REPORT OF GENERAL SECRETARY
AND
RESOLUTIONS

WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING
BHILAI
2-4, November, 1995.

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

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REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Comrades,

Five months have passed since the meeting of the General Council held in Howrah, West Bengal from 30th May to 3rd June 1995. The period has witnessed several important national and international developments which have bearing on the trade union movement of India.

At the outset, I pay homage to Com.Sudhir Mukherjee a freedom fighter and an outstanding leader of the trade union movement in our country. He joined the CITU recently and was instrumental in holding the working committee meeting at Bhilai. He was to be elected as Chairman of the Reception Committee but due to his sudden passing away he could not complete this task.

Another important leader of the CITU Com.Gopal Acharya breathed his last recently. He was associated with the tramway workers movement in Calcutta for several decades and was a member of the General Council of CITU since its inception. Despite ill health he was active in the T.U. movement. Let us pay our homage to his memory.

One of the veterans of the trade union movement in India Vithal Chandhari of the AITUC passed away after the last General Council Meeting. His contribution in development of Engineering Workers Movement in Bombay can never be forgotten. We express our heartfelt condolence to the bereaved members of his family.

The death of 77 coal miners in Gaslitand (Bihar) on 26th September was a major coal mine disaster for which callous BCCL Management was solely responsible. Even now the bodies of the trapped miners have not been taken out and it may take 3 months to pump out water from the mine. The accident highlighted the utter lack of safety in coal mines and we must strongly condemn the attitude of the management and express our grief to the bereaved members of the family.

The cold blooded murder of 6 coal miners of Dugdha Coal washery on 21st August 1995 by a truck of one of the contractors of BCCL was another ghastly occurrence in the coal mine. The management and the local administration are trying to protect the culprits by calling it an accident and making a face of enquiry. The CITU has demanded judicial enquiry so that the culprits are brought to book. Let us pay our homage to the memory of the 6 martyrs of the heroic coal workers struggle.

The CITU activist in singrauli coal belt was also murdered in broad day light by an NEC officials in order to supress the growth of CITU in the region. We condemn this brutal murder and pay our respectful to the memory of the martyr.

The shocking railway accident near Agra on August took the of innocent lives. The increasing railway accident in a serious phenomenon but the Railway Administration is totally unconcerned with it. We pay our homage to the memory of the persons who lost their lives.

The ghastly murder of Sardar Beant Singh, the then Chief Minister of Punjab by an explosion plotted by the terrorists has reaffirmed that the terrorist & disruptive force backed & patromised by impenalist power are still active in Punjab. We condemn such brutal murder & offer condolence to the bereaved family of Late Beant Singh, and assert our resolve to fight back the terrorist & disruptive forces resolutely.

Our President Com. E.Balanandan in his opening speech has already referred to the major international developments and I do not propose to repeat them once again.

INDIAN ECONOMY IN DOLDRUM

The recent data available through official agencies is convincingly highlighting the issues faced by the Indian economy and point out that these policies have now come home to roost. Notwithstanding the tall claims by the official spokesmen that the policy had paid dividend and it was irrevessible the conditions of industry and labour clearly point out that the World Bank - IMF package is responsible for all the present ills of the country.

All the scandals and cases of corruption that are erupting almost every day in the country have their roots in the policy of "liberalisation". As pointed by the Vora Committee the nexus between criminals and politicians of the bourgeoisie is existing and the criminals are in a position to get away with the criminal acts. These links have been more strong after the introduction of the new economic policy by the Government of India. I only propose to deal with some major aspect of these policies and their impact on the national economy.

POOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

According to a study by the central statistical organisation the average annual industrial growth rate stood at 8.2 per cent per annum prior to 4 years of "economic reforms". However during the 4 years of economic reforms it came to only 4.2 per cent per annum since 1991-92. The capital goods industry which grew at 11.3 per cent in the decade ending 1990-91, during the 4 years of economic "reform" the index declined from 291.6 in 1990-91 to 255.4 in 1993-94. In the consumer goods sector the growth recorded during 80's was at 6.6 per cent as against 3.7 per cent during the period between 1991-92 and 1994-95. Despite claim of high growth rate during 1994-95 the overall performance does not give a bright picture even according to official calculation.

Inspite of repeated pep-talk by the Finance Minister that budgetary deficit would be brought down to 5.5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as directed by the World Bank, he could not achieve it. During 1991-92 it was 6 per cent of GDP while the revised estimate of 1994-95 places it at 6.7 per cent of GDP.

As explained by Financial Express, "The major contributing factor to expansion of fiscal deficit is the revenue deficit and this has been increasing alarmingly. The revenue shortfall as proportion to of the fiscal gap, which was 44.77 per cent in 1991-92 is placed at 61.67 per cent during 1995-96 (BE). A look at revenue receipts and revenue expenditure trends shows that revenue receipts of the Central Government in relation to total receipts has declined from 63.16 per cent in 1991-92 to 56.8 per cent in 1994-95 (BE) whereas during the same period, revenue expenditure in relation to total expenditure increased from 73.86 to 75.74 per cent. This sharp fall in revenue receipts and increase in revenue expenditure has inevitably resulted in expansion of the revenue deficit."

After explaining this phenomon the journal explained the root cause of the problem : *"The unfortunate crony is that the revenue gap has been allowed to widen to accommodate customs and excise concessions on items of luxury consumption (like television, cosmetics, soft drinks etc.) meant for a small minority of the community."* (emphasis added)

In the name of reducing the fiscal deficit the Government of India has been refusing to provide support to the revival schemes of the public sector undertakings. The Government is selling valuable public sector assets to meet the budgetary deficit. The World Bank is further pressurising the Government of India to privatise public sector with greater speed and willing Finance Minister is prepared to oblige the aid givers: During 1995-96 the total disinvestment of public sector equity was to the tune of Rs.9.618 crore as against budget target of Rs.7000 crores.

GROWING DEBT BURDEN

The growing debt burden of the country is an alarming outcome of the New Economic Policies. According to an estimate Indians internal debt has gone up during the last 4 years from Rs.154,000 crores to Rs.274 crores. Over and above this the internal liabilities of the Government has gone up from Rs.129,000 crores to Rs.216,000 crores. Thus the net increase in internal debt and liabilities since the commencement of reform is Rs.207,000 crores. According to a CAG Report, "The burden of indebtedness of India increased at the rate of Rs.214 crore per day or approximately 4 crores per hour during the year 1993 alone!" 9

The external debt of the country has gone up from $ 84 billion to $ 95 billion during 1990-91 and 1994-95. The net increase in terms of rupee has been worked out at Rs.136,000 crores. If rise in both internal and external debt is combined it reaches a shocking figure of Rs.343,000 crores indicating that India's total debt has doubled during the last 5 year period.

There is no wonder that the growing indebtedness is adding to the countries repayment liabilities. According to Financial Express, the total interest liabilities on both internal and external debt is estimated at Rs.50,628 crores and on reserve fund and other items Rs.44,000 crore. This works out to be nearly 50 per cent of the revenue receipts of the Government of India. The figures are indeed alarming since the above data does not include the installment of the repayments of the borrowing. At times the Government goes on borrowing for the purpose of repaying the loans under the devise of re-scheduling on loan repayments.

Despite tall claims by Dr.Manmohan Singh and Chidambaram that India is not going towards Mexican type situation the country is fastly advancing towards a debt trap.

With the huge burden of debt repayment Government of India is reducing expenditure on social overheads affecting the social development in the country. The huge debt burden is also responsible for declining public investment in developmental activities.

In the annual joint meeting of the IMF and the World Bank Indian Finance Minister was lamenting that the India was paying World Bank more money that the Bank was lending to India. He was ofcourse advocating for more loans to India. He is refusing to take lessons from the colossal burden of debt on the Indian economy.

FREE ENTRY OF MULTINATIONALS

The Government of India's announcement to permit foreign companies to invest 51 per cent of equity and assurance of automatic approvals have opened floodgates for MNCs to penetrate and Control Indian Economy. During 1994-95 a total of $ 4 billion investment has come in India.

Though industrial houses have welcomed this measure since they also get a part of the loot accumulated by multi-national in India. But their concern is expressed by A K Rungta President FICCI when he said, "Even the most developed economies have support mechanisms to encourage indigenous industries. The instances of the U.S. and Japan disagreement over micro-chips and cars are fresh in our mind as also the framework of the Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA) engineered by the U.S. and others to protect their domestic textile industry. The underlying premise was that these sectors in the same economy were fragile and required Government support."

Rungta further observed,

"Most of the Indian companies are pygmies as compared to the giant MNCs in terms of their financial clout and market access. With their inherent strength in a better resource-base and penetration power in the complex global market MNCs can supply goods and services at lesser cost. Due to their staying power in the market, they can also withstand market pressures even if they are incurring losses."

(Financial Express 25th May 1995)

GROWING TRADE DEFICIT

The international trade deficit is growing due to liberalised imports and reduction in custom duty on imported goods. Many of these imports are at the cost of Indian products. According to official figures import growth rate is about 37.14 per cent while export growth rate is 27.97 per cent. During April-August 1995 only India's trade deficit reached $ 798.53 million. During the recent period only the oil imports show a drastic rise of 42.67 per cent.

A study conducted by the three leading U.S. economists from Florida International University recently has pointed out there could have been a flight of capital of as much $ 4.4 billion from India to the U.S. during 1993 through a total trade of about $7.3 billion due to the mechanism of under invoicing and over- invoicing of products. They based this study on the basis of official data regarding the average price of product sent to U.S. from India and the price of the same product sent by other countries to U.S.A. Similarly they also studied the export price of U.S. products to India and other countries.

This colossal frittering away of the foreign exchange could be easily detected by the Government of India, the U.S. economists pointed out. However, the Government of India is not taking any measure to check this national loss on the plea that it would affect our international trade. This study clearly indicates real face of the tall claim by the Government about the higher export performance of the economy. We are selling at a low price and importing at a high price. This is causing loss of the national resources and add to the poverty of the country.

The U.S. economists found this phenomenon as "abnormal" but the Government of India considers it as "normal".

DOUBLING OF PROFITS BY PRIVATE SECTOR

The Reserve Bank study on the unaudited financial result of 1725 companies reveals that their post tax profit for 1994-95 had increased to Rs.7580 crores as against Rs.3935 crores last year indicating a rise in profit by 93 per cent in one year. Some of the companies have recorded higher profit by more than 300 per cent in one year alone.

The amount of tax concessions and other benefits declared by the Government of India have been responsible for such a high rate of profit. The companies belonging to industry group of cotton/blended textile, engineering, basic industrial chemicals, cement, rubber and rubber products, and trading companies more than doubled their post-tax profits in one year under review. While the economic conditions of the poor has worsened this high profitability has only led to growing inequality in the country.

FALLING VALUE OF A RUPEE

As a result of inflation in the economy and continuous adverse balance of trade the value of rupee is declining rapidly. When the rupee was on the downslide the Ministry of Finance refused to intervene. The Reserve Bank of India took step to check further downfall only when per dollar more than Rs.35 were required in the market. Such policies only lead to devaluation of the rupee through the backdoor. With this development there is already further devaluation of the rupee to the tune of 10 per cent in just one month!

Keeping the trend of decline in the value of a rupee The Economist (London) Intelligence Unit has predicted a further fall in the value of rupee during the next 5 years. Its study showed that the exchange rate for the dollar against the rupee would be on an average Rs.34.72 in 1995 which would go up to Rs.37.14 in the next year. In 1997 the rate would further go up to Rs.38.81 while in 1998 it would be Rs.40.24, touching Rs.41.69 in 1999.

Michel Camdensus Chief of the IMF admitted that the exchange rate instability were partly a result of globalisation of financial markets

WORSENING EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS

Through the unemployment is on the rise the Government of India is making false claim of additional job generation. Montek Singh Ahluwalia Finance Secretary made a ficticious claim in an interview to Asia Business News that after the commencement of New Economic Policy in 1991 three million new jobs have been created, in 1992 and 1993 each year 6 millions new jobs were created while in 1994-95 he claimed that job generation has further increased to 7 million.

When job reduction has been the battle cry in every industry, growth of sickness and closure is reaching serious proportions, ban on recruitment in Govt. services and public sector, VRS is pursued vigorously, where is the generation of jobs in the country? The small scale and traditional sector has also experienced drastic reduction in availability of jobs and the claim of Finance Secretary cannot be sustained in any manner.

Some economists have already pointed out that the job opportunity data include the job made available to a person even for a day or a couple of days in a year. This does not take into account the generation of regular employment in the country. However the National Sample Survey data clearly note that the share of regular employees among the urban masses was 44.2 per cent in 1990-91, 39.9 per cent in July-December in 1991-92 and 39.4 per cent in the corresponding period in 1992-93. So far as the rural employment is concerned the share of regular employees was only 12.8 per cent in 1990-91, 9.2 per cent during first 7 months of 1991-92 at 8.3 per cent in the corresponding period of 1992-93.

The decline in regular employment and increase in casual employment is further underlining the dwindling job opportunities after the introduction of the new economic policies.

The Planning Commission in their preliminary draft of the Mid term Appraisal of the Eighth Five Year Plan pointed out that neither was poverty going down nor were jobs being created at the expected rate. It has further cautioned the Government against a shift and wide opening up of the consumer goods sector to imports as that would have a large-scale and immediately adverse impact on employment generations.

ORDINANCE ON PENSION SCHEME

Despite opposition of the trade unions the Government of India have decided to promulgate an ordinance amending the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 enabling them to introduce a compulsory Pension Scheme for the provident fund subscribers.

The CITU along with other Central Trade Unions have repeatedly demanded upon the Union Labour Ministry for a threadbare discussion on the proposed pension scheme including its funding, administration and other details before finalisation so that the scheme becomes really meaningful for the workers and can be efficiently administered. It may be noted that due to inefficient administration the Family Pension Scheme could not provide relief to all the beneficiaries resulting in accumulation of undisbursed fund amounting to Rs.6,500 crores.

It is to be noted that the matter is pending with the Standing Committee of Parliament on labour for examination. CITU and other central trade unions have been suggesting that instead of only insisting for amendment of the said Act for the enabling power the government should also simultaneously discuss the details of the Pension Scheme with the Trade Unions. So far as information goes Parliamentary Standing Committee is yet to complete its examination process.

In such a position hasty move of Govt of India to promulgate ordinance on pension by-passing the parliament and disregarding valid suggestions of the trade unions is nothing but a step of political expediency of projecting itself pro-labour but would in no way take care of the interest of the workers. Last year the Labour Ministry had convened a meeting with the trade unions on the issue. While objecting to many provisions of the proposed scheme, the trade unions had made various suggestions and the Labour Minister had promised another meeting to consider those suggestions. But they have not kept their promise on the contrary it appears from report of the press conference of the Union Labour Minister that they have finalised the details of the Pension Scheme unilaterally.

In the meeting with the Labour Minister as also while deposing before the Standing Committee of Parliament CITU and some other trade unions have demanded that the funding of the Pension Scheme should not be by diverting the employers' contribution towards provident and Government's contribution towards Family Pension Scheme.

In this connection it may be noted that the central public sector steel industry has already formulated a pension scheme as third retirement benefit with joint contribution from the management and employees. Such scheme has been agreed in principle by the managements in some public sector undertakings.

If our unions take initiative to organise massive campaign at grassroot level and educate the workers about the shortcomings of the scheme including diversion of PF contribution of employer for funding the scheme, there is no reason why should it not be possible to compel the Government to revise the Pension Scheme as suggested by us.

THE NEW DA FORMULA FOR CPSU EMPLOYEES

The Government of India took long six years to finalise its decision on revised VDA formula for the Central Public Sector Employees. The new formula have been announced unilaterally. Neither the suggestions of the trade unions have been accepted by the Government nor they has kept their promise that the trade unions would be consulted before announcing the new formula.

The revised VDA formula does not grant neutralisation to the workers at all levels and hence the demand of the workers is only partially met. The Government is telling that the Central Government employees DA formula has been adopted for the CPSU workers which is not a fact.

The Fourth Pay Commission granted full neutralisation upto Rs.3500 salary when the Consumer Price Index Number for the year was 600 (1960=100) while the public sector workers have been given full neutralisaiton upto the same amount at 1099 All India Consumer Price Index Number. This fixation has been made arbitrarily and the Central Government should have given full neutralisation to public sector workers upto a salary level of Rs.6,400. This is defeating the very concept of full neutralisation. For instance employees drawing wage from Rs.3501 and Rs.4,666 will be getting the same DA as employees drawing wage of Rs.3500/-. This amounts to DA freeze for these employees and these workers will stand to lose heavily for denial of full neutralisation to them.

The new formula is applicable from AICPI 1099. Now in the current wage agreements for CPSUs the basic pay has been drawn by neutralising AICPI 1072. The DPE has issued guidelines to the effect that the difference in CPI points between 1099 and 1072 and so on, VDA would be paid at the old rate of Rs.2.00 per point and that this amount shall not be counted for calculating VDA at new formula. Further, in some CPSUs the entire amount of FDA has also not been merged with the revised basic pay. If the Government would have announced the new VDA formula before conclusion of the current agreements then this situation would have arisen. The trade unions have demanded that the new formula should be uniformly applicable for all CPSU workers either by refixing the basic pay neutralising AICPI 1099 or by allowing the amount of DA for the CPI points upto 1099 as basic pay for this purpose. Otherwise workers in many CPSUs would stand to lose and an anomalous situation shall continue with different CPI points as the base for full neutralization and also the amount of VDA would vary for a given CPI points due to variation in basic pay.

The CPSU officers have been given less compensation compared to the Central Government Officers thereby virtually rejecting their demand for parity. With the finalisation and implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission the situation is likely to worsen further.

The employees of sick units referred to BIFR have been denied the benefit of the revised VDA formula. This is not only unjustified but illegal too. Because in all the last wage agreements it was clearly mentioned that the revised rate of VDA would be applicable for them also. Thus it is a violation of the provision of leagal agreement.

Demanding rectification of the various shortcomings a joint letter has been given to the Union Minister for Industries by CITU, AITUC, HMS and INTUC. The CITU unions in the public sector should organise serious campaign on these issues and try to develop joint agitation with the officers' associations.

AMENDMENT TO THE PAYMENT OF BONUS ACT

The payment of Bonus Act has been amended by the Government raising the ceiling on payment of bonus from Rs. 1600.00 to Rs.2500.00 and the ceiling on eligibility from Rs.2500.00 to Rs.3500.00.

It may be recalled that exactly this ceiling limit was proposed by the then Labour Minister in 1980 which was not accepted by the Government. Since then the AICPI has gone up by several hundred points and hence adopting the fifteen years old obsolete proposal is nothing but a mockery.

Obviously the amendment has failed to achieve its main purpose of full coverage of the workers in the organised industries both in public and private sectors. The real position is that despite this so called enhancement in the eligibility ceiling, more than 80 per cent workers in the organised sectors would remain out of the purview of the Bonus Act. The result is that the concept of Bonus as deferred wage is defeated.

The trade unions have been demanding total removal of ceilings on bonus. Because when the Government has totally failed to check the rise in price and consequent upward move of the price index, pay of the workers is bound to go up due to DA installments (for the purpose of bonus ceilings DA is part of pay). In such a situation any fixed ceiling is bound to become obsolete with the rise in AICPI. Further when the Government does not impose any ceiling on profit of the employers, it is ridiculous to impose ceiling on the payment of bonus to the workers. It may be mentioned that profit of the employers has gone up several times due to the various concessions granted to them in the name of liberalisation of the economy. Conversely larger and larger section of workers are pushed out of the purview of Bonus Act facilitating the employers to appropriate the entire profit.

Therefore, the amendment in question is nothing but an eye wash and the workers shall not get any relief worth the name and hence continue to suffer as prior to the amendment.

The CITU while resolutely reiterating the demand for removal of ceilings on bonus has also urged upon the Government of India to appoint a Bonus Review Committee which should submit the report within six months taking into consideration all practical difficulties facing by the workers. Given the naked pro-employer and anti-worker stand of the Government on the bonus issue it is imperative that we must intensify our campaign and struggle to compel the Government to further amend the Bonus Act as demanded by the trade unions.

NATIONAL PLATFORM OF MASS ORGANISATION

During the intervening period since last working committee meeting, the All India Convention of National Platform of Mass Organisations was held in 15th July, 1995 at New Delhi wherefrom a series of campaign and agitational programmes against New

Economic policy was adopted.

The convention after detail deliberation and review of the situation had decided to hold state level and district level joint conventions all over the country to consolidate and prepare for next phase of agitation. It was decided to hold joint demonstration and rallies in all the districts head quarter of the country on 15th September, 1995.

Most unfortunately, we are yet to receive reports from many states regarding observance of the above programmes. Report gathered by the centre reveals that state level/district level conventions could not be held in many states/places although constituents of National Platform met at state level in most cases. District level rallies were held in many states during the period from 14th to 27th September, 1995, but same could not cover all the districts of the country as was decided in the National Convention. In fine, required enthusiasm could not be generated by us in the agitation progrmame which speaks of organisational lapses of various constituents of the platform including ourselves. Ofcourse we must note that various units of ours had been quite active during this period in various industry level and sectoral campaign and agitation programmes but all those initiative could not be that effectively synchronised in the joint platform of struggle importance of which can hardly be under estimated in the present situation.

Another point deserves special attention. The National Platform could take up the above programmes after a long gap of 11 months since the general strike held on 29th September 1994. During this 11 month long period the platform could not be activised. One of the major reason was the preoccupation of CITU and our friendly organisations in various organisational programmes, besides assembly election in several states. This amply reveals the importance of our initiative in activising various joint platforms of struggle both at National level and unit level.

Secondly, the unity achieved in the national level has to be carried down below to the unit level to ensure involvement of broader masses in the struggle. In this aspect also, our experience reveals that wherever we could take effective initiative at the local/unit level to involve other constituents of platform organisationally in the joint programmes, greater mobilisation could be ensured.

Our units must have proper realisation of the importance and urgency of CITU's initiative in activising the joint platform of struggle as a means to reach and involve more and more people beyond our traditional support base, in the struggle, and take steps accordingly.

SOME NOTABLE STRUGGLES

The four and a half lakh telecom workers all over the country went on successful indefinite strike from 19th June 1995 against National Telecom Policy including privatisation of telecom services by the Government of India. Despite central Govt.directive to the state governments to invoke ESMA to suppress the strike the telecom employees heroically observed complete strike paralysing the entire telecom sector. The strike was supported by CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, BMS and other trade unions and the Government was put on the defensive.

A section of the leadership however betrayed the strike and came to a unfavorable settlement behind the back of workers. The strike was withdrawn on 23rd June unceremoniously. The betrayal angered the workers which was reflected in various ways.

The workers of IISCO and the people of Burnpur observed successful Bandh on 5th July in protest against Central Governments refusal to provide promised funds for modernisation of IISCO as a part of SAIL. Earlier the strike call was given by the 5 central TUs but since non-CITU unions backed out at the last movement the CITU had to uphold the call alone to press the demand of workers.

Another notable struggle was the one day strike of Engineering and unorganised workers in Delhi, U.P., Haryana and Punjab on June 24 demanding higher wages DA and other demands. The strike was successful in areas where CITU had influence but workers by and large responded to the call of CITU. In Delhi the demand for scrapping he Government order to reallocate 9000 factories on ground of pollution was also highlighted on occasion.

A near total strike was observed all over India on 20th June by 20 thousand medical and sales representatives to protest against the move of the Government of India to amend the Indian Patents Act as per GATT agreement. the call of strike was given by FMRAI which organised series of other mass actions to press this issue.

a Section of Haryana State Electricity Board employees on an strike from 19th October 1995 on their long standing demands. The Chief Minister of Haryana instead of settline their legitimate demands issued a mere appeal to withdraw the strike unconditionally with the statement that he would consider their demands. When the employees continue their struggle about 1300 employees were summarily dismissed by the HSEB. The workers have continued their struggles despite such vindictive actions and CITU issued a statement condemning the action of the Haryana Government.

A strike was organised by the bank employees on 31st August demanding parity between the wages of the officers and workers. The call was jointly given the AIBEA, NCBE, BEFI and INBEF. It was completely successful. Another 2 days strike was organised on 26-27 September which was also successful. The Govt. of India declared the strike illegal and launched prosecution against the leaders of strike. The CITU condemned this action of the Govt. and demanded their withdrawal. The negotiations later failed and the Bank Unions have given a call for indefinite strike from 19th December next.

STRUGGLE AGAINST CONTRACT LABOUR SYSTEM

To highlight the problems of contract workers in both public and private sectors the CPSTU decided to hold a national convention at Durgapur on 10-11 June 1995. The convention was first of its kind to raise the problems of contract labour at a national level. 200 delegates from various industries attended the convention. Many of the State Committees, despite CITU's direction did not send the delegates from contract workers to attend the convention. It was a joint convention it was also participated by the leaders of AITUC, HMS and JAF Bangalore.

The convention decided to observe All India Contract Workers Demand Day on 21st August 1995 to focus the attention of the country on the demands of the contract workers: Durgapur comrades made excellent arrangements for the convention.

The initiative taken by us should be carried forward so that sustained movement of the contract workers is organised to end this pernicious system. Employees of Insurance Industry were also in the mudst of various agitation. They went on strike all over the country on 28.09.95 to demand wage negotiation and right to collective bargaining which was overwhelmingly successful. They are also preparing for their next phase of struggle including another strike action.

Developments in Coal Industry

The Joint Bipartite Committee in Coal Industry (JBCCI) signed a Memorandum of understanding on 29th April which was not signed by the CITU since it was giving much less benefits than the workers in other leading public sector undertakings. A countrywide campaign was launched by the All India Coal Workers Federation through out the country which received good response from among the workers. A booklet was published by our unions and about 70,000 copies were sold among the workers.

Noting the growing discontent among the workers CITU appealed to all the Federation to be prepared for a Joint struggle to achieve a better settlement. Since the response of INTUC, AITUC, HMS and BMS was not forthcoming the All India Coal Workers Federation (AICWF) had to give a call for one day strike on 21st August 1995. Ministers for Coal and Labour called a meeting on 8th August and gave vague promises which was not satisfactory for all the workers. The CITU and the AICWF adhered to the decision on strike which was more effective than the last year's strike. According to an estimate 4.5 lakh workers joined the strike action. There was not much visible propoganda except by some AITUC unions againt the strike. The INTUC, HMS and BMS even threatened not to sit with CITU during the negotiations while the management talked of removing CITU from JBCCI. We however remained firm and campaigned among the workers. Our experience is that even the following of other unions were appreciating the stand of the CITU and criticising other unions for signing an unfavorable MOU.

The other unions seeing the lack of progress in talks had left with no alternative but to give a call for struggle. All the central trade unions decided to give a strike call from 16th to 21st October 1995. A strike notice was also drafted on 2nd October. However the Coal Minister called a meeting on 23 October and again gave vague promises and except CITU all the leaders withdraw the strike decision even before giving strike notice. The CITU opposed the stand of other unions and explained the firm line of CITU by observing a campaign programme from 9th 12th October.

Singareni Colliery Miners however struck work for 3 days from 16th t0 18th October and all the JBCCI constituents joined the strike.

None of the demands raised in the strike notice could be achieved and hence the withdrawal of the strike was sharply criticized by the workers. The JBCCI meeting on 11th and 12th October failed to settle the agreement and another meeting has been fixed on 28th October. If there would be no settlement on that day the management threatened to implement MOU without waiting for the agreement.

Our achievement in the Coal industry must be consolidated and the working committee of AICWF decided to increase the membership of the union and chalk out programme of trade union education to build cadre to strengthen the activities in the industry.

Cement Industry

The CITU had been taking initiative for developing united movement in Cement industry. Tamilnadu State Committee called a meeting of comrades working in Cement Industry on 13th July 1995 and prepared a charter of Demands. Meanwhile INTUC Federation also prepared a draft and asked for our comments.

A conference of the unions in Cement Corporation of India was held on 25-26 June at Akaltara (M.P). It was jointly organised by the CITU and AITUC unions. The Conference condemned the move of privatisation of 11 units under CCI. Ultimately the Govt. had to give assurance that they would not privatise the CCI units. However no help is coming from the Government to revive the sick units under CCI.

We have to take steps to reorganise the Coordination Committee so that our work is better organised. We also have to take steps to develop joint movement on Charter of Demands so that Cement Workers are mobilised all over India to achieve a good settlement in the industry.

Textile Industry: In the Textile Industry the unanimous 8-point agreement on the modernisation of the NTC mills was ultimately approved by the Cabinet due to continued struggle by the Joint Action Committee comprising of the CITU, INTUC,AITUC, HMS, BMS, and NLO. The JAC was further consolidated and strengthened during the period with the joining of the UTUC and TUCC in it. According to the agreement the Government also passed a Bill nationalizing the 15 Taken over Mills. However, the modernisation process of the NTC mills has not yet been started. The BIFR has not yet given clearance to the agreement.

In the above background, the JAC held a national convention of textile workers at Calcutta on 21st July. The convention was inaugurated by Com. Jyoti Basu. The convention gave a call for Jail Bharo action at Delhi by the Textile workers. The JAC has fixed up 12th December for the Jail Bharo programme.

Our All India Coordination Committee of Textile workers held the first All India Convention at Coimbatore on September 19 and 20. The convention endorsed the call of the JAC for the Jail Bharo programme at Delhi on 12th December. All State Committees should mobilise textile workers from all the three sectors, viz, mills, handlooms and powerlooms in maximum for participation in the Jail Bharo action at Delhi on 12th December.

The convention also re-elected Com. P.K. Ganguly as the Convenor of the Coordination Committee, which is to be reconstituted.

Unorganised Sector:

The movement in the unorganised sector has picked up during the period. Membership of the CITU has also increased in this sector. According to the decisions of the A.I. Coordination Committee of Unorganised Sector workers, conventions and rallies in pursuance of the 22-point demands were also organised in several states, like Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, UP, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, etc. Joint strike actions have also been organised in Bihar and other places.

However, considering the vastness of the sector, we have to accept that we have so far touched only the tip of the iceberg. With the structural adjustment programme under the new economic policies, the organised sector is being squsezed and more and more products are being off-loaded in the unorganised sector, particularly to home based workers, where overwhelming majority are women. Child labour is also increasing in this sector.

To work in a systematic way, the A.I. Coordination Committee has decided to concentrate on some industries which have large concentration of workers. These are Beedi, Handlooms, Powerlooms, Brick-Kiln, Quarries, Hotel and restaurants, Construction, Loading and Unloading, Match, Agarbatti, Carpet, Shops and Establishments, Garment, etc. The Coordination Committee has also set a target for 20 per cent increase in membership in these industries.

All India Committee of Beedi Workers:

Our functioning in the Beedi industry has shown improvement after the formation of the All India Committee last year. Several movements including strike actions were launched in different states in pursuance of the 18-point demands.

A crisis has developed in the industry during the period. The Government has reduced the excise duty from small cigarettes of less than 60mm length, which is being manufactured by ITC and other companies. This is as per the new economic policies to give benefit to the monopolists to capture the vast Beedi market. The prices of these small cigaretes have come down nearer to that of Beedi. Apart from this, the Government has also taken a move to put a curb on advertisements of Beedi and Cigarettes based on certain recommendations of ICMR on health grounds. Both these steps will have very adverse socio-economic impact, as millions of workers and growers are engaged in this industry. The CITU and other Central Trade Unions have given a joint memorandum to the Government demanding meeting to discuss the issue.

During the period, on a petition submitted by our Tamilnadu Federation of Beedi workers, the Supreme Court gave a verdict directing the Central Government and Tamilnadu Government to implement some welfare measures for the Beedi workers. The government however has taken no steps so far. In this background the All India Committee of Beedi workers in its meeting held at Cannanoor on 1st September has taken up several agitational programmes including a statewide strike action on December 27 preceded by a month long campaign.

CITU-ILO Child Labour Project

We have targeted 14 states in the unorganised sector where Child labour is concentrated. The states are: Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Tripura, U.P., Haryana,Punjab, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. The targeted 9 industries are: Beedi, Handloom, Match, Agarbatti, Carpet, Construction, Hotel and Restaurants, Brick-Kiln and Quarry.

So far state level workshops have been held in Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Orissa and Tripura. Bihar has decided to hold it on November 13 and 14. Rajasthan will hold it on December 5 and 6.

So far as industry level workshops are concerned, these have been held in Hotel and Restaurants at Bangalore, Beedi at Cannanore, Brick-Kiln at Chandigarh, Construction at Bhubaneshwar, Handloom at Madurai and Match at Shivakashi. The workshop in Quarry will be held at Patna on November 15. Karnataka decided to hold the workshop in Agarbatti,

Apart form the workshops there are other stages of implementation of the project, like training programme, postering, brochure printing, video films, etc.

Our approach to the child labour problem has already been dealt with in the national workshop. We have to launch campaign and struggle with the demands for alleviation of poverty, the main cause of child labour, for free compulsory schooling for the working children, etc. We have to give particular care for the working girl children. Such campaign will strengthen our struggle in the unorganised sector, as well as create awareness against the scourge of child labour.

OUT ACTIVITIES AMONG WORKING WOMEN

The CITU organised a workshop in Co-operation with the CTUC at Raniganj on 27-29 July for working women's activists in Eastern India which was attended by 20 participants from Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Bihar and Orissa. The workshop discussed at length the problem faced by working women in different industries particularly concerning the health of women workers.

On 11th July the Andhra State Committee organised Fourth Convention of working women in Andhra which was attended by 150 women from 18 Districts. It elected K. Hemalatha as secretary of the newly elected coordination committee.

A state level convention of Anganwadi workers in Bihar was held in Bihar in Nawada on 14-15 September 1995. About 1000 women from 10 districts attended the convention which combined with a rally of workers .

Workshop on Home Based Workers

A large number of workers in India are doing their work in their houses and are receiving paltry remuneration. they are characterised as self-employed and denied any benefit of legislation to govern their working and living conditions. The ILO is also planning to adopt a convention on their working conditions and this has given impetus to this question in our country.

The AIDWA has conducted a study on their problems in various states and to present the material a workshop was organised at Delhi on 2nd and 3rd July. It was jointly organised in Co- operation with the CITU. The Director of the ILO Area office Ms. j. Karavasil addressed the inaugural function. About 50 women activists participated in the programme.

The harrowing conditions of work of these women needs immediate attention of the trade union movement. We should take advantage of the initiative taken by the AIDWA in the matter and take up the question of this neglected strata in right earnest.

The question of elimination of middlemen in this sector has to be taken up and it may be necessary to form Co-operatives of these Home based workers so that they can bargain for a better price of their product.

We should also take steps to form unions among these workers and get them affiliated to the CITU. Since AIDWA is taking interest in this subject we should discuss this question with the AIDWA leadership and workout modalities of Co- operation. Fortunately 3 women office bearers of CITU are also top leaders of AIDWA's movement including the Presidentship of the AIDWA.

After the so called liberalisation measures a large section of industries are farming out their jobs to homebased workers to reduce the costs. The ranks of these workers are swelling. The CITU therefore should workout workable plan to commence our activities in this sector.

CITU 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

As decided by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Howrah General Council Meeting the 25th anniversary celebration was to continue for three month long programmes like seminars, workshops, Trade Union School, massive circulation campaign of CITU journals and publications, cultural programmes with conscious effort to involve broader section of the working class & common people. It was also decided to organise celebration programmes at unit level and state communities were entrusted to devise suitable plan in that direction.

The Anniversary celebration commenced with the massive workers rally at Netaji Indoor Stadium at Calcutta on 30th May '95, just prior to our last General Council Meeting. General council also discussed details of the programmes to be observed and adopted a resolution on the matter. All the states have been asked to send reports on observance of the celebration programmes.

Unfortunately many states did not send the report on celebration as yet. Information received at and gathered by CITU centre reveals that the anniversary celebration was observed by rallies, seminars, workshop & various cultural programmes etc. in states like Kerala, Tamilnadu, West Bengal, Karnataka, Tripura, Punjab, Assam, Andhra Pradesh. Information has also been gathered from Orissa, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat regarding observance of programmes through rallies & seminars. In certain states like Tamilnadu, Kerala, West Bangal and Andhra Pradesh, celebration programme could be extended to destrict level organisations, as per reports received at the centre.

IMPLEMENTATION OF REPORT ON ORGANISATION

More than 2 years have passed since we adopted report on organisation at Bhubaneshwar, but the progress of implementation of the report is extremely tardy and we are yet to take serious steps to ensure full implementation of the report.

We have made efforts in the CITU Secretariat to implement the decisions. A meeting of the full Secretariat was held on 12- 13 August 1995 which was attended by 22 members. The Secretariat had reviewed the activities and took decisions on important problems. The minutes of the meeting were wrongly published in the working class. The Secretariat considered this matter and felt that it was serious blunder and such lapses should not occur again. Some State Committees criticised the centre for this lapse and we fully endorsed their criticism.

The available members of the Secretariat are meeting regularly and discuss the day to day matters in these meetings. However, monthly meeting to plan the activities in advance in a co-ordinated manner is not that regular as yet. It has been decided now that such monthly meetings should be held regularly so that programmes of individual secretariat members are planned according to priorities. Certain weaknesses have been found in prior decisions on certain urgent matters in the meeting of the Secretariat which indicate the absence of collective functioning and steps are being taken to rectify the situation. The Secretariat also reviewed the shortcomings in the publication of the CITU journal The Working Class and decided steps to build up team work in editting the journal.

MEETING OF HINDI SPEAKING STATES

As per decision of the Report on Organisation to strengthen the activities of CITU in Hindi Speaking region a meeting of state committee representatives was held in the CITU headquarters on 1st August 1995. The meeting was attended by representatives from U.P., M.P., H.P., Bihar, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi apart from the available members of the CITU Secretariat.

The meeting reviewed the progress made since the meeting held an year ago. It was noted that membership drive was much below the mark while sale of journals and literature was not improving in most of the states. It was decided to meet more frequently so that proper check-up of the work done can be made more effectively. The need to strengthen the functioning of the state committee was also stressed in the meeting.

REVIEW OF STEPS TAKEN BY STATE COMMITTEES

The CITU centre asked all the state committees to send a detailed report by 15th October 1995 on steps taken by them on the implementation of the Report on Organisation. However only Kerala, Tamilnadu and Karnataka state committees have responded while Punjab and Orissa State Committees have send a cryptic report on some aspect of the work done by them in a general manner. I am extremely sorry to note that other state committees have not responded so far. The state committees sending reports have taken some positive steps which go in a big way to improve their functioning. However they still fall short of implementing the true spirit of Bhubaneshwar document.

By and large we find that after Bhubaneshwar the state committees are meeting more frequently, their attendance has also improved to some extent. However, many states have done even the job distribution of the members of the secretariat. Those whohave done job distribution have not adopted a system of regular check up of the job distribution. Democratic functioning has not made much progress at various level. In some states the State Committees have no seperate office of their own and are sharing it with others. This adversely affects the functioning of the state committees. The Secretariat therefore, has decided that some time of the working committee should be allotted to a review of the implementation of the Report on Orgnaisation. Without periodic review at the national level by working committee and the General council these tasks will not be implemented effectively.

ON CONFEDERATION

In the last General Council meeting I gave an oral report on the discussion I had with AITUC leaders. Comrades suggested in the meeting that a written note should be prepared for a discussion. Accordingly a written note was submitted to the full secretariat meeting held on 12-13 August 1995.

The members discussed the note and decided that we should have bilateral discussions with AITUC and HMS in the beginning and later discuss the issue of organisational consolidation of the trade union movement. The CITU centre will take necessary steps in thematter after this working committee meeting. A copy of the note submitted to the full secretariat is enclosed herewith for the information of the working committee.

BTR MEMORIAL TRUST

The most noteworthy development during the period under review isthe possession of the land for the BTR Memorial. You are aware that a piece of land measuring 1248 square yards in Rouse Avenue in the Centrally located area in Delhi was allotted to the BTR Memorial Trust by the erstwhile Janata Dal Govt in 1991. Taking some plea or the other the subsequent govts. were reluctant to hand over the allotted piece of land to the Trust. Inspite of several delegations meeting the subsequent Urban Development Ministers all efforts went in vain. We would like to record our appreciation for the single handed effort made by Com. Jibon Roy in getting the land finally released to the Trust only a few days back.

Now, therefore, we renew our call for collections for the BTR memoraial trust fund. The building has to be completed within 2 years. Therefore the collections have to be made immediately so that the work do not stop for want of funds. The total cost of construction is likely to be about Rs.2 crores. We should therefore, seriously decide a planned effort to complete the collection within a specific time frame to be decided by this working committee. The details of the collections received so far is being given in the annexure. However, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that around 3/4th of the collection received so far is from West Bengal alone. This is indicative of a fact that inspite of our decision several times and last time by 19th December '94 (on BTR'S Birthday), Our state committees have not taken up the issue seriously. So, an all out effort has to be made this time to fulfill this onerous task without any further delay so that we can construct a fitting memorial for our departed leader who have left his rich heritage for us to carry forward

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

U.P. State Committee of CITU organised a trade union class from July 2-4 at Hardwar which was attended by 15 participates. jibon Roy, P.K. Ganguly, and M.K. Pandhe took the classes. This class was being organised after a lapse of 3 years.

The steel workers federation of India organised 3 day workshop from 18-20 September at Calcutta which was participated by comrades. It reviewed the position of the steel industry and problems faced by the steel workers movement. Several workers participated in the discussion and the workshop decided to take positive measures to strengthen the movement under the banner of SWFI.

The Andhra State Committee organised a four day class for working women at Vijayawada from June 7 to 10 which received good response from the working women. Some local level classes also later organised by the State Committee.

We promised to give priority to prepare a syllabus for T.U. school. So far we have received 3 drafts on History of the Trade Union Movement, political Economy of capitalism and on Socialist Economy. The committee will finalise them and circulate them to the state committees. The centre is also trying to get the drafts ready on other subjects as soon as possible.

ON MEMBERSHIP

The State Committees are not ensuring implementation of the decision we have taken and in the New Delhi Working Committee meeting in July '94 and again reiterated in last Howrah General Council Meeting regarding completing collection of the affiliation Fees of 1993 & 1994 by May 30th 1995. It is really unfortuante that our state committees have once again failed to fulfill this important task. Though in the Report on Organisation we have identified this as one of our major weaknesses no corrective steps, it seems, have been taken by many of our state committees. We have also committed ourselves to increase the CITU membership for the year 1994 to 30 lakhs. WE are unable to analyse whether all the state committees are seriously working in that direction. Annexed with this report as Annexure II is a statement showing comparative picture of membership upto 20th October '95 according to the Annual Return received by the centre. Perusal of the statement indicates that for the year 1993 our membership is 19,36,884 and for 1994 it is only 9,11,168 as against 23,70,398 of 1992. If our membership for 1994 is to be raised by 25% as per our commitment then our state committees are yet to collect and deposit membership fees for 20 lakh members which should have been done by this time. Excepting Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu other state committees including Kerala (for 1994) and West Bengal have not fulfilled their commitment on this score for both 1993 & 1994 collections. This should not be allowed to continue. I therefore, suggest that by December 31st this year all the State Committees must complete the membership drive for 1993 & 1994 and deposit the collections to the centre, failing which the CITU centre will have to write to these unions about their disaffiliation. I hope the state committees will consider this question seriously and take suitable steps in the matter.

ON CITU PUBLICATIONS

This is another area of weakness which has been regularly discussed in the General Council and Working Committee meetings. Not much of an improvement has been observed inspite of our efforts.

Details of the outstanding has been provided several times. It appears that our state committees also are not serious otherwise an amount of Rs. 56,000.00 stands as dues on account of our state committees alone. We ahve been trying to impress upon you that with such a heavy outstanding it becomes difficult for the centre to go for further publications. It also creates a tremendous strain on our finances jeoparadising our normal functioning. It is, therefore, necessary that our state committees take up this matter seriously and clear the outstanding immediately. The list of outstanding is annexed as Annexure.

ASIA PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON CUBA

The most outstanding event in international solidarity with Cuba after the last General Council meeting was the holding of Asia-Pacific conference on Cuba held in Calcutta on 22-24 September. About 140 delegates representing 12 countries participated in the conference. The conference condemned in strong terms Helms-Burton Bill strengthening the blockade against Cuba and called upon the countries to ignore the blockade and develop more trade with Cuba.

The conference gave a call to observe 27th

November as Asia Pacific pay of solidarity with Cuba. On behalf of CITU M.K. Pandhe, Niren Ghosh, Chittabrata Majumdar and P.R. Krishnan participated in the conference. Pandhe chaired one of the five commissions in the conference. The West Bengal State Committee of CITU played an active role in the work of the preparatory committee and collected Rs.5 lakhs for the expenses of the conference. Last General Council gave a call for collection of funds for Cuba and a quota of Rs.8 lakhs was given to different state committees. So far the centre received Rs.6 lakhs which has been deposited with the Cuba Solidarity Committee. According to reports received by the centre about Rs. One lakh was deposited by the unions directly with the Cuba solidarity committee. I must mention here with appreciation the contribution of Rs. 2.5 lakhs made by the all India Insurance Employees Association directly to the Cuba Solidarity Committee. In view of the increasing aggressive roll played by the U.S imperialists against Cuba our solidarity must increase substantially to save the Cuban revolution.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NUCLEAR BOMBING OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

At the initiative of CITU the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Nuclear Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was observed all over the country by trade unions and mass organisations. A joint appeal was issued by INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS to all the workers to observe the Anniversary of this Bombing and demand banning of all nuclear weapons.

On 6th August the day Hiroshima was bombed a massive rally was held in Calcutta in Netaji Indoor Stadium which was addressed by Jyoti Basu among others. Similar rallies were organised on 7th August at Madras, on 8th August at Bombay and on 9th August at Delhi.

To address these rallies a two member delegation consisting of Naohika Shirota, Vice-Chairman, Zenroren and Noami Shirota came specially to India whose speeches were well received by all over India.

Delhi meeting was addressed by Pranab Mukherjee,

Union Minister for External Affairs and Ambassador of Japan to India along with representatives of all central trade unions.

Meeting were also organised in some other state capitals during this period. At the invitation of the 1995 world conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held on 3-9 August at Hiroshima. We sent two member delegation Consisting of K.C. ghosh and Abul Hasanath Khan both members of our General Council. 36 foreign delegates form 26 countries participated in the conference along with Japanese delegates. Our representatives also participated in the International T.U. exchange for nuclear free and peaceful world. The Japan Research Institute of Labour Movement also invited our representatives to attend a meeting convened by them.

The two programmes considerably helped in strengthening the bonds of friendship between Indian and Japanese working class.

The WFTU organised a SAARC Region T.U. Seminar at Dacca (Bangladesh) from 9-11 June on Social developments, ILO standards and T.U. Co-operation. CITU was represented in the seminar by Chittabrata Majumdar and Kanai Banerjee both Secretaries of CITU. Both of them presented papers and took active interest in the work of the seminar. The Seminar adopted a Declaration on calling for greater co-operation among the workers. It also constituted a co-ordination committee of SAARC region to strengthen regional co-operation. We are also trying to hold a meeting of trade unions of all affiliation in SAARC countries and we hope to develop still broader co-operation in the South Asian region.

A South-North Conference on New Alliance for dignity of Labour was organised by CNMS, an NGO carrying on research and education at Italy on 1-3 October, 1995 at Pisa. The conference was mainly to hold round table deliberation on Social Clause and was participated by 140 delegates from 28 countries of the world, comprising trade unionists NGOs, women movement activists etc. from both advanced industrialised countries and the developing countries. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU was one of the invitee panel-speakers, alongwith speakers from USA, Italy and Brazil. The delegation from the advanced industrialised countries of the North made frantic effort to draw conclusion in favour of 'Social Clause' in World trade and M.K. Pandhe was the only speaker in the panel to oppose such design. His intervention in the debate firmly opposing social clause in world trade and exposure of the design of the advanced countries to block the entry of the exportables of developing countries in their market has created notable impact among the mass of the participants, and also in group/commission level discussion and majority of the participants in the commission opposed linkage of social clause with world trade.

FORTH COMING PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Comrades,

Some after this meeting the country will go in for Parliamentary elections. In some states as in W.Bengal, Kerala, Tamilnadu our comrades will be busy in the election activity. The talk of elections in Kashmir is already in the air.

These elections are being held in a very complex situation. The ruling congress party is divided andits prestige among the people has been considerably eroded due to adoption of New Economic Policies, corruption an scandals. The growing dissention in the party has made the situation still worse for the congress.

The BJP which was claiming to form the Government at the centre in the next general elections is also facing internal challenge throwing over board the claim of the party that it was free from factionalism and was a disciplined party. The Gujarat developments have brought to the forefront the internal squabbles within the party. The expulsion of Vaghela, dubbing him as mafia don and smuggler then withdrawing charges against him and his readmission in the party had made mockery of all former claims of the party. The opportunist support given to Mayawati Government and withdrawing it unceremoniously and later trying to form a Govt. with the help of professional defectors has further brought down the image of the party. The dissidence inside the BJP came to the surface in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar, Bengal and M.P.

In such a situation if the left and democratic forces in the country organise properly and put forth a challenge to both these parties there is possibility of recording positive achievement in advancing the cause of the poor people of the country. However Janata dal is also having several internal contradictions. Their opportunist stance on several national issues is bringing down their credibility. However if Janata dal unites with other democratic and secular forces it is possible to form an electoral third to defeat both the congress and the BJP. The leftist forces have to play an important role in achieving this objective.

It is the duty of all CITU and other trade union activists to strike their best to make the left democratic and secular forces successful in these elections. The country can be saved only if such an alliance becomes victorious in the electoral battle.

The foreign multinationals are likely to take great interest in these elections to ensure victory to the forces who ultimately co-operate with them. They will therefore try to ensure victory either for congress and BJP in these elections. Therefore, to defeat the machination of multi-national companies the working class of our country has to play a leading role in defeating both the congress and the BJP and fight for the success of left and democratic forces in the next general elections.

Long Live CITU
Long Live Working Class Unity
Workers of the World, Unite!

M. K. Pandhe
General Secretary

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