



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITY

CALL OF THE SPONSORING COMMITTEE

Carry Forward Struggle against Economic Policies of Government

The Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions in its meeting held on 17th July 1992 evening reviewed the all India strike of 16th June 1992 against the economic policies of the govt. of India and expressed appreciation that the working class of India has magnificently responded to the call of strike despite false official propaganda about the strike. The sweep and dimension of the strike embraced a big section of Central & State Govt. employees including departmental undertakings like Defence production and air transport, post and telecommunications, etc. As usual the employees of bank and insurance sectors played a leading role in the strike. The public sector industries like steel, coal, fertilizer, oil, Bangalore PSUs witnessed widespread strike. Workers in the private and unorganised sectors of course did not lag behind and demonstrated their organisational might with their magnificent participation in the strike. Massive participation of the officers in public sector and banking industry also deserves mention. The meeting congratulated the Indian working class for expressing its resolute opposition to the detrimental economic and industrial policies of the Govt. of India.

Com. M.S. Krishnan, President, AITUC presided over the meeting.

The meeting expressed its grave concern at the continued surrender of the Government of India to the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank. It condemned the servile memoranda written by the Union Finance Minister to IMF which unhesitatingly accepted all its dictates. The prices of essential commodities are soaring higher at alarming level drastically curtailing the living standards of the workers, particularly the unorganised workers. The fantastic concessions given to the foreign capital in oil, fertilizer and other industries have immensely harmed the national interests while majority equity participation is liberally sanctioned for the multinational companies.

The bank scam has exposed the entire banking system's ramification while the Government is dealing with only part of the problem. The Sponsoring

Committee fully endorsed the demands raised by the unions in Banking Industry that the Governor of Reserve Bank must resign forthwith while Dr. Manmohan Singh should also submit his resignation for his moral responsibility in the notorious scam, which is a direct result of his new economic policies.

The Sponsoring Committee condemned the declared exit policy of the Government of India which has threatened the loss of jobs of lakhs of public sector workers which will also hit the private sector unit soon. It reiterates its total opposition to the national renewal fund and the Govt's offer of golden handshake. The Sponsoring Committee calls upon the working class to physically resist the drive towards retrenchment.

The meeting further opposed the drive towards privatisation of Central and State public sector undertakings and called upon the workers to unite and resist the privatisation measures with all their might. The meeting condemned the policy of the Govt. of India to stop flow of necessary financial assistance to public sector undertakings despite promise given in the Special Tripartite Committee. Several public sector units are literally starved of funds and they have no money even to purchase raw material and pay wages to workers.

The Sponsoring Committee condemned the victimisation measures taken by several public sector undertakings including BCCL and several Central Govt. depts by imposing break in service and other penal measures. It demanded immediate withdrawal of these measures.

The Sponsoring Committee expressed its serious concern at the development at Ayodhya on account of the ongoing illegal construction of Ram Mandir at the disputed site in defiance of the orders of the High Court and Supreme Court by the VHP and its outfits under the protection of the BJP government of the State without bothering for the rule of law.

The Sponsoring Committee condemned the brutal police firing on the peaceful demonstrators working

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Forward to Struggle

E. Balanandan

The 16th June general strike—a mighty show of protest by the Indian working class in its scope and wide sweep has surpassed the Nov. 29, strike. The strike practically paralysed the operations and activities not only of the organised industries and professions but also the unorganised sector in several parts of the country. The Air Lines, ports, steel, coal, oil, fertilisers, engineering and civilian and defence establishments joined the strike, many of them in full strength. In the financial sector, banking and insurance—the strike was total. Of particular importance is the participation in this action of officers of the public sector together with the workers in many areas. The central government establishments and services were seriously disrupted by the strike—postal telecommunications—different government offices did not work in many places or operated with depleted strength. The state govt. employees barring one or two states joined the fray. In all, the Sponsoring Committee's estimate was that 15 million workers, employees and officers responded to this call. Though officially the INTUC and BMS did oppose the call, in many places their followers joined this action.

The public support to this gigantic action of the working class was unprecedented. The left and national front parties apart from many democratic organisations of peasants, youth and students rallied in support of this action. Not only in W. Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Kerala—but in other states too people have rallied in support of the strike by joining in demonstrations and in many places organising harthals. This makes it amply clear that large sections of our people are increasingly becoming aware of the dangerous consequences of the World Bank, IMF dictated policies, pursued by the govt. which not only make the life of the people miserable but also compromises our economic and political sovereignty.

Mr. Sangma, the Labour Minister—the official spokesman of the Government—who was straining his nerves for persuading the workers not to join the strike, offering special awards or benefits to those who keep away from the strike—came out with a statement on 17th that the strike call was “by and large rejected by the working class”. However, another spokesman of the govt put the loss due to the day's strike around Rs. 400 crores. Thus Sangm's version was exposed and contradicted by his own men. Perhaps Mr Sangma must be persisting with his lies to placate his World Bank masters.

The press has by and large put forward a correct picture. The Indian Express editorially wrote on 18th June the following among other things...“the fact of the matter is that the government is giving the

impression that it takes nobody seriously in this country. It only listens to World Bank and IMF and their ...who sit as advisers in all the economic ministries and whose accountability to the nation is doubtful. How can then one blame the trade unions?...Stating further that nobody can expect that the working class will accept without murmurs, the policies which will have adverse impact on millions of jobs and continued...“The govt. has begun dismantling the public sector by off loading its equities at ridiculously low prices and by attempting to close down sick public sector units to the Board of Industrial Finance and Reconstruction, it is leaving to the bureaucrats to answer the questions whether India should have a public sector presence in several crucial areas (Emphasis added).

Just two weeks prior to the June 16 strike the Minister for Finance, Dr Manmohan Singh sent a Memorandum to the Director of IMF giving an extensive account of the policies and programmes which were being implemented and those that were proposed to be undertaken during 1992-93. Steps for privatisation of the public sector have been initiated with the transfer of shares to Indian and foreign capitalists at throwaway prices. Details regarding handing over of the “loss-making” companies to the BIFR are being worked out for its quick disposal. Besides, the restructuring programme will kill millions of jobs. The exit policy together with NRF will also adversely affect the workers. These are being implemented to assure the IMF that the Government of India is seriously trying to implement the conditions agreed upon for securing the loans. The concluding para 26 of the above memorandum states :

“The government's macro economic and sectoral policies for the medium term have been spelt out in the Eighth Five Year Plan which has just been adopted.....It is the government's intention to request conversion of the current stand-by arrangement into an extended arrangement with a suitable blend of ESAF funding to lend support to India's medium term programme of adjustment and structural change, while maintaining a manageable debt profile. It is our expectation that this conversion would take place by November 1992”.

From this it becomes crystal clear that the government is ready to submit to more humiliating conditions to avail more loans from the IMF.

The following paras of the memorandum is significant in this respect :

Para 18 states : “An inter-ministerial committee has examined various obstacles to orderly restructuring. In the light of their report, the government intends to draw up a programme of action, to facili-

tate restructuring of industry. This would inter alia, seek to remove various legal obstacles to restructuring. The NRF will finance the cost of special retraining and redeployment schemes and also provide compensation to displaced workers”.

As stated, an inter-ministerial committee has already finalised proposals for removing legal hurdles for the implementation of restructuring, etc. The IMF wants to ensure unfettered right for the employers to “hire and fire”. To do away with these legal hurdles, the restrictions now existing in the Industrial Disputes Act for retrenchment, closures, etc should go. They want restrictions on the right to strike, if not a total ban, and that the “burden” of welfare measures should be reduced. The trade unions have been kept in the dark of what transpired in the inter-ministerial committee. However, talks are on amongst the ministers and others about the proposed changes in labour laws. The Prime Minister himself was for a moratorium on strikes. From the above it is evident that the government is planning an attack on the right of the workers even to the extent of their organisational freedom.

Para 25 states : “In addition, the government now proposes to encourage actively foreign investment in important infrastructure sectors. A policy to encourage private, including foreign investment in the power sector has already been announced. The Government will also welcome proposals for private, domestic and foreign investment in the power sector has already been announced. The government will also welcome proposals for private, domestic and foreign investment in the production, refining and marketing of oil and gas. Moreover, comprehensive amendments to the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) will be introduced shortly to remove a wide range of impediments to efficient business activity by Indian companies and foreign investors.”

It can be observed from the above that more facilities are being doled out to foreign multinationals and private capitalists to penetrate infrastructural sectors like power alone. Amendments to the FERA are on the anvil. In the power sector, the foreign multinationals are assured of 100 per cent equity and a 16 per cent “take home” profit on cost plus basis. This will lead to minimum three-fold increase in the cost of power. This in turn will have an adverse impact on our industrial competitiveness. Besides, our power engineering industry will become idle.

Foreign multinationals are being allowed entry in the oil and petroleum sector with 74 per cent equity. 28 oil and petroleum blocks are being handed over to the private sector, Indian & foreign. For the exploration of these blocks the government has spent thousands of crores of rupees. This is now being transferred to private capital. We have already achieved 73 per cent self-sufficiency in crude oil

production. Last year we achieved a production of more than 32 million tonnes. This year the MOU signed is for 25 million tonnes with the ONGC i.e. less than 7.5 million tonnes. This is because the government has reduced budgetary support for the oil sector. Consequent to this we will have to spend a large amount of foreign exchange this year, to import oil. Foreign multinationals will now decide the prices of our oil resources.

A virtually free reign is being given to the foreign multinationals in some cases on par with Indian capital while in others or more, to placate the IMF and World Bank.

Dr Ashok Rao, the President of the Confederation of Officers’ organisations of Public Sector Undertakings brought to the notice of the Members of Parliament that the book value of capital invested in the Central Public Sector is Rs. 1,13,234 crores and present replacement value of these PSU assets at current prices would be over a hundred time of this investment. In the name of economic reforms this wealth accumulated through the sweat and toils of the Indian people are quietly being transferred to foreign and Indian capital. This is the sinister policy that the Government of India is implementing under the World Bank dictates.

In the name of tiding over the difficulties of the economic crisis in which the country has landed itself by the pursual of a pro-big bourgeoisie-landlord policy, and make Indian economy viable, the IMF-World Bank dictates are being sought to be implemented by throwing out millions of workers and employees. They are deprived of their livelihood. The wealth created by them is being taken away. Not only are workers put to distress, but the technicians, engineers, scientists and quasi-managerial persons also being thrown out on to the streets, while the capitalists are allowed to take away the wealth.

Where is the so-called constitutional equality ? Where lies social justice ? Nobody knows.

In this context it will be appropriate to quote Marx : “...a class of labourers who live only, so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market”. (Page 51 of the Manifesto of the Communist Party).

In the name of making our economy competitive and tiding over difficulties the working class and the people of the country are thrown at the mercy of capitalists.

Despite the strong protest organised by the Sponsoring Committee of trade unions, the Government of India is vehemently pursuing the new econo-

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Railwaymen's struggle :

XII LRSA Conference calls for preparedness for direct Action

The 12th biennial conference of All India Loco Running Staff Association which started at Sajad Saheedullah Nagar, Burdwan, West Bengal on 28th June concluded on 30th evening with a clarion call to railwaymen to prepare themselves for full fledged participation in the struggle of the country's working class against the anti-labour, anti-people and anti-national policies of the Govt pursued at the dictates of the IMF and World Bank, and also for direct action for realising the long pending demands of Loco running staff and common demands of railwaymen. The three day conference with massive participation of about 15 hundred delegates from all the zonal railways was efficiently hosted by the Eastern Railway unit of the AILRSA with enthusiastic cooperation of railway unions and democratic organisations. The conference started on 28th morning with unfurling of the organisation's flag by its president K Rajanna, followed by garlanding of the Martyrs column by the leaders of the Association as well as of other organisations and dignitaries like Benoy Chowdhury, Minister, West Bengal Govt and Chairman of the Reception Committee, Samar Mukherjee MP, Vice President CITU and others including foreign delegates from Hungarian Railway workers union, Papp Pal, president of the union and Pek Keroly.

After election of the presidium which comprised of K Rajanna, Ragho Prasad and Iswari Prasad, and welcome address by the Chairman of the reception committee, the conference was inaugurated by Samar Mukherjee MP. The conference was also addressed by Kanai Banerjee, Secretary, CITU, Ashis Sen MP, General Secretary, BEFI, C M Singh, President AIREC. The leaders of different constituents of AIREC, CLW Labour Union, Eastern Railwaymen Union, 12th July Committee greeted the conference. All speakers called upon the LRSA to unite the Railwaymen for joining the mainstream of trade union movement of the country in their ongoing resolute struggle against the policies of the Govt leading to devastation of the country and compromise of sovereignty of the nation.

Basudev Acharya MP who addressed the conference as the main speaker on the last day gave an elaborate account of the struggle conducted on the Parliament floor and in the consultative Committee for vacation of victimisation and other demands of loco running staff and other railwaymen. While greeting the conference in its inaugural session, the delegation from the Hungarian Railway Workers Union narrated the experience of rail trade union movement in their country. The messages read out in the conference included those received from abroad, from Japan and from TUI Transport and United Kingdom and from TUI Transport as well as from the leaders of various trade unions within the

country including the Secretary General of AIREC, General Secretary, AIRF and other railway unions.

A colourful procession, about 5000 strong, comprising delegates and members of local democratic organisations was taken out on the second day of the conference.

While presenting his report to the conference, the Secretary General S K Dhar explained all the salient points of the report and called upon the members to realise the gravity of the situation arising particularly out of the Government's economic policies aiming at massive privatisation and staff reduction in railways. He drew pointed attention to the anti-struggle role of a section of leadership of rail trade union movement thanks to which the railway workers still remain virtually as onlookers when the main stream workers carry on a life and death struggle. He called upon the LRSA & AIREC to make serious bid to achieve a break through and adopt with that end in view a phased programme to be culminated finally in direct action.

About 50 delegates who took part in discussion on the report, while expressing their anger for the attack launched by the Govt on the legitimate interest of railwaymen, on the hard earned privileges, they also recognised the weaknesses of rail trade union movement and expressed their determination to overcome them for achieving breakthrough.

The resolutions adopted by the conference included those on immediate vacation of victimisation, on 44 point charter of demand, against the economic policies of the Govt, on Industrial relations and against denial of trade union rights, from grant of channel of communication, on safe running of trains and in support of Himachal State employees struggle.

The conference adopted the following programme:

1. a) Campaign fortnight : 1st—15th August
- b) Demand Day : 13th August
- c) Submission of memorandum addressed to Rly Minister with mass signature to shed foremen/ loco foremen/CTFR through mass deputation.
- d) Continuous campaign through posters, leaflets, group meetings.
2. Divisional mass rally on 15th Sept.
3. Central rally in Delhi in November
4. Observance of safety week, date to be fixed later.
5. Direct action if demands are not fulfilled.

The conference unanimously elected a central committee with K Rajanna as President, R S Satpate as Working President, S K Dhar as Secretary General and P K Dutta Gupta as Treasurer.

PM's Talk Of Moratorium On Strike Will Meet With Stiff Resistance

M.K. Pandhe

The Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao in his speech during the rally organised by the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee at Guwahati on July 3 denounced the strikes in the country and characterised that they "hampered the process of national development." Though apparently he was referring to the strike of the truck owners he had also in mind the recent all India general strike by the working class on June 16.

Prime Minister is also holding the Labour portfolio and this open denunciation of the industrial strike of the working class is only hinting at the policy of confrontation with the trade union movement.

In the same meeting the Prime Minister made a mischievous appeal for "a consensus among all political parties against strikes". He very well knew that the appeal would not be heeded by many political parties in the country. He was fully aware that his Home Minister tried to sell the idea of reintroduction of National Security Act (NSA) and Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) in a meeting of leaders of the opposition parties on the eve of the budget session of parliament but it was resolutely opposed by the left parties and NF and he failed in introducing these notorious anti-working class measures to suppress the strike struggles. All the trade unions in the country including the INTUC denounced the attempt to bring in such anti-strike legislations in parliament.

Sinister Moves

The Guwahati statement of the Prime Minister expresses his government's resolve to introduce a new labour bill in parliament in the next session which would prohibit strike in an aggressive manner. The attempt made by Rajiv Gandhi Government to enact Industrial Relations Bill providing for prohibiting strikes in industries involving majority of the organised working class and imposing stricter punishment such as a minimum of 15 days imprisonment for the workers participating in the strike. Punishment was also provided for workers financially helping the workers participating in "illegal" strike. Even to give strike notice 60 per cent workers will have to give consent in a strike ballot and any worker had a right to challenge the strike ballot pending the decision on it by the government no strike could be organised. Such atrocious provisions are sought to be brought once again in the bill by the Congress party. P A Sangma, Minister of State for Coal and Labour has announced the Government of India's proposal for a new Industrial Relations Bill in Parliament.

The ASSOCHAM, FICCI and CIE have already demanded moratorium on strikes in India. They have fully supported the proposals of the notorious IR Bill and wanted the provisions to be included in the new bill being considered by the government. The Prime Minister has only ventilated the views expressed by the employers organisations clearly indicating a policy of suppression of the trade union movement.

IMF-World Bank Dictates

The Prime Minister's speech also assures the bosses of the IMF and the World Bank that the Congress government is committed to implement the conditionality of introducing legal measures to ensure "industrial peace" in the country. The multinational companies want a guarantee that their investments would be secured and agitations of workers would not hit their undertakings. They further want to ensure that their package of "structural reform" would not be resisted by the working class in India and there would be smooth sailing for their conditionalities. The tycoons of the IMF and the World Bank who are monitoring the implementation of their conditionalities will have every reason to be happy with the Prime Minister's statement.

The Prime Minister's claim in the press conference on June 30 after completion of one year in office that the so called restructuring of the economy would not be at the cost of labour was a clear attempt to hoodwink the people of the country. The working class from its experience of the implementation of the new economic policy has experienced that government was determined to throw on street millions of workers through the exit policy. The privatisation of the public sector undertakings is going on in full swing. The virtual ban on wage negotiations in public sector is a direct attack against the workers. The government in every public sector undertaking is passing the entire burden on the workers while the promise of taking workers into confidence exists only on paper.

The functioning of the special tripartite committee study the impact of the new economic policy on the workers has shown that the government is only making a farce of dialogue with the workers while it is going ahead nonchalantly with the implementation of its policy.

Mounting Attacks on Common People

The Narasimha Rao Govt is instrumental in scuttling negotiations on pension schemes in public

sector by issuing directive that the management would not contribute any fund towards it. The refusal of Congress government to increase the exemption limit of income tax has only imposed a heavy burden of taxation while higher bracket income people got a way with tax concessions. The opposition of the Central government to increase the ceiling of the Bonus has deprived lakhs of workers their right of bonus. The working of the ESI scheme has reached scandalous proportions with workers not getting any worthwhile medical benefit. The recent enhancement of ceiling has made the matters worse for several lakhs of workers. The accumulation of funds to the tune of Rs. 4200 crores by depriving lakhs of widows their rightful pension under the family pension scheme is another instance of government's callousness. Above all the phenomenal rise in prices of essential commodities has considerably reduced the standard of living of the toiling masses of the country. Despite tall claims by the government and the personal assurance of the Prime Minister in the Labour Consultative Committee meeting on June 29, the sickness of our industries continues to grow with several thousands of additional units facing closure.

Naturally working class is bound to resist these attacks to protect its living standards. The recent rising curve of working class struggles indicate the determination of the working class to fight the inroads in their standard of living. Narasimha Rao Government is preparing the ground for suppression of these struggles.

Wooing Foreign Capital

The Prime Minister during his recent visit to Japan went out of his way to woo the Japanese monopolists to invest in India in view of the several concessions announced to foreign capital after the new economic policies. He made a special mention of the cheap labour in India and exhorted the Japanese "aid givers" to take advantage of it. The Government of India has given green signal to multi-nationals to exploit Indian labour. Narasimha Rao Government's economic reforms are therefore closely linked with perpetuation of this Indian cheap labour. What more evidence is necessary to expose the hypocrisy in the claims of the Congress government that the new economic policy has a human face!

Perhaps the Prime Minister is not aware of the fact that the right to strike has been acknowledged internationally as a fundamental right of the working class. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has accepted this fact. When all avenues of settlement of dispute do not bear any fruitful results the working class has no other weapon except strike action as a last resort. National strike also has been accepted as rightful weapon of the workers to achieve their common demands, both nationally and internationally.

The Industrial Disputes Act already gives immense powers to the government to impose restrictions

on right to strike. Any dispute pending before conciliation machinery of the government cannot be settled through strike action according to this law. Such a strike would be illegal and invite penal action. The government has arbitrary powers to prohibit strike on the plea that a particular industry is public utility or essential service. These restrictions imposed on strikes in India by the present statute virtually makes every strike illegal. It is only due to the strength of the trade union movement that the governments have not been able to impose penalties against the workers. Repeated attempts made by Coal India managements to impose deduction of 8 days wages for participating in one day strike have been squarely defeated by the united trade union movements of the workers. Even the High Courts in several states have struck down such penal measures by the managements.

Denial of Democratic Right

What Narasimha Rao Government now wants is a blanket ban on strike. It is a denial of the weapon of strike to the workers on the one hand and acceptance of right of the employers to impose onerous conditions of work on the workers or attack their existing facilities won through hard struggles.

While advocating a national consensus against strikes the Prime Minister in his Guwahati speech made a tall claim that the Congress government at the Centre was committed to solve the problems of the country only after obtaining a consensus from other political parties (Indian Express July 4). Narasimha Rao's dismal record for the last one year and his confrontation with trade unions on two occasions in this short spell only proves that he is lying. Left parties have made it absolutely clear that they are totally opposed to his policies and they seek their total reversal. There can never be consensus on policies that sell out nation's struggle for self reliance and mortgage country's sovereignty and integrity.

It has been the practice of Narasimha Rao to call for a consensus on every issue. He also at times talks with opposition parties. But in practice he implements what the IMF dictates to him. In India he always states that he had an open mind and he would modify the policies if found not helpful to the country. However, when he goes abroad and appears before the representatives of multinational companies, he categorically asserts that the path chalked out by the IMF and the World Bank was irreversible. This double faced policy was seen by the people of India on so many occasions and people no more be hoodwinked by such policies. His appeals for consensus against strike also involves a threat to go ahead with the proposal to bring in legislation to prohibit strikes in India.

The united movement of the working class will however resolutely oppose any move to impose further restrictions on the workers' right to strike. The
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A Horrendous Crime At Bhilai By BJP Government

Jibon Roy

A horrendous crime has been perpetrated against the most downtrodden sections of the working class in Bhilai. They work in the industrial estates and surrounding ancillaries and are mostly tribals. It was on 1st July evening when the sun was just going to rest the Madhya Pradesh Armed Constabulary jumping with their rifles over the squatting workers who numbered few thousands. According to eye witnesses, the gathering was around 3 to 5 thousand.

The peaceful squatting of the workers was started to be tackled first by teargassing and lathicharge followed by incessant firing. Although the police continues to limit the declared number of death toll to 16 people, eye witnesses believe firmly that the exact number of the dead would not be less than 50.

The BJP led administration has no doubt set a record in arranging a mass-massacre, that too against the poorest, the most exploited workforce of the industrial area.

Demonstrators Were Brought to the Dragnet

Myself, alongwith Com. M.A. Bady M.P. who were the members of the 2 member CITU team, came across convincing evidence to establish beyond any doubt that the greatest genocide of workers of recent times was engineered with cold blooded accuracy, while visiting the place of the crime on 4th July. Workers were allowed to gather just at the mouth of the main road which takes one to the power house Railway Station by 2 minutes walk and the main gate of the steel factory to the west in 15 minutes. People started assembling since 4 days preceding to that fateful day.

Administration watched silently the demonstrators going to the Railway track in the busy morning hours on that horrible day. Although squatting on tracks began in the early hours of the day, no important official of the state govt. nor any ministers visited the spot to speak or pursue the squatting workers. The Education Minister of the State Govt. who is representing the constituency & is said to have made a number of clandestine visits to that area during the preceding days of the incident, was also conspicuously absent.

Inspite of having full knowledge of the long pending ultimatum, this evasiveness speaks of the conspiracy behind the massacre. They saw the rail roko programme as an opportunity to destroy the workers resistance against mass termination and low wages. It is all the more important to accord that Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha which was leading the movement had informed the Administration earlier

that if its grievances is not settled, it was going for more serious forms of agitation.

The govt kept the leaders busy in a drama of negotiations with some junior officials and waited for sunset. By this time, the most atrocious decision of opening fire came from Bhopal and the top police officials appeared on the spot around dusk of that fateful day to implement the slaughter.

It is a lie to say that the govt. was not knowing anything about the programmes of the CMM. Again it is a blatant lie to say that the stone throwing prompted the police to start the firing. These stories were cooked up to hoodwink the press and the people. We came across a number of eye witnesses who have affirmed that when incessant lathi charge over the workers on the Railway track failed to provoke them or to get them dispersed, agent provocateurs had been brought to the operation. It has been generally accepted by almost all sections of local press that firing followed within a spell of 10 minutes since teargassing started and it was indiscriminate. Throwing of stones started concurrently with tear gassing and the sky was covered partly with gas smoke and partly by floating cloud. Quite a good number of workers who were present in the area vouched that stone throwing began from the place much away from the Railway track where many anti-socials and policemen in civil dress were present. We have seen both workers and police men injured in the stone throwing accusing each other. Some shop owners have complained that they were looted by the police even at more than 1 1/2 KMs away from the site of the occurrence, before the police action even started. Firing began at about quarter past 6 in the evening.

Police Went Bersek

The police and administration claimed that 71 rounds were fired and 16 have died out of whom two in hospital. But circumstantial evidence, and witness of local people confirmed that the number of dead and the rounds fired was much more. In a situation when curfew has been clamped in the locality wherefrom the workers have come to participate and Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha office locked by the police, it is very difficult to assess the extent of casuality. We came to know about atleast 2 workers who have been killed atleast one and half KM away from the railway track. Shri Pradip Kutty fell down in the four road crossing towards the south of Power House Railway station with multiple bullet injuries. Shri Ashim Das, an employee of water works was shot dead near Bijay talkies one and a half KM away towards north east. One Shri Suresh Kr Soni, a businessman whom we met in BSP hospital had been hit by bullet when he was going on his scooter with

his sister on the pillion. Shri Uttam, a student of Raipur had been admitted with multiple bullet injuries in the lower part of the abdomen as he was hit by bullet when he was getting down from a bus which was stopped a long distance from the station. Attending doctors at Bhilai hospital told us that he would have died if he was brought few minutes late to the hospital. We found Smt Dewati Bhawan lying in Durg District hospital with bullet injuries in the left thigh. She was shot near Chattishgarh hospital, two KM away from the spot, when she was collecting water from a municipality tap.

Quite a good number of women workers have been shot and physically assaulted. Dewati and five other women workers are still lying in Dist hospital at Durg. Smt Beshahin a tribal women had been dragged out of the quarters in the nearby locality and mercilessly beaten up. Police had pushed a lathi into her mouth uprooting many of her teeth. Madness of the police force was such that they had carried house to house search and beaten up the inhabitants mercilessly.

Deliberate act of Killing

Those who died and injured in the hospital were mostly hit in the abdomen and above. Bullet injury in abdomen, intestines, chest and the head does not justify the claim of the police that the firing was for self-defence. As we have visited on 4th July, there were 28 injured in BSP hospital. Doctors and nurses in the BSP hospital have done commendable work in ensuring immediate medical treatment to the injured and saved many lives. In the District hospital also, the staff have acted promptly, but dearth of medicine has adversely affected the treatment.

The Past History

The Madhya Pradesh State administrative machinery has earned notoriety for its arm twisting tactics against working class through decades and also for its Industrial Relations Act (i.e. M.P.I.R. Act) which imposes stooge union over the workers, suppressing all voice of dissent. The massive removal of workers and the refusal of state industrial machinery to extend any relief to the victims which had been the primary cause of Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha for resorting to Rail Roko on that fateful day of 1st July has been the general feature of industrial relations in Madhya Pradesh. There are instances when the management of public sector industries including Bhilai steel plant have taken recourse to this arm twisting tactics to drive away daily rated and contract workers. Derogatory form of industrial relation system has impeded the natural growth of trade unionism in Madhya Pradesh and given rise to a generation of industrialists in Bhilai industrial belt who have grown highly prosperous within a very short span of time through brutal exploitation of labour. They enjoy immense power to influence government policies.

The Chattishgarh Mukti Morcha has entered the

trade union movement in Bhilai industrial belt in the recent past and could penetrate considerably amongst the tribal workers. The mysterious assassination of Sankar Guha Neogi, the supremo of Mukti Morcha in September last brought the Morcha into direct confrontation. They accused the industrialists for the crime which had been substantiated later through the revelation by CBI enquiry.

A Calculated Move To Suppress the Workers

Available indications confirm that the Madhya Pradesh Government having been armed with NEP and notorious M.P.I.R. ACT was out to avenge the awakening of workers in the industrial complex, who are mostly tribal. Decision of Rail roko by Chattishgarh Mukti Morcha had been a step to foil the game. Government was confident of success as its predecessor Cong(I) Government in M.P. through strong arm tactics. Moreover, it was sure of Central Govt's support for its move to reduce labour.

On the other hand for the Morcha which drew strength from the tribal awakening in area, particularly against savage wage slavery introduced by the private industrialists, it is a matter of survival if it cannot bring back those who had been thrown out of employment during the struggle against Shankar Guha Neogi's murder. The supermo of the Morcha had been assassinated about a year back and it had been revealed later that the murder had been engineered by leading industrialists of the area. According to an estimate around 3000 workers had been thrown out by the industrialists taking advantage of continuous strike call by the Morcha. Morcha took up the issue of wage negotiations alongwith the demand for taking the workers aback to job.

The BJP Government took the plea that INTUC is the major recognized union in the industry and there cannot be purposeful talk with Morcha. However, subsequently some discussion had been initiated by the labour which turned out to be meaningless because of the reluctance of the BJP Government industrialist combine. Taking advantage of the long drawn negotiation in the meantime, the industrialists continued their rampage against militant workers and introduced INTUC and a splinter union inspired by Dangeites.

On the other hand the CMM leadership unfortunately failed to see the sinister design of the Government in trapping the morcha in a protracted negotiation and realise the urgent necessity of uniting all trade unions and also democratic opinion in their support. On the contrary it has distanced itself from the general trade union movement and the democratic mass allowing the govt to paint the movement only as of a tribal outfit. This failure has been utilized by the BJP government.

Freedom is Suppressed

Severe discontent was spread among the mass of
(Cont'd on page 20)

Disinvestment of PSU Shares : A fraud on the People

"The Cavalier Manner in which, the minority Govt at the Centre, under dictates of foreign agencies like World Bank and IMF has decided to dispose off the assets of the people, through disinvestment of public sector enterprises merely to overcome current revenue deficits... at throw away prices is economically, ethically & morally indefensible" urged the National Confederation of Officers' Association of Central Public Sector Undertakings (NCOA) in a communication dated 5th July, 92 to all the members of parliament, which was also released to the press.

Shri K. Ashoke Rao, President, NCOA, in his aforesaid communication to the MPs, unveiled the real economics of the disinvestment deals of PSU shares being pursued by the Govt. of India which practically tantamounts to handing over the public asset to private hands almost with paltry return, if not free of cost.

The NCOA's communication reveals:

Giftng away public property

The Dept. of Public Enterprise note on disinvestment during 1991-92 (No. BPE/12 (4)/91) states, "the total shares disinvested during 1991-92 consists only 8% of the total Government shareholding in 31 PSEs (though the list of disinvested enterprises contains only 30 names, presumably Maruti is the 31st) and the total amount realised is Rs. 3038 Crores". On the basis of the net profits reported by disinvested enterprises and the extent of disinvestment and taking today's profit equity ratio (P/E) ratio of 25 the sum that could have been realised works out to Rs. 6170.06 Crores. However considering the monopoly character, the nature of business, extent of reserves and assets of these enterprises it would be reasonable to take a P/E ratio of 100 and at that rate a sum of Rs. 24,680.24 crores should have been realised. In fact even a P/E ratio of 100 is very conservative considering the fact that the market price of SAIL's Rs. 10 shares was a high of Rs. 250 and is currently being traded at Rs. 114. This works out to P/E ratios as high as 400 on the higher quoted share price and at current prices a ratio of about 250. Therefore, at an aggregate level the disinvestment has been done at a ridiculously low realisation.

Let us examine it at an enterprise level. Bharat Petroleum Ltd. (BPCL) has a Paid Up capital of only Rs. 50 Crores and Hindustan Petroleum Ltd. (HPCL) has a Paid up Capital of only Rs. 63.84 Crores (in comparison Madras Refineries and Bongaigaon Refineries have Paid up capital of Rs. 114.13 Crores and 199.82 Crores have respectively.) As per the above cited note of the Department of Public Enterprises "the average realisation Per Rs. 10/- face

value a share is Rs. 27.65" (in the first round which was 4.7 percent of the total share holding in 31 PSEs)" and "The average realisation per Rs. 10/- face value a share is 45.25." (in the second round which was 3.3 percent of the total Government shareholding in 31 PSEs)." Assume that the 20 percent shares of BPCL and HPCL that were disinvested were sold even at FIVE times (i.e., a Rs. 10 share was sold for between Rs. 50). At this rate 100 percent disinvestment would have got the Government and the people of India Rs. 250 Crores for BPCL and Rs. 319.20 for HPCL. The reserves of BPCL and HPCL are Rs. 616.11 and 729.69 Crores respectively. Thus the new owners would, by investing about Rs. 300 Crores, have got not only the assets of the enterprises but also reserves of Rs. 6 to 7 hundred Crores! That is they would have got the petroleum companies free of cost with reserves more and double their so called risk capital!!

The paid up capital of most enterprises does not in any way reflect the current market value of assets. The current value of assets of such PSEs as steel mills, fertiliser units, oil refineries and large capital goods can be computed by adjusting the book values with the cost of creation of equivalent capacity at current prices. Take an example of SAIL. Its paid up capital is Rs. 2985.89 Crores. The cost of Durgapur steels modernisation for adding 1 million tonnes is about Rs. 2600 Crores or ISSCO modernisation for 1.8 million tonnes is estimated at about Rs. 6520 Crores. On that basis it would be reasonable to estimate that the replacement value of the direct productive assets (not the township and other assets) of SAIL which produces 8 million tonnes would be over Rs. 30,000 Crores. Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) has a paid up capital of Rs. 244 Crores. Its replacement value at current prices would be well be over Rs. 20,000 Crores. Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertiliser Ltd. (RCF) has a paid up capital of Rs. 551.69 Crores but the market worth of the real estate alone held by it only in Chembur would be worth over Rs. 7000 Crores at current market prices."

The NCOA communication further asserted :

"To argue that the sale of PSE shares was made to mutual funds owned by the Government and any windfall profits gained by subsequent selling in the market will only be to nationalised institutions is absurd. The assets of the Public Sector Enterprises belong to all the citizens of India but the profits gained by mutual funds belong only to the investors in the mutual funds. When the Narsimhan Committee on reforms in the financial sector recommendations are implemented and the financial institutions are denationalised the gains would go into a few private hands, and foreign interests at that. The

motivation to undertake such policy and the modus operandi of consequent transactions is what needs to be investigated without delay by a Parliamentary committee. In fact, Honorable members who have a legal background should examine the possibility of formally charging the concerned functionaries of the Government of India with malfeasance."

'While dealing on the danger of multinational' increased grip on the PSUs the NCOA argued :

"What needs to be examined in detail is the extent of foreign commercial bank borrowing (which according to the Institute of International Finance, Washington went up from \$ 300 million in 1980 to over \$ 12,000 million in 1987) that the Public Sector units were forced to take specially during the eighties. The facts in this regard have not come

out in full, but it is well known that highly rated PSEs were forced to borrow in commercial markets abroad not to meet their own foreign exchange requirements but to shore up the balance of payments of the country that enabled the profligate spending of the eighties. Will this debt be converted into equity? The methods have been well worked out. The so called debt equity swap through which OECD multinationals now own the major share of industry in countries like Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Argentina etc."

NCOA Communication also expressed serious apprehension of Scandalous and unfair trading of the PSU shares and commented :

"There have been allegations that forward trading was going on in the mutual funds. There were

Table Giving Financial Details of Disinvested PSUs.

Sl. No	Name of Enterprise	Paid up Capital	Net Profits 1991-92	Reserves & surpluses	Col. 4 as % of 3
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Hind. Petroleum	63.84	120.04	729.69	188.19
2.	Bharat Petroleum	50.00	127.81	616.11	255.62
3.	Bharat Earth Movers	30.00	46.14	320.05	153.80
4.	Videsh Sanchar	60.00	78.58	285.19	100.97
5.	BHEL	244.76	164.52	592.05	67.22
6.	Shipping Corp	216.23	95.25	308.01	44.05
7.	IPCL	186.00	57.27	510.62	30.79
8.	Bharat Electronics	80.00	34.25	182.84	42.81
9.	Indian Telephone	87.69	35.94	215.62	40.98
10.	Hind. Organics	49.35	31.97	121.28	64.78
11.	Madras Refinery	96.58	42.61	128.30	44.12
12.	MTNL	633.00	95.80	451.66	15.97
13.	Hind. Zinc	403.73	84.05	212.22	2.82
14.	Bongaigoan Ref.	199.82	48.50	108.94	24.27
15.	CMC	15.15	(—) 6.78	5.72	—
16.	Hind. Photofilms	119.53	1.98	36.49	1.66
17.	Andrew Yule	7.90	3.73	23.46	47.21
18.	Cochin Refinery	42.16	42.10	112.47	99.85
19.	STC	30.00	23.13	296.84	77.10
20.	Rashtriya Chemical	551.69	40.76	326.90	7.39
21.	HMT	78.56	14.15	173.60	18.01
22.	SAIL	3985.89	244.69	1127.51	6.13
23.	Neyveli Lignite	1435.82	95.24	679.61	6.63
24.	Hind. Cable	45.84	2.32	79.56	5.06
25.	NALCO	1288.62	71.94	231.00	5.58
26.	National Fert.	491.58	29.74	223.46	6.06
27.	FACT	339.31	23.37	59.20	6.89
28.	Credging Corp.	28.00	14.77	84.58	50.57
29.	MMTC	50.00	77.28	300.07	154.56
30.	IRRCON	4.95	8.97	180.15	181.21

Note : 1 to 14 disinvested 20 %; 15 to 17 between 10 and 20%; rest <10%

even allegations that some of the banks had in fact purchased shares of the public sector enterprises as surrogates for multinational banks and business houses. It seems that these allegations are being denied.”

But recent revelation in the Second report of Janakiraman Committee probing into the multicore security scam shows that such apprehension of unfair trading of PSU shares can hardly be ignored.

The 2nd report of the Janakiraman Committee found out that even the most liberalised norms set up by Govt of India for sale of PSU shares have been flouted by some National Banks and allied agencies leading to probable loss in returns. And the manner the PSU equities have been traded by Allahabad Bank and SBI Caps clearly smacks of gross irregularity and unfairness. This may be the tip of the ice-burg and many more may come out if the matters are investigated thoroughly and faithfully since the whole philosophy and approach of the Govt of India in dealing with the matters is bound to scam-prone.

The NCOA Communication also refuted with facts and figures the allegation being hurled against the public sector on ground of inefficiencies and loss. It is pointed out that, notwithstanding many limitations the net profit of the profit making PSUs in 1990-91 was Rs. 5431.42 crores against a loss by other PSUs (including the taken over private sector sick units) to the tune of Rs. 3063.68 crores. In terms of exports, the share of Public Sector was 21.80% & together with Small Scale Sector it was 49.75%. Contribution of the public sector to the exchequer in 1990-91 was Rs. 1300 crores in corporate tax and in all the Contribution was Rs. 19466 crores, which works out to be 17.2% of the total investment. On the other hand NCOA pointed out, that the total amount of funds of financial Institutes locked up in about 4 lakhs sick in private sector units was anywhere between Rs. 8000 crores to Rs. 10000 crores, 75% of which comes under large borrowers.

The Communication pointed out “According to a study, almost 80 percent of the private Sector Indian joint ventures in ASEAN region are either unprofitable or barely profitable. The amount of money lent by the Indian financial institutions and Banks which may have to be written off is over Rs. 14000 crores”.

NCOA asserted firmly, “What is at stake is not just the disposal of some commercial enterprises but the political and economic sovereignty of the nation. The Public Sector units are not mere enterprises but are actually vital sectors of the economy in their entirety. Is it meaningful then to blindly carry on with the logic of World Bank—IMF? This raises an obvious suspicion that the IMF—World Bank and the Govt of India are in fact working in tandem

P.M.'s Assurance on Revival of Sick PSUs

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement to the press on 30.6.92 :

While addressing the meeting of the Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of Labour, the Prime Minister has announced that the chronically sick public sector units will be revived for which economic packages are being worked out.

The assurance of the P.M. will be quite meaningful if the government abstain from the passive steps of dismantling the sick PSUs. Despite assurance by various Union Ministers, the budgetary support to such units have been stopped, as a result of which many such units are defaulting in payment of salaries and wages to the workers, taking shut down running plants for want of raw-materials, power, coal, etc. The government has even issued secret circulars to close down many sick units.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the Govt. of India for its attempt to hoodwink the people in giving false promises and acting diabolically. It talks of economic package and acts to the contrary. It talks of consensus but spurns all the techno-economic revival plans and suggestions put forward by trade unions. It turned all the Consultative Committees into macoineries of self-subservience and hence into mockery.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions demands of the Prime Minister that if he is really serious about the revival of the sick public sector necessary funds should be taken into confidence and necessary funds should be released so that the sick industries could survive till economic package is declared and see that the concerned Ministries take all suggestion and proposals forwarded by the trade union representatives are taken into consideration for the revival of the units.

with some other objective in mind. What are the real objectives and who are the beneficiaries?”

The NCOA demanded strong intervention of the members of Parliament to ensure estoppel by further disinvestment of PSU shares by the Govt of India & reversal of the disastrous economic policy of the Govt of India.

International Solidarity Meet at Philippines : A Quest for New Orientation

Jibon Roy

Notwithstanding the fact that the horizon of Internationalism is shadowed today by the setback to socialism in erstwhile Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, its gleaming shine is still kept beamed through the smokes of confusion widening international working class movement is tending to assume distinction in days to come.

If the working class resistance worldwide in recent times is sought to be viewed alongwith growing urge for international consolidation amongst the ranks in the movement, it could be said that the eclipse is not at all permanent. The very existence of the working class as the creator of all wealth but still robbed of its due share, keeps the candle of internationalism lightened through its struggle against expropriators scattered but united internationally. Rejuvenated compatriotism amongst the developing nations and increasing unity of the people against "New World Order" widens the concurrent characteristics of resistance against multinationals and US gangsterism is adding new colour to international brotherhood in those Third World nations. My experience through 15 days Philippine visit during April end and May '92 and participation in the 9th International solidarity at Philippines and in the seminar on "New World Order" has given me confidence to feel that internationalism is a phenomenon, can survive and acquire strength even at the most critical stage of international working class movement.

Increased need of international co-operation was responded

In view of a situation under unipolar world when the International working class movement was under severe strain the Centre of Indian Trade Unions thought it urgent to strengthen its international relationship at a broader length. Invitation from Kilusang Mayo Uno Labour Centre of Philippine had therefore been readily accepted. SWFI had gladly responded to the call of sponsoring the visit and asked me to undertake the responsibility.

I reached Manila in the evening of 28th April and stayed there upto 9th morning. Attended the May Day celebrations, visited extensively all areas of the metropolis.

I had the opportunity to visit factory gates, prison house, slums and also the trade union offices. I have been enlightened and enthralled with the stories of heroic resistance struggle of the working class and the people of the Island nation against neo-

colonialism its militarism and state sponsored terrorism. I got moved with the art of combining various forms of struggles and the forums in a state of situation where everything and anything could be declared illegal. Situation is such that even killing of trade union activist or worker at the factory gate either by military or by private force of employer is made permissible in the name of curbing terrorism. And same is also a regular phenomenon and news of sudden disappearance of trade union leaders and activists is quite common in Philippino trade union movement. In a political system which moves entirely at the pleasure of USA everything is expected.

I got specially the first hand experience about socio-economic picture of a country when a semi-feudal and neo-colonial economy is structurally adjusted globally. But the precious experience I brought home is about the real state of happenings in the continents of the unipolar world of today. My intimate talks with 65 odd delegates participated in the seminar on "New World Order" and their speeches had been a great source of understanding the world.

K M U As The Driving Force to Trade Union Unity

The Kilusang Mayo Uno Labour Centre is the united Trade Union Platform of the Left in the Philippines representing 20 percent of the country's 3.2 million industrial workers. This is the most militant section of the labour which constitute the base of labour and democratic movement. It is hardly conceivable to the people who live in democratic society what adversities a trade union movement has to face in a militarized society where anti-communism forms the main plank of ruling polity and general democratic aspiration is throttled. Notwithstanding right to organize and right to strike is guaranteed under constitution, in reality a legal strike is almost impregnable in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. Any strike notice is invariably followed by Government intervention and in such a situation it becomes automatically illegal. True to the sense of state structure in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, maintenance of private army by the industrialists is allowed. Storming of factory gate by the military is a regular occurrence there. Kelusang Mayo Uno popularly known as KMU took the arduous task of organising different sections of the working class in private and public sector, Government Employees who are organised under different organisations, and many of whom have not yet been unionised. Ceaseless campaign against

colonial exploitation, colonial wages and in support of extension of democracy could form the platform of unity step. Though it is far off from achieving a total unity, KMU can claim that it could establish itself as the main platform of trade union unity in Philippines.

Globalisation of Semi-Colonial Economy and Working Class

The nation of 17,000 small and big islands, rich with alluvian agricultural land and stored with immense quantity of high quality gold and nickel has been converted into an import based export oriented country. Its quarries, garment and semiconductor industries are totally owned by the foreigners. There is no capital goods industry in the country and hence mined products are processed by the multinationals abroad. Garment and semi-conductor goods are processed with imported raw materials. As the economic management is left entirely to the market forces, in case of Philippines they are multinationals, it is thrown into a great inflationary spiral to a average of 25-30% per year and into ruthless consumerism. On the other there is no Govt protection even for the most weakest section of the population. Multinational makes not alone the choice of commodity to be produced but create compulsion for the people to consume. I have visited number of public places in Manila and I found no drinkidg water or tap in railway stations, markets, or hotel complex. People are compelled to take Coco cola or beer in place of water and this is converted the consumer pattern from basic necessities to luxuries.

Minimum wages fixed for the Philippine workers to compare with other third world nations may be treated better in terms/net amount. It is around 5 dollar a day against less than one dollar in India. But in view of reality that everthing except oxygen in the air is under the control of the market forces, there being no safety net against price or social security measures like provident fund, gratuity etc such better rank in wages appears to be illusive. There is no system of wage scale and overwnelming percentage of workers are posted in lowest level of wage rate; no education or medical facilities by the employers or the government. Nonetheless, whichever minimum wage is fixed has not been paid in most part of the country, even in Manila. In all practical purposes working class has been left to the mercy of multinationals.

What is inspiring is the taking up of challenge by the Philippino working class. Growing strike struggle against the colonial wage and acute living condition is the striking phenomenon in working class struggle. We came by cases of strikes to continue for months together and sometime more than year. Through this struggle trade union unity developed. In a semicolonial and militarized society no militant trade union movement can spread its roots

unless the movement could embrace the entire community in it different type of social movements and enlargement of mass education. The KMU to the best of its ability trying to keep itself at the midst of these movements beginning from health or science movement to the length of community education. Its contact with student, youth and women movement is not just ritualistic but it is a systematic organisation. Working women's participation in KMU functioning is a great feature in Philippino trade union movement. It is claimed that the KMU along-with its other allies have the influence over 60% of the population.

Seminar on New Economic Order—An Important Step Towards Brother International Understanding

The international department of KMU which is equipped with all modern communication systems and experienced staff is proud for the organisation. Through a consistent painstaking process the KMU could establish friendly contacts with number of trade unions groups in Asia and Pacific, Western part of Australia, many European countries. This contacts led to the formation of solidarity committees in some of such countries. This international contacts have saved the Philippine trade union movement enormously from being isolated from the International working class movement and thus from being crushed by state terrorism from within. The International Seminar on "New World Order" is the result of that pursuit. It cannot be claimed that the seminar had been a well represented one or well documented. Except CITU, KOSATU (South Africa), Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, LUSTME (New Caledonia) no trade unions from developing nations could participate. Despite having genuine intention many trade unions could not participate because of financial reasons. Out of all National trade unions in Europe, only CGT France has participated. From Japan number of trade unions which have just been striving to fill up the vacuum created due to stepped up compromise of proletarian internationalism by the govt. backed central trade union participated. What was the most important was the participation of number of regional trade unions from Australia which are affiliataed to International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Similarly few ICFTU unions from Canada have participated. Besides, groups of workers and independent unions from Belgium and Newzealand did attend the seminar. In total sixty seven delegates have participated in the seminar.

Market in the face of stiff competition from synthetic fibres and other competitors;

- (b) Take advantage of the global environment—awareness in order to replace synthetic packaging by natural-fibre materials, which can be achieved by protection to the industry (i.e. tax and excise differentials) from the pressures of the burgeoning synthetic lobby;
- (c) Larger purchase of B. Twill bags by the Central Government, atleast at levels upto the 1990-91 ones, for storage and transportation of food-grains by the FCI;
- (d) Strict enforcement of the Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act of 1987 upon the Cement and Fertilizer industries and upon the Food and Sugar storage and transportation activities;
- (e) Revitalisation and effective functioning of the 5 NJMC mills to serve as instruments to control and guide the prices and availability of jute products away from speculative interests; and
- (f) Injection of adequate working capital to the Jute Corporation of India to ensure that its

operations guarantee remunerative minimum prices to jute growers.

9. I would earnestly request you to kindly set up a high-level machinery consisting of Central and State Government officials and representatives of management and labour to work out the strategy outlined above to be, then, placed before you for decisions as early as possible. At the same time, since this type of comprehensive strategy will take time to bear results, the immediate need is for strict enforcement of Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act of 1917 and for sufficient purchase of B Twill bags by the Central Government i. e. by the FCI, etc.

10. I anxiously hope that these two corrective steps would be advised by you to be undertaken immediately—while an overall strategy is being worked out in the meantime. The present crisis, if not tackled immediately, will inexorably cause the industry to reach a point of no return, with rapid closure of mills apprehended.

I anxiously look forward to hear back from you.
With regards,
Yours sincerely,
Jyoti Basu

Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers

(Base 1982 = 100)

Centre	Apr. 1992	May 1992	Linking factor for Old base								
ALL-INDIA	231	234	4.93	Belgaum	236	242	—	Varanasi	249	248	5.12
Gudur	225	226	4.33	Hubli-Dharwar	238	244	—	Asansol	220	220	4.77
Guntur	234	236	5.60	Mercara	224	225	—	Calcutta	232	232	4.74
Hyderabad	224	226	5.23	Alwaye	212	215	5.19	Darjeeling	216	216	4.55
Visakhapatnam	235	237	—	Mundakayam	223	225	4.67	Durgapur	237	239	—
Warrangal	229	233	—	Quilon	218	223	—	Haldia	242	243	—
Doisom-Dooma-				Trivandrum	236	238	—	Howrah	247	247	4.12
Tinasukia	211	214	4.05	Bhalghat	225	228	5.24	Jalpaiguri	216	220	4.16
Gauhati	231	234	—	Bhilai	208	211	3.49	Raniganj	216	216	4.40
Labac-Silchar	213	219	3.96	Bhopal	238	242	5.46	Chandigarh	231	234	—
Mariani-Jorhat	222	225	3.95	Indore	246	249	5.18	Delhi	240	242	4.97
Rangapara-Tezpur	226	227	4.29	Jabalpur	252	252	6.41	Pondicherry	242	246	—
Jamshedpur	221	222	4.68	Bombay	245	255	5.12				
Jharia	214	214	4.63	Nagpur	246	251	4.99	Additional Series of Labour Bureau			
Kodarma	214	217	5.43	Nasik	251	255	—	Kothagudem	232	233	3.25
Monghyr	228	227	5.29	Pune	240	248	—	Himachal Pradesh	223	222	3.75
Noamundi	235	231	4.58	Sholapur	252	259	5.03	Bhilwara	235	240	3.20
Ranchi-Hatia	226	230	—	Barbil	226	229	5.00	Chindwara	239	240	2.59
Ahmedabad	238	241	4.78	Rourkela	212	215	3.59	Tripura	237	238	4.37
Baroda	235	238	—	Amritsar	215	218	5.19	Goa	250	254	3.40
Bhavnagar	243	247	4.99	Ludhiana	214	217	—				
Rajkot	232	237	—	Ajmer	241	242	5.01	Other Series of Labour Bureau			
Surat	252	252	—	Jaipur	228	227	5.17	Centre	Base	Mar. 1990	Apr. 1990
Faridabad	214	218	—	Coimbatore	222	224	5.35	Ammathi	1960	873	895
Yamunanagar	214	215	5.53	Coonoor	238	240	4.80	Chickmagalur	1960	887	894
Srinagar	228	229	5.47	Madras	231	233	5.05	Kolar Gold Field	1960	910	914
Bangalore	224	226	5.66	Maduri	230	234	5.27	Gwalior	1960	1022	1025
				Salem	215	215	—	Sambalpur	—	—	—
				Tiruchirapally	230	232	—	Berhampur	—	—	—
				Agra	223	226	—	Cuttack	—	—	—
				Ghaziabad	234	236	—				
				Kanpur	238	240	4.69				
				Saharanpur	228	228	5.06				

Note: 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.

—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series.

CITU Protests Against The Postponement of Tripartite Committee on D.A

The CITU has protested against the postponement of the meeting of Tripartite Committee on DA for Public Sector Undertakings. In a letter to Shri P.A. Sangma CITU General Secretary M K Pandhe has expressed doubts about the Committee's completion of work by the end of July.

The CITU has also drawn the attention of Union Coal Minister at the casual way the Government of India is taking the Special Tripartite Committee meetings since the decisions taken in these meetings have not been implemented.

The CITU has also drawn the attention of Mr. Sangma about the non-implementation of the assurances given by him in the meeting of Central Trade Unions held on 3rd June 1992.

The following is the full text of the letter :

Shri P A Sangma 9, July 1992
Minister of Coal and Labour
Government of India
New Delhi-1

Dear Shri Sangma,

I am surprised to receive the communication from the Department of Public Enterprises yesterday that the Tripartite Committee on DA for public sector which was scheduled to be held on 10th July 1992 has been postponed "due to unavoidable circumstances". On enquiry I was informed that the meeting may now be held after the presidential elections.

In the last meeting of the Tripartite DA Committee held on 29th June you promised that the Committee would complete its deliberations by the end of July. The Prime Minister in the meeting of the Labour Consultative Committee gave the same assurance. I however, wonder how the work of the Committee will be completed by the end of July. Trade Union representatives have already told you in the last meeting that they would have to consider whether to remain as members of the Committee beyond July 1992. When there is acute discontent among the public sector workers this casual approach on the part of the Government of India is only adding insult to injury.

I am extremely sorry to note that the same cavalier attitude is taken by the Government of India in the functioning of the Special Tripartite Committee who are supposed to go into the impact of the economic policies of the Government of India. However, after 20th January 1992 meeting no meeting of the Committee has been convened though it was agreed that the Committee to go into the question of sickness in the private sector would be convened shortly. Though the constitution of 6

industrywise committees were announced in December 1991 so far only 3 have been held (Jute, cotton textile and chemicals) while the committees in Road Transport, Electricity and Construction have not been convened at all. What is shocking is that in these industrywise sub-committees Govt promised to circulate a status paper on various public undertakings but even that assurance has not been implemented. The assurance given by the Union Finance Minister that those undertakings which were running viably at current level of working but were showing losses due to interest burden on past loans the Government would write off the past liabilities as a measure to make the units viable. But the assurance has not yet been implemented even in a single case so far. Another assurance was given in the meeting that public sector undertakings which have no funds even to purchase raw material would be given necessary support. This assurance also remains to be implemented while several units are starved of funds leading to closure and massive wage-cuts. This approach of the Government of India is reducing these Tripartite Committees into a sheer farce.

In a meeting of the Central Trade Unions held on 3rd June prior to the all India general strike of 16th June 1992 you promised that the wage negotiations in public sector, which were held up due to directive of the Department of Public Enterprises, would be commenced soon. However more than five weeks have passed since then but the Government directive has not yet been withdrawn and the wage negotiations in public sector continue to be stalled. Even your own Deptt of Coal has not given permission to CIL management to commence negotiations.

Regarding the Pension Scheme we were told that the commitments given in Steel and Coal Industry would be honoured and negotiations in others would be permitted. But nothing has been done so far.

The INTUC leadership asked the workers to believe in the assurances given by you, though we were sceptic about these assurances. However, the behaviour of the Government is now bringing down immensely the credibility of the Government of India and the assurances given by it on various issues.

I hope you would seriously consider the matters so that expeditious steps are taken on the problems urgently faced by the workers,

I would only request you not to consider the patience shown by the workers as a sign of their weakness.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
(M K Pandhe)
General Secretary

US Juggling with Human Rights

Tapen Sen

For quite sometime United States arrogated to itself the role of International Policeman, in finding fault with others specially the developing countries on human right aspects. It has become fashionable for US Congress to impose Sanctions and create economic blockade on countries whose human right situations are considered to be not meeting the standards set by US. For most of the cases such standards of human rights set by USA for other countries are not maintained by US themselves, in respect to the people of different stratas living in USA.

And such stance of self appointed policeman taken by US led different US agencies to create subversion and destabilisation in many Third World Countries. Active abetting of secessionist elements in Kashmir & Punjab through Pakistan and simultaneous raising of hue and cry on alleged human right violation by the Indian Government in those areas by the US exemplify such dual faced diplomacy of the US making Human Right issues as the main plank of its subversive design.

But who is USA to dictate terms to others on human right, whose human right record already attained infamous dismality, emitting nauseating stench all around ? Can the US which was responsible for the most hideous genocide & mass destruction of the century in Heroshima & Nagasaki by dropping of Atom Bomb have any right to talk about humanity and human rights! And everybody knows the Atom Bomb was dropped on Japan by USA well after the decision of Japanese war command to surrender in 1945.

Or, can the same US having in its record the most ghastly crime of running the longest and most destructive war in Vietnamese soil, claim to be the arbiter as to who are violating human rights or not ? The wound of Vietnamese war is still woozing blood since American war mongers has experimented all kinds of chemical and gaseous weapons not only to kill the freedom fighters but also cripple their future generation mass destruction devices.

But the cynical immorality of it all is that the power responsible for the most heinous crime against the humanity after infamous Hitler has become the teacher of human and democratic values.

How can US dictate on human rights when in its own country the highest number of Covenants of human rights declared by United Nations are still not ratified. The United States could not yet ratify the 26 year old Covenant on Economic and Cultural rights and the Covenant on Civil & Political rights. Similarly, the United States has not yet ratified the majority of the International Human

Rights Conventions signed within the framework of United Nations including International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, (1969), the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1962), International Convention on the Suspension and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1976), the Convention on Prevention & Punishment of the Crime of genocide (1951), the Convention of Non-applicability of Statutory Limitation on War Crimes and Crimes against Human Rights (1976), the abolition of Forced Labour Conventien (1959), convention relating to Status of Refugees (1954) and many others. Not only that, Not to speak of international conventions alone, the US administration has also blocked ratification of the American Conventions on human Rights which was signed in 1969 & became effective in 1978 with the participation of more than 20 American Countries in the Convention. Should not the evils of racial discrimination, apartheid, genocide, discrimination in education, forced labour, traffic in persons, prostitution, discrimination against women, refugees etc. be treated as basic problems of humanity in present day civilized world and does not the non-ratification of concerned conventions by US amount to violation of human rights ?

Who will raise the question ? Specially when the custodian of these human rights covenants, the United Nations is gradually stooping down to the level of appendage to American diplomatic manoeuvres !

The US has been blocking the ratification of human rights convention on the plea of non-acceptance of such convention by the US Congress and/or contradiction of such conventions with the legislation of different States under US. Practically, US has developed an insurmountable wall with its Constitution and the Federal & State laws to defend against bulk of International Human Right Conventions that are not in accordance with US interest. And at the same time so-called American human right guardians preach 'human right above Sovereignty' and 'human right beyond national boudaries' for other countries. For US itself, it is the US Sovereignty, or US Constitution and/or US interest which are all above human right considerations.

It is precisely what explains existence of worst kind of discrimination against the black populace in almost streams of social life in USA, the country which boasts of being self-appointed leaders of the civilized world. And such discrimination in many cases are also supported by even legislations both at the State and Federal levels. It is a matter of record that some of the States in USA, particularly the Southern States had been protecting racial discrimi-

(Cont'd on page 20)

All India Convention of Transport Workers

A convention of all India Road Transport Workers' Federations affiliated to different central trade unions (CITU, AITUC, HMS & BMS) was held at Pune, on June 28. With the main theme of resisting the attempt of privatisation of the state transport undertakings (STUs) by different state governments, the present state of this sector, and the problems it is facing, were also brought out in the seminar. The findings and conclusions of the seminar, along with proposals for effecting a more efficient and satisfactory transport service throughout the country were summed up in the Declaration adopted at the end of the seminar.

The Presidium for the seminar included Md. Amin (CITU), Iswar Singh (AITUC) and Subrahmanian (HMS), Nana Saheb Gore, a veteran Socialist leader, inaugurating the convention recalled that ever since Independence, there has been a demand for nationalisation of the road transport industry. Participating in the discussion, M.G. Pathak, Deputy Director, Central Institute of Road Transport, pointed out that with the minimum taxes actually paid by the state transport undertakings, it is wrong to say that STUs are running at a loss. He cited several examples to demonstrate that in States where 100 percent nationalisation exists, the economic health of the public transport sector is better there. He suggested to the trade union leaders, that during collective bargaining processes, the capability of the undertaking to bear the cost should be borne in mind. In a number of cases where STUs were running at a loss, the level of taxes imposed by the respective state governments was also quite high.

Shymal Chakraborty, Transport Minister of West Bengal, referred to the seminar held in Calcutta in February this year on the question of an alternative national transport policy. He asserted that unless a united struggle against the existing transport policy of the central government is carried on by the trade unions, no effective results would be achieved. The lacuna with the existing transport policy is that it has failed to keep pace with the development of industry and agriculture.

Transport can be divided into four sectors; road transport, railway, civil aviation and water transport. These should function in an integrated fashion, but our experience shows that this has not been the case and the burden on road transport has gradually increased. For instance, only 8000 kms of new railway tracks have been added since Independence; the share of the cargo operation in the water transport sector remains the same, whereas movement of vehicles on the road has increased manifold. But, construction of new roads and maintenance of the existing roads has not kept pace. One third of the villages in India are not accessible, and two thirds of the villages have only fairweather roads. Allocations to transport in the plans has been gradually decreasing, from

the Fourth Plan onwards. It has been reduced from 23% to 7%. Similarly, the share on the road transport sector has decreased from 7 per cent to 2.9 per cent. The two monopoly big chassis manufacturers, viz., Tata and Ashok Leyland, are not taking advantage of the advanced technology to produce more fuel-efficient engines, and the amendments to the M.V. Act, 1988, aiming at more liberalisation has created an adverse impact on the financial condition of the STUs.

Iswar Singh of the AITUC, pointed out that though the state sector in the passenger bus service industry constitutes only 36 per cent, it carries 69 per cent of the total passengers. For social reasons, concessions to the students, handicapped, ex-freedom fighters, journalists, etc., are offered, but the govt. should provide a corresponding grant to STUs to compensate for the losses incurred by these concessions. Often STUs have to operate uneconomic routes which are generally refused by the private operators.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU, recalled the experience of the Dalla Cement Factory where the united struggle of the workers forced the govt. to retreat from their plan of privatisation. He explained that road transport industry is feeding the other industries. Emphasising the need for co-ordinated development he said all the sectors of transport industry should be developed simultaneously and for this purpose, the government should evolve a scientific transport policy. At the same time he called upon the workers to take the responsibility for increasing efficiency and put forward positive proposals.

Apart from the declaration, the following programmes were decided upon.

1. August 25, to be observed as a Demands Day by wearing badges, issuing leaflets, holding state conventions, gate meetings, dhamas.
2. A Convention of the workers of STUs will be held later.

Declaration

This All India Convention convened by Road Transport Workers Federation of India (HMS) on 28-6-92, All India Road Transport Workers Federation (CITU), National Federation of Indian Road Transport Workers (AITUC) and Parivahan Mazdoor Mahasangh (BMS) at Poona on 28th June '92 views with alarm and vehemently condemns the steps taken by the Government of India to privatise the industries, particularly the road transport industry, after the introduction of new economic policy. Several state governments have also taken steps in

the same direction. Already Motor Vehicles Act 1988 made retrograde provisions for privatisation.

The privatisation lobby is trotting out these ideas on the plea that the State Transport Undertakings have been chronically sick and are incurring losses and are inefficient.

However, the experience of the Trade Union movement as well as the findings of the CIRT and other expert organisations clearly show the following facts :

1. The STUs with one or two exceptions where there is too much political interference, have been functioning very well and provide better service, a fact acclaimed by various award giving agencies. This has also been recognised by the report of the National Transport Policy Committee in 1981.

2. Whereas private operators refuse to ply their buses on predominantly rural or uneconomic routes or bad roads, the STUs have been satisfying these social commitments. In some states the fare includes the cost of insurance which is absent in the private sector.

3. The government nationalised private transport with social objective in view. Even the Birla Committee in its report in 1943 advocated road transport to be in the national sector.

4. Several state government such as Karnataka and Kerala, deliberately discriminated against the STUs in the matter of taxation by imposing much higher rates of motor vehicles or passenger taxes on them.

5. In spite of the above, the STUs have been paying the taxes, whereas the private operators have been systematically evading them.

6. In 1985-86 though STUs owned only seven per cent of the total vehicles, they paid 34 per cent of the total tax collection. The STUs also offer better service conditions for the employees than in the private sector, where the conditions are simply shocking.

7. Passenger amenities in the private sector are practically absent, while the STUs provide all possible amenities and service to the travelling public.

8. Though the number of bus passengers and the vehicles that ply on the roads are increasing by leaps and bounds, the percentage of Plan expenditure on the roads in the total Plan expenditure has dwindled from 6.89 in the first Five Year Plan to a meagre 2.90 in the Seventh Plan. The conditions of the State highways and district/Union roads is no better.

9. In view of public sector transport serving the people in remote areas, the demand for more public transport is increasing all over the country. Though it constitutes 63 per cent of the total passenger buses, it carries 69 per cent of the total bus passengers.

10) This stupendous achievement has been accomplished and massive fixed assets for the society at large have been built up by the STUs unlike the profit-mongering private operators inspite of the fact that very little equity capital has been provided to them.

11) After announcing the new economic policy the government of India, as well as several state governments, have stopped all assistance to PSUs with the result that they are starved of capital funds, and further growth is retarded.

12) STU buses suffer only where private operators predominate and indulge in all sorts of unfair practices in collusion with the powers that be.

13) Despite the increased cost of inputs the fare structure has not been increased correspondingly during the recent past, a fact which is conveniently ignored by the protagonists of privatisation.

This convention draws the attention of the country to the fact that over 90 percent of the assets in private ownership and control in road transport are generated out of public funds, which proves that the private sector is only using public funds for private profit, which is totally unjustified.

The Convention would like to warn the nation that if this so-called private sector is allowed to replace the nationalised road transport industry either wholly or partly—already being done in some states—then (a) the industry will cease to be a public utility service; (b) collection of motor vehicle and passenger taxes will be substantially reduced; and (c) the political clout of the private operators with powers that will be further increase, resulting in the shifting of a good portion of the tax burden from the private operators on to the other sectors, including the common people.

The Convention, therefore, is of the considered view that national interests demand not denationalisation or privatisation but cent per cent nationalisation and complete elimination of all private operation from the passenger road transport scene all over the country.

The Convention, therefore, demands that the central government drop the dangerous move to amend the Motor Vehicle Act 1988 to facilitate further privatisation, and urges upon all the state governments to bring their whole state under total coverage by nationalised passenger road transport, completely eliminating all private operators. It also demands immediate withdrawal of the existing retrograde features of the existing M.V Act 1988.

The Convention further demands that the managements of the STUs should be made more professionalised and debureaucratized to make them more efficient, productive and responsive to the transport needs and problems of society. The present parricidal system of cooking up the balance sheets so as to artificially show losses in order to

reduce the income tax liability and/or to obviate employees' demands for more wages, bonus and fringe benefits, should be replaced with a correct system of accounting, wherein the balance sheets will also show, apart from real profits or losses, the social benefits that accrue to the society, expressed in monetary terms.

Workers' participation in management in all undertakings will immensely help in improving the performance of these undertakings.

The Convention demands that state governments should take into consideration the concessional fares and social obligations while judging the performance of the STUs.

The Convention also demands that all the ILO Conventions and recommendations in respect of road transport workers should be incorporated in the Motor Transport Workers' Act.

The Convention exhorts the workers and employees of the STUs to play their part in full in improving the performance of the STUs in the eyes of the general public. They should also keep in mind that the discourteous behaviour, or an unbecoming or irresponsible act of a handful of workers unfortunately gets generalised, thereby tarnishing the image of the whole workforce as well as that of the enterprise.

This Convention appeals to the road transport workers to implement the following programme of action to achieve the objectives stated in the declaration.

1. To organise local, regional, state-level, joint conventions all over the country with a view to popularise the decisions of this convention.

2. To publish literature in all languages to campaign against the false propaganda carried on by the vested interests against the STUs.

3. To observe the all-India ANTI-PRIVATISATION DAY on August 25 by holding demonstrations, wearing badges, organising dharnas, gate meetings etc.

4. To organise an All India Convention of all Public Sector transport undertakings, and workers in the private sector also.

The Convention decides to constitute an All India Co-ordination Committee consisting of two representatives from each organisation to chalk out a further programme of action. Bhau Phatak will be the convenor of the committee.

The Convention appeals to all the Unions who could not participate in this convention to take part in the programme of action so that road transport workers are mobilised all over the country against the pernicious move for privatisation.

Cement Industry

Joint Statement by CITU, AITUC & HMS

In a joint statement, the CITU, AITUC and HMS have expressed deep resentment at the inaction on the part of the Government to intervene and the arbitrary action of the Cement Manufacturers Association to ignore a large section of the workers in Cement Industry and thereby delaying solving their long pending demands. The Statement signed by Com. Kanai Banerjee (CITU), T. N. Sidhanta (AITUC) and V. Tyagi (HMS) is as follows :

The joint charter of demands of HMS, CITU and AITUC was submitted to the Cement Manufacturers Association (CMA) and the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) in September last year. As there was no response from either, we reminded them in course of our letter dated 19th May, 1992 followed by another reminder on 23rd June, 1992.

We urged on the CMA for negotiated settlement of the charter of demands and joint negotiation to that end of all those unions and federations who submitted charter of demands. But even then there was no response.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that the CMA has started negotiation separately with the INTUC and BMS excluding other organisations and we further learn that a new agreement is about to be concluded by the CMA with only those two organisations which they will try to impose on all workers in the industry. We strongly protest against this divisive game of the CMA, and workers and unions will resist any attempt to impose an agreement in which they are not a party.

We would like to warn the Cement Industry Employers that responsibility of any disturbance of industrial peace in the industry will solely be of the CMA.

We would once again urge on the CMA to retrace their steps and initiate joint negotiations of all unions/federations in the industry which have submitted charter of demands.

While expressing deep resentment for inaction on the part of the govt in respect of our demand for convening tripartite meeting involving all the trade unions which have submitted charter of demand, practically helping thereby the cement industry to impose on all workers the agreement reached with one or two unions representing only a section of the workers, we urge upon the govt to take immediate step for bipartite/tripartite wage settlement in the industry involving all unions in the field.

We would call upon workers and unions in all states to hold meetings, demonstrations, dharna etc at all factory gates in observance of protest week from 3rd to 10th August and submit joint memorandum to the management protesting against any attempt to impose a settlement, and prepare for strike action.

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trade union movement in India will not be deterred by such intemperative threats and the workers resistance to the anti-national, anti-people economic policies of the Govt of India will continue to grow in future. Any attempt to browbeat the working class will ultimately only recoil on the government of India.

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the people from all walks of life, employees, doctors, shop keepers, small businessmen, teachers, etc in the locality against such heinous terrorism engineered by the police force on the workers. It is perhaps for this reason, curfew is still continuing in the locality, while Section 144 has been declared in the steel township, to block the possibility of the mass agitation by the democratic people. Despite this, different trade union organisations including CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMP, AICTU and political parties like CPI (M), CPI, Janata Dal and others and democratic mass organisations protested against the action. Trade unions have submitted memorandum to district administration against such dastardly killings and demanded immediate withdrawal of all prohibitory orders. As decided by these organisations, joint demonstration in Bhilai on 6th July and massive preparations for observing an all India protest day on 8th July etc has already began. Steel workers has also come forward in large numbers to protest the massacre. Surprisingly, the INTUC kept themselves away from protesting against such brutal murderous action on the workers by the BJP government.

Getting the news of this ghastly killing the CITU Secretariat immediately sent a delegation to Bhilai consisting of Com. Jibon Roy, Secretary and Com. M. A. Baby, M.P. (CPI(M)). The CITU and the Sponsoring Committee of Trade unions in separate statements have severely condemned this brutalkilling and demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits and sufficient compensation to the family members of the deceased and injured. The sponsoring committee had also given call for observance of All India protest day on 8th July 1992. We are receiving reports from many corners about the observance of the day.

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nation within the framework of State laws. For instance, until recently some State still allowed racial segregation in Schools, opposition to marriage between Whites & Blacks, separate use of public facilities based on race and a 'Poll Tax'. And existence of such discriminatory laws alongwith the biased administrative and judicial machineries in US Society led to the worst kind of racial riot in Los Angeles in recent times claiming so many lives des-

truction of properties.

And it is a matter of record that the entire US Society remains to be the hotbed of brutal violation of human rights and administration plays an active role in it. The rate of Crime is by far highest in USA, which includes murder, rape, robbery, torture on women, drugtrafficking & drugabuses and claims many lives every year. If these are not encroachment on human rights then what else ?

What will explain US Support to Phillipino Govt. and the Chilean Govt. who are fountain-heads of human right violation of the worst kind which has been observed by many international organisations including ILO & different UN bodies ? In reality, the US administration in its so called cover of human right-defender in other countries happens to be the worst offender of human rights within its own territory besides being abettor of most of the human right abrogations in many of its satellite countries in the world.

Irony is that the US administration which is supposed to be on the dock in the Court of International Humanity for the Crime being committed by them to the humanity both within the country and abroad has been making maximum noise on violation of human rights in other countries and demonstrating arrogance of dictating terms to others and threatening penal action, with the so-called civilized developed world of the West and the international bodies remaining silent spectator to such hypocritic postures.

Maharashtra Anganwadi Workers & Helpers Participate in 16th June 1992 Strike

Anganwadi Workers and Helpers belonging to the Anganwadi Karmachari Sanghatana (Maharashtra) affiliated to the CITU and the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers & Helpers participated in a big way in the 16th June All India strike to protest against the anti-people economic policies of the Cong (I) government.

In response to the strike call given by the central trade unions to voice their opposition to the IMF sponsored anti-worker policies of the Narsimha Rao government, Anganwadies remained closed on the 16th of June. There was no distribution of supplementary nutrition, despite threats of reprisal from CDPOs. In Nagpur, Pune and Amravati cities, employees participated in joint rallies with other trade unions while small protest meetings were organised at taluk and district places.

Whither AIRF

Kanai Banerjee

The AIRF is going to have its General Council meeting soon. It will be held in the context of intensifying attack on the working class and the masses of the common people resulting from governments' attempts to implement various aspects of economic policies which are based on the IMF and World Bank conditionalities. The working class of the country will have its attention focussed on the meeting with both expectation and apprehension. Railwaymen constitute the largest single contingent of Indian working class and AIRF is the most influential of all railway trade unions, the decisions of the meeting will largely influence the courses of development of the ongoing struggle of the working class and the people against the disastrous policies of the Govt. either in the positive direction or in the negative. The working class will naturally hope and expect that the meeting will take such positive decisions which will immensely strengthen the working class resistance. And this is exactly what they can reasonably hope from and expect of a trade union which is not subservient to the Govt. or the ruling party wedded to the interest of the exploiting classes. Yet it is the role so far played by the AIRF. Keeping away from the two countrywide one-day industrial strike on grounds which in the light of their experience they find absolutely devoid of substance, makes them apprehensive too. What decision the AIRF will take in its general council meeting will be known only in the future. But the working class and their trade unions outside railways but having fraternal relation with railway trade unions, specially with AIRF, would severely be interested to put some points for consideration by the leadership of the organisation including the field leaders who will attend the meeting.

We noted on an earlier occasion that an unhealthy tradition developed in trade union movement in the Government sector, particularly in railway trade unions, that of maintaining fair distance from the mainstream of trade union movement, of keeping as far away as possible from the united struggle for the common causes of the entire working class. Unions in the Govt. sector had never in the past decided to participate in one-day industrial strikes called by National Campaign Committee. This tradition received the first serious blow when on the eve of the first one-day industrial strike scheduled for 29 Nov. last year, the All India State Govt. Employees Federation declared its decision to join the strike. At the same time, the convention of Central Govt Employees held some days before the strike called upon the organisation to join the strike locally if local situation permitted. The state employees made immense contribution towards success of the Nov. 29 strike while Central Govt. employees participated in strike to varying extend in several states. But second severe blow to

the said tradition came when before the 16 June strike the major Center 1 employees union declared their decision to join the strike. This decision was declared by the All India Defence Employees Federation, National Federation of Postal Employees Telecom Unions, the Central Govt Employees Confederation and its affiliates.

In the entire Govt sector, of all the non-Congress unions, the AIRF stood in ground isolation "upholding" the most unhealthy tradition in one important sector of the country's trade union movement. Has anybody any doubt about it that this position of the AIRF weakens the working class struggle and strengthen the hands of the Govt to in eusify tttack on the working class including of course the railwaymen? On the eve of the meeting the leaders, members and supporters of AIRF will certainly ask themselves the question: Will the AIRF continue take this ignomious stand to the detriment of the interest of the working class in general and railwaymen in particular?

The wider response of workers to the trade union call for the second one day industrial strike on 16 June which is now generally accepted as an undisputed fact, is an equally indisputable indication of greater awareness. On the part of the workers of the serious nature of the attack and its devastating consequences to their own lives. This awareness is certainly developing among the railway workers too. As they are coming to know more and more about the IMF and World Bank conditionalities, the Govt policies based on them and the plans of the railway administration for implementing those policies, the staggering figures of staff redundancy worked out by them, plans for privatising an enormous proportion of railway work with inevitable threat to service conditions and job security, daily attempts to implement one another of these plans, the railway workers too have began to be restless, more conscious sections among them being already unable to reconcile themselves to the fact of their own inaction and isolation when other sections of worker are in the thick of the battle.

In fact in some places workers are on their own initiative and under guidance of local unions are keeping away from duty on strike days. This phenomenon is particularly evident on Eastern Railway where official report of attendance of staff on 16 June show that in :

Head Quarters Office the attendance was	81.6%
Kanchrapara Workshop	97.9%
Liluah workshop	44.9%
Sealdah Area includine	
open line	40.8%
Howrah Division	60%(App.)
and so on.	

Besides Eastern Railway, attendance was particularly nil in Chittaranjan Locomotive works. While CLW Labour Union (an independent union not affiliated to AIRF or any Central trade union) gave open call for strike, on Eastern Railway the General Secretary of Eastern Railwaymen's Union, an affiliate of AIRF, openly called upon Eastern Railway workers to participate in the strike in his capacity as the Convenor of the Eastern Railway Unity Committee. The question will surely be asked : Can the AIRF afford to ignore what those developments indicate ?

Another point also will undoubtedly receive consideration of the leaders, members and supporters of AIRF. The leaders used to put forward several arguments in justification of not joining one day strike. One was the arbitrary power of Govt. conferred by Article 311 (2) (a) (b) (c) of the constitution, Rule 14 (ii), which they use in enormous scale to victimise employees. After participation of the Central Govt employees in the general strike, this argument has lost all its force. The argument that was put forward by AIRF spokesman in the 19th May convention, ie, before the strike, namely that one day strike cannot change government policies and so AIRF would not join one day strike, it would join only in indefinite strike was greeted with jeers and anger by the delegates, because they could not find anything but utter hypocrisy in the declaration. Still another argument that all railwaymen cannot be involved in one-day strike was never convincing. Some other arguments eg. the problems of running staff etc are also sometimes put forward. But during past months, all the arguments, literally all, have completely lost credibility; if there was ever any. Before the 29 Nov. strike the AIRF unions on both Eastern and Central Railways adopted resolutions urging the AIRF to take decision to join the strike. Before the 16th June strike also their demand for permission to the unions to take decision at zone level regarding joining the strike. The permission was denied, but the question remains, if any of the AIRF arguments had the least validity, how the veteran leaders of the two major unions could urge the AIRF to join one-day strike or seek permission to go on strike at zone level ?

These are some of the points which cannot but come up for consideration in the ensuing meeting of the AIRF, no serious activist of AIRF can in the present day context avoid these points. The question to which discussion on these points inevitably boils down is whether AIRF will come out of its grand isolation and join the mainstream, participate whole heartedly in the united struggle of the working class in all its forms including strikes, or it will continue to keep away from it. The decision that will be taken on this question will have far reaching consequences for working class movement, for the future of the class and the future of the country. Great responsibility lies today not only with the members of the General Council, but with all mem-

bers and supporters, the responsibility to ensure that AIRF takes correct decision on this vital question, a decision that will change the balance of forces in the ongoing struggle against disastrous Govt policies in favour of the working class and the common people.

(From Page 1)

in small-scale units in Bhilai on 1st July resulting in death of about 25 workers. The meeting demanded immediate suspension of police officers involved in police firing and apprehending the culprits who murdered Com. Shankar Guha Neyogi recently.

The Sponsoring Committee decided to implement the following programme of action to carry forward the struggle against the Central Government's economic policies with more determination :

- (1) To organise industrywise, state level, local level convention to educate the workers on the serious implications of the economic policies of the central government.
- (2) To hold an all India convention of trade unions against economic policies of the government of India in the middle of September '92 at New Delhi.
- (3) To organise an all India convention against Communalism and divisive forces.
- (4) To organise a massive march before the Parliament in November 1992 to raise the powerful voice of the working class against the economic and industrial policies of the government of India.

The Sponsoring Committee appealed to all mass organisations to join the struggle against these draconian policies so that the interests of the people are protected and country is saved from the clutches of multinational companies, Indian monopoly capitalist and the tycoons of the World Bank and the IMF.

(From page 3)

mic policy. The experiences of third world countries are that no one could tide over the financial difficulties by submitting to IMF-World Bank dictates. India's fate cannot be otherwise. The experience of the last one year amply proves this. Production in industry and agriculture has declined. The prices of all essential commodities and other articles are sky rocketting.

Therefore, the battle against these policies should be carried forward with renewed strength and vigour. Strenuous efforts should be made to mobilise those sections of workers who could not join the earlier strike action. A massive movement encompassing the peasants, youth, agricultural workers, students and all other sections of patriotic people should be built for a gigantic mass action to force the government to retrace these policies which spell disaster for the Indian people.

Working Class Action all over the World

The first half of 1992 has become distinctive for phenomenal strike action all over the world particularly in the advanced industrial world of the West by the organised working class against repression and traditional tactics of the capitalist class to pass on the burden of economic recession to the workers. With whatever skill, the capitalist class may try to paint capitalism with shine and fragrance, as being the agent of the bright future for mankind, the real and ugly face of it is being exposed by organised and militant denial of the working class all the world over to shoulder the burden of crisis ridden capitalism.

Great Britain

On 6 January 1992, workers in the Equipment of GEC Alsthons in Manchester, Great Britain went on strike to fight back planned jobcuts by the company. By mid February more workers joined and the strike continued for about five weeks to protest so called job nationalisation measures thrust upon the workers by the management. More than 2,500 public service workers of Great Britain went on two day strike from 25th March 1992 at the call of their national union NALGO in protest against lay-offs and discriminatory action (in the name of disciplinary action) against blacks and other ethnic minority. Around the same time BBC workers organised three days strike to protest against job-cuts.

The employees of GIRO BANK at UK went on strike for 24 hours on 6th March in protest against the plan of wage reduction by the management. The 1,100 members belonging to National Union of Civil & Public Servants rejected a job evaluation exercises proposed by the authorities and went on strike in protest.

France

Against the same job cut measure the workers of GEC Alasthom, Montronge, France struck work for more than seven weeks.

In February 1992 workers of Alcatel-Radio Technique in Laval, France had gone on strike and occupied their factory opposing the company's plan to cut 246 jobs.

The 42 month long courageous strike of the workers of La Ciotat Shipyard of France, against reduction of job and shedding of manpower, the workers gained a victory to compel the French Government to come to terms.

Spain

There have been repeated strike actions by transport workers in Spain over wage demands and against job-cuts. Bus transport workers went on strike to

protest against lack of progress in wage negotiations and also against dismissal of 27 workers who were victimised because of one day strike in January 1992.

On 11th March, 16000 Spanish custom officers went on strike to demand compensation for job losses in their profession as a result of Single European market.

Sweden

On 21st February, immigrant workers in Sweden organised protest strike demanding firm action against racist attacks. During the last one year, more than 11 immigrant workers from Latin America, Africa and the Mediterranean were shot in Sweden. The immigrant workers along with their family constitute 12 percent of the 8.6 million population in Sweden.

Portugal

On February 1992 public service employees all over Portugal resorted to a 24 hour strike action against low wages. This strike was preceded by another 24 hour strike by the Lisbon based public service workers, and further strike actions are being planned.

Netherland

On 8th-9th April, Railway workers went on two days strike in Netherlands over wage issue.

Australia

Air transport fuel workers went on one day strike on 6th April 1992 over demands of wage rise.

Bulgaria

On 27th March, 1992 more than 20,000 miners in Bulgaria took on strike action to protest against job losses, low wages and bad working condition. The strike lasted for several days.

Japan

Rail transport workers in Japan went on 48 hours strike on 31st March, involving more than 2 lakh workers on wage issue.

Bolivia

On 27th March, nearly 80,000 teachers struck work and staged demonstration in La Paz in Protest against low wages.

Philippines

On 6th April, Air Traffic Control workers went on strike for two days.

Jamaica

Sugar Industry workers launched a strike action in the first week of March demanding wage rise.

Iran

During the end of January 1992, oil workers at installation at Abadan, Shera, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Kermanshah in Iran went on two week strike demanding wage rise.

USA

12000 workers of M/s Caterpillar were on strike since 4th November 1991 which continuing still now so far as information received. The workers demand was a collective agreement on wages and they went on strike after the negotiation broke down. The caterpillar worker strike is the longest strike action in USA during recent time. The strike has also escalated in other units of caterpillar in Belgium and France.

On 20th March 2700 transport workers in Pittsburgh on weeklong strike demanding wage rise and improved working condition.

Germany

Since German unification, the shipyard workers in Eastern Germany have been confronted with the reality of the market economy and its traps. They have to continue their struggle against massive job cuts. Nearly more than 10,000 shipyard workers still employed in ship building in former GDR continued their occupation of their workplaces locking the gates of factories, they have been occupying for more than two weeks. The Ship building factory of former GDR is being planned to be sold out and the possible buyers have announced to bring down manpower to 7000 from present 21,000.

Besides this the West Germany also witnessed the biggest ever strike action by the public service workers paralysing all kind of Transport services, including air services, and other city based services, postal services etc for 11 days, few months back.

Poland

During early 1992, steel workers at NOWA HUTA of Poland staged work stoppages against plan of the Government to close down part of the factory and retrench 15,000 workers. Owing to pressure of struggle the government has to come to term with the union and abandon their plan of massive retrenchment.

Greece

On 10th March, a series of strike action began in public service and banks in protest of government's

attack on workers rights and benefit in the name of austerity.

Czechoslovakia

On 11th February, the independent trade union of Public Road Transport Workers organised strike on the territory of the Czech Republic involving 90% of the workforce, protesting against reduction of subsidy in public transport.

Russia

On 23rd March, pilots with the Russian Airlines threatened to strike and halt Russian Air traffic, if govt did not agree to wage increase and reduction in the length of the working week. On 25th March pilots in the domestic routes struck work.

South Korea

In January 1992 33 thousand workers went on strike at the Hyundai auto plant in South Korea against dismissal and arrest of Union members when the company tried to force a lock out. 10 thousand workers took control of the main auto plant.

The workers sat inside the plant for five days after which a 15000 strong armed troupe of soldiers with 10 helicopters and six police boats attacked the striking workers and re-occupied the plant.

Source : 'Flashess'—WFTU,
March-April 1990

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