



THE WORKING CLASS

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Against Govt's Economic Policy

Forward To Bharat Bandh Preparation

P. K. Ganguly

April 15 will be a land mark in the history of the struggle of the mass organisations when they meet in a national convention at the Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi to announce the date of Bharat Bandh, demanding reversal of the IMF dictated economic policy which the Narasimha Rao Government is adamantly pursuing.

It is for the first time since independence that the trade unions alongwith the mass organisations of peasantry, agricultural labour, students, youth, women and other professional workers like scientific workers, lawyers and cultural groups, etc have come together with the objective to form a new broad platform to unitedly fight for the same cause—to safeguard the economic and national sovereignty of the country from the imperialist financial hordes—the IMF and World Bank.

The pace was set by the massive Delhi rally of 25th November, 1992, which called for formation of such a platform and launch countrywide united movements of various forms to culminate into a massive Bharat Bandh.

The one million rally which was organised by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions, was itself an unique demonstration of trade union unity in India to stand determined to frustrate the US led imperialist moves through the Fund-Bank and GATT to rob the sovereignty of the country from a supine Government and expose the people to the ruthless, full blast exploitation by the multinationals. The mammoth rally was the reflection of the support

of the labouring masses to the cause of the trade union struggle which started with the two country-wide industrial strikes of November 29, 1991 and June 16, 1992. It was, because the so-called new economic policy with its multi-form and inter-related tentacles adversely affected all the facets of the country's economic development and growth. It affected the country's trade, commerce, industries—big or small, food and agriculture, the service sector, the pricing system, the public distribution system, the financial and banking system, the employment situation and what not. Since all the conditionalities of the IMF and World Bank became the economic policy of the Government, all the labouring masses gotrenched under its impact.

Sections of the other labouring masses like peasantry, agricultural workers therefore did participate in the rally and the preceding statewide jathas in various parts of the country.

The rally rightly assessed the response and called for broader unity. The call of the rally could be much before implemented. The communal frenzy created by the RSS-VHP-BJP and Shiv Sena by demolishing the Babri Masjid obstructed the forward struggle of the working class and tried to disrupt its class unity. The Sponsoring Committee which had also taken a resolution against the growing communalism promptly waged a two-pronged struggle endorsing the communal harmony programme of the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan. Against the economic policy however, it convened the broad meeting of all other mass organisations on March

Communal Harmony Rally, Delhi, April 14

National Convention Against Economic Policy, Delhi, April 15

Public Sector Strike, April 20-22

3 and formally decided to implement the call of the 25th November rally for the preparation of the Bharat Bandh. With an unanimous decision it decided to convene the massive National Convention at Talkatora Stadium on April 15, i. e. one day after the 14th April mammoth communal harmony rally called by the Rastriya Ekta Abhiyan.

The struggle against the IMF-dictated economic policy which was being carried forward so far by the trade unions as the most organised force, now has the prospect of getting diversified and bring under its fold the most vulnerable sections of the toiling masses—the peasantry and the agricultural workers, apart from the students, youth, women and other professional employees.

Since then the IMF directly supervising the implementation of its conditionalities, has driven the Narasimha Rao Government deep into the morass resulting in further deterioration of the economic situation of the country.

One of the main pleas for getting the loans from the IMF under heavy conditionalities was to tide over the adverse Balance of Payment position which according to the Government had rendered the economy of the country crisis ridden. But within two years the BOP position further deteriorated. The external debt has crossed 75 billion dollars. The Economic Survey (1992-93) says that cent per cent of the loans taken in the nine months of 1992-93 were drained off to pay back the previous loans. It is preposterous! With the latest IMF-prescribed Budget, imports with lower price of foreign goods will further increase, the process of de-industrialisation will start in the country, trade imbalance will further widen and India will be in a real death trap of the debt trap.

During this, period prices of all commodities have increased, exposing the hoax of the “falling inflation rate” as claimed by the Government. With the steep hike in railway freights and fares, prices of all commodities have increased. Apart from this, the prices of petroleum and diesel have increased during this period. Sugar prices both in the ration shops and the open market have been increased and levy sugar quota has been further reduced. Besides issue prices of both rice and wheat for public distribution system have increased. The process of withdrawal of subsidies has started. The public distribution system itself is on way to virtual collapse. Steel prices have been increased four times after decontrol. Coal prices have been increased steeply. Fertilizer prices have also been decontrolled. Similarly, petroleum prices have also been increased. Telecommunication rates have been steeply hiked.

Privatisation and disinvestment of public sector shares are going on unabated under the mandate of the IMF. The Budgetary support has been stopped to the sick PSUs. With the announcement that the

sale of kerosene and LPG will be privatised and the private parties will be allowed to import them, the prices of these items naturally will show steep hike. The service sector, the banking and the financial system are going to be practically handed over to the multi-nationals, negating the very objective of nationalisation of the banks and insurance. Monopolisation of economic power following privatisation of banks will undermine and corrupt the entire financial system. The swindling of the huge bank funds in conspiracy with the foreign banks has laid bare the shape of things to come after privatisation. The MRTTP & FERA have been practically dismantled. The Exit Policy has been finalised with the unemployment soaring to 37 million. The labour laws are going to be trimmed as per demands of the World Bank to curb the right to strike. And the last but not the least, the Dunkel proposal hanging like Damocles sword and the Patent Act is under the growing threat of being amended to clear the path for the realisation of absolute powers by the multinationals for re-colonisation of the country.

The Convention therefore, the first of the type being jointly organised by the trade unions (the sponsoring Committee): and other mass organisations will be of great significance. It is obvious that being affected by the parasitic prescription of the IMF, a massive attendance with a big section of the peasantry and agricultural workers, apart from students, youth, women and others will participate in the deliberations to chalk out the various forms of movements to culminate in the proposed Bharat Bandh, the date of which will be announced in the convention itself. The Sponsoring Committee meeting with the mass organisations held on March 23 has already decided to accommodate, 7,000 delegates to the convention and distributed the quota to each mass organisation. A common Charter of Demands the most vital demands of each mass organisation is being formulated.

As per report, after the communique issued after the very first joint meeting on 3rd March, there is a stimulant activity among the mass organisation in the country, particularly of course in the trade unions. The public sector workers are already preparing for 72 hours countrywide strike from April 20-22 as called by the CPSTU. Several industrial federations are also on the path of strike. The trade unions naturally have to lead the mobilisation work unitedly. The Sponsoring Committee in the states according to local conditions have to gear up their activities in right earnest to mobilise the other mass organisation a big success, so as to make the Bharat Bandh a complete bandh.

The Convention therefore is bound to serve as a beacon light and the pace setter for the forthcoming united movement of the toiling masses of the country. The trade unions which initiated the process and are now mobilising the other mass organisations

under the vortex of the common struggle, must see that the Convention lays the basis for fortifying the new broad unity of the working class with all its allies to fight the economic policy together and shoulder to shoulder. This was obviously the objective of the trade union movement when it first launched the struggle against these policies, that each phase of the movements must embrace larger sections of workers and other toilers. The two industrial strikes and the rally have obviously set the direction. The Convention must further it with the new allies of the working class. The mounting struggles further, are bound to pave the way for developing a fighting worker-peasant alliance as the core of this broad unity. The trade union movement has to carry forward this task assiduously with a political zeal with massive united actions with all its allies so as to tilt the correlation of class forces in its favour. This only can frustrate the evil designs of the IMF-World Bank and save the country from being taken to the pre-independence days and being subjected to neo-colonial exploitation. At the same time it will frustrate the diabolical designs of the communal forces and the propagators of the fascist Hindu Rashtra, whose economic concepts are on the same imperialist lines. The Bharat Bandh will be the first united salvo in this direction.

All Mass Organisations to Prepare for Bharat Bandh; Join Communal Harmony Rally on April 14

The Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions invited all other mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth, women, lawyers, scientists, etc in a meeting at Delhi on 4th March to discuss and constitute a new broad platform to carry forward the struggle against the IMF dictated economic policy of the Govt. The meeting was called in pursuance of the Declaration of the 25th November Delhi rally.

Representatives of the following organisations attended the meeting :

CITU, AITUC, HMS, AICCTU, UTUC, TUCC, UTUC (LS), All India Democratic Womens Association, National Federation of Indian Women, Bhratiya Keth Mazdoor Union, All India Agricultural Workers Union, Democratic Youth Federation of India, All India Kisan Saba (4 Ashoka Road), All India Kisan Sabha (4, Windsor Place), All India Lawyers Union, Students Federation of India, All India Students Association, L. P. C. Association, (AICCTU), All India State Govt Employees Federation, All India Coal Workers Federation, All India Bank Employees Association, Bank Employees Federation of India, All India Insurance Employees Asso-

ciation, All India Defence Employees Federation, National Federation of Postal Employees, Postmen Union, P & T Federation, Steel Workers Federation of India, etc.

Vireshwar Tiagi, Secretary, HMS, presided over the meeting.

The speakers expressed serious concern over the growing threat of undermining of the economic sovereignty of the country due to the pursuance of the Fund-Bank dictated economic policy by the Narasimha Rao Govt. The anti-people budget which reflected all the conditionalities of the IMF came for severe criticism. The meeting expressed in one voice the urgent necessity to forge a broad unity amongst all the trade unions other mass organisations representing all sections of the Indian people to wage a united struggle against these policies, which alone can force the Govt to retrace from the path, free itself from the dictates of the IMF-World Bank and formulate a self-reliant pro-people economic policy.

The speakers also expressed serious concern over rise of the communal forces and the wide spread communal riots in the country in the wake of the demolition of the Babri Masjid by the vandals of RSS, BJP, VHP and Shiv Sena. They expressed concern over the attempt to capture central power by these forces to impose a Hindu Rashtra. They expressed the unanimous desire to fight this developing fascism unitedly in co-operation with all other secular and democratic forces. The meeting further endorsed the programme of the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan and unanimously adopted the following action programme to wage a two pronged struggle against the economic Policies as well as the communal forces simultaneously:

1. To observe a week from March 25 to 31, 1993 to oppose the anti-people general and railway budgets by organising joint rallies, demonstrations, gate meetings, conventions, Postering, leaflet distribution, etc.
2. To organise a massive National Convention at Delhi on April 15, 1993 at Talkatora Indoor Stadium against the IMF dictated economic policies of the Govt.
3. To prepare for a Bharat Bandh against the economic policies, the date of which will be declared at the National Convention.
4. To intensify the campaign to collect signatures in millions on the pledge to maintain communal harmony and defend secularism, which will be submitted to the Govt by the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan on 13th April. All signatures should reach Delhi to the respective organisations by 31st March.
5. To participate in massive numbers in the

Delhi rally on 14th April, 1993 being organised by the Rashtria Ekta Abhiyan.

B.H. Joshi Acting Gen. Secretary AITUC	P.K. Ganguly Secretary CITU	Vireshwar Tiagi Secretary HMS
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Aboni Roy Secretary UTUC	D.D. Shastri Vice-President TUCC	Swapan Mukherjee Gen. Secretary AICTTU
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British Chanda
President
UTUC (LS)

Verification of Membership

The process of verification of membership of Central Trade Union organisation is underway for quite sometime now. The verification on the basis of membership of 1989, has to go through certain phases and the final results can only be made available not before 1994 or even beyond. In almost all the states the physical verification has been undertaken. You are aware that three notices are to be served to the unions, in the process of physical verification, whose membership requires examination. This physical verification will entail checking of membership registers, receipt books containing counterfoils of receipts, audited statement of accounts, registration certificate, affiliation certificate and receipt of payment of affiliation fee. The first notice to produce records will be issued by giving 21 days time from the date of issue of notice. Then second notice will be issued giving same notice period and if the union fails to produce records a third and final notice shall be issued by giving 25 days notice period. Presently, notices are being served to the unions in almost all states and in certain states even 2nd and in some cases 3rd notices are also served. We call upon our unions to respond to the very first notice they receive and not wait for the 2nd or 3rd notice. In case of any shortcoming they may immediately contact the central office and be prepared with the required documents.

The general verification of strength of Central Trade Union organisations is conducted with a view to giving them representation on various international and national conferences, committees, councils etc. It is therefore important that the membership of our unions should not go by default and therefore we should respond to this exercise with all seriousness.

Railwaymen's Movement

AILRSA, SERly, 13th Biennial conference was held on 22nd & 23rd March 1993 at Dongargarh of Nagpur division. The conference was attended by 218 delegates covering all the seven divisions of the zone. The flag of the Association was hoisted by G.Y. Rajlu. Garlanding of martyrs column was done by the representatives from fraternal organisation including the leaders of the organisation. A condolence resolution was moved paying homage to the departed eminent leaders of the country.

The entire deliberations were conducted by a three members presidium consisting of G.Y. Rajlu, N.G. Prasad and B. Babji Rao.

Welcome address of the chairman reception committee, B. Sanyal was placed by Dinesh Chowdhary.

The conference was inaugurate by Secretary General of organisation. The conference also addressed by C.M. Singh, President, AIREC. The conference was also greeted by A.K. Shukla, General Secretary of AILIEA Raipur district, Sanjoy Pathak of SFI, A.K. Gungly G.S., AIRCCA/SERly, Rabi Banerjee GS, IRSTSA/SE Rly, and A.K. Bag of IRTWA/SE Rly.

The printed report of General Secretary and the Zonal Treasurer placed by M.N. Prasad and M.C. Saha respectively and the draft resolution in printed form was placed by N.B. Dutta. 19 delegates took part on the above reports and the resolutions, and passed with some additions.

Then the conference elected a committee of 21 office bearers taking M.N. Prasad as president, N.B. Dutta as General Secretary and M.C. Saha as Treasurer.

CITU Condemns Bombay Blast

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses deep shock at the series of bomb blasts that ripped the city of Bombay on 12th afternoon, killing around 300 persons and injuring over 1000. This inhuman act was one of the worst sort of terrorism in history. Coming in the wake of the worst communal holocaust in the city engineered by the Shiv Sena-RSS, these well planned bomb blasts clearly indicated the deep rooted conspiracies hatched by the foreign agencies to destabilise the country in all manners.

The CITU demands of the Government to probe into this dastardly act and inflict severe punishment to the culprits. It conveys heartfelt sympathy to the family members of those killed.

The CITU calls upon its unions and appeals to all other trade unions and to working class in Bombay to close their ranks to extend relief work to the affected people.

Central Budget Sings IMF Tune

M.K. Pandhe

The Central Budget for the year 1993-94 presented to Parliament on 27th February by the union Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh meets all the requirement of the IMF conditionalities. This has ensured another dose of IMF loan to India since the aid givers made it clear that it was only after they see the budget to their liking they would consider giving another instalment of loan. As a loyal World Bank blue-boy Indian Finance Minister has sent a clear message to his masters that he would have no hesitation to the Indian economy to the apron string of the multinational companies.

The so called growth oriented budget is opening the floodgates for foreign goods in India. The drastic reduction in customs duty is meant only to enable multinational companies to sell their products in India at the cost of Indian manufacturers. The talk of linking Indian economy to so called global economy is only meant to allow dumping of foreign goods in India at cheaper prices than Indian products. The budget will only help the advanced capitalist countries to overcome their recession partially by passing on its burden on the Indian economy.

When stockyards of Steel Authority of India are overflowing with steel products, the Government of India has reduced Custom duty on import of steel and scrap material making marketing of steel difficult for the public sector undertaking. Dr. Manmohan Singh talks of efficiency through global competition but it is in practice exposing Indian manufacturers to the unfair competition by the foreign steel monopolies. The German Govt. is subsidising sale of steel in India to the tune of \$ 100 per tonne while the Japanese are selling steel in India at over 30% less than domestic prices in their country. Indian Steel producers have to charge Rs. 1500 per tonne as extra charges which are absent in other countries. Under these circumstances to expect Indian steel to compete with foreign steel is a ridiculous proposal. The govt. of India is thus hitting at the basis of our steel industry to the advantage of the multinational companies. There is no wonder that the World Bank in their confidential report to the Govt. of India demanded not to have more steel plants in India. The Narasimha Rao Govt. has only implemented this directive and immensely harmed the cause of India's economic advance.

The Heavy Engineering Industry will also be adversely affected by the drastic reduction in custom duties. Machinery and machine tool manufacturers will find it difficult to get market since they have higher import content and they will have to find foreign exchange in open market at higher rates after the introduction of full convertibility of the

Rupee. The recession which already is hurting the growth in this sector is likely to deepen further. BHEL, BEML, HEC, MAMC etc will be worst sufferers. The suppliers of equipment from abroad are offering some credit facilities which enables them to have an edge over the indigenous equipment.

The Chemical and electronics industries will also be suffering as a result of reduction in customs duty on similar grounds. As a result of long term recession in advanced capitalist countries they are dumping their goods in the third world countries but Dr. Manmohan Singh's budget has completely ignored this aspect. Mere observation in his speech, "As for unfair competition through dumping our anti-dumping laws are already operational and action under these laws will be taken expeditiously wherever it is needed", cannot be taken seriously by anyone including the multinational companies.

Despite reduction in import duties the Finance Minister expects to increase the earnings from these duties to go up by about Rs. 600 crores which clearly indicates our import bill would be considerably higher. The IMF is willing to give additional loans to meet the foreign trade deficit but in turn this would only increase our dependence on the loan givers.

In the name of boosting exports all the concessions offered in the budget will lead to our country exporting more goods abroad at the cost of domestic consumption. Even essential commodities are exported at throw away prices in foreign countries. Though the full convertibility of the Rupee will benefit exporters the real benefits will be garnered by the foreign investors and the Non-Resident Indians.

The budget speech clearly mentions the Govt of India's intention to establish "global linkages which will be of critical importance in the emerging world economy" clearly emphasising the foreign private investment role in bailing Indian economy out of the present situation. Dr. Manmohan Singh confidently mentioned, "We can expect to attract a substantial share of the private investment that is presently flowing to many developing countries in Asia". The Central Government has already signed multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) convention and several foreign countries including U.K. Germany and US have expressed willingness to sign bilateral investment treaties in India. Under these treaties the Govt. of India will be forced to ensure good return on investment for multinational companies and protect their vested interests on Indian soil. The green signal given to the foreign investor to loot Indian economy and the people will

be new bonanza for the multinational companies. Ironically the growth of these foreign exploiters role in Indian economy will be considered as the growth of national economy.

The imposition of import tariffs has been a weapon being used by the advanced capitalist countries to protect their indigenous industries. This weapon has been surrendered by Dr. Manmohan Singh at the behalf of multinational companies which will curtail the growth of Indian industries. The small scale and traditional sector will be seriously affected by this policy and their closure will become imminent in several sectors.

The provision of additional Rs. 630 crores towards National Renewal Fund in the budget is only to give to workers who would be victim of the Exit policy. Mr. P.A. Sangama Union Labour Minister has assured the foreign aid givers that a bill to legalise the Exit policy would be brought in the budget session itself, a thing he could not do during the last session due to the strong opposition by the trade unions. The link between the Exit policy and the entry of multinationals is now clearly seen by the people and the promised grant \$ 500 million by the World Bank to the NRF only exposes their real intention.

Public Sector Disinvestment

The policy of liquidation of public sector in a phased manner is carried out with impunity in this Budget. Rs. 3500 crores will be raised for budgetary purposes by selling out equity of well run public sector units in the stock market. Dr. Manmohan Singh in confirmity with his commitment, so the World Bank has offered these equity capital to the foreign investors who would be trying to develop greater stake in our public sector undertakings. The Union Finance Minister is totally unnerved by the exposure of the share scandals highlighted by the JPC probe in our country completely giving up the earlier goal of public sector achieving commanding heights in the economy, the budget proposals seeks to handover commanding heights of the public sector to the unscrupulous stock-brokers. Apart from giving up the objective of self-reliant economic development the Govt. of India is frittering away the valuable assets of public sector at a paltry value to the private Indian and foreign investors. Whatever assets were built in public sector over a period of years are being utilised to reduce the fiscal deficit as directed by the IMF.

Privatising Banking Industry

The Finance Minister in his speech has permitted public sector banks to raise fresh equity by offering their additional share holding to the private sector. By this process he has opened up the way for privatising the banking industry. The assurance that the Govt. would keep majority share holding has no meaning because in several private sector companies

the share of public sector financial institutions is much higher than the controlling business house.

The stock scam revelations have highlighted the clear nexus between the public sector banks and the notorious speculators in the country. Instead of taking any action against the perpetrators of economic crimes the Finance Minister has allowed the stock brokers to raise fund for the banking sector to indulge in speculative activities and make quick stock money

The creation securities and Exchange Board of India the Govt. of India has handed over the entire operation of the stock market in the hands of leading speculators. The creation of National stock Exchange as proposed by the finance Minister will only be a new cover for the manipulators of the market in the country.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, despite his attempt to clear himself from the share scam cannot escape the responsibility for the great swindle amounting to several thousand crore of rupees. The former Reserve Bank Governor under his patronage was conniving at every misdeed of the banking chiefs is collusion with the stock brokers. His talk of reform in the banking and capital market sectors is only a devise to perpetuate the misdeeds prevalent in Indian economy. Since foreign banks and speculative agencies have siphoned out huge ill gotten gains in the stockmarket World Bank and the IMF have developed vested interest in continuing the swindle and the finance minister in his budgetary exercise has only obliged them.

Dependence on Borrowings

The statistical jugglery of Finance Minister cannot hide the fact that 18 per cent of total budgetary revenue comes from internal borrowings while 3 per cent from external borrowings. In addition to that he was to borrow another 3 percent from the Reserve Bank. Naturally interest payment forms the largest component of his expenditure in the budget 25 paisa of every rupee spent by the Govt of India goes for the interest payment. Though the fiscal deficit in terms of GDP shows the decline and meets the World Bank conditionalities the fiscal deficit continues to be as high as Rs. 36,959 crores which is almost the same as in the last two budgets.

To meet the fiscal deficit the Govt has to partly depend more and more on IMF loans which in turn also increase the country's liability to repay these loans. For every fresh loan the Indian Govt had to comply with new conditionalities while the capacity of the Govt of India to resist these conditionalities is declining very fast. Dr. Manmohan Singh by his economic and fiscal policies is systematically taking India into a veritable trap. The budget reflects his determination to take a plunge into the debt trap, what ever may be the consequences to the national economy or the people of India.

Myth of Reduced Inflation

The Finance Minister has made a clever exercise of reducing the rate of inflation on paper by drastically reducing public investment and construction activity. He then resorted to the increase in price of steel, coal, sugar, cooking gas, foodgrains etc while 10 percent increase in railway freight and passenger fare will further push up the price level of essential commodities. All this exercise was complete prior to the presentation of the General Budget.

Over and above this, the Finance Minister has reduced subsidy and freight concessions to public distribution system. All these measures taken together will substantially build up inflationary pressure and push the price level up to dizzy heights.

The tall promise of generation of 110 million manday's job will more or less remain on paper while in practice due to retrenchment and closure there would be substantial addition to the already high unemployment level in the country. The people below povertyline will increase as a result of this. However the World Bank and the Finance Minister have been giving a rosy picture about the future of Indian economy, contrary to the actual realities.

Workers' Expectation Belied

The workers in public sector were expecting withdrawal of ban on wage negotiations and the acceptance by the Govt of the recommendations of Tripartite Committee on DA. The agreements relating to the Pension Schemes in public sector has so far remained unimplemented and the Government obstruction to implement them has not yet been removed.

The general workers were expecting removal of ceiling on the payment of bonus and the enhancement of exemption limit for the payment of income tax. The promised assistance to sick public sector undertakings has not been implemented while revival packages for public sector prepared by trade unions are not being considered. None of suggestions given by the trade unions during the pre-budget discussion found favour with the Finance Minister while most of the proposals advanced by the industrial magnates were accepted by the Finance Minister.

Dr. Manmohan Singh's budget thus gladdens the heart of the World Bank, IMF, multinational companies, profit hungry NRIs, speculators and the rural rich. It does not offer anything for the common man of India.

The working class and the people of India have therefore no other alternative but to oppose these budget proposals which are extremely detrimental to the national interests. The budget which is an embodiment of the economic policies of the Govt of India must be resisted with all the might of the people. It is only in the reversal of these policies that the national economy and the livelihood of the people will have some future.

Kisan Sabha Opposes Union Budget

N. Sankariah and R.N. Goswami M.P., President and General Secretary, All India Kisan Sabha have issued the following joint statement to the press, regarding the 1993-94 budget, presented to Lok Sabha on 27th. February 1993-94.

"Dr. Manmohan Singh has come out with his third IMF/World Bank dictated budget to open the doors of our economy still wider for Multinational concerns. Massive concessions have been given to Indian monopolists too in the form of reduced Custom and Excise duties who will be the biggest beneficiaries of Finance Minister's magnanimity.

"While so much concern has been expressed about developing agriculture, concessions have been reserved only for landlords and rich farmers in the form of reduced duties on agricultural machinery free movement of agricultural produce and bigger allocations to building infrastructure and processing industries.

"Along with the common men the rural poor, landless agricultural labourers and poor peasants have been totally forgotten. There is no mention of land reforms, payment of fair wages or a central legislation for agricultural labourers. Even the demand for access to institutional credits, (whose size has been enlarged) to these sections has not been given any attention to. It is they who will suffer most from massive hike in railway fares & freights, rise in administered prices of foodgrains, Sugar, fertilizers, coal, steel, electricity and irrigation rates and a general rise in prices that is bound to emerge as a cascading effect.

"Public distribution system is going to be the biggest casualty with big rises in issue prices, with budget allocation far below the actual needs, with no procurement due to free movement and the declared intention to confine it to only persons living below poverty line.

"Cost of production of all agricultural products is bound to rise with all inputs becoming costlier and it is doubtful whether they will remain competitive in international markets, even after all the export incentives. This will certainly push down millions more below the poverty line and bring total ruin to the agriculture of small and marginal farmers.

"The All India Kisan Sabha calls upon its units and workers to launch united campaign against this anti-people and anti-peasant budget, rouse the peasantry to join other sections of our common masses for whom this budget brings only additional burdens and come out in united struggle against this onslaught on their living."

Coal Workers on the March, Big Rallies in Calcutta, Singareni

Sunil Basu Roy

Seven lakh Coal Workers of India are on the march. They are determined to fight back the new economic policies the industrial policy of Govt. of India. They are determined to oppose the Coal Mines Nationalisation (Amendment) Bill, which is passed will pave the way for privatisation.

The workers are passing through ever worsening situation. Wage negotiations have been stalled. National Coal Wage Agreement (NCWA-IV) expired on 30 June, 1991. But, inspite of the fact that charter of demands were placed by the unions, Govt. have failed to constitute JBCCI-V for negotiating and settling NCWA-V. Over and above, the NCWA-IV was not fully implemented, particularly, in respect of housing, drinking water, medical, educational facilities. Mines safety is deteriorating.

Contributions towards a Pension Fund is being deducted from workers' wages. More than Rs. 2 crores have been accumulated. The scheme, however, is not operative as yet. Nor the contributors have been refunded their money with interest. Workers, retire and going to be retired are naturally greatly distressed.

The tripartite committee's recommendation on payment of industrial D.A. @ Rs. 2 per point with retrospective effect from 1.1.89 has not been implemented.

A Govt. ban on wage negotiations in the public sector has helped coal India, Singareni to stall the wage revision in coal industry. A foul game was played on the issue of constituting Joint Bipartite Consultative Committee on Coal. There was no negotiation therefore.

The Contractors' workers have contributed 47 million tonnes of coal to the national output. But, they are not paid the productivity linked bonus. A large number of regular workers have been declared surplus.

At the same time, accidents, fire, subsidences are seriously damaging the mines, both underground and surface land is being degraded. Reclamation is absent. New mines are claiming more surface land with built in areas. Old mines with reserves are being abandoned half-way. Trade is privatised. As a result, corruption has become rampant in the management. Mafias are becoming the real controllers. They have links with the management and the political Dadas.

The IMF and World Bank are imposing their conditionalities including de-nationalisation of coal mines, as well as other mines. The Govt. is committed, but moving surreptitiously.

Coal price has been increased for the tenth time since nationalisation. Workers' wages have been revised 4 times only.

The coal workers are therefore greatly agitated.

To press demands, the coal workers are today a strong detachment of Indian working class movement. They have joined the national public sectors' strike on 29 November, 1991, 16 June, 1992, participated in thousands in the New Delhi Rally on 25 November, 1992,

At the call of All India Coal Workers' Federation the coal workers have initiated a continuous struggle for the last few months. On 12 March, 1993, 2 demonstration were held—one in front of Coal India Office in Calcutta, the other at Singareni Collieries H.Q. At Coal India, the memorandum was submitted by AICWF General Secretary Sunil Basu Roy, M.P., AICWF President, M.K. Pandhe, AICWF leaders—Gopinath De, Bamapada Mukerjee, Bikash Chowdhry, M.L.A., S.K. Baksahi, Ramanika Gupta, Ashok Jadav, B.P. Kashyap and several others. It was received by the Director (Personnel) Coal India as the CMD was engaged in a meeting with the MDs of coal companies at a safe distance—Park Street.

Before the deputation met, a grand mass meeting was held before Coal India Office, 10,000 workers from Raniganj, Dhanbad, Jharia, Hazaribagh, Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh, Nagpur joined the meeting.

The meeting was presided over by M. K. Pandhe, who in his address exposed the anti-worker, anti-national character of IMF/World Bank dictated policies, the New Industrial and New Economic Policies and exhorted upon the coal workers to launch united struggles. He called upon the workers to participate in the proposed all India public sector strike on 20-22 April, 1993. Welcoming the call for strike issued by INTUC he appealed to them to discuss the matter with all Central TUs for charting a common programme. He hoped that INTUC will not backout. Sunil Basu Roy, M.P., Bamapada Mukherjee, S. K. Bakshi, Gopi Nath De, B. P. Kashyap, Ramanika Gupta, Bikash Chowdhury, M.L.A. and others addressed the rally.

The Calcutta based Coal India and its subsidiaries employees took great pain to make the rally a success.

The coal workers of Singareni collieries in Andhra Pradesh under the leadership of Singareni colliery employees' Union have submitted a similar memorandum to the CMD of SCCL on 12.3.1993. It was led by P. Raja Rao and others.

The Trade Unions (West Bengal Amendment) Act 1983

[It is now known to all that an amendment Bill passed by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1969 during United Front regime providing Secret Ballot for recognition of Collective Bargaining Agent was refused Presidential Assent for 13 years and returned in 1982. The Left-front Government in West Bengal once again brought an amending Bill which was passed in September 1983 and sent to the President for his assent, The Bill has now received Presidential assent after long ten years, making it an Act. We publish below certain excerpts from this Act for information of all concerned.—Ed.]

Krishna Pada Ghosh, the then Minister of Labour Government of West Bengal (Member CITU Working Committee) introducing the Bill on September 6, said in the statement of objects and Reasons the following :

“The Trade Unions Act, 1926 provides for registration of Trade Unions and in certain respects defines the law relating to such registered Trade Unions. The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 provides for representation of workmen generally by a member of the executive or other office bearers of a registered Trade Union. For the purpose of collective bargaining, such registered Trade Unions actually represent the workmen.

There is no law, applicable to this State, through which employers may recognise specified Trade Unions to the exclusion of others for the purpose of settlement of industrial dispute. In that context, the need to have a legislation providing for the manner in which bargaining agents may be selected and also indicating their rights, has for long been felt and the present Bill has been drafted keeping in view this need.

In particular, the Bill provides for : (a) mode of determination of bargaining agents both for individual units and for any class of industry in a local area, through secret ballot to be conducted by the Registrar of Trade Unions (b) conditions for recognition of Trade Unions and rights to be enjoyed by such Trade Unions, (c) classification of bargaining agents as sole bargaining agent, principal bargaining agent and as constituents of the joint bargaining council, (d) expanding scope of appeal against decisions of the Registrar to include cases concerning determination of bargaining agents, (e) specifying penalty to be inflicted on employers for failure or refusal to grant recognition, and (f) protection to lawful trade union activity of recognised Trade Unions.

Recognition of Trade Unions as bargaining agents:

*28 A. (1) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (2) any registered Trade Union may apply to the Registrar for recognition as a recognised Trade

Union for an industrial establishment or a class of industry in a local area: Provided that no such application shall be entertained in respect of an industrial establishment or a class of industry in a local area, if there is already a Trade Union recognised under this Act in respect of such industrial establishment or class of industry, during the period of two years immediately following the date of recognition of that Trade Union by the employer concerned: Provided further that such application may be filed with the Registrar within the period of two years referred to in the first proviso if the recognition of the Trade Union concerned is cancelled under this Act during that period: Provided also that in a case where recognition has been granted under the provisions of sub-section (3) of section 28B, subsequent application by any other union may be entertained by the Registrar on the expiry of a period of six months immediately following the date of recognition of a Trade Union by the employer concerned, subject to the condition that the Registrar shall not entertain any such application unless accompanied by a document containing the signatures of such minimum number of eligible workmen as is necessary for support for recognition as constituent of the joint bargaining council: provided also that the existence of recognised Trade Union in respect of a class of industry in a local area shall not be a bar in submitting an application for recognition in a single industrial establishment belonging to that class of industry in a local area.

* (3) If there is only one applicant Trade Union in respect of an industrial establishment or a class of industry in a local area, the Registrar shall enter the name of that Trade Union in the prescribed register to be maintained by him for this purpose and grant a certificate to the applicant Trade Union directing recognition of that Trade Union by the employer concerned and upon such recognition, the Trade Union shall be the sole bargaining agent in respect of the industrial establishment or the class of industry in the local area.

(4) If there are more than one applicant Trade Unions in respect of an industrial establishment or a class of industry in a local area, the Registrar shall arrange to hold an election by secret ballot in order to ascertain which of the applicant Trade Unions secures the largest number of votes, being more than fifty per cent of the votes of the workmen employed in the industrial establishment or the class of industry in the local area, and after recording the name of the Trade Union securing the largest number of votes as aforesaid in the prescribed register to be maintained by him for the purpose, grant a certificate to that Trade Union directing recognition of that Trade Union by the employer concerned and upon such recognition, the Trade Union shall be the

sole bargaining agent in respect of the industrial establishment or the class of industry in the local area.

(5) If none of the applicant Trade Unions participating in the election as aforesaid secures more than fifty per cent of the votes of the workmen, the Registrar shall record the names of such Trade Unions as have secured not less than ten per cent of votes of the workmen employed in any class of industry in the local area or not less than fifteen per cent of votes of the workmen employed in the concerned industrial establishment, in the prescribed register to be maintained by him for the purpose and grant certificates to such Trade Unions directing the employer concerned to recognise such Trade Unions as constituents of the joint bargaining council in respect of the industrial establishment or the class of industry in the local area. And, from amongst such unions, the Trade Union securing the largest number of votes shall be given a certificate directing the employer concerned to recognise the same as the principal bargaining agent in the joint bargaining council in respect of the industrial establishment or the class of industry in the local area, provided the said union has secured more than forty per cent of the votes of the eligible workmen.

(6) The constituents of the joint bargaining council shall have the right to participate in any negotiation, discussion or settlement concerning the workmen employed in industrial establishment or the class of industry in the local area. Two or more Trade Unions recognised as constituents of the joint bargaining council together having more than fifty per cent of the votes in such election shall be entitled to sign any settlement in a case where there is no principal bargaining agent.

(7) Where there is a principal bargaining agent in a joint bargaining council, no settlement shall be entered into in the concerned industrial establishment or the class of industry in the local area, without the principal bargaining agents as a party.

* 28D. (1) On receipt of the Registrar's certificate directing recognition of Trade Unions under section 28B, the employer or employers, as the case may be, shall grant recognition to the Trade Unions as the sole bargaining agent or principal bargaining agent or constituent of the joint bargaining council, as the case may be, in relation to the industrial establishment or class of industry in a local area, to which the certificate relates.

(2) A Trade Union recognised under sub-section (1) shall also be recognised as the sole bargaining agent or principal bargaining agent or as a constituent of the joint bargaining council, by every federation, association or organisation of employers pertaining to the same industrial establishment or class of industry in the local area.

* 28E. (1) Trade Union being the sole bargaining agent or recognised as a principal bargaining agent or as a constituent of the joint bargaining council shall, in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed, have the right:

(a) to raise issue and enter into collective agreement with the employer or employers on general questions concerning employment or non-employment or terms of employment and conditions of labour of any workman in respect of the industrial establishment or class of industry in local area, for which it is recognised. Provided that where, in any local area, in addition to Trade Unions recognised for a class of industry, there are also recognised Trade Unions in individual industrial establishments belonging to that class of industry. The Trade Unions recognised for a class of industry shall have the right to raise only such issues which concern that class of industry as a whole: (b) to collect membership fees, subscriptions or any other dues payable by members of the Trade Union within the premises of the industrial establishment: (c) to put or to cause to be put up a notice board on the premise of the industrial establishment in respect of which it is recognised and affix or cause to be affixed there on notices relating to meetings, statements of accounts of its income and expenditure; (d) for the purpose of prevention or settlement of any dispute regarding issues specified in clause; (a)—(i) to hold discussions with the workmen who are members of the Trade Union at a suitable place or places within the premises of the industrial establishment with the consent of the employer; and (ii) to meet and discuss with the employer or any person appointed by him for the purpose; and (e) to nominate its representatives on non-statutory bipartite committees like Production Committee, Welfare Committee, House Allotment Committee, that might be set-up by employer in an industrial establishment.

(2) The rights of Trade Union referred to in sub-section (1) shall be without prejudice to the rights that any recognised Trade Union enjoys under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

* The recognised union should get certain statutory facilities which the Bill provides in following terms:

"Every employer shall give to a member of the executive or other office bearer of a Trade Union recognised as sole bargaining agent or principal bargaining agent or constituent of a joint bargaining council for lawful trade union activities including leave for attending conciliation proceedings".

* The Bill also provides for penalty as follows for such employers who refuse to grant recognition:

32A. If any employer fails or refuse to grant recognition to a Trade Union as required under section 28D, he shall be punishable with fine which may extend to one thousand rupee or with imprisonment which may extend to six months or with both.

* The right to trade unions secure registration and recognition is further strengthened as the Bill provides for a right of appeal through a new insertion as follows.

(3) For the purpose of an appeal under sub-section (1) an appellate Court shall, so far as may

(Cont'd on page 15)

The INTUC Strike-That Was Destined to Be Withdrawn

M. K. Pandhe

The call for All India one day strike by the INTUC in all the industries in private and public sectors on 19th March 1993 was unceremoniously withdrawn by INTUC leadership on 16th March 1993. The withdrawal was so pre-planned that an All India meeting of INTUC was called in advance on that day knowing fully well that it was the date of withdrawal.

As was expected, there was no preparations for the strike. No poster no leaflet, no holding of mass meeting. Even the managements knew that there would be no strike. Usually in steel and coal industries the management generally convene a meeting to consider the strike notice with the unions but no such meeting was called by these managements. On enquiry the CITU was informed unofficially by the management that there would be no strike. On 10th March there was joint Committee meeting of BHEL but the chairman did not appeal for withdrawal of the strike because in no unit of BHEL there was any visible preparation for strike.

INTUC leadership knew very well that on its own strength they would not be able to organise the strike. INTUC leadership was accustomed to oppose every strike as "Politically motivated". If they would have organised mass meetings to popularise their own call for strike workers would have asked them the question as to why they opposed two nation-wide strike organised by the sponsoring committee on similar issues.

The CITU was informed that during the budget speech the announcement of the implementation of the decision of the tripartite DA Committee would be made. The representative of the Department of Public Enterprises made an announcement in the meeting of trade unions with the Ninth Finance Commission that the Department has already cleared the proposal about the recommendation and the file was lying with the Prime Minister for his signature. However, if the announcement would have been made during the Budget Speech there would have been no reason for INTUC to withdraw the strike. The announcement therefore was deliberately delayed to suit the convenience of the INTUC.

The CITU and other constituents of the sponsoring committee and the CPSTU appealed to the INTUC to agree to fix a common date for strike unitedly so that Govt. should be pressurised to accept the legitimate demands of the workers. However, the INTUC was not prepared for such a joint programme of action because they knew that they had to withdraw the strike and the Narsimha Rao govt. would bale out the INTUC out of the predicament

by offering some concession.

It is there fore clear that the call of INTUC was not a sincere call and it was only a devise to overcome the criticism of their own ranks that the leadership was not prepared for any action. The strike call served the purpose of satisfying the ranks and withdrawal helped the INTUC leadership to prove its servility to the central govt.

On 8th March Ramanujam, President INTUC wrote an appeal to the Prime Minister. Finance Minister and the Labour Minister to extricate the INTUC from its difficult position. Sangma replied to him on 16th March that "All the issues mentioned in your appeal have been under very careful consideration of the Government". If this was so then where was the need for strike ?

The tripartite committee on DA for public sector finalised the recommendations in July 1992 but till March for about 8 months the central govt. was sleeping over the report.

It was only after the threat of another strike of 72 hours in public sector in April next by the CPSTU that the Govt. of India took steps to implement the report. However, the Central Government thought it fit to give it through INTUC so the sagging morale of its ranks could be salvaged. Hence Sangma wrote to Ramanujam.

"In accordance with the recommendation of tripartite DA committee the government have decided to pay Industrial DA to the employees of public sector enterprises to whom DA is applicable at the rate of 2.00 per point increase over 800 points of the 1960 series of All India consumer price Index with effect from 1-1-89".

Sangma's letter is totally silent about the multi-slab system which was to be finalised in consultation with the trade unions. In fact the same was part of the July recommendation of tripartite DA committee to which INTUC was a party. It is not clear whether the INTUC has given up this demand. The public sector workers have to continue their struggle for achieving multi slab system.

Another snag in the decision on DA is the deduction of 50 per cent of the enhanced DA to be deposited in the PF account. The CITU opposed it in the meeting but Sangama in his statement in parliament has wrongly mentioned that in the end CITU accepted the proposal which is totally incorrect. The AITUC and other non INTUC unions

endorsed the CITU proposal but the stand of the INTUC in the tripartite committee on DA enabled the Govt. of India to carry forward its stand despite opposition of non-INTUC unions.

The ban on wage negotiations in public sector undertakings was imposed by the Government due to the non-settlement of the DA question for such a long time. However, in absence of guidelines the negotiations would be meaningless since the management would not be able to offer anything in absence of the guidelines. The appointment of H. N. Ray Committee was only an attempt to delay the settlement on the question of wage in Public Sector undertakings.

Once the guidelines are issued by the Department of Public Enterprises the trade unions will have to fight against these guidelines as was done in the past. It was only by defeating the guidelines that the trade unions in public sector can achieve satisfactory wage settlement this time.

Hoax of Pension Scheme

Government of India's assurance on the pension scheme is only a statement of its position stated earlier. The pension scheme prepared by the PF organisation is a scheme based on the diversions of the managements' contribution to the provident fund. The CITU has already opposed the pension scheme of this time and demanded pension as the third retirement benefit. In steel and coal industries the trade unions have signed settlements with the managements and 2 per cent of workers wages are being deducted every month since 1989. There is no assurance by Sangma that these agreements would be honoured by the managements. The fiasco of the Family Pension Scheme is still before the eyes of the workers. The huge accumulation of Rs. 4200 crores of rupees during the last 2 decade is a sad commentary as how the pension schemes are operating under the PF organisation.

The Banks and Insurance Employees are going on strike on 29th March demanding pension as the third retirement benefit. The government of India wants now to implement the pension scheme purely on workers' money and without any contribution from the management. This cannot be accepted by the trade union movement.

The Govt. of India has been considering the unanimous proposal of the trade unions to remove the ceilings in gratuity Act. However, due to the pressure from the employers side this legitimate demand is not being conceded by the government so far. INTUC leadership may be satisfied by repetition of the old assurance that the removal of ceiling is under consideration but the workers cannot get any relief by such verbal assurances.

Sangma's hope that Finance Minister would be appropriately considering the proposal on enhancing the exemption limit in Income Tax Act also does not

mean anything to the workers.

INTUC in its strike notice has raised correctly the question of working out a National Employment policy. The Exit policy of the Govt. of India is actually generating huge unemployment and unless this policy is scrapped any talk of employment policy is ridiculous. The INTUC leadership appears to be satisfied about the appointment of a committee by the National Development Council and an assurance that the report of the committee has to be considered by the Government. Then what is the meaning of this assurance. It seems the Govt. of India and the INTUC leadership has poor opinion about the intelligence of our workers.

Regarding INTUC's demand for modernisation without retrenchment Sangma's promise will be considered as a big joke of the year. He assured Ramanujam that the matter has been already discussed in the special tripartite committee. However INTUC leadership is fully aware that no decision of this committee has been properly implemented so far. Moreover for the last 14 months the committee did not even meet, while the govt. is going ahead with referring cases to BIFR with a view to close down the industrial units violating the tripartite decisions. After all, like beggars, withdrawers of strike cannot be choosers!

The trade unions have been demanding removal of ceilings in the payment of Bonus Act for several years. As a result of steep rise in prices these ceilings have become so ridiculous that in several undertakings overwhelming majority of the workers have already gone out of the purview of the Bonus Act. Sangma has made a profound discovery in informing Ramanujam that "Abolition of ceiling under the payment of Bonus Act does have serious financial implications." Due to the opposition of the employers the government of India is not removing these ceilings. Surprisingly, the INTUC leadership appears to be satisfied with Sangma's assurance that "This issue calls for further deliberation. As if this was not enough, the INTUC leadership had also swallowed the argument of the union Labour Minister." I would assure you that government always does give utmost consideration for the problems of the workers." Further Sangma appears to have convinced INTUC leadership that "substantial actions" on all the issues raised by the INTUC "have been taken".

Thus the deal struck by the INTUC leadership behind the back of workers in a raw deal and interests of the workers were let down by the INTUC leadership. Though no tangible concession was given to the workers in private sector these workers were asked to withdraw the strike.

The INTUC leadership will find it difficult to convince their own ranks about this raw deal. The sponsoring committee and the CPSTU will have to carry forward their struggle with firm determination despite the sell out of the working class interests by the INTUC leaders.

Statement by Sponsoring Committee on 16-3-93

The Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions has noted that on the assurance given by Shri P.A. Sangma, Labour Minister that the Dearness Allowance at the rate of Rs. 2/- would be implemented and the wage negotiations in public sector would also start, the INTUC has withdrawn their strike call scheduled on 19th March.

It is thus obvious that the strike call given by the INTUC was a fake one only to hoodwink the workers. It is to be noted that all the other trade unions had jointly declared strike in the public sectors from 20-22 April demanding wage negotiations, implementation of the DA of Rs. 2/-, against privatisation, etc. This created a big impact, as all the public sectors workers irrespective of any affiliation became fully prepared for the 3 day strike.

It is actually the joint preparation of all the other trade unions and the pressure created by it, which had compelled the Government to come to this 'agreement' with the INTUC. The trade unions also approached the INTUC to agree to a joint date of the strike as the demands were identical. This would have been a historic event in the united struggle of the public sector workers in the country. But the INTUC did not agree to the proposal,

It is also obvious that the Govt. and the INTUC hatched the conspiracy to sabotage the united movement of all workers in the public sector. This is not the first time that INTUC has done this. As usual on the assurance of the Govt they have now withdrawn the strike trying to take the credit of having convinced the government to concede the workers' demands.

The Sponsoring Committee further condemns the Govt for indulging in such unfair labour practices. When all the other trade unions had jointly given the strike call, the Government instead of negotiating with them, singularly discussed with INTUC only to sabotage the united strike.

The Sponsoring Committee calls upon all sections of the employees and workers in all Public Sector Undertakings not to relax their vigilance and continue their current agitations and the preparations for 3 day strike to press the Govt for acceding to their demand and implementation.

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CITU Condemns Labour Minister's Announcement on Exit Policy

The CITU Secretariat issued the following statement on March 17 :

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns the Union Government's treacherous attempt to formally introduce the Exit Policy, as announced by the Labour Minister in the 'Top Management Perspective' Seminar organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries at Delhi on 16th March. Till recently the spokesmen of the Government had been persistently denying any plan to introduce the Exit Policy.

It is reprehensible the Government, despite total opposition by all the trade unions, has finalised the Exit Policy, and the Labour Minister announces this in the meeting of the top industrialists to please them.

With the Exit policy, the impact of the entire gamut of the new economic policy will now be fully reflected in the Labour Policy of the Govt and will squarely fall on the workers. All the conditionalities of the IMF and World Bank have thus become the economic and labour policies of the Narasimha Rao Government.

The Labour Minister has ridiculously indulged in double talks, one voice he has that Exit Policy would focus on employment generation, while in another voice he has talked of the prerogatives of employers to close down the enterprises and retrench the workers 'to check unproductive and erring employees' This means that all those workers who cannot satisfy the employers terms of productivity will have to leave.

It is to be noted that in the last Indian Labour Conference all the trade unions demanded an Employment Policy from the government, while rejecting the Exit Policy and the National Renewal Fund. Shri Sangma has actually made a mockery with the workers and the vast unemployed workforce by terming the Exit Policy as the Employment Policy of the Government.

The employers, besides, have been placed above law. The employer-employee relation will not be regulated by any law. It will be dictated by the employers only by their jungle rule as dictated by the IMF-World Bank, and the workers will be fully 'disciplined' by putting all curbs even to the elementary forms of trade union movement.

The CITU denounces this dictatorial regime as visualised by the Exit Policy and appeals to all trade unions and the working class to prepare for massive united struggles to stall the IMF-dictated diabolical games.

International Convention on People's Approach to GATT Negotiations

People's Resolution on Uruguay Round

A cross-section of eminent experts, scientists, jurists, academicians, representatives of industry, mass media, farmers, consumers, workers, students NGOs from industrialised and developing countries (Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, The Netherlands, Philippines, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, U.K., U.S.A. and Yugoslavia) numbering about 250, participated in the 'International Convention on People's Approach to GATT Negotiations held' on February 18-20, 1993 at PHD House, New Delhi, India. The Convention was organised by the National working Group on Patent Laws, India.

The Convention deliberated at length for three days the Draft Final proposed by the GATT Director General, Mr. Arthur Dunkel (popularly known as Dunkel Draft Text—DDT).

The Convention was organised to accomplish the following objectives:

—to make an assessment of the likely outcome of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations from the perspective of the people the world over and the developing countries in particular;

—to aim at co-ordinated action and co-operation among the developing countries for strengthening their negotiating position;

—to further regional and sub-regional co-operation and national action;

—to determine new approaches to GATT issues;

—to consider launching of a mass movement on the People's Approach to Uruguay Round of GATT Negotiation.

The following Resolution was passed in the People's Convention by an overwhelming consensus:

i) The People's Convention strongly felt that the Dunkel Draft Text (DDT), in its present form, is totally unacceptable and must be rejected as it is inimical to the basic needs and aspirations of people the world over and people in developing countries in particular;

ii) It calls upon the governments of both industrialised and developing countries to take note of the acute concerns of the people and see that those concerns are fully reflected in the conduct of the negotiations in the GATT;

iii) It calls upon Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and concerned groups of the world and the people at large to organise themselves individually and collectively to express their strong protest and to actively campaign against interference in the national policies of sovereign Governments and ini-

mical provisions of the DDT that threaten human rights and interests and the environment;

iv) It expresses its appreciation of the tremendous efforts put in by the National Working Group on Patent Laws for organising the People's Convention at this most appropriate time for providing an opportunity for the participants—national and international—present here to express their collective views on matters of vital concern for all people;

v) It proposes that the National Working Group on Patent Laws take the initiative to establish a "Centre" which would keep abreast of the developments in the area of international trade negotiations, particularly those pertaining to the on-going Uruguay Round, and facilitate exchange of information in this field, so that concerted efforts could be made to mobilise public opinion world-wide.

CITU Condemns use of Uranium Shells in Gulf War

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU has, in a strongly worded letter addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations, condemned the heinous crimes committed by the US—led alliance of states on the Iraqi people by using uranium shells in the Gulf War, which has caused death to 53,000 Iraqi children in the first 8 months of 1991 alone from fatal ailments including cancer and mysterious stomach illnesses.

The letter says, "Depleted uranium, which makes up the shell's core, is a radio-active by product of the enrichment process used to make atom bombs and nuclear fuel rods. During the six week long war against Iraq, the US and allied coalition tanks, artillery and war planes fired at least 10,000 such shells despoiling at least 40 tonnes of depleted uranium in Iraq and Kuwait. Regretfully, the UN Environment Programme, which has investigated the ecological damages of the Gulf War has remained remarkably silent on this issue and no effort has been made so far to assess the extent of radio-active contamination due to depleted uranium rounds in Iraq."

The letter takes serious note of the situation and the UN must play an active role in investigating the grave danger posed to human life by the use of uranium shells and undertake the clearing of all radio active uranium shells in Iraq and Kuwait. It further demands that the UN should consider immediate ban on uranium penetrators in accordance with international treaties on chemical and radioactive weapons."

Water Transport Workers Observe Demands Day

Port and Dock Workers in all major ports observed all India Demad Day on 16th March to protest against the anti-workers policy of the Government of India and to demand immediate starting of negotiation for revision of their wages and other benefits as well as settlement of other long standing demands.

This decision was taken in the Working Committee meeting of the Federation held at Bangalore on 22nd February '93 which was presided over by M M Lawrence and attended by M.K. Pandhe, Shyamal Chakraborty, both vice presidents. While discussing the report placed by the General Secretary Subash Chnkraborty, the leaders of the different ports observed that the Govt was not willing to settle any of the disputes of Port & Dock workers. It was agreed to by the Govt at the time of last wage settlement that the process of negotiation for the next wage revision will start 6 months before the expiry of the tenure of the current settlement. Since the present settlement is effective upto December 1992, But the Govt is silent on the issue. Besides, the declaration of the multi-slab rate of additional dearness allowance and payment at the rate of Rs. 2.00 per point of the CPI at the lower level, payment of pension as per recommendation of IVth Pay Commisson etc. are still unresolved. The Working Committee of the Federation discussed the problem and came to the conclusion that the united movement of the Port and Dock workers is the only guarantee for realisation of these demand.

It is in this context, the federation had taken decision to observe Demand Day on 16th March '93 to create condition for joint movement. Besides, some important decisions regarding the movement of CIWTC workers, movement of seamen, amendment of the Constitution etc have been taken in the meeting.

Opening the meeting M.M. Lawrence stated that the country was passing through a serious situation due to activities of the communal forces. He called for campaign to maintain communal harmony in Ports & Docks at all costs.

At the conclusion M.K. Pandhe cautioned that this time wage revision of Port and Dock workers will be a difficult task. There is ban on negotiation. So workers have to fight unitedly demanding starting negotiation and declaration and implementatson of DA Committeo report.

Save IISCO Movement

The Save IISCO Committee held a meeting at Burnpur on March 10 and unanimously adopted a resolution opposing the move to privatise the Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO). With the slogans for "immediate modernisation of IISCO by SAIL;" "no surrender to private party" and "follow the Dalla (Cement) path," the Committee has been carrying forward movements in various forms including strike action. Postering, wall writing, gate meeting, leaflet distribution, demonstrations taking the family members etc are going on. There will be a mass convention on April 1. Preparation for District bandh is also going on. The following resolution was adopted in the meeting.

"This meeting of Save IISCO Committee finds with grave concern that Shanker Committee recommended for Mukund Iron for modernisation and update of IISCO. Mukund Iron will participate at 51 : 49 shares.

We always protested against privatisation before the Minister of Steel, SAIL and also before Shanker Committee on 6th January, 1993.

We also sent petition before the Parliament signed by over 15 thousand workmen of Burnpur.

We sent various memoranda, resolutions etc, to the Steel Minister, SAIL and Prime Minister time to time. Our Central leaders met Prime Minister and reiterated our stand.

Inspite of the fact that—IISCO is making profit this Shanker Committee recommended for privatisation.

In view of the above facts Save IISCO Committee have no other alternative than to adopt stern movement so that private concern will not be allowed to enter Burnpur Works.

So the Committee gives call for continuous movement till the Govt of India changes its decision and modernisation must be done by SAIL."

(From page 10)

be, follow the same procedure and have the same powers as it follows and has when trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, and may direct by whom the whole or any part of the costs of the appeal shall be paid, and such costs shall be recovered as if they had been awarded in a suit under the said Code.

There are other provisions in the chapter dealing with definitions which do away with the present loophole. Thus the two approaches—one by the Government of India which tends to take away the right to organise and another by the Left Front Government which widens the trade union right of the workers, are now clearly seen.

New Victories for VSP Workers—Management Concedes Substantial Changes in Promotion Policy

The long drawn struggle conducted by the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant workers has at last made the management to rectify the anomalies in the promotion policy. These policies were introduced in the past in collaboration with the INTUC and AITUC unions, which were functioning as the recognised unions in the plant. The settlement signed between the now recognised Steel Plant Employees Union and Visakhapatnam Steel Plant management on 5.2.93 has resolved a number of long standing grievances concerning promotions. In view of the resistance put up by the VSP management to make any important agreement with the newly recognised CITU Union which may be inconvenient for the INTUC union, the present settlement has turned to be an important landmark towards the independent growth of trade union movement and also a step towards the settlement of other pending issue. In this context it may be noted that the VSP management is systematically planning the defeat of the recognised CITU union in the next union elections.

This agreement disposes off part of the issues contained in the strike notice served on 30.10.92. The strike has been kept in abeyance when the management through written assurance on 23.11.92 expressed its desire to resolve all the pending issues through negotiations.

Through the present agreement the workers got substantial concession with regard to the promotion policy of non-executives introduced vide the Tripartite agreement dtd 5.1.90. For the purpose of promotion from Grade L-2 to L-3 and L-5 to L-6, the length of service for eligibility has been reduced from 5 years to 4 years. Consequently this reduction has been made effective in promotions to higher grades also. Eligibility for promotion from L-8 to L-9 extended cadre grade will be reduced to 5 years.

One more personal grade of L-5 will be added to the extended cadre A, so that employees who could not be promoted to the regular grade of L-3 even after completing 5 years of service in the personal grade of L-3 will be considered for promotion to the personal grade of L-4.

Another important feature of the current settlement is that ministerial grades under ML-1, ML-2, ML-3 and ML-4 will be treated as on single cadre. Promotion in those cadre will be regulated as per eligibilities period. No written or stenography test will be conducted.

The existing Junior Nurses and Junior Pharma-

cists who are having a service of not less than 1 year in L-3 grade will be considered for the posts Nurses and Pharmacists in L-4 grade over a period of time in future as per requirement. The same criteria was accepted in cases of existing nurses and pharmacists for promotion from L-4 to L-5 grade.

Similarly the existing Design Assistants in L-7 grade who have put in 3 years of service shall be considered for promotion to L-8 grade in future as per requirement.

To remove the pay anomalies of around 116 employees who were granted increments under the agreement dtd 21-3.85, it was agreed that their pay will be refixed notionally as if no increment was granted under the said agreement and on the pay so refixed an amount equivalent to an increment will be granted notionally with effect from 1.1.90 as special personal pay. Dates of annual increment will also be regulated accordingly.

Employees who are selected as trainees are not being given FR-22C benefits while fixing their pay in the regular grades on completion of training and they were being treated as a new appointees. The management agreed to consider giving FR-22C benefits to such candidates.

ACFTU Delegation to Visit India

A 5 member trade union delegation from All China Federation of Trade Unions is going to visit India from 9th to 18th April. The delegation is being jointly invited by INTUC, CITU, AITUC and HMS. The delegation will be led by Com. Zhang Dinghua, Vice-Chairman of the ACFTU. The delegation is likely to visit Calcutta, Dhanbad, Bokaro and Agra. The delegates will also visit certain factories, coal mines and will have discussions with all the Central trade unions for strengthening the cordial relations between Indian and Chinese trade union movement.

A.P. State Convention of Working Women

The Third Andhra Pradesh State level convention of working women was held in Hyderabad on 14th-15th Feb, at P. Sundarayya Vignana Kendram. 77 working women from 14 districts came to attend the convention and represented 26 industries. They included university lecturers and school teachers, LIC & Bank employees, public sector industrial employees to unorganised women like headload workers, beedi workers and women in small pharmaceutical industries. Anganwadi workers also came in good number.

The convention started at 11.00 AM on 14-2-'93 with the hosting of the CITU flag by the general secretary of the CITU A. P. State Committee, Com. Nanduri Prasada Rao. The city Co-ordination Committee convener and reception committee chairman Com. V. Saroja invited the delegates. A presidium comprising of Com. Hemalata, Vijayalakshmi and Sarojini was elected which conducted the proceedings.

The convention passed a condolence resolution paying tributes to the great leaders who worked all their life to the cause of the toiling people Com. P. Sundaraya, Com. BTR, P. Ram Murthy Basavapunnaya Janaki Amma, Girija Potti and also on the martyrs killed by the police, the communalists, naxalites etc

Con. V. Srihari, Secretary, State CITU Committee explained at length the impact of the new economic and industrial policies on the conditions of the working women. He said because of steep rise in the prices, because of the increased necessities of life, the income of the male member of the family alone is not sufficient. So more and more women are coming out seeking jobs. But the Govt. is not taking the responsibility of the welfare of the people. It says that its duty is only to govern and not to look after the welfare measures, unlike previously when it used to announce welfare measure though they were not whole heartedly implemented. Because of this change in the attitude of the government it is handing over the industries and trade to private individuals, whose only concern is profit making. It is putting forward the theory that through the private industrialists the benefits will percolate to the poor workers etc. Because of these policies women, most of whom are engaged in the unorganised sector like agriculture, handloom fisheries etc are losing jobs. Because of the introduction of advanced technology women working as telephone operators & receptionists are also losing their jobs. In agriculture, because of the introduction of contract system, women and children are not getting the jobs and have to depend on the income of the husbands, most part of which is spend in the arrack shop. This is one of the reasons for the anti-arrack movement started by women in Nellore District.

The All India Working Women's Co-ordination Committee secretary, Com. Vimal Ranadive, in-

augurating the convention said other trade unions and womens organisations were also opposing these policies because of their adverse effects on working women. In the recent workshop on these policies where the industries minister, P.A. Sangma, the Chairman of the National commission on Women, Smt. Jayanti Patnaik and central trade unions including INTUC participated, the opinion was divided with all the trade unions including INTUC and majority opposing the policies. The CITU taking up the cause of the working women and trying to organise them. Besides, the CITU took the lead in bringing all the trade unions and federations together and forming the Sponsoring Committee to fight these policies. Com. Vimal also warned about the danger of communalism. The communalist are opposed to women coming out for jobs as according to them this will lead to disruption of the family. The working women should join the others in fighting the communalist forces, she said.

Com. Punyavati, convener of the A.P. Co-ordination Committee presented the report. Though the convening committee could not function in co-ordinated manner, work among working women was going on the different parts. The formation of anganwadi union is the result of their work. She put forward strengthening the anganwadi union, organising the beedi and construction workers, holding district level conventions etc as the future tasks. She also called for an increase in the subscription of the Voice of the Working Women and Karmika Lokam.

Com. M. Swarajyam, president, A.P. Mahila Sangam, and Smt. Sonya Gupta of the Central Institute of Foreign Languages gave messages and expressed their solidarity.

Com. Parsa Satyanarayana, President State CITU explained CITU's role on in bringing the workers of different units together and preparing the working class to fight against the policies of the govt. The working women, as a part of the working class should fight for their rights and at the same time discharge their duty in organising, he said.

The convention passed resolutions against the new economic policies, communalism, anti-arrack and private teachers problem, beedi workers problems etc.

A new co-ordination committee with Com. Hemalata as secretary and 12 others was elected.

Com. Vimal Ranadive reviewed the two days proceedings and said, though the women participated in group discussions with great enthusiasm, all of them could not speak on the dias. They must be bold enough to put forward their opinion. We must take forward the cause of Com. P. Sundarayya and B.T. Ranadive who fought all their lives for the cause of the toiling masses.

Supreme Court Wants Railways to give Alternative Employment to Surplus Contractors Labour

Mass Convention by Railwaymen at Kanchrapara Branch

An order passed by a Supreme Court bench consisting of Justice J.S. Varma & Justice N.M. Kasliwal on 4th March 1993 in the case against retrenchment of contractors labour engaged in handling of Coal ash and transshipment as well as in similar other works stated that "the Railway Administration would be well advised to examine this problem from humanitarian point of view in an attempt to provide suitable alternative employment to as many of the appealants/petitioners as possible in the circumstances of the case." The order further states, "The question involved is of importance for all the zonal railways in the country and, therefore, it has to be viewed as a matter of policy by the Ministry of Railways." So at the request of the counsel for the railways some time was allowed by the court for having the matter "examined by the concerned officer in this perspective and the case has been ordered to be further listed for 13 April 1993.

Bulk of the workers concerned with this case are coal, ash and transshipment handling workers engaged by contractors undertaking the work on Indian Railways. The work was of perenial nature and therefore the workers have long been struggling for getting for getting the work undertaken departmentally with the workers being absorbed in railway cadre. In fact in some cases the work used to be done departmentally. But the railway authorities turned a deaf ear to the workers demand. Now as steam loco sheds are being closed down in pursuant to the policy of progressive abolition of steam traction, rendering the work of coal and ash handling redundant, the workers attached to the closed down sheds were facing retrenchment and took the shelter of court. Contractors workers engaged in several other types of railway work also came to take protection of law under similar circumstances. The Indian Railways Coal Ash & Transshipment Handling Majdoor Union, a CITU affiliate, and the unions of other concerned categories of workers have been waging relentless struggle against retrenchment both in law court and outside.

The above order now passed by the Supreme Court appears to be based on recognition of the responsibility of the Railway to provide suitable alternative employment to the retrenched workers who were in the direct employment of the contractors. The workers however have no room for complacence. The Railways will leave no stone

On 15th February 1993, a mass convention was held at Kanchrapara district, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal against the new economic and industrial policies of the Union Government. The new policies of the Govt had bad impact on the Railwaymen in general and at Kanchrapara in particular. It has come to the knowledge of the Railwaymen of this complex as well as to the Eastern Railwaymen's Union, Kanchrapara Branch, that the Railway Administration is actively considering the proposal for closing down the activities of the Halisahar Stores, Eastern Railway. Since the withdrawal of Wagon repairing work from Kanchrapara in 1987, the situation has worsened. Although it was a commitment given by the higher administration to the union that "all the capacity rendered surplus by closure of Wagon Shop activities and tapering of Conventional Coach load will get fully utilised, it has not been done.

A presidium was formed with Anil Bhattacharjee and NR Saha (ERMU), Sunirmal Bhattacharjee (AIREC) Sankar Poedar (State Co-ordination) and Subhas Majumdar (P & T) to conduct the convention. About 1500 Railwaymen and others were present in the convention.

Surjit Roy, General Secretary, Eastern Railwaymen's Union inaugurated the convention. He urged upon all the struggling forces including the TUs, democratic and secular forces, to lunch united countrywide movement. Ajit Chowdhury (CITU) said that it was high time for Railwaymen and their organisations to come and join with the main stream of struggling workers throughout country against the IMF dictated anti-people economic policies of the Union Government.

Saila Bhattacharjee (Defence) Ranjit Kundu (BCMU) Jagadish Das (MLA) M.L. Banerjee (AIREC) and leaders of P & T, Defence, Railways, State Co-ordination Committee etc. also greeted the convention.

The Convention adopted the draft report highlighting the problems of railwaymen in general and those of Kanchrapara in particular. A resolution placed by Sanchendu Mukherjee and seconded by Saila Bhattacharjee chalking out action programmes and another appealing for support from the Sponsoring Committee was also adopted by the Convention.

untured to evade the court advice. The workers should be ready for another round of hard struggle which in any case will be the final round.

Gold Bonds : Boon for the Dishonest

[We are reproducing hereunder an article written by TN Pandey, a former Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, in the Economic Times of Delhi of 12th March, 1993. The objective of the Gold Bond Scheme according to him, is nicely camouflaged to legalise the Black Money with smugglers and tax evaders—Ed]

The gold bonds scheme will soon become operational. The maturity period is five years. Subscription to the bonds is to be accepted in the form of gold of 0.995 fineness to be determined by the govt. mint. In case of ornaments, the same have to be melted, after removing stones etc. and then tendered for acquiring bonds. One bond will be for a minimum denomination of 500 grammes of gold. The bonds can be obtained in the form of government promissory note or stock certificate at the option of the subscriber. If no option is exercised, the bond will be issued in the form of stock certificate. The bonds can be subscribed by resident individuals, Hindu undivided families, trusts, firms and companies. The bonds have nomination facility and are transferable.

Benefits envisaged under the scheme are :

* Interest (tax free) earning of Rs. 20,000 in five years. With individuals with the present maximum marginal rate of 40% plus 12% surcharge, the effective earning would be Rs. 28,960.

* The subscribers would not be asked about the source of acquisition of gold invested in the bonds;

* Initial subscribers will have immunities under the income, wealth and gift tax Acts as also under the customs Act, foreign exchange regulation Act and foreign contribution regulation Act and foreign contribution Act. Ownership of bonds will not be taken into account for the purposes of, and will be inadmissible as evidence in any of the specified acts;

* Bonds will be eligible form of security for taking advances from the banks;

* Benefit consequent to appreciation in the price of gold that may take place after five years.

The objective of the scheme is to supplement official gold reserves. The finance minister's budget speech shows that one objective of the scheme is to enable 'patriotic' citizens to contribute their mite to the development of India ! Both these objectives considering the scheme appear to be illusory. The delay in announcing the scheme is indicative of the fact that there was no urgent need to augment the gold reserves in view of encouraging BoP position.

The commitment that gold equivalent to the value of bond would be returned at the end of five years means that boost to the reserves is only to be short lived.

There is nothing to indicate that there is any urgency to go in for such a desperate measure. The objective, nicely camouflaged, seems to legalise the black money (otherwise liberal tax immunities would not have been necessary) available with smugglers and tax evaders at great cost to the govt. The value of one bond being approximately Rs. 2 lakh, it is beyond the reach of small and medium level taxpayers. Hence the scheme is meant only for richer strata of the society. Do they need such a honanza ?

Again, saying that persons who have concealed their incomes and wealth in the past be doing a patriotic act by contributing to the bonds is unfair. It is amusing to find that at American president is exhorting the Americans to show patriotism by paying more taxes for successful implementation of economic plans of the country. The Indian govt. is appeasing the tax evaders and black money holders by labelling them as patriotic when they invest in gold bonds on promise of immunity to them from any penal actions and showering tax benefits on them for the frauds that they have committed on the society !

Tax amenities (Gold Bond Ordinance also provides amnesty benefits) are greatly harmful to the development of a healthy tax culture and short term revenue gains are greatly offset by long run reduction in compliance, revenue and respect for the laws of the society.

Such amenities send the message that the govt. is soft on those who do not comply with tax laws ! The invisible cost of such schemes in terms of damage to social values is enormous.

One amnesty produces the expectation of future such amnesties thus further reducing both the incentive to comply currently and has a deterrent effect on the penal provisions. This has been the experience in India when one amnesty after another became a periodical feature. The various schemes starting from Tyagi disclosure scheme of 1951, followed by two voluntary disclosure schemes of 1965, a VDS again in 1975, special bearer bond scheme of 1981, amnesty scheme in 1985-87 and national Housing Bank scheme of 1991-92 have all been a disappointment. The total value of bearer bonds subscribed was only Rs. 964.24 crore ! With such unsuccessful experiences in the past, the government should not have ventured to introduce another scheme. Prof, Chelliah, whose recent interim report on tax reforms got thumping appreciation

the finance minister in the budget of '92, guided the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy in preparing a report in 1985 on black money aspect. In this report, the voluntary disclosure schemes have been decried.

The report says, "...to these valid criticism, we would add the important point that the VDS do not blunt the underlying causes of black income generation. If anything by holding out hopes of repetition in the future, such schemes reduce whatever deterrent effect exists in the current provisions for penalty and prosecution. With the incentives for black money generation unaltered (or worse enhanced) there is little reason to credit VDS with any long term effectiveness in the fight against black income."

The views of prof Chelliah should have received equal respect on this matter too.

The Wanchoo committee, commenting about the Bearer bonds scheme has observed: "The Bearer Bond Scheme is a poor substitute even for a disclosure scheme, as it can cover only black money which is not invested and is lying in cash. Further, the investment of black money in such bonds will not connect it up with any particular source of income and as such, it does not offer to the investor immunity from investigation and proper assessment of the income from that source and the penal consequences. The investor cannot also remain completely anonymous from the Income tax departments when he sells the bonds or raises loans on their security or offers the interest from such bonds for taxation. These aspects will militate against the success of the scheme even within the limited sphere of persons having unaccounted cash. Making the interest tax-free would tantamount to allowing high rate of interest and would defeat the very purpose of offering a low yield on the investment.

With almost every expert committee saying that VDS or bonds schemes are no solution to the problem of checking tax evasion and providing revenues to the government, introducing yet another bond scheme is clearly misconceived.

The scheme will provide incentive for converting even current incomes in gold bonds by purchasing gold from the market. People in high income brackets may be tempted to do so as the immediate saving in tax would be substantial and there would be no resource crunch by such investment because funds can always be procured by pledging the bonds with the banks and claim interests as a tax deductible expenditure.

Further, transferability of the bonds can provide a convenient shield to the tax evaders. It would be no surprise, if after the issue period, the bonds start selling at a premium or being lent as short term

accommodation for consideration.

The hope that people would melt that jewellery and invest in gold bonds is too tall a expectation in a country like India where sentimental, religious and antique values are associated with jewellery which also provides sort of social insurance for women folk. Because of this and there being almost no change of its detection by the Income tax departments because of weak enforcement machinery, not many would be willing to melt jewellery and acquire bonds.

It is inequitable to allow taxpayers who knowingly broke the tax laws to periodically escape from the penalties designed specifically to a ply to them. It has a great demoralising effect on honest taxpayers and they too, specially fence sitters, may be motivated to avoid tax which would be a great damage for voluntary compliance culture.

Trade Union Convention At Jammu

A one day convention of the representatives of various trade unions of Public and Private Sector affiliated to Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) was held at Jammu, which was presided over by Om Prakash, President, B.R.O. Union.

The convention was addressed besides others by Balwant Singh, all India Secretary and President, Punjab State Committee of CITU. After explaining the aims and objectives of CITU he criticised the new Industrial and Economic Policy of the Central Govt. and its dangerous impact on the country's economic Sovereignty and working class. He urged upon the workers to fight these policies vigorously. He also cautioned the workers on the growth of communal forces who are out to destroy the secular fabric of the country and urged upon them to launch sustained struggle against these forces to maintain the unity of the country and its secular fabric.

The convention adopted resolutions against privatisation, on communal harmony, on trade union rights and full implementation of labour laws in J & K.

A 15 member co-ordination committee of CITU for Jammu region was formed with Mohd Maqbool as convenor and Om Prakash as Organising Secretary to co-ordinate and guide the Trade Unions in Jammu region.

Economic Survey 1992-93 : What it Reveals ?

The Economic Survey 1992-93 makes heroic efforts to prove great achievements have been made during the past year, and that again, through implementation of the so called new economic policy which is being pursued since July 1991. As a noted economist has put it, seldom has the survey been so blatantly a 'good performance' self-certificate from its authors and so openly a manifestation of a particular view point. The view point of course is that of the IMF and World Bank. What is bound to be the first victim in this process is objectivity and truthfulness. Considerable jugglery has been made to prove a proposition which is not true.

Balance of Payment Position

It is well known that it was in the context of a serious balance of payment (BOP) problem and to come out of it for good that certain immediate steps were taken and a lot of long term measures initiated, which together constitute the so called new economic policy. Though it was clear to the whole world that all these measures were taken to fulfil the conditionalities for the huge loan granted or to be granted by IMF for immediately meeting the BOP problem, the Government, particularly its Finance Minister stubbornly struck to the claim that all the measures were adopted on their own, absolutely free from any external influence or pressure. The measures aimed at overcoming BOP problem include drastic devaluation of the rupee, trade liberalisation, partial convertibility of rupee and all that. It is a common sense as well as economics that BOP problem arises out of chronic trade deficit due to import being more than the export. Permanent cure of this problem lies in balancing import. The survey points to the improvement in the position of foreign exchange reserve. But the present increase in foreign exchange reserve has been effected simply by the huge loan IMF and others contracted during the past couple of years. The increase in the reserve thus represent our debt burden, our liability and not asset, not our real earning. Only a positive trade balance can provide real assent in terms if foreign exchange, which can provide lasting solution to BOP problems.

It is claimed that new economic policy aims at lasting solution to the problem and has adopted serious measures to remove the imbalance. What does the survey has to report about the achievement in this regard ? The following figures will give the answer :

Import & Export (US \$ Billion)

	Import	Export	Balance
April-December 1991	14.2	12.5	-1.3
April-December 1992	16.6	13.1	-3.5
	2.4	0.5	

(Table 6,2, P 98, Eeon. Survey)

The position is clear taking account of the first nine months of '91-92 & '92-93 we find that in '92-93 import has increased \$ 2.4 billion. As against \$ 2.4 billion export has increased by only \$ 0.5 billion. Thus the trade gap has widened against no further. from \$-1.6 to \$-3.5. This is what all the measures under new Economic Policy, devaluation of the rupee, all sorts of liberalisation partial rupee convertibility and so on, has achieved for our economy.

Failur to close the trade gap means more loans from international agencies and foreign countries which in turn increases servicing liabilities, ultimately to a position where the entire new loan is eaten up by the debt servicing requirements. This is the position which is know as debt. It is important to note what the W. Bengal Chief Minister Joyti Basu has pointed out from the Economic Survey itself. That "100% of the external loan taken in the first nine months of 1992-93 has been required to just pay back the past external loan due in this period, indicating that perhaps for the first time since independence the nation's economy has been taken to the death trap of external loan."

Industrial Production

Reviewing the position of industrial production the survey holds out the hope that industrial growth rate for 1992-93 may reach four percent. Let us examine the position.

In table 1.1 at P 2 we find the index of industrial production. It shows that in 1990-91 it stood at 212.6 (1980-81 as 100). It slightly declined in 1991-92 and stood at 212.4 the provisional figure of 1992-93 (April-October) has been put at 208-3. Thus we find here a picture of decline after 1990-91.

Now let us look at the rate of growth of industrial production. The following figures are to be found in Table 6.1 at P 125.

Years	Annual Growth rate (Industry)%
1981-82	9.3
1982-83	3.2
1983-84	6.7
1984-85	8.6
1985-86	8.7
1986-87	9.2
1987-88	7.3
1988-89	8.7
1989-90	8.6
1990-91	8.3
1991-92	0.1

We can see from the above table that during the decade of the eighties the industrial growth rate has only twice slipped down below 7 per cent only once

it has been 7.3 per cent, for 5 years during the decade the rate was above 8 per cent, twice it has been above 9 percent. And after all the sound and fury of the new economic policy, our govt is holding out the hope of 4 per cent, and that also with proviso. If you are not happy, compare it with previous years figure-0.1, a decline of 8.4 percent.

Agricultural Production :

Following is the index of agricultural Production :

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
Agricultural Production as a whole.	151.3	183.2	187.0	192.0	186.6	195.9
Foodgrains	140.4	169.9	171.0	176.4	167.1	179.7

These figures also give a picture of stagnation and fluctuation indicates the dependance on monsoon. The survey holds out the hope for agricultural production being 5 per cent higher than in 1991-92, and the hope is based on the fact that "After a slightly delayed start the monsoon turned out to be very good..." "The agricultural situation this year" therefore "is broadly satisfactory". However with bad monsoon, the country may be pushed to a desperate condition. Indian planning has little to do about it. 88 crore population is therefore well advised to be constantly praying for the mercy of the providence.

Per Capita Availability of Consumables :

At this stage we may look at the net availability of food grains and some important articles of consumption as given in Table 1.18 (P S-24) and 1.20 (P S-26) :

	Food grains grain per day			Cloth (Meters)			
	Cereals	Pulses	Total	Cotton	Man Made	Total	
1985	415.6	38.4	454.0	1985-86	13.6	5.4	19.0
1986	434.2	43.9	478.1	1986-87	13.4	5.7	19.1
1987	435.4	36.4	471.8	1987-88	12.3	5.7	18.0
1988	411.8	36.7	448.5	1988-89	11.7	6.5	18.2
1989	452.6	41.9	494.5	1989-90	11.6	6.1	17.7
1990	435.3	41.1	476.4	1990-91	11.7	6.9	18.6
1991	470.7	40.3	511.0	1991-91	10.5	6.9	17.4
1992	443.0	33.4	476.9				

The importance of per capita availability figures is obvious. It will be seen that the position has remained virtually stagnant over the decades. The survey does not hold out any hope of any change for the better in near or distant future.

Prices and Inflation :

The survey is "almost extotic regarding inflation claiming that there has been decisiv progress". The rate of iaflation is shown to be around 7 percent, which is much below the double digit inflation rate prevailing earlier.

But it is to be noted that "while point to point price rate currently rules below 7 percent, the average rate is expected to be close to 9-10 percent for this financial year". Secondly, by loud propa-ganda impression is sought to be created as if prices are going down. The following figures show the movement of prices.

Whole sale Price index with 1981-82—100 :

1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
148.5	156.9	171.1	191.8	217.8	231.0

It shows how price has been continuing to rise all the time. If we take cumulative position of 2 years then we find that the effect of 7 percent inflation is now added to the already existing impact of 16 percent inflation of last year. Therefore, 7 percent inflation does mean a lightening of the burden due to high prices.

B. T. Ranadive

on

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The Bombay Bomb Blast Outrage—Another Conspiracy of Destabilisation

Ashok Dhawale

The dozen ghastly bomb blasts that ripped through Bombay within a space of three hours on March 12 have already claimed over 250 innocent lives by official estimates, although unofficial sources place the death toll as closer to 500. Over 1500 people have been grievously maimed or injured. Property worth several crores of rupees has been literally razed to ashes.

Destabilisation ; Conspiracy : Although life in Bombay is now apparently returning to normalcy, the bomb blast outrage has further intensified the deep sense of fear and insecurity already felt by the common man as a result of the equally ghastly orgy of communal violence that rocked the city in the months of December & January. This horrifying conspiracy meticulously planned, lavishly funded and ruthlessly executed could certainly not be without powerful foreign link. It was aimed at destabilising the country by triggering off yet another holocaust of communal frenzy. It came in the wake of another destabilisation conspiracy, of a different yet equally dangerous type, at Ayodhya on Dec. 6, which unleashed the spectre of countrywide communal violence.

Communal Amity Maintained : One of the first apprehensions felt by all on hearing the news of the blasts, apart from deep shock and outrage was whether these would be utilised by the communal and fascist to trigger off yet another avalanche of communal violence directed against the minorities. And as a matter of fact incendiary statements to this effect were made by Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray. But this time round, it is to the credit of the people of Bombay that, except for a few stray incidents of stone-throwing at Mahim, the entire city has maintained its peace and communal amity. Further, the spontaneous outflow of help and relief rendered by thousands of people of all strata at each of the blast affected spots was indeed a gratifying feature. Equally gratifying was the sight of thousands more, regardless of religion and creed, who thronged all the major city hospitals to donate their blood for the blast affected.

Thackeray's Contemptible Antic : Particular mention must be made of the fact that Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray made a shameless and contemptible attempt to make political even out of this terrible human tragedy. On March 13, the very next day after the bomb blasts, Thackeray published a prominent front page signed statement in the Sena daily "Saamnaa" with the sarcastic and incendiary title "Hindus are expected to remain tolerant and just silently watch all that happens."

Advani's Falsehoods : But Thackeray, crude and brazen as he is, was not alone in trying to utilise the bomb tragedy to achieve increased communal

polarisation. BJP leader L.K. Advani who visited Bombay on March 14 addressed a press conference whose sole purpose was to give a communal slant to the whole issue. Not only does Advani outright deny that the Bombay riots were Communal, but not by a word does he even mention the role of the Shiv Sena which by every account was the main culprit in both the December and January riots in Bombay.

Role of Congress (I) : Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Bombay on March 13, glorified the so called 'economic reforms' of his Government and declared that the main purpose of the blasts was to derail these reforms. He uttered not a word about the post Ayodhya communal polarisation and the Bombay riots that had undoubtedly provided fertile soil for the bomb blasts.

Another factor that has been rightly exercising the minds of people and the press in the wake of the bomb blasts is the colossal failure of the intelligence agencies of the Central and State Government. It is obvious that the bomb blast operation must have taken weeks to organise, yet the intelligence agencies seem to have had no clue whatsoever.

Service done by Left Forces : As soon as the news of the blast became known, the CPI (M) and CITU direct its units in Bombay to immediately send volunteers for donating blood to the blast victims. The same evening several CPI (M), CITU and DYFI members rushed to the nearest hospitals and donated blood. The mass organisations immediately put up boards in different areas condemning the bomb outrage and appealing to the maintain peace and communal harmony at all costs.

Perceptive Comment : We may conclude this piece with a perceptive observation in the front page editorial entitled "High-Tech Terrorism" that appeared in the Sunday edition of the Times of India, March 14: "It requires no special aptitude for clairvoyance to argue that the one and only effective antidote to the Bombay style, high-tech terrorism is vigilance at all levels in our society... Obviously such vigilance is no possible in a divided society. Those who planted the devastating bombs in Bombay would not have gone about their business with the nonchalance they demonstrated had our country not been polarized so sharply along communal lines. Sooner rather than later, we have to meditate anew the grave implications of the destruction of the Babri Masjid on December 6. What is at stake is our very survival as a nation. We cannot ensure this survival if a section of our people feel insecure, frightened and humiliated while another section labours under the impression that the country's culture, ethos and identity are under threat."

DPRK Warns Against US-South Korean "Team Spirit"

The withdrawal of the Democratic Republic of Korea from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has laid bare the so called "independent" character of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is to be noted that despite opposition to the NPT's discriminatory basis, the DPRK signed the NPT as a gesture of cooperation for peace. But the IEAE acting at the behest of the USA started inspecting not only the nuclear facilities as per the safeguards agreement, but also various non-nuclear establishments according to intelligence supplied by the USA. The infiltrations made by the IEAE were totally violative of the rules and regulations of the IEAE and an attempt to undermine the sovereignty of the DPRK and passing on informations to the USA. Protesting against such motivated actions of the IEAE, the DPRK has withdrawn from the NPT.

But the USA's games did not end there. While utilising the IEAE to peep into DPRK's establishments, it escalated its war preparations in conjunction with the South Korean regime by starting the aggressive military exercise "Team Spirit 93", there by disrupting all efforts of unification of the the country.

In view of USA's belligerent activities and war like preparations, the Supreme Commander of Korean People's Army in a statement issued on March 8, has declared a state of semi war calling upon the people to be prepared for any eventuality.

The following is a synopsis of the statement ;

"In spite of the strong protest and denunciation by all the Korean people and the world's revolutionary people who love peace and oppose war, the U S imperialists and the South Korean puppet clique have at last started an adventurous joint military exercises, "Team Spirit 93."

The staging of the joint military exercise "Team spirit 93" at a time when the agreement on reconciliation, non-aggression, cooperation and exchange, and the joint declaration on denuclearisation to remove the danger of a nuclear war have been adopted and made effective on the Korean Peninsula, is an act of extremely dangerous and grave military provocation that can never be justified.

The US imperialist are now conducting a war exercise heavily with poder smoke by bring a large number of newtype fighters and warships equipped with nuclear weapons and various other means of nuclear strike into the Korean Peninsula and the

waters surrounding it, and by mobilising more than 200,000 aggressive troops including the "quick reaction deployment force" from the US mainland, Guam Island, Hawaii, Japan and other US military bases in Asia and Pacific region.

Our people, who hold dear the independence of the nation and the peace of the country, do not want war, but we will not beg for peace at the expense of our dignity.

In view of the grave situation prevailing in our country owing to themachination of the US imperialists and the South Korean puppets to provoke another war and as selfdefensive measures for safeguarding the security of our republic and people, I order as follows :

1. The whole country, all the people and the entire army shall switch over to a semi-war state from March 9, 1993.

2. All the soldiers of the three services of the Korean People's Army—army, navy & air force—and of the Korean People's security Forces, and all the members of the Worker-Peasant, Red Guards and the Young Red Guards shall watch sharply every movement of the enemy with high revolutionary vigilance and be fully alert for action to crush the enemy at stroke should he attack us at any moment.

3. All the people shall firmly equip themselves with our juche-oriented view on war and, with a hammer and stickle in one hand and a rifle in the other, make a great upswing in the socialist economic construction."

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