



# THE WORKING CLASS

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## Presidential Speech

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Comrades,

I offer my homage to the memory of the comrades who are no more with us. All of them fell fighting for the cause of the workers. Some became victims of goonda attacks while others fell victim to police bullets. I pay my homage to the memory of our Tripura comrades who were murdered by Congress(I) hired goondas.

Comrades, many others suffered imprisonment and police torture while defending the CITU and its right to champion the cause of the workers. We honour their valour and courage. I express my warm sympathy and solidarity with tens of thousands who are locked out and retrenched, with their families undergoing privations. Never before India witnessed so many thousands of families thrown to the wolves and offered hostages to the economic crisis.

### Pursuit of war by USA

Comrades the fifteen months since our Kanpur meeting have witnessed rapid and important developments in the national and international situation. The international situation is now surcharged with dangerous possibilities. The US imperialists intent on their nuclear war drive are pouring in hundreds of cruise missiles in Europe to aggress against the Soviet Union. Their NATO partners are adding this suicidal game though the people of these countries abhor war and demand peace. Through mighty peace demonstrations and other mass actions millions in these countries have expressed themselves against the deployment of missiles in Europe and demanded their withdrawal. In the USA also the peace loving forces are condemning Reagan's war policy and peace has become an issue in the Presidential election.

The Soviet Union and the Socialist countries hold the peace banner firmly putting forward concrete proposals to save the world the horrors of a nuclear war. At the same time the USSR has warned the

US imperialists that those who dare attack her will meet with the retaliatory action sufficient to cool their ardour for aggression. While the working class and people of the world highly appreciate the peace fight of the Soviet Union, some people in our country and abroad in their extreme foolishness refuse to distinguish between an imperialist power out for nuclear war and conquest and a socialist country intent on peace and indulge in talk about two super powers. Thereby they prettify imperialism and slander socialism.

The US imperialists have again exposed themselves by refusing to accept the Soviet offer for serious discussion on keeping the outer space free from nuclear weapons. The poisonous mind of Reagan was revealed to the people when in 'joke' he talked at outlawing the Soviet Union and ordered its bombing. The joke was duly broadcast in certain radio networks. It was a crude device to familiarise the people with the idea of a nuclear war against the USSR and revealed the innermost recesses of Reagan's mind. Recently Reagan sought to cover them by hypocritical talk about peace. India's working class and the trade union movement owe it to themselves that in this dangerous situation they take the fight against war in all earnestness, expose the US imperialist game of nuclear aggression destruction of Socialism and subjugation of the world and rouse our people.

All CITU unions must give full and grand response to WFTU's call to observe September 1, as a day in defence of peace and against war.

### Greetings to British Coalminers

Comrades, we must send our warm greetings to the coal miners of Great Britain who are waging a courageous fight against unemployment and closure of pits. The Conservative British Govt. is resorting to every mean device, with which we are familiar in our country, to crush and defeat the strike. Undaunted by the repression let loose against them, by the imprisonment of their leaders, and by

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police barbarities against themselves the British miners are fighting for months and we wish them success in the heroic struggle. We denounce the Thatcher Govt. for its anti-working class policies and its barbarities and are confident the British TUC and the entire working class will stand by the miners and ensure their victory.

### India being Surrounded

Comrades, the developments in our sub-continent should cause concern to all those who prize the freedom of our country and the freedom of our neighbours. The imperialists are intervening to stem the march of the democratic forces in all these countries to disunite the people and support the reactionary dictatorships. They support the reactionary forces in each country to fan the fire of chauvinism and create hostility between the neighbours. In relation to India their game is to surround the country with a number of hostile and reactionary governments to bring pressure on her to change its policies and to attack the growing democratic urge of the people. They are therefore supporting the Pakistan dictator who has no backing of the people and giving him plenty of arms to be used any time against India. The supply of F-16 aeroplanes, the supply of Harpoon missiles and plentiful finance for acquiring defence materials are preparations for creating hostilities between the countries. It will be suicidal if the working class of our country fails to take note of these imperialist conspiracies and does not consciously fight them.

The same agencies utilise every opportunity to create bad blood between India and Bangladesh while they support the military dictator against the democratic movement in that country.

And now recently the imperialists have succeeded in drawing in their net the reactionary Jayawardene Govt. of Srilanka with whose aid they are bent upon fanning hostile feelings between the people of the two countries.

### The Developments in Sri Lanka

The CITU and its all unions have watched with great admiration the struggle of Tamils in Srilanka and have expressed their indignation and protest against the oppression and atrocities committed against them. To kill the defenceless persons in jail is a cowardly attack worthy of those who hire Israeli and British mercenaries to fight the minority in their own country. But the danger is not only to the Tamils, it is to the entire people of Srilanka, to their freedom and independence. Once you allow armed imperialist mercenaries in your country, you find it difficult to push them out. But Jayawardene is determined to pursue this dangerous path, because he is afraid of relying on the healthy democratic instincts of the people of Srilanka. There are sufficient grounds to believe that Trincomalee is already under US control and some other strategic places will also be placed at its disposal. This is the inevitable

result of relying on the imperialists to fight your own minorities.

Comrades, the army, navy and police forces in Srilanka do not seem to be under any control. Or perhaps they have been secretly given the license to murder anybody at their will. Otherwise it is difficult to explain how there could be naval shelling of a town in Jaffna or destruction of Mannar by the army. These brutalities practised by the Lankan army show to what extent the Jayawardene Govt. has gone in repudiating every norm of a civilised Govt. In fact the fighting Tamils in Srilanka are facing something worse than a military dictatorship.

Comrades, we must all appreciate the courageous role played by the Communist Party of Srilanka and other left parties in this difficult situation and their fight for people's unity, justice to minority and against imperialist penetration. The ruling politicians of Srilanka are issuing provocative statements to create feelings of hostility between the peoples of our two countries. This suits the US imperialists from whom Jayawardene has sought help. This screens the imperialist penetration in Srilanka. Besides it helps the US designs to surround India with undemocratic and hostile regimes.

Comrades, we must warmly congratulate Tamilnadu State Committee and our trade unions in the State for the correct and courageous way in which they have handled the critical situation created by the repression of Tamils in Srilanka. Short sighted politicians and parties sought to exploit the genuine anger of the people to direct it into chauvinist channels which would have created permanent barriers between the people of the two countries and suited the imperialist designs. The Tamil problem in Srilanka can be solved only with the pressure of international working class opinion and the unity of the Tamil and Lankan democratic forces. Our unions all over the country must recognise this difficult situation and by their continuous support for the cause of Tamils they should rouse the international working class to intervene so that justice is done to them.

### The Indian Situation : Crisis in Textile Industry

Comrades before I turn to political developments in our country let me deal with an urgent issue that faces our trade union movement. I am referring to the crisis in the cotton textile industry which has imposed misery on tens of thousands of workers.

Comrades, the cotton textile industry in India is experiencing the severest crisis in the last fifty years with more than a hundred mills gone sick, others closed, others locked out with thousands of workers losing their earnings. It is indeed strange that with half of India going almost half-naked, there should be a crisis in the textile industry. But this is how capitalism works, or rather the mixed economy of India — India Govt.'s euphemism for capitalism in India—works.

The crisis affects not only the direct factory workers, but lakhs of people who are connected with textile trade or production. The organised industry together with powerlooms and handlooms is estimated to employ not less than eight million people. An equal number is estimated to work in trade and complementary industries which supply raw materials to the industry.

Now a substantial part of this vast mass of Indian people is thrown on the streets, a helpless victim of the crisis.

The crisis was brewing over years and it relates to the basic economic policies pursued by the Govt. You cannot stop the outburst of crisis if you subject a basic necessity, next in importance to food only, to the vagaries of inflation and have no plan to keep its price within the reach of the mass of consumers.

The per-capita off-take of textile has been continuously on the decline since 1979. It was 13.65 metres in 1979, it declined to 12.08 metres in 1981. At present the offtake is estimated at around 10.5 metres per annum. In fact, the decline in per-capita consumption of cloth has been there for the last several years. Per-capita availability of cotton cloth purchased by the masses was going down since 1962. It was 15.2 metres in that year, never to reach that figure in any subsequent year. It started sliding down to between 14 and 13 metres, then between 13 and 12 metres and later on between 11 and 10 metres. Now in spite of the steady fall in the availability of cloth there is a crisis. It is evident that with the success of every Congress Plan the Indian people are becoming less and less capable of meeting their cloth requirements, and are forced to economise on cloth. And the Congress (I) Govt. hypocritically claims that during the course of the Sixth Five-Year Plan, they have raised millions of people above the poverty level.

The root cause of this decline in cloth offtake in spite of decline in availability is of course the price factor, the inflationary spiral of the economy engendered by the deficit budgets of the Congress Government. This was admitted by an official committee — the Textile Committee of the Ministry of Commerce. Its studies showed that in 1978 when average value per metre of cotton textiles was Rs. 5.56, the per-capita offtake of cotton textiles was 11.60 metres, while in 1981, when the average value per metre went up to Rs. 8.22, the per capita offtake fell down to 9.40 metres.

The Estimates Committee of Parliament, 1977-78, made the following observation on the Govt.'s failure regarding textile policy and the fall in consumption of cloth.

“The Committee are surprised to note that even after thirty years of independence and completion of four Five-Year Plans, the Govt. have not yet been able to formulate an integrated national policy in respect of a basic necessity like cloth. The Com-

mittee would like to point out that the task force on textile industry had envisaged per capita consumption of cloth in the country by 1978-79, i.e., the terminal year of the Fifth Five-Year Plan as 17.67 meters. As against this, the per-capita consumption of cloth in the country has gone down from 14.49 in 1973 to 13.62 metres in 1974 and 13.81 metres in 1975. The fall in the per capita consumption has been mainly in the rural areas and the decline has been mainly noticed in the case of persons belonging to lower income groups”.

The erosion of the purchasing power of the people especially of the peasants and agricultural workers is so much that they are not able to consume existing production which is only 50 per cent of the estimated capacity. It is estimated that the centralised and decentralised sectors together can produce 22,000 million metres of cloth per annum. But the highest production figure reached was 11,500 million metres in 1983-84. This 11,000 million metres production was also too much for the country. More than 1000-1200 million metres had to be exported.

The Industry's reliance on the Western markets for its exports has added to its difficulties. The Western countries — Europe and the USA — many of them with their imperialist ambitions and anti-Indian policies, have been steadily reducing imports from India. Indian exports to Europe were valued at Rs. 1368 million in 1976-77, they came down to Rs. 726 million in 1982-83. Indian exports to the USA were valued at Rs. 406 million in 1976-77, they came down to Rs. 114 million in 1982-83. Total Indian export to Europe, America and Africa were valued at Rs. 2622 million, they fell to Rs. 1345 million by 1982-83, i.e., by 50 per cent. The capitalist crisis, rising fever of protectionism and anti-Indian outlook, all contributed to this precipitous fall in exports.

The situation would have been impossible had not the exports to the USSR made up the loss. Indian exports to the USSR valued at only Rs. 383 million in 1976-77 rose to Rs. 1779 million in 1982-83. The result was that the loss in the exports to Western countries was more than covered. In 1976-77 total Indian exports including the USSR were valued at Rs. 3005 million; in 1982-83 they were valued at Rs. 3124 million. Linking with a crisis-free Socialist economy has paid dividends. Thanks to it exports have not declined and they are higher in 1982-83 than any previous year.

There is at the same time no doubt that the mill magnates with their inefficiency, incompetence and penchant for making a fast buck have contributed to the present plight of the industry.

The situation in some centres is not so bleak as it is presented by the mill magnates. The rapid rise in the number of powerlooms from 23,000 in 1951 to 600,000 is not totally unconnected with the patronage extended to them by some millowners. It is known that many mills often shut the weaving

section and transfer their yarn to powerlooms to escape excise duty and in the bargain make huge profits. An important cause of the present state of affairs is the industry's refusal to attune itself to the domestic market which demands cloth at lower prices and which therefore affects their rapid profit-making capacity. This is an anti-social and anti-national outlook. The textile magnates want to cater either to the foreign markets or to those who can buy high-priced man-made fibre cloth. The industry cannot survive on this narrow market. It has to depend on the domestic market composed of the mass of poor people. This solution must be imposed on the magnates to avoid lay-off, closures and lock-outs.

One of the persistent demands raised both by the Government and the employers is that of modernisation. In the first place modernisation of even a substantial number of mills will lead to a large increase in production. Who will purchase it? Will the price of cloth be lowered and market expanded? Let me quote from an article in *Commerce*: "How do mills produce low-priced cloth with operations cost escalating so rapidly. Is large-scale modernisation the answer?"

"As opposed to industry expectation no radical improvement in technology can substantially help the industry as a whole since such expensive improvements pay for themselves only if they are used to produce fabrics which are highly expensive and confined to a minor elitist market — the narrow segment once again. Research findings have exposed the fallacies in the conventional argument that modernisation will enable production of cheaper cloth; instead they point to one singular conclusion — modernisation will not be cost-effective at the entire industry level. For instance, detailed technological viability analyses for different types of high technology machines, which have a stress on high machine productivity and low labour complement through automation, have shown that they do not become viable economically under Indian conditions until the fabric price is Rs. 12 per metre (ex-mill). Secondly, modernisation would be highly labour-displacing; were the textile industry, the largest employer among Indian manufacturing sectors, to displace labour, there are bound to be damaging repercussions in the consumer market itself. The industry would only pull the carpet from under its feet."

The cry for modernisation is raised to tie the industry to foreign markets to earn profits and neglect the domestic market. And in the bargain they want to displace thousands of workers.

The same article indicts the management for its operational inefficiency. "Poor maintenance is one of the significant factors behind this latter situation. A considerable gap exists between the actual and potential productivity performance of any given machines, even obsolete ones. Inter firm data show that the scope for improving productivity in mills is

of the order of about 30 per cent on the average". Instead of tackling the problems concerning inefficient management, and orientating the industry to the needs of the people, both the Govt. and the employers care more for exports than for the basic health of the industry. When the industry is unable to thrive on the basis of the vast domestic market, it betrays the bankruptcy of the policy of the Govt. and the management. Besides, the management adopts unfair labour practices, keeps young workers on temporary jobs for years, denying them both DA and bonus, and even entrusting work to contractors to escape the provisions of the labour laws. But this cannot save the industry as a whole. It intensifies workers' exploitation and at the same time does not meet the needs of the people.

Thanks to Congress planning which with every success makes the poor poorer and the management's selfishness and blindness which fails to see that the industry cannot maintain itself without orientating to the mass of the people, the textiles are seeing the worst crisis since modern textile production was started in the country. The crisis is far wider and deeper than even the 1930 crisis.

In 1983, the number of cotton mills, spinning and composite, was 805. Of these more than a hundred have gone sick and taken over by the Govt. In 1971 only eight mills were taken over. Their number suddenly increased to 65 in 1972. But the Govt. did not move in to remove the basic causes of sickness. The 103 mills taken over by the Govt. do not end the story. Many more mills continue to close. In Bombay, after the last strike, more than 50,000 workers are on the street.

Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, M.P., U.P., West Bengal and several other states are witnessing closures and lock-outs. Rajasthan textiles are also complaining about loss of market. Twentyfour mills are closed in Gujarat and 14 in Tamil Nadu. In all 58 textile mills have closed down leading to loss of jobs for 73,000 workers. This figure added to those thrown out of jobs in Bombay will easily go to 125,000. Such is the depth and extension of the textile crisis, the main victim being the textile workers. The Govt. dared not prevent the managements from closing the mills as and when they liked. They could have refused sanction at least in certain States for closure on the basis of the existing law. And sometimes the Judiciary intervenes and declares such laws void. In July the Lok Sabha passed the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill making prior Govt. permission compulsory for closure, layoff or retrenchment in any industrial unit. How will this affect the lock-outs and closure of 58 mills that are already there? This is the usual trick of cheating the people by passing a counteracting measure after allowing the capitalist offensive to reach its objective. And one can be sure that on future occasions also the Act will remain a dead letter.

The Govt. itself has not proved efficient in managing the taken over mills. The same malady of

inefficiency, corruption and lack of social consciousness dominate the taken over sector. The NTC management also seeks to run the mills without participation of the workers in management on equal terms. This is resisted because it will stop many avenues of illegal gratification now available.

In the course of years the decentralised production, especially the powerlooms production, had made rapid advance. Total decentralised production is now ahead of textile mills production. Mill magnates often suggest that powerloom production competes with mill production because it has not to pay excise and other taxes. But as against this the mills have the advantage of large-scale economy. Why should the former go ahead and the latter fall behind?

It should be clear that the workers, the people and industry need not suffer if the industry is correctly linked with people's needs and supplies cloth at prices within the reach of the people. This also means that official policies which erode the purchasing power of the people must be defeated.

It is clear that the cotton textile industry cannot be allowed to remain in the hands of private capitalists. They have ruined it and will continue to ruin it in pursuit of their self interest. Some Bombay millowners, for instance, want to dispose off their mills and make huge profits by selling the land of the mill. They want to pocket this unearned income running into crores of rupees and go in for new pastures. In the bargain they seek to deprive thousands of workers of their jobs.

### **Demand Nationalisation of Textile Industry**

Nationalisation of the cotton textile industry is the only remedy in the present situation. The crisis has shown the bankruptcy and anti-social character of private management. But nationalisation with bureaucratic management will produce no results. The bureaucratic management does not in the least differ from private management except perhaps in the depth of its corruption. The mess that is made by the NTC is therefore everyone to see.

Nationalisation therefore must be accompanied by equal status for workers in running the industry and managing the concern. Without this neither the present profiteering outlook will be eliminated, nor the anti-social role of private capital. The CITU must therefore demand immediate nationalisation of the textile industry and the opening of all the closed mills.

The Govt. is opposed to nationalisation and is trying to aid the industry by some financial concessions, loans and proposals for modernisation. All these are just devices which do not go to the root of the problem.

It is necessary that there should be substantial relief in taxation on cotton cloth. The spendthrift

Govt. should not be allowed to earn millions out of people's nakedness. Such relief should be passed on to the consumers by lowering the cloth prices. The excise duty on cotton cloth in 1982-83 amounted to Rs. 124 crores, on cotton yarn Rs. 96 crores and the duty on all cloth including man made fibres was Rs. 700 crores. The Govt. of India has absolutely no right to lay such heavy taxation on this necessity of life next in importance only to food. A drastic reduction or abolition of this obnoxious tax major will definitely help people to buy more cloth.

The textile workers have immeasurably suffered from the crisis. The defence of their interests must be considered to be the supreme duty of all organisations. We should demand that the existing lock-outs and closures should be declared illegal and the closed mills should be reopened. We should demand that all those who have been locked out or retrenched should get unemployment wage till the factories reopen.

### **Trade Union Unity Requires Further Strides**

Comrades, there is no reason to be completely satisfied with our achievement in regard to trade union unity. Though there has been certain notable developments and certain notable advance, the unity achieved falls far short of what is possible and required under the present circumstances. The offensive of lock-outs, closures, etc is so big and extensive that the trade union movement cannot claim that it has succeeded in giving a consistent fight against it, much less has it in any way succeeded in reducing its severity. The textile industry, the biggest industry in the country, constitutes a glaring example of the weakness in trade union unity. The movement has also not been able to check the offensive in a number of unorganised and scattered industries. Taking advantage of this the employers and the Govt. are forcing agreement linking wages with productivity. Recent months, besides, have seen increased attacks on the freedom and liberty of the trade unions. Arbitrary reduction from wages are made for going on strike. The Coal Authority of India by using an Act passed by the British Govt., the Payment of Wages Act, enacted when Indians had no fundamental rights, has confiscated a week's wages of thousands of coal workers for one day's strike. The Patna High Court order calling for stay and declaring that the Act goes against the fundamental rights of the Indian people was, it seems, being disregarded, but perhaps later on better counsels prevailed. But the Govt. intended to use the Act on a wide scale. It is being used in several states.

The Govt. of India has banned the all-India coal miners' strike under the ESMA. The ESMA is being perennially applied to some industries and the right of strike is being virtually extinguished. The U.P. Govt. excels in extending the application of the Act to one industry after another to attack strikes.

These attacks are bound to increase in future. Both for defence of the living conditions and the freedom of the trade union movement, it is essential that trade union unity takes many more strides forward and is able to draw increasingly large numbers of unions, central organisations and workers within its fold.

### Approach Paper to Seventh Plan

Comrades, now let me turn to the document on approach to the Seventh Plan. It sets before the people Indira Govt.'s policy to handle planning and the country's economy during the next five years. It determines the scope for, employment in modern industry, the ways and methods to tackle the problem of unemployment, investment in modern industry, the Govt's plan regarding agriculture and peasantry and housing for workers dwelling in cities and rural areas.

The document published in the midst of a deep rooted crisis of the economy manifested in the massive rise in unemployment and joblessness and closure of industry and utter ruination of smaller concerns. It does not offer any respite to the workers and the people of India from the regime of high price, unemployment, slum dwelling and sweated labour. The same old promises are repeated and the same old methods are adopted which during every plan have thrust millions into deeper poverty.

So far as the figure of total investment is concerned it is estimated at Rs. 3,20,000 crores; out of this the public sector plan outlay would be Rs. 1,80,000 crores. This last figure comes very near to the total outlay in the public sector during all the previous plans put together.

But of what avail? All the previous plans have witnessed tens of millions being pushed below the poverty line. Besides with all the investments in the earlier period the targets and objectives in relation to production could not be realised.

Even during the Sixth plan targets regarding steel, power generation, iron ore, coal, electronic goods and irrigation could not be achieved. Where physical targets cannot be reached what change is there for social targets despite profuse promises.

The Seventh Plan aims at a growth rate of 5 per cent in the economy. Can this offer any relief to the Indian people. The Sixth plan is expected to achieve a growth rate of 5.2 per cent slightly higher than the Seventh plan. What relief has it given to the people? In fact situation during the Sixth plan has worsened with lock-outs, increased unemployment and massive destitution in rural areas. It is futile to expect that the Seventh Plan can offer any relief from the present distress.

The Seventh Plan aims at a growth rate of 4 per cent per annum for agricultural production and 7 per cent per annum for industrial production. Is this rate

possible for industry considering the miserable failure to use existing capacities in big and small industries alike and monstrous erosion of the purchasing power of the people which will continue during the plan years.

The document observes that within the framework of the declared principles — growth, equality and social justice, self reliance, improved efficiency and productivity—“the movement of social justice has to be faster and there must be a sharper focus on employment and poverty alleviation. Hence the Seventh Plan must emphasise policies and performances which will accelerate the growth of food grain production, increase the employment opportunity, and what is equally important, raise productivity”.

The same wornout record — to cheat the people that increased production will mean a radical relief, a change in their social status. Experience shows that so long as planning is carried out within the frame work of the existing class i. e., with landlords, money bags and capitalists pre-empting all benefits of social progress and increased production, there is no escape for the people.

The document goes on announcing high objectives but does not change the class basis of planning, does not dare attack the right of vested interest and have not the courage to suggest break up of the land monopoly. Therefore its promises will remain empty words.

The entire plan and its approach is dominated by the crisis of the economy and the pressures created by the results of earlier plans.

Years of borrowing from abroad and heavy taxation on the Indian people and dependence on exports to Western countries, now in the midst of crisis, have put their imprint on the strategy of the plan. “The Seventh Plan has to take into account the prospect of considerably diminished flow of concessional financial assistance from abroad, sizeable date service obligations and a global environment where interest rates are expected to be high with only limited possibility of any sharp acceleration in the volume of export growth”.

India's creditors—the IMF and the World Bank have been repeatedly demanding that India must restrain her ambition of industrial advance and cut her coat according to her cloth. This is precisely what is being done by the planners.

How do the planners propose to mobilise the financial resources? “The required resources have to be mobilised in a manner which minimise dependence on external sources or in deficit financing which has a high inflationary potential. In order to do this the public sector will have to generate more internal resources through improvement in efficiency and productivity.”

What chance is there for the public sector to meet the resources needed for planning and overcome reliance either on foreign indebtedness or on deficit financing? There is no chance whatsoever unless the bias in favour of a bureaucratic and corrupt management, in favour of an arrogant and anti-working class management is ended, and the bureaucratic public sector is placed under genuinely public management with the participation of the workers.

The public sector concerns are notorious for their mismanagement and inefficient organisation. Every year they inflict loss of crores of rupees on the state instead of contributing to its resources. The Central Govt. public sector during the 1983-84 incurred a loss of not less than 30 crores of rupees.

But the Govt. shows no desire to change. The CITU repeatedly declared that its trade unions and workers are prepared to discharge their responsibility in running the industry on the basis of equal status in management. But the Govt. has refused to respond. For sake of appearances it has announced a new scheme of workers' participation which ensures no participation, no genuine responsibility for the workers. It is intended only to show international opinion that the Indian Govt. possesses a progressive outlook. But just as the earlier scheme was never introduced in the public sector the current scheme also will not be implemented.

On this important question of workers' participation the approach document makes only a vague reference to workers' share in the management. "By planning to give the work force a share in the fortunes of enterprises through a share in the management and by improving industrial relations the Seventh Plan should aim at improved work ethics, great pride in work and reduce absenteeism; it should minimise the loss of working days and increase the man-hour productivity substantially"—all of course without participation of workers on equal terms.

These platitudes are accompanied by contrary practices. To inspire the workers to make the public sector more productive the authorities are embarking upon intimidatory and confiscatory measures. The nationalised coal India is confiscating eight days wages for one day strike under an obnoxious Act passed by the British enslavers. An arrogant bureaucrat who heads Coal India makes insulting statements about labour leaders and trade unions and says that he will not hold negotiation with the unions and will not call meetings of the Joint Negotiation Committee. The man is not kicked out either by the Labour Minister or the Energy Minister. The same person besides refuses to carry out in full the terms of a solemnly signed agreement. All this shows that the public sector is a completely bureaucratic sector and that neither the Govt. nor the Planning Commission has any idea of reforming it.

Besides it is known that in a number of public

sector undertaking losses are incurred because of the use of substandard materials and other corrupt methods. The Nationalised Coal India itself has been charged with supplying substandard coal to the railways and electrical boards. The latter have charged that the substandard coal has damaged the capacity of the powerhouses to produce electricity and that in some cases the machinery itself has been damaged. But when the workers expose this corruption they are not appreciated but are victimised.

It is therefore futile to expect that the bureaucratically managed public sector will help in ending reliance on external aid and deficit finance. The Seventh Plan will have to increasingly rely on either costly foreign debts or huge deficit finance for securing the necessary financial resources. That means heavy debt payments for the country and rising prices spiral for the debts. Already the effects of current deficit financing are being felt by the people. Prices has started shooting up in the last few months and the Finance Minister is unable to deny the rise. He however, tries to explain it away by saying that it is due to seasonal influences. There is no doubt that the accumulated effect of the Govt.'s deficit financing will inflict the prices further making the conditions of people utterly miserable. The Seventh Plan instead of alleviating the situation is going to exacerbate its discontent.

What is the direct result of all this? Development of modern big industry is to be checked. "This strategy outlined in the section on objectives of the Seventh Plan would result in the lowering of the capital output ratio. This is of great importance, if as is likely, there is a constraint of resources in real terms. The likely increase in debt servicing obligations in the next two years, the possible reduction in the additional resources mobilisation from the ill sector, and the balance of payments consideration would necessitate concentration on areas of low import requirement". That is there must be restriction on the development of modern and sophisticated industry.

The key note, the key excuse is utilisation of existing capacities. "The Seventh Plan has to lay emphasis on improved utilisation of capacity by pinpointing the factors responsible for the existence of idle capacity. Continued regular and intense monitoring of all major public sector enterprises and especially the capacity utilisation should be used effectively for the purpose". It is known that India's per capita production and consumption of vital commodities like steel, coal, electricity is one of the lowest in the world. Its capacity to produce these items is not large and yet there is under utilisation of capacity. Why? Have the planners thought of removing the basic cause of this under utilisation? It is nothing but the expression of economic crisis in the typical form of over production of the means of production. The over production is not in relation to the needs of the people but in relation to eroded purchasing power of the people during every

Five Year Plan. Full capacity cannot be utilised unless this basic cause is removed. Instead of removing it and going for quicker industrial advance the capitalist path of planners leads to slow down in industry and further erosion of purchasing capacity and perpetuation of under utilisation.

Net result is that the workers, the young generation and the employees should look less and less to modern industry with modern wage standards, for jobs. They must seek them in ill paid small industries.

Therefore there will be greater and greater emphasis on per capita increase in productivity, through imposition of heavier work load, or introduction of sophisticated means rendering large section of labour redundant. When you refuse to accept agreed norms of production and share management with the workers to fight corruption and inefficiency, to solve the problem of production, increased productivity means only imposition of additional burden on the work force and its further alienation from production. The workers will be face to face with this attack on a big scale during the years of the Seventh Plan.

The approach document says "the Seventh Plan must emphasise policies and programmes which will accelerate the growth of foodgrain production, increase employment opportunities and what is equally important raise productivity". It says "the Seventh Plan must aim at a accelerated rate of agricultural development and self sufficiency in foodgrains and edible oils at higher levels of consumption. Special programmes need to be formulated and implemented during the Seventh Plan for effecting a breakthrough in rice output, especially in the eastern region and some of the southern region States. Similar programmes are necessary to raise the output of oil seeds, millets and pulses".

All this in the first place shows that six successful five plans have not made India self sufficient in food grains and edible oil. The approach paper therefore has to emphasise the necessity of self sufficiency.

Secondly, all this targeted production with the rate of 4 per cent growth in agriculture—will it lead to a radical improvement in the conditions of the people with the present day one sided distribution of the food grains produced? At best it may relax the severity of present day scarcity of edible oils, etc. But it is futile to expect that the proposed rise in rice production etc will automatically increase the purchasing power of the rural masses and ensure a higher per-capita consumption of food. So long as the existing property relations in the countryside and the country as a whole continue, benefits of progress in food and other production will continue to be monopolised by a tiny section of big property holders. It is a law of economics that the distribution of means of production decides the distribution of means of consumption among the people. In fact the planners have now realised that economic

progress does not automatically lead to economic well being of the people and social justice.

The key solution is change the distribution of means of production, property relation in land, etc. But this the planners would not accept.

This food programme if it is successful will at best continue the existing misery and maldistribution.

But the approach document assures that it is striking a new part and is integrating the food and agricultural programme with a programme for alleviation of rural poverty. "The core of anti-poverty programme lies in the endowment of income generation assets of those who have little or none of these. Hence redistribution, land reforms and security of tenures to the informal tenants have to be directly integrated with the anti-poverty programme".

This same promise is recorded in the sixth plan documents and without any result at the end of the plan. The reason is easy to see. The most obvious method of endowing income generation assets in rural areas on those who have nothing is to break the land concentration and distribute land among the landless. But this neither the sixth plan contemplated nor the approach document contemplates. In its place it only suggests distribution of surplus land, the traditional cheating slogan of Congress (I) government. Here one may ask the question is the Indira Government at all serious about any substantial addition to the assets of those who have none? If it is why is Presidential assent being withheld for bills passed by West Bengal Legislature which ensure the same objective.

So one crucial part of the poverty alleviation programme collapses.

Like the sixth plan the new approach document claims to provide employment for lakhs of people so that they are taken above the poverty line. This is supposed to be a vital part of the seventh plan. "Employment schemes will aim at the creation of durable assets, skill formation and generation of permanent and continuing employment with progressively increased income levels. In addition the scheme will continue to promote self employment in economically viable activities. This would shift a sizeable part of the rural population from agriculture to the secondary and tertiary sectors—a logical corollary of implementation of programme that will increase rural income and rural employment will be the production of consumer items in rural areas with guaranteed market arrangements. This would also revise a number of hand made and handicraft items.

Now every effort to give work to rural unemployed is wellcome. Such schemes and plans have been there in the past also. The sixth plan also was supposed to create millions of jobs. But all these schemes have produced very little effect on the grim

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situation in the rural areas where unemployment continues to increase and assets are not built. In the first place only a part of the huge sums spent on the programme reaches the poor and produces jobs for them. A substantial part is sequestered by officials. The job creation claims have been exaggerated.

No doubt a few have certainly benefited. But this is far from tackling the unemployment programme and creating a new basis for economic advance.

The claim that the employment scheme will automatically lead to revival of handicraft, of establishment of new agro-based industries has no basis in fact. The handicrafts and hand looms and other small industries are in complete ruins. Tens of thousands small concerns are closed and millions are unemployed. The claims that the employment scheme will repair these ruins and revive these industries is asking for the moon. As matters stand the employment schemes cannot be anything other than just relief work, affording some temporary relief but totally incapable of changing the life status of any section of the people.

The stress on self employing industry is a convenient way for the state to escape its responsibility for providing jobs. A few thousand rupees are to be given to some people mostly favourites in the name of self employment. This is the basis of the bank-melas organised by the Indira Government. It is only intended to bolster the electoral prospects of the ruling party. Besides once you distribute the sums you can claim that so many lakhs have been properly employed. The objective of providing productive jobs for everyone who needs it is going to remain a distant dream.

While the approach paper declares the laudable objective of providing jobs for everyone who needs it does not seem to cover the two crores of unemployed in the cities, industrial unemployed workers. There is no reference to this section anywhere. All schemes of employment are mentioned in relation to the rural unemployed. There is no mention of tens of thousands thrown out of jobs due to closures and lockouts and what is to be done with them.

On the contrary the employers and the government repeatedly talk about modernisation, computerisation and automation to prop up industry—all of which means further attacks on jobs. A recent statement emanating from the labour department of the Government of India gives a green signal to computerisation and removes the earlier restriction on the import and use of computers. It was accepted till now that computers should not be introduced without the consent of the trade unions concerned. Now it seems the trade unions are only to be informed and nothing more need be done.

The approach document claims to devote greater attention to rural housing, very good. But what about housing in the cities, housing for industrial

workers? They are asked to live in slums. Slums will not go, only they will be improved and basic amenities will be provided. It was estimated that by the end of the sixth five year plan more than 30 million people will be living in the slums of Indian cities. No one knows how many more millions will be added to this figure at the end of the seventh plan.

The approach document promises no relief to the people and the working class of India; on the other hand it holds out the prospect of further deterioration in the living condition of the workers and the people.

### Fight Authoritarianism, Divisive Forces

Last two years have witnessed unprecedented developments in our country but the trade union movement has hardly noticed them and much less has it done to combat them.

The challenge of divisive forces has become menacing, with secessionist elements helped from abroad trying to break the unity of our country. The Government on the other hand is worsening the situation by resorting to administrative remedies only and adopting measures which assail the democratic rights of the Indian people. Shades of some thing worse than emergency are already there. The amendment to NSA, the Special Court Act, with the onus to the accused to prove his innocence, the provision to extend the Ordinance to any state, the abuse of Governor's powers in Kashmir to illegally dismiss the Abdulla Govt. and the misuse of his authority in West Bengal and Andhra, and finally the deployment of armed forces in wide areas and during communal riots all portend a situation worse than the emergency. But the organised trade union movement has hardly done any thing to meet this attack. Unless it throws its organised strength to fight the authoritarian drive it will be guilty of letting down the Indian people.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi continues her authoritarian drive with the illegal and outrageous dismissal of the N.T.R. Ministry which continues to have the majority support in the legislature and among the people. This is the second illegal dismissal of a non-Congress(I) government within a period of few weeks.

This wanton and unscrupulous attack on the constitution and state democracy with aid of unscrupulous Governor proves that Srimati Indira is determined to extinguish all democratic norms and opposition and create a situation worse than the emergency. The entire people of Andhra are in revolt. The first protest led to killing of 14 people. The protest must continue. The entire working class and the CITU unions all over the country must join the protest. The illegally established Ministry in Andhra must be deposed and the unscrupulous Governor must be sacked.

In West Bengal and Tripura the Central Government discriminates against the Left Front Governments of the two states in matters of financial

resources, relief and industrial developments, and at the same time the ruling party gives licences to its followers to indulge in anarchy and violence in cooperation with any reactionary force.

The Government of India has robbed Rs. 2000 crores of all the states by refusing to implement the recommendations of the 8th Finance Commission this year. West Bengal alone has been deprived of about Rs. 300 crores and Tripura Rs. 46 crores. It is the duty of the working class and the people of the two states to defeat Congress(I) efforts at destabilisation. In the coming Parliament election the Congress(I) party must be defeated.

Dangerous is the challenge of divisive forces.

For the battle is not against an employer or even against the Congress(I) Govt. We and the Indian people are face to face with international imperialism which is now out for its old mission of subjugating peoples of other countries. And for this purpose it requires disunity and discord in the newly liberated countries, the weakening, partitioning and dismemberment of big countries like India before it can swallow them.

The experience of both Assam and Punjab proves this. If in Assam the seemingly innocuous demand for settling the foreign entrants issue was used, in Punjab there was an open appeal to religious fanaticism and secession with the raising of the slogan of Khalistan.

The working class must take full note of the imperialist hand behind these appeals and movements. The USA's role in Assam has been already exposed. Its role in the Punjab developments stands equally exposed with the encouragement to spurious leaders of Khalistan by high U.S. dignities, the discovery of millions of U.S. dollars in the Golden Temple. Other imperialist powers like Britain do not lag behind in encouraging the Khalistanis. And the Pakistani Dictator Zia plays the same role. It was reported in the Press that special training camps for Khalistani commandos were organised in Pakistan.

The picture of conspiracy is thus complete. Anyone who either disposes of these developments as simply a distorted manifestation of economic discontent or discontent due to unequal treatment, etc., fails to note the deep rooted plan behind it.

These divisive forces are effective in misleading large sections because they exploit some genuine grievances or backward consciousness for their purpose. The backwardness of certain regions under the capitalist path, the uneven development, the mounting problems of unemployment and economic misery under the bourgeois-landlord Government are not seen as common problems to be solved by joint class struggle of the exploited sections of the Indian people, but are presented as injustice done to one particular region, community or caste. People steeped in caste or communal consciousness or suffering from regional outlook fall easy victims to these appeals, especially when they are going through some acute economic difficulty.

The imperialists are exploiting the weaknesses and backwardness that are inevitable under a bourgeois-landlord State in a newly liberated country. This alliance of exploiting classes is neither able to push forward the economic development of the country, nor overcome the backward looking religious, communal and caste consciousness. Its policies maintain their existence and it is not unwilling to use them to divert the attention of the people from class and democratic battles. The utter bankruptcy of Congress rule is expressed in this. Its class policies are leading to the disintegration of Indian national consciousness.

Both Punjab and Assam have become running sores because the Congress (I) Party, guided by its limited class interests is unable to make a political bid for the masses and isolate the forces of secession and disruption. It cannot give a political battle to these forces. It must therefore rely on administrative measures and make the question of people's unity a law and order question.

In Punjab the isolation of the extreme secessionists and their political defeat was possible if the Congress (I) Government had heeded the voice of the CPI (M) and other Opposition parties to settle the demands which were in the interests of the people of Punjab as a whole. But this did not suit the electoral interests of the Congress (I) party and therefore considerations of national unity were sacrificed to the electoral needs of the Congress (I) party.

This, however, is inevitable. The bourgeois-landlord combination unwilling to uproot old land relations, is also unable to fight anti-national and fissiparous tendencies. This is the experience of all newly liberated countries.

That is why the working class and its organised trade union movement has to play a crucial role in the fight for the unity of the people and the nation, for national integration. Without this the country will rapidly lose its sense of oneness and unity.

Here lies a basic weakness of the Indian situation. The working class is neither vigilant nor even aware of the political developments and its responsibilities towards the people, the peasantry, the freedom of our country. Without this awareness of its responsibility the trade union movement becomes an exercise in protecting minor economic demands of the workers accompanied by utter blindness to the new dangers facing the country.

The trade union movement must overcome this weakness and rouse the workers to fight all divisive, communal and secessionist tendencies. The trade union movement, with its organised might, must lead the fight against the anti-national forces and by its organised intervention must inspire other sections of the people to take up the challenge. This is an urgent task facing the trade union movement in the new situation.

*August 24, 1984*