra work and the irrational system of reimbursement. Rajasthan indicated the serious flaw in basing an organisation on one person, who when she left the work, had no one to sustain the struggle. Tamilnadu indicated the victories they had won-4 hours work only, sari and blouse for Divali and a membership of 96% in the union. Promotion of helpers also was achieved.

Bengal delegates explained the reason for their large membership - a 3 tier organisation, backed by active mass organisations. They also had the privilege of getting several workers elected to the panchayats.

Karnataka, Himachal and Haryana are also struggling against the attitude of the bureaucracy and the threat of privatisation.

Andhra indicated that where the union is strong, gains can be made they have demanded Rs. 100 as ex-gratia payment and promotion to vacant post in the womens development office.

All delegates lent their support to the demonstration programme at Delhi in the budget session.

Com. Jyoti Basu addressed the delegates and gave the assurance that he would take up the demands of the ANGANWADI staff with the Planning Commission. He asked for facts and datas to refute the Govt's arguments that the projects under ICDS should be privatised because the govt was withdrawing from the social sector.

Contd on page 17

# Road Transport Workers Convention

A convention of Road Transport Workers representing various unions of Road Transport Workers engaged in Truck, Bus, Mini Bus and State Transport Corporations of different North Eastern States viz Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and West Bengal, was held on 4th October 1994 at Lakhiram Barua Sadan, Guwahati. About 300 delegates representing both private and public sector transports attended the convention. A Presidium consisting of A Pyangrope(Shillong), B K Sangma(Tura), L Jhanendra Singh(Manipur) Manik Dey(Tripura), M Ahmed(Assam), Mrs Sibani Sengupta(West Bengal), Viniho Sema(Nagaland) and L T Peter Taksing(Arunachal Pradesh) conducted the day long proceeding. At the very outset while welcoming the delegates, Prafulla Sarma, Chairman of the Reception Committee appealed to strengthen the joint platform to fight the anti-worker and anti-people policies of the government. Achyut Deka, veteran trade union leader of Assam inaugurated the convention, explaining the policies of the government and the conditions of the working class of the country as a whole.

Sarbeswar Das, convenor of the Coordination Committee placed his report explaining the problems of Road Transport Workers of North Eastern States. It was explained that the Motor Workers of NE States were facing maximum police harassment. In the name of check gates and requisition, the police and MVIs extorted money from the drivers. To cross Assam a truck driver has to pay atleast one thousand rupees to the police in different check gates. The MVIs also forced the drivers to pay on flimsy grounds taking advantage of MV Act 1988. He stated that the Motor Workers had no job security, uniform wage structure and social security benefits like PF, Bonus, gratuity, pension etc. The provisions of Motor Transport Workers Act 1961 were never implemented in this area of North East States. He urged upon the delegates to unite and fight on the basis of 16-point demands of the Motor Transport Workers. He observed that representatives from all the North eastern States barring Mizoram had attended the convention and it was a matter of great pleasure that while some forces were trying to build-up secessionist movement in this area the Motor Workers were trying to form united platform not only to protect their own interest but also for the unity and integrity of the country. For the first time the transport workers of Hill States had joined the all India action of 29th Sept, in the form of Chakka Bandh.

Narayan Saha, Jt Secretary of All India Road Transport Workers Federation congratulated the delegates for their efforts to form the joint platform of Motor Workers in this industrially backward area.

While explaining the problems of Motor industry and possible effects of New Economic Policy and GATT agreement, Saha said that the workers had no alternative but to fight unitedly to protect their rights and livelihood. While explaining his experience in west Bengal and other parts of the country he informed that the Transport workers of SAARC countries comprising of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives had also formed a joint platform to ventilate the common problems of Motor workers. It has also raised the demand of 8-hours duty and social security benefits to Motor Workers. He called upon the convention to observe Demand Day on 22nd November 1994 at the call of the Joint Committee of SAARC countries.

Several delegates from Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Shillong, Garo Hills(Meghalaya), Tripura and West Bengal spoke in the convention and expressed their full support to demands raised by the convenor. They unequivocally supported the concept of forming the Coordination Committee of Drivers and Motor Workers' Unions of North Eastern States.

The convention unanimously accepted the declaration placed by the convenor and decided to observe Demand Day on 22nd November 1994 by way of holding meetings and wearing demand badges on duty. The convention also formed a 34 member working committee with Sarbeswar Das as convenor.

## Dr A R Desai

The CITU expresses deep sorrow over the passing away of Dr A R Desai, a distinguished social scientist, author and a consistent upholder of Left ideology at Baroda on November 12.

Dr Desai who authored several books will be long remembered for his scholarly publication, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, a pioneering research on the subject. His research on rural poverty, agrarian struggles, nature of democratic rights as enshrined in the Indian constitution and their actual enjoyment are still relevant and will immensely help future scholars. His academic accomplishments are many. He headed the social sciences department of Bombay university for many years. Dr Desai was a champion of Left ideology and was consistent upholder of the cause of the peasants and the working class.

The CITU sends its condolences to the members of the bereaved family and pays homage to the memory of Dr. Desai.

# MASSIVE RALLY BY DAILY-WAGE WORKERS

□ **Badal Saroj**

Thousands of daily-wages workers who came from all over Madhya Pradesh and thronged the state capital Bhopal on October 9 to register their massive protest against their retrenchment and demanding confirmation of the workers of the work-charged establishment, held a powerful demonstration in front of the residence of the chief minister and courted arrest. Responding to the call of the state unit of the CITU these demonstrators which included women in large number who were the first to offer themselves for arrest, broke the police cordon and headed towards the residence of the chief minister.

Earlier, these demonstrators held a mass meeting at the Yadgar-e-Shahjahan park. Addressing the mammoth meeting the state CPI(M) secretary and CITY vice-president Shailendra Shaili, termed the retrenchment order issued by the state government as unconstitutional. He said the state government is enriching the capitalists at the cost of the employment of the toiling masses. Sharply criticising the state government which is privatising many departments and public sector undertakings, Shaili called upon the people to intensify the struggle to protect the employment of the workers. He said the policies followed under the directions of the World Bank and IMF are wrecking disaster and have endangered even the sovereignty of our country.

Veteran freedom fighter and former MP, Yamuna Prasad Shastri, warned that policies which played with the employment of the people, will not be tolerated. He termed the government of Digvijay Singh as the well-wisher of feudal lords and capitalists, and said the disastrous economic policies of the union government has made the state a grazing pasture of capitalists. Shastri termed the action of abolition of vacant posts as an anti-people step.

CPI(M) MLA Ram Laxhan Sharma strongly criticised the termination of the services of the daily-wage workers. He alleged that the BJP which avoided raising this issue in the assembly and the chief minister who continued to assure that the matter will be discussed in the assembly, were both anti-worker.

The meeting was presided over by state CITU general secretary, S.K. Kumar. Among those who addressed the meeting were state CITU president Badal Saroj, workers' representatives from various districts and leaders of Anganwadi workers.

After the conclusion of the meeting, the demonstrators formed themselves in a disciplined procession and marched towards the residence of the chief minister raising slogans; but the police stopped them en route. All the elaborate arrangements made by the police to arrest the demonstrators proved to be insufficient. Some jathas had to await arrest. The arrested demonstrators removed the barricades and marched towards the residence of the chief minister where the police used force to control them. Many demonstrators staged dharna in anticipation of the arrest. Two thousands workers including state CITU president Badal Saroj and state CITU secretary S.Kumar were arrested.

It will be noted that the MP state government, by a single order, had terminated the services of all the daily-wage workers employed in the state government departments from January this year. On behalf of the CITY state Committee, Badal Saroj and Subodh Pradhan of the MP Lawyers Union challenged this order in the High Court through a public interest petition. The High Court immediately stayed the operation of the order. After accepting the unconstitutionality of the order, the High Court disposed the public interest petition. Due to the intervention of the CITU, about one lakh employees continued to be in service.

## **OBSERVE COM. BTR'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY**

The 90th Birth Anniversary of Com. B.T. Ranadive, the founder President of CITU falls on 19th Dec. 1994.

All State Committees, unions and federations should observe the anniversary in a befitting manner by holding seminars, rallies, meetings etc.

At Delhi a seminar will be held on 18th December on Trade Union Unity, where all central trade unions have been invited. On 19th December a mass meeting has been arranged at the CITU Centre Lawns.

**CITU Secretariat**

## **CONTRIBUTE TO COM. BTR MEMORIAL TRUST FUND**

All unions are requested to contribute liberally to the Com. BTR Memorial Trust Fund. As per decision of the CITU Conference, workers are requested to contribute one day's wage to the fund by 19th December, 1994.

**CITU Secretariat**

## Standing Labour Committee Meeting

# Trade Unions Reject Linking of Social Clause to International Trade

□ P.K. GANGULY

The Government called the 32nd Session of the Standing Labour Committee on October 27. Although the Standing Labour Committee is to function in between two Indian Labour Conferences, and is supposed to meet every six months to discuss and deal with the vital issues concerning labour, yet the growing apathy of the Government was revealed, as it called the Standing Labour Committee meeting after a lapse of two years and a half, and more than two years after the last Indian Labour Conference. The last SLC meeting was held on 25th July, 1992 and the last ILC was held on September 7 and 8. It was precisely during this period, that the working class of India faced the most unprecedented offensives from the imperialist countries through their international financial and trade organisations like the IMF, World Bank and GATT, and through the supine Narasimha Rao Government of India.

This meeting also was obviously called because of the pressure of inclusion of a social clause in the GATT (now WTO) created by the USA and their cohorts to push India into the marsh of international trade, and to extricate itself from the situation, the Government of India wanted cooperation of the trade unions.

The social clause however was a singular issue, on which there was not only unanimity among the trade unions and the employers, but they also supported the Government to reject it. In the discussions that followed, the consensus was arrived at that the motive of the USA and some other advanced capitalist countries to link social clause to international trade was an attempt to introduce unilateral and arbitrary non-tariff protectionist barriers to the multilateral free trade regime to wriggle out from the crisis they are in, caused by recession and growing unemployment in those countries, as best as possible.

The trade unions castigated the Government for signing the GATT agreement, which in itself was a nefarious ploy to trap the developing countries into the neo-colonial net of exploitation by the advanced capitalist countries. The inclusion of the social clause would be the final nail into the coffin, and making the ILO irrelevant. Social clause in the form of labour

standard, environment, child labour, etc is clearly under the jurisdiction of ILO, and cannot be hijacked by an extraneous imperialist body like the WTO and authorise it to use trade sanctions against developing countries like India.

While delinking the social clause with international trade, the trade unions however severely grilled the Government of India for non-observance of the minimum standards set by the ILO. They demanded immediate ratification of the two vital ILO Conventions No.87 and 98 relating to Freedom of Association and Right to Collective Bargaining. They also demanded implementation of other important Conventions on payment of minimum wages, child labour, equal opportunities, environment, safety, occupational hazards, etc, in the entire field of which the Government of India is a notorious defaulter.

The trade unions demanded another meeting to specifically discuss and decide all these issues for practical implementation. On Child Labour they demanded their inclusion in the National Authority on Child Labour, which has been created by the Government and in the Central Advisory Board for Child Labour also. They demanded poverty alleviation programme, need based wages and employment generation programme and free education to children as means for progressive elimination of child labour. The Government's new economic and industrial policies came under severe criticism in the course. The trade unions also demanded immediate settlement of the long pending issues of slab system of DA, pension and abolition of ceilings on bonus.

The Labour Minister, who was presiding over the meeting was at his wit's end as to what to reply. He however concluded the meeting with an assurance that another meeting of the SLC would be called soon to discuss these issues. He also informed that a Conference of NAM Labour Ministers would be held at Delhi from January 19 to 23, 1995 and the next Indian Labour Conference would be held on January 3 and 4, 1995.

The trade unions attending the SLC meeting were CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, BMS, UTUC, TUCC, UTUC(LS) and NFITU. The CITU was represented by M K Pandhe and P K Ganguly.

## The Spectre of 301

One of the major dividends of the celebrated end of cold war era, it has been claimed by major players in international trade, is the 113-nation GATT treaty concluded at Marrakesh (Morocco) on April 15 this year rounding off the 6-year old Uruguay round of trade negotiations. It is being claimed that the treaty heralds the crumbling of trade barriers, renders access to markets unfettered and unshackles trade between and among nations. In an era of freedom, trade must be free!

But to all who have been following the zigzag course of intricate negotiations away from public gaze, behind the suave and sugar-coated talks of free flow of trade, lies the elaborate game plan of advanced industrialised countries to strengthen their protectionist policies, corner the biggest slice for themselves, browbeat and suppress the legitimate claims of developing countries and to foist unfavourable terms on them and to reinforce their iron grip. Though at times mutual hostility and suspicion, clash of interests and conflicts over specific areas threatened the culmination of the prolonged negotiations, eventually these were patched up. They were spurred by their necessity of not allowing the third world countries to advance their interests. The United States had already broken the backbone of third world countries by resorting to country by country negotiation and forced them to fall in line. If only India had stood up against the pressure, other countries could have mustered courage to stand up to the US pressure. With Indian opposition collapsing, the third world resistance dissipated. This spinelessness and surrender is being masqueraded by Indian spokesmen as pragmatism. And since then every conceivable imaginary gain of the GATT treaty is being projected and the people are being fed with misinformation.

With the passage of time following the conclusion of the treaty, new facts, fresh doubts and hitherto concealed aspects are coming to light. The IMF has come out with the conclusion that whatever benefit would flow from the treaty, would be unevenly distributed. What the IMF does not say is that trade hereafter would be more unequal. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has published its finding that the treaty would result in pushing up the grain import bills. The developing countries which

account for 75 per cent of wheat imports globally, face wheat price rises of between 5 and 8 per cent due to the projected cut in subsidies. While developing countries will pay more for food, the annual US gains from the treaty arrangements will be 122.4 billion dollars by the next decade. The European union is likely to gain going up by 163.5 billion dollar annually in year 2005. More examples are unnecessary. Trade blocks which run counter to the concept free trade still continues to be a cornerstone of US policy. The US and other imperialist countries never ease the pressure to push down the commodity prices. There are thousand and one channel to pressurise, browbeat, cajole or cow down, the poor countries. The GATT treaty sanctifies all these devious methods.

On top of all these now comes the US announcement that whatever the provisions of law of countries, in the event of a conflict of law the US trade law shall prevail. Despite all the talk of free trade, crumbling of barriers, easy accessibility to markets, the leader of the free world insists that Special and Super 301 shall be invoked whenever necessary. The US is keeping the weapon to bully the poorer countries, to force its way into any country, to gain access to any market, any business on trade even if it is against the national interest of that country, against its national legal framework or infringes sovereignty. The US is retaining the crowbar to beat down to submission the weaker nations. Super 301 was invoked against Japan, Brazil and India. About Japan, the US moved carefully and finally agreed to an informal arrangement. Brazil buckled; India made some public noise and surrendered behind the screen. The threat of retaliatory action under Super 301 played a role in ushering the Fund-Bank dictated regime.

The US commitment to free and unfettered trade lasts as long as it suits US interests. The moment it tends to go even marginally against US interest, the cloak of commitment to free trade disappears. The insistence that US trade law would prevail in the event of a conflict is yet another proof, if any proof was needed, of US hypocrisy. And lying prostrate to US dictates and undertaking to advance its interests even by compromising economic sovereignty is what the present government is claiming to be a major victory.

# MASSIVE YOUTH RALLY AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

The Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) and the Students' Federation of India (SFI) jointly organised a massive rally before parliament on November 10 against unemployment. Over 5000 youth and students converged at the capital from all parts of the country demanding jobs for all and education for all. The rally was organised as a part of programme taken up by the World Federation of Democratic Youth to observe November 10 as the day of Global Youth Action against Unemployment.

The marchers assembled at the Feroj Shah Kotla ground and marched to the Parliament Street Police Station, where they were stopped by the police in barricades. The march was led by the youth and student leaders, viz, M.A. Baby, M.P., Md. Salim,

M.P., and Bratin Sen Gupta.

A huge public meeting was held in front of the Parliament Street Police Station, which was addressed among others by M.A. Baby, Md. Salim, Bratin Sen Gupta and Sitaram Yechuri. The leaders assailed the policy of the Narasimha Rao Government, being pursued at the behest of the IMF and World Bank, which had resulted in growing unemployment instead of generating employment, and presented a bleak future for the youth and students.

The DYFI has started preparations for observing the year 1995 as the World Youth Year as declared by the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

## Massive Rally by Jammu Workers

Hundreds of employees, worker's and peasants held a massive rally at Town Hall, Jammu to protest against the disastrous consequences of Economic policies of the Central Government and GATT agreement on the eve of the strike call given by the National Platform of Mass Organisations throughout the country. The Banking and Insurance employees of J&K also went on complete strike and joined the mass rally.

The rally was addressed besides others by Com.Md Maqbool and Com.Om Parkash of CITU, Com.Nirdesh Upal, AITUC, Com.K K Bakshi and

Com.Arora of NZIEA and JAC, Com.G N Malik of Kisan Tehrik and Com.Sham Parshad of USTA. The speakers lashed out the economic policies which have endangered the country's economic sovereignty to imperialist agencies. They explained that these policies are responsible for raising price, unemployment, privatisation, retrenchment and cut in subsidies, etc which have made the life of toiling masses miserable.

A militant procession was also taken out from Town Hall, which passed through the main markets and culminated at Shalimar Chowk.

## Tripura Jute Mill Reopens

Long drawn struggle by the CITU ended with success at Tripura, when the only Jute mill in the State reopened on November 1, 1994 after a gap of two years and a half.

The Jute Mill was opened by the Left Front Government. But it was closed by the Congress-TUJS regime from April, 1992. All the 1700 workers were summarily thrown away without any payment. The mill had 205 looms. All the looms and other assets were stolen and sold away by the gangsters.

After the victory of the Left Front, the Dasarath Deb Government in its all round efforts to stabilise the economy of the State, tried to reopen the mill, and sought Central help. But the Narasimha Rao Government refused to extend any help to the Left

Front Government.

After long drawn efforts and with the cooperation of the workers, the Left Front Government arrived at an agreement with Raj International, a private enterprise, to reopen the mill.

According to the agreement, all the 1700 workers have been reinstated. They will also get their arrears upto October 31, 1994 in instalments.

On November 1, in a function, Com.Baidyanath Majumdar, the Deputy Chief Minister and Vice President of CITU, pressed the button and set the mill to functioning with 155 looms. Among those who addressed the workers apart from Com.Baidyanath Majumdar were Com.Samar Chowdhury, the State Home Minister and Com.Tapan Chakravarty, the State Industries Minister, both State CITU leaders.

# RUSSIAN TRADE UNIONS LAUNCH MASS ACTION

(We are reproducing hereunder a letter to CITU from the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia regarding the present condition of the Russian workers under the Yeltsin regime in capitalist path of development. The CITU's letter supporting their mass action programme on October 27, is also being published hereunder-Ed.)

Letter from Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia

Dear Collegues,

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FITUR) are appealing to you for an expression of solidarity with working people and members of trade unions of the Russian Federation.

Recession of industrial and agricultural production in Russia has reached a critical mark. Millions of people have not been paid wages and salaries for a number of consecutive months. Unemployment, both manifest and hidden, has been acquiring threatening dimensions. Continuing fall in the living standards of the population has brought a considerable part of it beyond the threshold of physical survival. Social tension is gradually rising to the point of explosion.

It is with regret that we have to assert that the steps, which are being taken by authorities with the presumable aim of overcoming the crisis, have failed so far to bring about real positive results. The Government are not respecting a series of their commitments in the social and economic field, which were stipulated in the General Agreement they signed with Trade Unions and Employers Associations, as well as in the treaty on social accord.

The FITUR considers as fully substantiated recent observations formulated by the ILO Committee of Experts on the non-compliance of the Russian Government with a number of provisions of some the ILO Conventions ratified by the Russian Federation, and among them the Convention No 95 "Protection of Wages" and Convention No 122 "Employment Policy".

In the situation that has arisen, the Executive Committee of FITUR General Council have decided upon an All-Russian Protest Action to be taken by Trade Unions on the 27th of October this year, against the worsening of social and economic conditions of the working people. United by the Trade Union task of defence of working people's vital interests, on this day and through the entire country we are going to hold rallies, marches and meetings under two main demands:

Payment of dues in wages and salaries

Taking of practical steps to avert mass unemployment.

Aware of your Organisation's declared principles of struggle for the interest of the working people of world over and proceeding from the universal values of ILO standards, some of which are being violated in Russia today, we deem it our duty to inform you about the lawful demands of workers and Trade Unions of our country. The FITUR believes, that in present day, which sees globalization of economic processes, International Solidarity is an effective means in the struggle of the working people, irrespective of their territorial or organizational belongings.

We shall be grateful for an expression of your position towards the situation, that has at present developed in Russia. In case of your positive attitude, please send us your message before the 26th October at the latest, so that we could inform our rank-and-file members and public at large in due time, that is before and during the Collective action.

With fraternal Trade Union greetings,

19.10.94

The Federation of  
Independent  
Trade Unions of Russia

## Support of CITU

22-10-1994

General Secretary Federation of Independent Trade Unions (FITUR) 42, Leninsky prospect Moscow, Russia

Dear Comrade,

We acknowledge with thanks your letter dated 19th October 1994.

The shocking working conditions in Russia is a matter of serious concern to us and we fully sympathise with the working class of Russia when they are facing acute deterioration in their working and living conditions.

We strongly condemn the policies of the Government of Russia which are wholly responsible for this extremely bad situation through which the workers are passing today. The violation of the solemn commitments given by the Government of

Russia to the trade unions is an attack on the trade union rights of the Russian workers.

The non-payment of wages to the workers for several months is bound to cause acute discontent among the working class of Russia.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses full solidarity with our Russian brothers and sisters who have been left with no other alternative but to resist the sharp deterioration in their living standards.

Please inform us about the programme of direct action you will decide to defend the working and living conditions of the Russian workers. Please rest assured that the CITU affiliated unions will organise solidarity actions all over India in support of Russian brothers and sisters.

Long live the friendship between the working class of India and Russia!

Long Live the bonds of friendship between CITU and FITUR!!

With warmest greetings,

Yours fraternally,  
M.K. PANDHE  
General Secretary

## WORLD CONFERENCE ON SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA

The World Conference to express solidarity with Cuba began at Havana on November 21. The conference will continue upto November 25. The conference is being organised by the International Committee on Solidarity with Cuba to mobilise world opinion in support of the grim struggle waged by Cuba to safeguard its revolution and socialism against the offensives launched by the USA and its 32 years economic embargo against Cuba, defying the UN General Assembly voting against the embargo for the consecutive three years.

About 2,500 delegates from 238 countries are attending the conference at their own expense, representing different political parties, trade unions, students, youth, Cuban Solidarity organisations and distinguished individuals and Nobel Laureates.

A 42-member contingent from India left Delhi for Cuba on November 18 to attend the Conference. The Indian delegation included of Coms. Harkishan Singh Surjeet, M.A. Baby, Mangatram Pasla, Biman Basu(CPI-M), A.B. Bardhan (CPI), Chitta Basu(Forward Block), etc. From the CITU, Kali Ghosh, P.R. Krishnan, Ramanika Gupta, J. Ballabh, etc. were in the delegation.

## Contd from page 10

Com. M.K.Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU addressed the delegates on the closing day. In the context of the NEP, the CITU had committed to support the demands of the Anganwadi staff.

The following resolutions were passed in the conference unanimously. (1) Against the Howrah Mail Bombay accident demanding resignation of Railway Minister. (2) Against the New Economic Policy (3) Against price rise (4) Against privatisation of Anganwadi project (5) Against communalism (6) For Regularisation of Anganwadi Workers and helpers (7) Against atrocities on women and children (8) Against Imperialist conspiracy against the third world countries.

The conference ended with the election of an expanded general council and working committee. The following office bearers were elected President : Vimal Ranadive, Working president : B. Roy, Gen. Secretary : Nilima Maitra, Vice presidents : Lakshmi Sehgal, Ahilya Ranganekar, K. Hemalatha, Nirupama Chatterji, Secretaries : Kiran Moghe, Nazimunnisa, N. Palaninathan, C.H. Balamohan, Treasurer Nina Rao. 23 member working committee was elected.

There was a rally at Esplanade Grounds addressed by Binoy Pal and attended by several hundred anganwadi workers and helpers from the areas around Calcutta. The meeting was addressed among others by Com. Binoy Choudhuri, Minister West Bengal, Ahilya Ranganekar, Nirupama Chatterjee, Chittabrata Majumdar and Vimal Ranadive.

## 13th Congress of WFTU

The 13th World Trade Union Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions is going to be held at Damascus, Syria from November 22 to 26, 1994.

Being invited, a delegation from the CITU left for Syria on November 21. The delegation consists of Com.M K Pandhe, General Secretary(Leader); Com.K N Ravindranath, Secretary; Com.Robin Sen, Vice President; Com.Sukomal Sen,(Working Committee member and General Secretary of All India State Govt Employees Federation) and Com.R Ramanathan(Airlines Corpn.Employees Union).

The report of the Congress will be published in the next issue.

[We are publishing hereunder some reports of international struggles by the working class, from April to August, 1994, which were published in the "Flashes," the news journal of the WFTU, received at the CITU Centre in November--Ed]

## Japan

### 800,000 Workers Strike Against Revision of Pension System

On 20 April, some 800,000 trade union members in 42 industrial unions and 47 regional organisations in Japan went on strike as part of this year's Spring Struggle campaign. The main demands raised were: stop the adverse changes in the pension system proposed by the government, grant wage increases and guarantee stable employment. This strike by the Japanese workers concerning the pension system was the first in 21 years, the Zenroren newsletter has pointed out.

The Zenroren intensified its national campaign against the revision of the pension system through protest actions in May and June.

Zenroren president Takeshi Oh'e stated that the coalition government intends to take back from workers the pension system they won after long years of struggle, and he accused the government of paying no attention to this most essential element for people's life.

Under the government's proposals, the age of retirement is to be raised from 60 to 65. The rates of contributions for pensions are to be raised and the scale of retirement benefits reduced.

## Indonesia

### Workers Strike in Medan against Arrest of Trade Union Activist

Protesting against the arrests of trade unionists by the police, about 4,000 workers from four factories in Medan went on strike from 8 June. Thousands of striking workers confronted state troops which were sent to crush the strike.

Among those arrested and prosecuted are several local leaders of the independent SBSI union which has been organising the workers to demand implementation of minimum wages and labour laws.

The government has since prosecuted more than 40 firms for not paying the legal minimum wage or giving proper holidays and working long hours.

## Argentina

### General Strike against Neo-liberal Policies

A country-wide general strike was observed in Argentina on 2nd August in protest against the neo-liberal policies of the government.

Victor de Gennaro, leader of the ATE public sector union said: "This strike is a warning to the government to temper its arrogance and pay attention to all sectors of society. It is a warning over falling wages, the crisis of regional economies and the plague of unemployment."

This was the second such general strike since President Menem took office in 1989 protesting against decline in real wages and rising unemployment. Three weeks earlier, at the call of the trade unions, over 100,000 persons demonstrated in the capital, Buenos Aires, demanding satisfaction of their demands.

## Romania

### 80,000 Miners on Strike

On 28 July, over 80,000 Romanian miners began a strike demanding that wages should be linked to inflation. The workers rejected an offer of 7 per cent wage rise and demanded full compensation for the fall in purchasing power caused by the rise in prices.

## USA

### Complaint against TNCs filed by Unions under NAFTA

Trade unions in the United States have filed complaints against three TNCs, under the NAFTA procedures, for violating the right to organise, in their Mexican plants.

The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UERMWA) has lodged a complaint against the TNC General Electric and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters has charged the TNC Honeywell of obstructing trade union organisation. Another complaint is being filed against TNC Sony for "persistent violations of workers' rights particularly in the area of freedom of association."

The complaints have been filed with the US National Administrative Office, established to handle labour complaints under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

According to the complaint, Honeywell sacked 21 production workers from its electronics parts plant in Chihuahua, Mexico in November. The IBT stated that "Honeywell is part of an employers' association, which uses spying, electronic surveillance, locked door interrogations, threats and firings to keep out independent union groups."

# DECLARATION ADOPTED IN THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF RAILWAYMEN

*at Himachal Bhavan, New Delhi, Sept. 12, 1994*

The 'All India Railway Employees Confederation' took serious note of the government of India's decision to abandon its age old economic and Industrial policies of free India and follow the new policies dictated by the World Bank and IMF to fulfill their conditionalities. These new economic policies have tremendous effect on the social and economic life of the working class and people in general.

These new policies are being debated and raised at different forums and the trade unions and other organisations are offering resistance to the anti-people and anti-labour provisions of these policies. The railway men being the largest family of organised labour and worst affected by it have special responsibility to take end in this.

To discuss and debate this vital issue the AIREC organised conventions at Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, Secunderabad. We fully supported the decisions and programmes of the Sponsoring Committee of T.Us' in this regard.

As stated above much has been said and discussed on the new economic and industrial policies of the Government by all shade of people, in this Convention we would like to Highlight the impact of this policy on the Railway Industry, and its workers, democratic and trade union rights of employees, unemployed youths, and common people in general. We wish that through this convention a united common opinion will emerge to combat the situation.

Since independence the government was following a policy of mixed economy and self reliance. The free India was termed as 'democratic socialist state' with a view to efford all sections of people equal rights with social and economic security and justice. The object of the country after attaining independence was to build up self reliant economy with an industrial base. Heavy Industries and big projects were planned in public sectors, as these required heavy investments and resources. And thus steel, oil, heavy electrical, machine tools, defence, fertiliser and other heavy Industries came into being. Huge dams and power generation projects were constructed and foundation for the development and industrial progress of the country was laid.

These public sector undertakings worked as sound base for the self reliant industrial and economic growth of the country. The government was also discharging its social obligations toward the poor and needy people of India by supplying the

essential items and necessities of life at control rate through public distribution system. Some of the service and essential items were subsidised by the government in discharge of its social obligations and help to the poor.

Under the same policy, the railway developed itself as a self reliant system. Its activities were not confined to train operational functioning but all other allied work necessary for running the railway industry as an organised self composed enterprise, were included within its sphere of work. Thus under same Railway Board the railways had broadly the following three areas of work:

- i) Construction work
- ii) Open Line work including the workshops for repair of coaches, locomotives and signaling systems.
- iii) Production Units for continued supply of electric and diesel engines and coaches etc.

In addition to above the railways have their own Research development and standardisation organisation and following other services to become a self sufficient and self reliant organisation. (i) Protection Force, (ii) Medical department for the railwaymen and their families and outsiders in case of emergences. (iii) Procurement and distribution of stores (iv) Parallel telecommunication system (v) Catering for supply of food to the passengers are public at stations and in trains (vi) Supply of Power to railway establishments and quarters. (vii) Schools for the education of railwaymen's children particularly for those working at remote places.

If any of these parts of railway systems is withdrawn or closed down, it is bound to have adverse effect not only on the staff and working of the railways but on the employment potentialities too.

The above gives only a rough picture of the government policies and the railway working before the introduction of the new economic and industrial policies. Under the new policies the government has to reverse the process by liquidating the public sector industries and privatising the services. This vital base and very foundation of our national economy an self reliance is proposed to be demolished at the behest of World Bank/IMF in the name of economic reforms, liberalisation and globalisation.

Since 1991 when Shri Narasimha Rao Government adopted new economic policies many Public Sector Undertakings like ONGC, India Oil, Maruti Udyog, BHEL, Coal, and Steel Industries have

either in full or in parts privatised. Several other public sector units like Shipping Corporation, Air India, Indian Airlines, Hindustan Fertilisers, Fertiliser Corporation, Scooter India, NPCC, IRCC, Bharat Leather etc totalling about 58 which were built up at very heavy cost and labour are facing imminent privatisation or closure. The Narasimhan Committee and Malhotra Committee were appointed to recommend privatisation of Banking and Insurance sectors respectively, thereby to hand over Bankign and Insurance sector along with public funds to the private monopolists and Multinationals. A total of 9000 branches of Nationalised Banks are sought to be closed down and similarly Insurance sector with its 41000/- crore 'life funds' and enormous resources in the shape of investment and real estate are proposed to be handed over to private sector. The public sector are being dismantled systematically while the sick units are being referred to BIFR for Liquidation, the profit making PSU are being privatised by disinvestment.

Indian monopolists and multinational are being allowed to enter all sectors of economy including the vital essential sectors like power, telecommunication, oil, banking, Insurance, airlines, railways, defence etc. Many concessions are given to NRI and MNC for entering into Indian market. Custom duty is reduced. The foreign investors in Power generation industry are guaranteed 16% return.

Under the new policies various schemes of the government at Centre and state level are being shelved and thousands of employees are rendered surplus and being retrenched. Thousands of vacancies in the railways and other departments are being abolished. Millions of jobs are going to be finished in the name of restructuring, indiscriminate introduction of computerisation, rationalisation and off loading the works to contractors. As a result the registered unemployment in the country has grown from 3 crore 40 lacs to 3 crores 80 lacs and rural unemployment has grown from 7 to 8 crores affecting all section of people.

The imperialist forces led by USA in a very calculated move through its international monetary agencies have taken control of the national economy through various conditionalities and agreements like, GATT etc. there by under-mining the sovereignty self reliance of the country. Through GATT agreement the transnationals will have access into vital agriculture, financial and service sectors. They will have intellectual property rights over seeds, many pharmaceutical items and other areas which will hit our research work, food self sufficiency and escalate the prices of all essential and life saving drugs beyond the reach of common people.

It is on record that since the introduction of these policies the prices of all commodities have sky

rocketted and the inflation have crossed into double figure. There has been virtual collapse of public distribution all over the country. Under the same new policy the government imposed administered price rise in the most essential commodities like sugar, rice, wheat. The hike in petrol, diesel, LPG, coal, steel, fertiliser, railway freight and fare and last budget proposals have caused all round rise in prices of all essential commodities which have worsened the living standard of common people.

In line with the above new policies implemented in public sectors drastic changes are being brought about in the railways, to transform it into business led organisation. That means the railways will not be permitted to fulfill its social obligations thereby increasing the burden on the common man. All this is done on the basis of conditionalities given by the World Bank/IMF. According to them the public service obligations or social burden which the railways now bear in our country is a form of subsidy which is ultimately being borne by the Tax payer and this should be withdraw. They also suggested as follows:

- (i) Increase the freight an passenger fares.
- (ii) Close the uneconomic lines.
- (iii) Eliminate operational deficit.
- (iv) Reduce staff and Establishment.
- (v) Withdraw all public welfare measures.
- (vi) Deregulate and privatise public owned Railway services. An expert committee headed by Shri Prakash Tandon was set up in 1993 to recommend measures to transform the railway Industry into a business led organisation. The recommendations of the committees are already being implemented.

This drastic change in the role of railways have a great impact on the social and economic life of the common people. During its long years of existence the Indian railways have always been looked upon by the people and the government not only as commercial organisation but more as the vital life line of the country i.e. as public utility service. The railway system is necessary for the growth of other industries, for the development of the under developed and inaccessible parts of the country and for carrying articles of daily necessities like food grains, salt, seeds, industrial raw material.

The railway system was seen as a means of transport with reasonable fare for daily commuters in suburban sections. These were the areas where lower rates were considered necessary for the benefits of the common people and also for the development of the country. The railways are used for the defence, at the time of natural calamities and

famine for rushing in articles of relief. The railway play vital role to promote tourism, art, culture and national unity in remote parts of the country.

In our developing country with 45% of its population living below poverty line it is astonishing that the government propose to withdraw social obligations and concessions of the railways under the new economic policies.

Above all the railways was the biggest source of employment for the skilled and unskilled and unemployed youths. Now as indicated earlier there is ban on recruitment, the jobs are finished and the railway ministry has taken decision to hand over to private agencies all work now being done by the railway except those directly connected with the train operation. This is being done gradually but steadily. The following steps in this direction are already under way:

- (i) Conservancy work at various places is being handed over to contractors.
- (ii) Catering services are being privatised. (Previously due to bad private services the catering was departmentalised)
- (iii) Purchase and distribution of store materials by SLD VANS have been done away with in many places and these materials meant for railways are being carried by private agencies.  
Local purchase of material is resorted to freely and the store staff is reduced.
- (iv) Container service is being privatised with CONCOR coming into field.
- (v) Booking of luggage by Railway luggage vans is being privatised.
- (vi) The railways are introducing 'Own your Wagon Scheme'.
- (vii) All construction work in all departments are handed over to contractors.
- (viii) Maintenance work of tracks including renewal, core packing and welding etc are given to contractors. Maintenance works of buildings are also off loaded to contractors.
- (ix) The production work in the well equipped workshops are stopped. Material & Machinery is procured from open market and staff is made surplus. So much so even the Locomotives are imported at very heavy cost whereas the CLW Chittaranjan has the know how to manufacture world class Locomotive. This is in pursuance of the policy to privatise the production units. That well equipped workshops & production units with big infrastructure and experienced

artizen & other staff are made idle.

- (x) An Indiscriminate computerisation of work in the offices and field at a very high cost through imported equipments and technology is just to reduce the staff strength sharply but without any economy in the establishments. The cost of maintenance of these system is much more than the salary of the staff rendered surplus through these machines.
- (xi) Telecommunication net work is to be replaced by satellite system of information and is to be privatised. This will endanger thousands of jobs.
- (xii) Loco, carriage, diesel and electric shed and depots are closed by reorganising schedules and closing some uneconomical lines.
- (xiii) The railways have long back adopted a policy of discouraging small traffic and general merchandise traffic.

This was just to close down some of the goods offices or reduce the work to cut the number of posts.

- (xiv) The railways are in the process of permitting the private sector to run the tourist trains on five circuits and divestion railways of the function of ticket checking. The expert committee headed by Shri Prakash Tandon had made some of the following recommendations and has asked for a task force to implement these in manifestation of the government intention to privatise the railway activities directly or through joint ventures or after corporatisation.

No 11. Creation of transport organisation at transport hubs, jointly owned by railways, industry(private) and road transports to handle all goods traffic.

No.12. Converting Production units, workshops, printing presses and other similar activities into fully owned corporations of Indian Railway which can be associated with public capital from financial institutions industries etc.

No.13. Setting up of metropolitan Transport Authorities in major cities to provide integrated transport facilities in association with the States, municipalities and industry.

The above picture is only partial and it is given only to make us understand the enormity of the problem that has already been created.

In such situation when privatisation is being brought in the railways leaving aside the generation of new jobs and employment to the employed youth, the security of job of the railwaymen has become a real problem.

In this process of privatisation there is another danger looming large on the workers, a serious attack on their trade union and democratic rights. Under the pressure of Multinationals and monopolists and the conditionalities of the financial institutions, the government propose to bring in T.U. amendment bill and change the provisions of I.D. Act etc.

To combat the above situation and jointly resist the implementation of the anti-people and anti-working class new economic and industrial policies of the government, Sponsoring Committee of Trade unions of India took joint programmes to lodge protests and urge the government to retrace its economic policies. On 21st June, 94 the sponsoring committee of trade unions alongwith other mass organisations held a National Convention in New Delhi and adopted the following programme of action:

- All India Rail Ruke on Sept. 20, '94
- Country wide torch light processions on Sept. 27, '94.
- One day countrywide general strike and hartal on 29th Sept.94.

The convention is of the considered opinion that without concerted and powerful united movement the government of India will not be prevailed upon to change its IMF and WORLD BANK

## NAGPUR KILLINGS

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions and the Working Class join all trade unions, mass organisations and progressive forces in strongly condemning the brutal lathi charge on peaceful tribals - mostly women with children - marching towards the Maharashtra State Assembly at Nagpur on November 23 to represent some of their demands. The stampede caused by indiscriminate use of force led to the death of 122 of the marchers and severe injuries to scores of others. Many of the injured are in critical condition in hospitals. The country is stunned that Maharashtra police should deal with tribal marchers with such brutality which is symptomatic of the contempt with which the state apparatus looks upon people's demands.

Though the State Government has been forced by popular indignation to order for a judicial enquiry, announced compensations for the dead and injured and the Tribal Affairs Minister has resigned, the struggle for solution of the numerous problems of

dictated economic policies which have endanger the self-reliance and democratic rights of the people. The convention give clarion call to all railwaymen and central government employee to join the main stream of working class of India and actively participate to make above programme a success.

The convention view with serious concern the continued erosion in real wages of the Railwaymen and the CGEs in general due to inflation, devaluation and high rise in prices of the essential and daily use commodities. The organised labour of the CGE is taken for a ride and not even single long pending basic demands of the railwaymen and the CGEs like wage parity, need base minimum wage, grant of statutory bonus of 8.33% in addition of PLB point to point neutralisation of price rise, Wage board to review the pay scales and emoluments from time to time and merger of DA instalments in the pay as it crosses the level of 50% as per recommendation of te iv th CPC, job security and rights to work, regularisation of casual labour, reduction of duty hours, raising of Income Tax exemption limits and others is settled. For time gaining and postponing the settlement of urgent genuine demands of CGEs Vth CPC is set up, with adverse terms of reference.

The Convention call upon the entire railwaymen to forge powerful broader unity and launch united struggle to prevail upon the government to settle the burning demands of the CGEs and that of Railwaymen in particular. To mobilise and prepare the workers for struggle enclosed programme be implemented all over the country.

tribals who are abysmally poor and backward must continue with greater vigour.

The CITU and Working Class express profound grief and sorrow over the loss of innocent lives, send condolences to the members of the bereaved families and wish the injured speedy recovery. The CITU demands stringent punishment to the guilty police officials.

### COMMISSION PAPERS

The Commission Papers on the 9 Commission subjects as discussed in the 8th Conference of the CITU held at Patna from March 3-7, 1994 are available in English and Hindi in booklets.

**Price of each Booklet is Rs.10/-**  
**Please send your orders to:**  
**Centre of Indian Trade Unions,**  
**15, Talkatora Road,**  
**New Delhi - 110 001**

## ITALY

### Million Strong Protest Action Against Budget

Over one million workers rallied in a street protest action in Rome on November 12 against the 1995 budget of the Italian Government which plans to cut health and pension spending. According to the budget plans, nine trillion liras (5.7 billion dollars) will be cut from the pension system by structural reforms.

The estimate of one million protesters was given by the trade unions, the Italian press and the state television for the gathering at a Central Rome square, which was only one of the three gathering points for five marches staged in the capital. The Italian police were unable to state the exact figure of the total gathering at different places, but confirmed that it was one of the largest protest actions held in the country. The demonstration was the latest in a series of protests and strike actions in Italy against the budget proposals.

Although the Silvio Berlusconi Government survived a confidence vote in the parliament because of the majority of the ruling party, yet social tensions continue to rise and the Parliament divided with serious divisions among the partners of the coalition government.

The leader of the Democratic Party of the Left

charged the Government of contempt for the fundamental rules of democracy and opening the way to conflict and instability. The leader of the Centrist Popular Party said that they cannot allow the Budget Bill to be passed in a climate of social conflict.

The leader of the Communist Refoundation Party warned that the forces of opposition in the Parliament will resort to every means of obstruction to stop the legislation being rammed through with confidence votes.

In the meantime, Silvio Berlusconi, the Prime Minister, who is a media tycoon, came under heavy pressure to resign, after he was placed under investigation by the Milan anti-corruption Magistrates. But despite the disclosure that he has been listed at the Milan Palace of Justice for bribing the tax inspectors looking into the affairs of his Fininvest Holding Company, Berlusconi refused to resign.

The trade unions after the million strong protest action, called for an eight-hour general strike on December 2. The strike will be the first national stoppage in twelve years to cover the full working day. Before this there was a 4-hour strike on October 14.

### Strike Struggles Sweeping France

Strike struggles against the austerity drive by the French Government and for pay hikes are sweeping the various industries in France. The most bitter strike is at GEC-Alsthom, the Anglo-French Engineering giant, since 1990, where the total 8,000 workers have gone on strike as the management rejected a compromise proposal on pay hikes by an agreed arbitrator. The strike threatens to spread in other industries.

Two main unions have called on the railway and other public sector workers also to go on strike. The workers in at least six private companies and the prison officers are already on strike since the last one month.

The social explosion, as reported by The Times, London, has been fuelled by growing discontent caused by recession, unemployment and the falling Franc.

Unemployment has risen to 12.7 per cent in France, an all time record, despite the rosy picture given by the Government spokesmen in typical capitalist phraseology that the French economy by most measures is now the strongest in Europe as manifested by a growth rate of 2.2 per cent expected by the end of the year with inflation as low as 1.6 per cent and a trade surplus for the past two years.

The government however is under serious pressure to respond to the angry public mood, which attributes the cause of unemployment to the Anglo-Saxon led trade war and the Maastricht Treaty.

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## Spain

# Sole Reliance on TNCs for Industrial Development was wrong, Say Unions

[We are reproducing hereunder a short article published in the Spanish Trade Union Journal El Metallurgico, published in the Flashes from Trade Unions of July 1, on the havoc created by the MNCs on the workers' lives--Ed]

According to the trade union journal, El Metallurgico (April 1994), one lesson to be learnt from the recent economic and employment crisis is that "an industrial policy based exclusively on the solicitation of transnational companies is not enough."

The TNCs were invited to Spain by the government with the offer of large subsidies and concessions. In recent years, these companies have closed down a number of their enterprises, transferring production to other countries.

The journal stated: "It has been clearly shown that for many of these companies, their main, and sometimes, their sole, objective was to win markets in Spain and the European Union. This may be considered to be coherent, although it is also coherent to be able to claim compensation from those companies which received public aid or subsidies. They must not play with public money. However, there are no mechanisms which guarantee the fulfilment of agreements whereby aid is given to these transnational companies."

The journal pointed out that the closure or reduction in work force at the industrial plants of the TNCs which has been taking place over the last four years has become one of the main problems, since it has meant the destruction of a part of the industrial fabric, thus dangerously reducing its size, which is already at a disadvantage when compared to the main countries of the European Union.

Suzuki Santana is a Japanese transnational vehicle manufacturer which provides economic activity to a whole town in the south of Spain (Linares, with a population of 60,000) where it manufactures all terrain vehicles. This company is heavily subsidised by the Spanish government. Last February, it announced suspension of payments and closure, barely ten months after signing an agreement with the trade unions and the government covering an investment of 18 billion pesetas over three years (40 to 50 per cent subsidised), an annual production of 50,000 vehicles and considerable increases in productivity. The agreement affects 2,400 employees directly and 15,000 indirectly. In March, the company announced that if it were to remain in Spain, it would be at the cost of the dismissal of 60 per cent of the work force and a wage freeze for the next two years.

The US-based TNC, Gillette, has announced without notice that it would close down its only factory located in Seville. The company made a profit of 700 million pesetas in 1993. The closure affects 242 workers and employees.

Ebro Kubota, a subsidiary of the Japanese Kubota company (manufacturers of agricultural machinery) decided last March to close its only factory in Madrid. This affects 316 employees and another 1,000 suppliers.

General Electric (Medical Systems), a US-based TNC located in Madrid has decided to integrate manufacture at its plant in France, where it has moved some production lines. This affects 119 employees.

Rank Xerox, a US computer TNC, decided to close its only centre for assembly of printers and reconditioning of machines in Madrid, moving the work to France. This means the loss of 330 jobs (21 per cent of its labour force in Spain).

Another 493 jobs are lost in the Philips TV plant in Barcelona, which has decided to close down and move elsewhere.

In all these cases, the TNCs are relocating production, transferring the work to their subsidiaries elsewhere.

The justification, in all these cases, is the alleged accumulated losses. It is notorious that the parent company fixes "transfer prices" which are often below production costs. The subsidiaries are also burdened with overheads involving high financial and other costs.

The union journal also pointed out that in the case of TNC enterprise in Spain, losses are also a consequence of the forced reduction of the workforce through incentives to leave (50 per cent of them forced to leave in two or three years).

The journal called for controls on the activities of the TNCs, "in some cases through the appropriate use of budget mechanisms, demanding industrial and technological compensation and the promotion of a new industrial fabric through a greater level of nationalisation of the production. In other cases, this should be carried out by entering directly in the shareholding of certain companies which, due to their size are of vital importance to our economy and also taking into consideration their social impact."

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