



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

Com. M. Basavapunniah

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses deep sorrow at the passing away of Comrade Makineni Basavapunniah, a member of the Polit Bureau of the CPI (M) and one of the stalwarts of the Communist movement in India, on 12th April 1992 due to cardiac arrest. He was 77.

Born on 14th December 1914, Com. M. B., as he was affectionately known to everyone, joined the freedom struggle during his student days. He was attracted to Marxist ideas in early thirties and joined the Communist Party of India in 1934-35.

As a brilliant student, he came to all India prominence in the student movement and was elected as Joint Secretary of the All India Students Federation in the foundation conference in 1936. In 1940 he became the Secretary of the Guntur Dist Committee of the CPI and due to his organising capacities he was taken on the Secretariat of the State Unit of the Party. In 1948 he was elected to the Central Committee of the Party in its Second Congress at Calcutta, and became a member of the Polit Bureau of the CPI in 1950. He held the same position in CPI (M) after its formation in 1964. With firm adherence to Marxism-Leninism, he fought relentlessly against all deviations and became a leading theoretician of the party.

He had a sharp pen and his polemical style threw all arguments of the opponents to the winds. His unflinching conviction in proletarian internationalism was clearly seen during his writings on ideological question, which played a crucial role in ideologically unifying the CPI (M).

Com. M. B. played meritorious role during the heroic Telangana People's struggle during 1946-1951 and exhibited his immense organisational capacities.

He was among the four member delegation

from CPI which went to USSR and met Comrade Stalin and other Soviet Communist leaders to discuss the strategy and tactics of the Indian Communist movement. He participated in the meeting of the world Communist parties held in



the year 1957. His contribution in the International ideological debate has been of great value. Com. MB. spent 6 years in underground and was imprisoned twice during Congress regime. He was a member of Rajya Sabha for 14 years.

With Marxist-Leninist outlook he took keen interest in the working class movement in the country. He participated in the Goa Convention in 1970 which took the decision of formation of CITU. He attended the foundation conference of CITU in Calcutta. He was taking keen interest in CITU activities and was enquiring about the progress from time to time.

Despite his falling health Com. MB was active and contributed a great deal in evolving a correct

understanding on problems of socialism and international communist movement. In his passing away the Indian Communist movement has lost a great teacher and ideologue.

The CITU pays its respectful homage to the hallow memory of Com. MB and sends its heartfelt condolences to his wife Jagdamba and son Jaswant Mohan. The CITU takes pledge to carry forward the task left unfinished by him.

National Trade Union Convention on 10th May at New Delhi

The Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions from its meeting held on 13th April 1992 at New Delhi has decided to hold a National Convention of Trade Unions on 10th May 1992 at Mavlankar Hall, Rafi Marg, New Delhi to take further course of action against the disastrous Economic & Industrial Policies of the Govt of India and its severe fall out on the working class, the people and on the country's economy. The convention is expected to be attended by about 2000 delegates from all over the country representing various central trade unions and various Industrial Federations.

The Sponsoring Committee noted with grave concern that inspite of the unequivocal disapproval of such disastrous policies of the Govt manifested through the massive industrial strike all over India on 29th November, the Govt of India has not taken a lesson and is nonchalantly pursuing the same policies denigrating the self reliance of Indian economy at the dictates of the IMF & World Bank.

The Sponsoring Committee calls upon the entire trade union movement to take note of the severe fall out of the Industrial & Economic policies casting serious repercussion on the country's economy as well as on the working class and the common people, and prepare for the second countrywide strike action demanding reversal of such policies.

The Sponsoring Committee called upon the trade unions and Industrial Federations to expose through massive campaign the dangerous policy of the Govt and popularise the united move of the trade union movement to stall the same, and make the convention a total success.

Among those who attended the meeting of the Sponsoring Committee on 13th April 1992 were Com. M. K. Pandhe and P. K. Ganguly (CITU), B. D. Joshi and S.K. Sanyal (AITUC), D.D. Shastri (TUCC), A. Roy (UTUC), R. K. Sharma (UTUC-LS), V. Tiagi & Mahendra Sharma (HMS), and leaders of employees federations from Bank, Insurance, Postal, Telecom, Fertilizers, Steel & other industries.

Trade Unions Condemn the Central Govt's Move to Reintroduce ESMA and MISA

The meeting of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions in India held in New Delhi on 21st March 1992 strongly condemned the Govt of India's move to re-introduce the notorious anti-labour legislations such as Essential Service Maintenance Act (ESMA) and Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) to suppress the normal T.U. activity in the country.

In the wake of nationwide strike of 29th November by the working class against the new economic policies of the Govt. of India, the working Class resistance is growing all over the country with increasing prices of all essential commodities, risins unemployment and implementation of the policies, the working class is facing acute problems and their struggles are bound to be intensified. The trade union proposal to organise the second countrywide general strike against the economic policies of the Govt of India is only a part of this resistance struggle. The Narasimha Rao Government by bringing in such draconian legislations is making a crude attempt to infringe the trade union right of the workers.

The Sponsoring Committee called upon the working class of India to raise their voice of protest against these proposed Bills. This issue should be properly focussed in the protest demonstrations being organised before Parliament and Governor's residences on 2nd April 1992 all over the country.

The Sponsoring Committee warns the Govt of India that taking such anti-working class measures at the dictates of the World Bank and the IMF will only make the workers more bitter and their confrontation with the Government will further grow in days to come.

Comrade Veereshwar Tiagi, Secretary HMS presided over the meeting.

The Sponsoring Committee decided to organise a demonstration before Parliament on 2nd April 1992 and the workers will assemble at Jantar Mantar at 11AM for the purpose.

The Sponsoring Committee will meet on 3rd April to decide the date of All India General Strike by the entire working class.

May Day Manifesto of the CITU, 1992

On the occasion of May Day, 1992 the Centre of Indian Trade Unions renews its pledge to carry forward the revolutionary traditions of the May Day to struggle against the growing offensives of imperialism and for the defence of socialism, democracy and peace. It holds high the banner of proletarian internationalism and sends warm greetings to the working class of all countries fighting against capitalism, against growing unemployment, price rise and attacks on trade union rights.

It greets the working class and people of the third world countries fighting against the renewed neo-colonial offensive of imperialism led by the USA to subvert their national sovereignty and independence.

On this May Day the CITU denounces the USA and its imperialist cohorts for launching multi-prong economic and ideological offensives to undermine socialism in Cuba, China, Vietnam and DPRK and sends revolutionary greetings and extends full support to the working class and people of these countries in their determined struggle to safeguard socialism. It expresses its firm solidarity with Cuba, where the USA has escalated its threat brazenly.

On this May Day the CITU condemns the United Nations for playing into the hands of the USA to impose sanctions against Libya and continuing its savage offensive on Iraq for their refusal to submit to the imperialist dictates.

The CITU welcomes the result of the referendum in South Africa and expresses solidarity with the struggle of the South African people under the leadership of ANC for uprooting apartheid and establishment of a free, democratic and non-racial society in the country.

It condemns the USA and Israel for the failure of the West Asian Peace talks and extends full support to the struggle of the PLO for a homeland.

Euphoria of Market Economy Dying Down

The CITU keenly watches the developments in the erstwhile socialist states in Eastern Europe and in Soviet Union, which has been dismantled by the counter revolutionary forces, and where capitalist path is being resorted to. It notes that the euphoria with which the changeover to the capitalist path was welcomed, is dying down rapidly before the stark realities of spiralling prices, galloping unemployment and acute shortages of all essential commodities. The CITU greets the working class and the people of these countries who are coming out in tens of thousands to demonstrate against the evils of the economic reforms being carried on under pressure from the USA. It welcomes the efforts of the Soviet people to rebuild the Communist Party and supports their demand for revival of Soviet Union.

Crisis of Capitalism

On this May Day the CITU draws pointed attention of the working class to the fact that despite the tall claims of imperialism that capitalism is the last word in social development, the entire capitalist world is passing through the severest crisis since the great depression of the 1930s. It has entered into a phase of recession with growing unemployment, closures and mounting inflation in all the advanced capitalist countries.

USA, the leader of the capitalist countries, is now the biggest debtor country in the world. Tens of thousands of workers have been retrenched following closures of various units in the steel industry, automobile industry, banking industry, IBM computers and so on, pushing up unemployment to 10 per cent. The same picture is being seen in Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Japan, Belgium, and other OECD countries.

Counter Deideologisation Propaganda : Defend Socialism

Following the bankruptcy of the so-called market economy, and being unable to check the deepening crises, imperialism has desperately unleashed a deideologisation propaganda to de-politicalise the working class pledged to struggle for socialism with the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism. On this May Day the CITU calls upon the working class to reject and counter this malicious bourgeois propaganda with its own class ideology and carry forward the struggle against capitalism and imperialism in defence of socialism.

On this May Day, the CITU calls upon the working class to recall and popularise the unparalleled achievements of socialism, which banished unemployment, price rise and all evils of capitalism and changed the destiny of mankind, liberating it from the ruthless exploitation from the capitalist system. The CITU asserts that the present set back to socialism is not the final say. Socialism shall prevail and capitalism is bound to meet its doom due to its inherent contradictions.

Pressure on India

In the background of the deepening crisis in the capitalist world, the USA is desperately trying to mount its neo-colonial exploitation of India and other third world countries. Taking advantage of the tilt in correlation of class forces in favour of it, following the collapse of Soviet Union, and its armed might and nuclear arsenal, the USA is blackmailing India to formulate its economic and industrial policies according to its demands. With its dominant position in IMF, World Bank and GATT, the USA is fully utilising these fora alongwith its own trade laws—Super and Special 301 and Dunkel proposals to rob India of its economic sovereignty and expose

the people to the full blast exploitation by the multinationals.

The CITU denounces the Narasimha Rao Govt for surrendering to the US pressure and accepting the prescriptions of devaluation, liberalisation, privatisation, dismantling of the public sector, privileged treatment to multinationals and formulating budget according to its dictates.

The Glorious 29th November Strike

On this May Day the CITU warmly congratulates the working class and the Sponsoring Committee of trade unions for rising to the occasion and launching the 29th November countrywide strike to register their strong opposition to these IMF dictated policies.

Policies being Implemented

The government however was committed to the IMF and remained insensitive to this massive strike. While playing fraud with the workers on one hand by giving hoax that there would be no retrenchments, closures or privatisation, etc, it has on the other hand started implementing the policies one after another under the direct supervision of the IMF. The Exit Policy, National Renewal Fund, amendment of the Sick Industrial Companies Act to refer the sick PSUs to BIFR, marking 98 sick PSUs for closure or handing over to private parties, 49 per cent disinvestment in the profit making PSUs, acceptance of the Narasimam Committee's report to hand over the banking and entire financial system to multinationals, etc all are pointers to the Government's abject supine position before the IMF.

Effect of the Policies

Closures, 'Golden Hand Shakes' and privatisation have already started in several industries. In railways alone about four lakh workers are going to be retrenched. Three lakhs will be affected in the Banks. Apart from nearly eight lakh workers in the Public Sector Undertakings, the worst affected will be the working women, workers in the small scale and unorganised sectors and the weaker sections of the society. Growing unemployment and spiralling prices will plague the country and smash the national economy.

Threat to Independence

Its vacillation to resist the surrender of the Intellectual Property Rights, to negate the pressure to sign the Non Proliferation Treaty and on the contrary, its repeated reiterations and assurance to the IMF that the economic and industrial policies are irreversible etc, tantamount to surrender of the country's economic sovereignty and poses danger to our freedom and independence.

Effect on Foreign Policy

The effect of the IMF dictated economic policy

is seen inevitably in the foreign policy of the Government too. Being a pioneer of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Government has been surrendering to the US pressure now. It has withheld the supply of rice to Cuba under US pressure. It voted in the UN in delinking racism with Zionism. It gave recognition to Israel, the worst fascist regime after Hitler's Germany. It voted with the US against Libya. Earlier it allowed refuelling to US war planes against Iraq. It has now started joint military exercises with the USA. All these tantamount to abandoning and sabotaging the NAM and making a tilt to pro-imperialism.

Impact on Labour Policy

As repeatedly warned by the CITU, pro-imperialist tilt in economic and foreign policy has its inevitable impact on the Government's labour policy as well. The President had already hinted at curtailing the right to strike. Now the Government has taken a move towards it to put the trade union movement into straight jacket by amending the labour laws as demanded by the IMF-World Bank. Introduction of ESMA and MISA is in the offing.

Boost to the Divisive Forces

These policies have further helped the imperialists in their efforts to destabilise the country by boosting the divisive forces of all sorts. In Kashmir and Punjab the situation is fast deteriorating in absence of any political solution. After the farcical election in Punjab, it has taken the same move in Kashmir, sacrificing the national cause to the narrow objective of removing its minority status at the Centre. Its appeasement of BJP on the Ekta Yatra has emboldened the latter to launch frontal attack on the Article 370 to further alienate the people of Kashmir from the rest of the country. The ULFA problem has not been resolved. The Jharkhand issue is raising its ugly head. The RSS-BJP-VHP axis is creating new problems at Ayodhya. All these issues are plaguing the country, when the working class is struggling for unity to safeguard the country's sovereignty.

The Answer is Strike Action

On this May Day, the CITU proclaims that the only answer to these challenges is to launch further strike action. The CITU welcomes the decision of the Sponsoring Committee and the All India Convention held at Calcutta on March 5 and 6 to prepare for another countrywide strike action against these economic and industrial policies. The joining of the INTUC and BMS in the Calcutta Convention was a significant step forward towards closer trade union unity for national cause. The Sponsoring Committee must consolidate the unity achieved through the 29th November strike and carry forward the unity demonstrated in the Calcutta Convention throughout the country in all states, and all industries, public or private sector and among all the central and State

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CITU Calls for Launching Strike Preparations

The Extended Emergent Secretariat meeting of the CITU held at Delhi on April 15 under the presidency of Com. E. Balanandan called for launching full scale preparations for the second country-wide industrial general strike alongwith all other trade unions against the economic and industrial policies of the Government. The same day the Secretariat discussed about the strike preparations with the leaders of various national federations including those of Central Government, Railway and State Government employees also.

Independent Campaigns

After indepth discussion, the Secretariat adopted a resolution on the issue and called for launching full scale independent campaign and preparation by the CITU and the federations for the strike. It directed all the State Committees and unions to publish the Resolution, the May Day Manifesto and the pamphlet on the Calcutta convention of March 5 and 6 in regional languages and distribute them in thousands among the workers.

The Secretariat welcomed the All India Convention called at Delhi on 10th May and requested the Sponsoring Committee to fix the date on the strike in its meeting being held on 27th April, so that the 10th May convention could be fully utilised to rally the workers for the strike.

The Secretariat called upon the State Committees and industrial federations to take initiative to convene joint conventions before 10th May to create full atmosphere for the strike and make it impending.

Resolution Adopted by the Extended Emergent Secretariat Meeting of the CITU, held at Delhi on April 15, 1992

The extended emergent meeting of the Central Secretariat of the CITU held at Delhi on April 15 and 16, 1992 denounced the Narasimha Rao Government for refusing to take cognizance of the massive countrywide united strike action by the working class on November 29, 1991 in protest against the retrograde economic and industrial policies formulated under the dictates of the IMF, and on the contrary, going ahead with the implementations of the policies under the direct supervision of the IMF.

The meeting further condemned the Government for giving false hoax to the trade unions that there would be no closures, no retrenchments, no privatisation, etc, while on the other hand reiterating and reassuring the IMF that the economic measures are irreversible.

Despite total rejection by the trade unions in the Special Tripartite Committee meetings, the Government went ahead with the constitution of the National Renewal Fund taking pecuniary help from the World Bank, amended the Sick Industrial Companies Act and referred 58 out of the 98 loss making public sector units to the BIFR, marked the 58 PSUs for closure or handing them over to private parties and made the passage of the Exit Policy clear. And now the government have declared that they would sell 49% of the equities to the Foreign monopolies, of all profit making PSUs, thereby exposing their anti-national intentions to sell away the hard-earned assets of the nation to the foreigners.

Over and above, despite strike actions and massive rally before the Parliament by the bank employees and officers, the Government has accepted the diabolical recommendations of the Narasimham Committee to hand over the banking and financial system to the multinationals.

Aparts from above, the government is virtually on the surrender to the draconian Dunkel proposals on investment measures and services giving equal treatment to the multinationals and removing all controls and regulations, dismantling the FERA and MRTP in the process. Its surrender of the Intellectual Property Rights would place the Indian agricultural and the drugs and pharmaceutical industry of the country under the complete command of the multinationals.

After the 29th November strike, a number of closures in various industries and forced retirement in the name of Golden Hand Shake have taken place affecting several thousands of workers. About 8 lakh workers are threatened with joblessness in the 98 sick PSUs. In railways alone 4 lakh workers are threatened with retrenchment. In the banking industry about 3 lakh employees are going to be affected. In Central Government 10 percent reduction in staff complement has been ordered in the name of restructuring. Even while promising no retrenchment the government of India has retrenched 34 employees from the public sector Textile Committee. State public sector units in several states have already been closed or sold to private parties. The State Government employees are also under the same threat. Permanancy in job will be taken away.

Privatisation of the PSUs in the core sectors like in power, fertilizers, steel, telecommunication, road transport, railways, etc have already been started. Massive plans of further privatisation in railways, airlines, etc have been chalked out in consultation with the world Bank. In the power sector 100 per-

cent equity with 16 percent take home profits are going to be allowed to the multinationals. With a scandalous deal the multinational Asean Brown Boveri (ABB) has been given orders for locomotives at the cost of BHEL. Another scandalous deal was struck against NTPC to favour the same ABB.

Even the union budget was formulated in tune with the IMF World Bank demands as it became evident from the Finance Minister's letter to the World Bank, which has led to soaring prices, unemployment and heaped miseries on the people. The worst affected will be the peasantry and the rural poor in absence of any land reforms or employment generation programme.

In pursuance of the demands of the World Bank, the Government has now taken a move to curb organised trade union movement by changing the labour laws to curb the right to strike. Move has also been taken to reintroduce ESMA and MISA.

The earlier warning given by the CITU that pro-imperialist economic policy is bound to pose a danger to the Government's foreign policy, has now come true. Under pressure of the USA, the Government is now abandoning its non-aligned foreign Policy. It voted with the USA against Libya and has given recognition to the Zionist Israel. It withheld rice supply to Cuba under US pressure. It has started joint military exercises with USA. The Vishakhapatnam port is going to be opened for US naval vessels and submarines.

In the background of the above situation, where the Government has made a total surrender of its economic sovereignty to the US pressure, mortgaging self-reliance and national planning to the IMF, the freedom and independence of the country is in danger. India is under a real threat of being taken to the pre-independence days.

This meeting of the Secretariat of the CITU considers that now is the time for the entire working class to close-up their ranks, consolidate their post-November 29th Strike unity, and go into a country-wide mass united strike to resist and thwart the IMF inspired government offensive. The meeting noted with satisfaction that the massive All India Convention held at Calcutta on March 5 and 6 had united all the trade unions including the INTUC and BMS to appeal to the Central Trade Unions to give a call for the second countrywide strike at the end of April. The meeting welcomed the decision of the Sponsoring Committee on April 3 to prepare for the strike, for which it will meet on 27th April and has called an all India convention on 10th May.

The meeting however noted with concern that in the background of the sell out of the country and when the working class and all trade unions are fully prepared to launch the strike action, and new forces had joined the mainstream of the massive working class struggle, a few trade union leaders are still reluctant to join the mainstream of mass united strike action. This will harm the interest of the working class and the nation. The Secretariat con-

siders that every day's delay in fixing the date of the strike will only strengthen the hands of the Government and its mentor, the IMF. Every day's delay will further accelerate the process of privatisation, closures, retrenchments and heap further liabilities on the working population of the country.

The meeting requests the Sponsoring Committee to fix the date of strike in its 27th April meeting. This will help to make the 10th May convention to be a rallying point for full scale preparation for countrywide mobilisation for the strike. The CITU calls upon all its unions to launch full scale campaign for the strike to bring all sections of workers and the trade unions together. It appeals to all patriotic sections of the people and mass organisations of students, youth, women, peasants and agricultural workers to extend full support to the strike.

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Countrywide Demonstrations Against the Economic Policy of the Government

The mounting anger of the workers against the refusal of the Narasimha Rao Government to heed the demand of the trade unions to withdraw the IMF-dictated economic and industrial policies and on the contrary going ahead with the implementations at a fast rate, was demonstrated in the country-wide protest rallies on April 2 at the call of the Sponsoring Committee. The rallies were held jointly in all the places. The workers demonstrated their preparedness to launch the second countrywide strike action at the call of the Sponsoring Committee. The following are the reports.

Delhi :

Over 10,000 workers demonstrated before Parliament (Sardar Patel Chowk) on April 2 protesting against economic policies of the Government of India.

The demonstrators assembled at Jantar Mantar in which workers from Delhi and adjoining states participated. A rally was held at Sardar Patel Chowk which was addressed among others by Umraomal Purohit (HMS), M. K. Pandhe (CITU), Darshan Singh (AITUC), K. Sharma (UTUC-LS), Piyush Tirke (UTUC), D. D. Shastri (TUCC), S. K. Vyas (Confederation of Central Govt Employees), J. P. Choubey (All India Railwaymen's Federation).

Samar Mukherjee, M. P., Madhu Dandavate and Sukomal Sen MP., addressed the gathering and supported the struggle of workers.

A delegation consisting of Samar Mukherjee, Mohan Singh (both MPs), M. K. Pandhe (CITU), T. N. Siddhana (AITUC), and V. Tiagi (HMS) submitted a memorandum to the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shivraj Patil.

Tamilnadu :

Working people in Tamilnadu were called upon to be prepared for joining all the all India actions including general strike against the disastrous economic policies of the central and the state government.

The united call for action was given in the state level convention, organised by the state level sponsoring committee of trade unions. The convention held in Madras on 29th March was attended by more than 1000 delegates who had come from all over the state representing various trade unions, including CITU, AITUC, LPF, HMS, NLO, UTUC (LS) and various industrial federations in public and private sectors.

The convention was presided by C. Kuppaswami, president LPF, A. M. Gopu (AITUC) moved the

main resolution. Among those who participated in the discussion, highlighting the effect of the economic policies on various sectors were TK. Rengarajan, A Soundarajan (CITU), G. Balaraman (HMS), T. Swaminathan (NLO), Bhoopathi (AIIEA), R. Gangadharan (TNGEA-AISGEF), Jagan (Confederation of Central Government Employees) and Venkatachalam (AIBEA).

The resolution was adopted unanimously by the convention. The resolution, while explaining the disastrous effects of the policies of the Central Government also pointed out that the state government was also following the same policies.

The highlight of the convention was the speech of the Chief Guest Dr Ashim Das Gupta, the Finance Minister of the Government of West Bengal. Dr. Gupta in his forceful address explained some major aspects of the economic policies and how the Government was succumbing to the pressures of IMF and World Bank. Then, he explained in details an alternative based on safeguarding the interests of the common masses of India.

March to Raj Bhawan

More than 3000 workers and employees from various sectors participated in the Raj Bhawan march, in Madras on 2nd April. Led by state level leaders of various participating organisations, including T. K. Rengarajan (CITU), C. Kuppasamy (LPF) and A. M. Gopu (AITUC) they marched to the Raj Bhawan and submitted a memorandum to the Governor. The memorandum explained the disastrous consequences of the present policies of the central and state governments and demanded its withdrawal.

Similar memoranda were handed over to collectors in all other districts after processions and demonstrations. Hundreds of workers and employees participated in these processions in the district centres. It is noteworthy, that some unions, which had not participated in the 29th November strike have also now come forward to participate in these campaigns.

Maharashtra :

On April 2, 1992 over 5000 workers and employees under the banner of the Trade Unions Joint Action Committee marched to the residence of the Governor of Maharashtra at Raj Bhawan in Bombay to protest against the IMF-WB dictated economic and industrial policies of the Government. The action in Bombay was jointly organised by the CITU, AITUC, HMS, Kamgar Aghadi, Sarva Shramik

Sangh, UTUC, IFTU, Air Corporation Employees Union, Bombay University and College Teachers Union, and employees organisations in LIC, GIC, Banks as well as State and Central Government.

A delegation met the Governor of Maharashtra and submitted a detailed memorandum outlining the strong opposition of the trade unions and the working class to the anti-people economic and industrial policies of the Narasimha Rao government. These policies, the memorandum stated, not only threaten the livelihood of the vast majority of the working people, but by shamelessly bowing to the dictates of the imperialist-controlled International Monetary Fund and World Bank, they also impinge on the economic and political sovereignty of the country.

The large and militant morcha, which began from outside the Grant Road Railway Station, was stopped at the Chowpatty Band Stand by the police, where it was converted into a rally. The rally was addressed by Ahilya Rangnekar, K. L. Bajaj and P. R. Krishnan (CITU), B. S. Dhume and Prakash Reddy (AITUC), Chandrakant Desai (HMS), Dada Samant (Kamgar Aghadi), Pushpa Mehta (UTUC), Jayant Chavan (Sarva Shramik Sangh) Prof. K. K. Thekedath (BUCTU), R. Ramanathan (Air Corporation Employees Union), and others.

Karnataka

Under the leadership of Joint Action Committee of Trade Unions consisting of CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMKP, JAF, AIBOC, AIBEA, BEFI, AIEA, LICEU, GIEA, KSGEA (FU), FMEU, NCOA, AIRBEA, NCGIOA and State Govt Employees Ikyata Vedike (Unity Forum), a massive procession was taken out from the Silvar Jubilee Park, Bangalore at 1 P. M. with banners of different central trade union organisations as well as unions from different districts, Agricultural Labour Organisations, Kisan Organisations, etc, shouting slogans against the economic policies of Narasimha Rao Govt. A large number of women including beedi workers participated in the procession and demonstration. The procession was stopped near Governor's Bungalow and 5000 workers and employees demonstrated by sitting on the main road near Governor's bungalow up to 5 p.m. S. Suryanarayan Rao, President CITU, V. J. K. Nair, CITU General Secretary, M. S. Krishnan, President AITUC, Anant Subbarao of AITUC, Maichal Fernandes of HMKP, Borayya of State Govt Employees Unity Forum, and other leaders of different central organisations addressed the demonstrators. K.S. Subramanyan of Merchantail Employees Union welcomed the demonstrators and Balkrishna of AITUC thanked the gathering. A delegation of central trade union organisations met the governor and submitted a memorandum. One special feature this time is the participation of a large number of KSRTC employees belonging to AITUC. AITUC leadership never encouraged KSRTC employees who are affiliated to it to participate in any all India action. This time they changed their tactics and brought transport employees to participate in the demonstration. Officers of Bank, LIC, and public sector also participated in the demonstration.

CITU published in Kannada 5000 copies of the declaration of the convention of trade unions held at Calcutta on 5th and 6th March 1992 which were all sold out during the demonstration.

Orissa

About 3000 workers and employees from state union of CITU, AITUC, UTC (LS), HMS and state units of different all India federation, marched in a colourful procession to Rajbhawan on 2nd April 1992 and organised dharna there.

A delegation consisting of Com. Shivaji Patnaik, Com. Lambodar Naik (CITU), Com. Duti Krushna Panda and Prabir Palit (AITUC) Mayadhas Nayak (UTUC-LS) and Krushna Patra (HMS) went to the governor and submitted a memorandum to him. The meeting was addressed by leaders of central trade unions and leaders of federations.

The leaders of Central TUs and federations met in the evening and decided to organise a state level convention on 10th May 1992 at Cuttack to speed up the campaign of all India strike.

Tripura

A mass rally was organised on 2nd April 1992 at Agartala. About 1200 members from different unions participated in this mass rally. From this rally a memorandum was submitted to the Hon'ble Governor of Tripura. A meeting was also held in front of the Governor's house under the presidentship of Com. Panu Majumdar, Com. Baidynath Majumdar, the president of CITU and Com. Sudharshan Das, General Secretary addressed the meeting.

Similar demonstrations were organised in Belonia, Dharmanagar and Kailashahar also.

Assam

A big demonstration was organised by the CITU and other trade unions at Guwahati in front of the Governor's place and a memorandum was given to him by a delegation in the afternoon.

Rajasthan

CITU and several other trade unions held a big joint rally before the Governor's place at Jaipur and submitted a memorandum to him.

Madhya Pradesh

A massive joint rally was held at Bhopal after a procession and a memorandum was submitted to the governor.

Similar demonstrations were organised in other states and by various public sector unions also in different parts of the country.

West Bengal

A massive joint rally was held at Esplanade East, Calcutta. The rally was attended by thousands of workers who came in a number of processions from various parts of the city. The rally was presided over by Niren Ghosh (CITU) and addressed by Chittabrata Majumdar (CITU), Kamalapati Roy (AITUC), Satin Roy Chowdhury (HMS), Atul Kundu (UTUC), Prashanta Das Gupta (TUCC), Shankar Saha (UTUC-LS) and others. The rally appealed to the Sponsoring Committee to fix the date of the strike without delay.

Bank Unions Joint Committee for Movement against Privatisation of Banks Boat Club Rally—7th April, 1992

[In a massive rally of about 50,000 employees the following resolution was adopted—Ed.]

Resolution

With the installation of the new Government at the Centre last year, there has been a total shift in Government's economic, industrial, trade and fiscal policies, based on the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The new economic policy aimed at establishment of a free market economy is characterised by devaluation of the rupee, deregularisation and delicensing of the industries/trade, scrapping of MRTP Act, free entry of foreign capital and transnational corporations, unrestricted concessions to private sector, gradual dismantling of public sector, etc.

As a result of these so-called economic reforms, there have been unabatedly galloping price rise of all essential commodities, increasing unemployment, more and more taxes on poorer sections of the people and sharp rise in joblessness. Threats of DA and wage freeze are very much in the air when price rise remains unchecked. At a time when unemployment is the worst curse facing the country, the Government speaks of an "Exit Policy" threatening loss of jobs to millions.

This Central Rally, preceded by a massive long March to the Parliament, participated by thousands of Bank Officers/employees coming from all states and corners of the country, held in New Delhi on 7th April 1992, organised under the auspices of "Bank Unions Joint Committee for Movement against Privatisation of Banks" views with grave concern these policy shifts of the Government as the same are against the interests of the country, the nation and its economy. These anti-people measures are bound to endanger country's economic independence and will ultimately damage political sovereignty.

In the opinion of this Rally, the main thrust of the latest Central Government Budget—an extension of the policies initiated as per dictates of IMF and World Bank—will heap more miseries on the common man while price rise and inflation will remain unchecked, foreign capital will have a heyday in close collaboration, with the big industrial and monopoly houses in the country—large scale privatisation accompanied by mounting loss of employment.

In this game-plan of the Government, the Banking Industry and the financial system are occupying the key position and have become targets of special attacks. The appointment of "High Power Committee on Financial System" headed by Shri M. Narasimham, former Governor of Reserve Bank of India comprising mostly Government executives

were charged with the responsibility of submitting a report on Banks and financial system within a short period of 90 days. This report has been tabled on Parliament on 12/12/1991 and is a topical issue in the press and all forums of the country. As per Statements made during the budget speech by the Finance Minister, implementation of this Committee's recommendations are to be undertaken in course of this year.

Before this Committee, AIBEA, AIBOC, BEFI the AIBOA—the constituents of the Joint Committee had submitted their respective memoranda. Some other bank Officers/employee Unions too had made their own submissions as well. The main points of all these organisations, with minor variations in respect of some details, were unanimous on certain basic features i.e.

- 1) No dilution of the ownership pattern of the public sector banking system.
- 2) Overdue restructuring of the banking encompassing all the public sector banks, the few private bank and all the regional rural banks.
- 3) No slowing down of the pace of social lending in pursuance of the main objective of bank nationalisation.
- 4) Introduction of an effective independent audit and vigilance system.
- 5) Depoliticisation of Bank credit and appointments of the top Executives.
- 6) Transparency of the Balance Sheets disclosing the actual affairs of banks.
- 7) Separate legislation for expeditious recovery of bank loans with deterrent punishments to defaulting borrowers, etc.

All these and other proposals were aimed at making banks and financial institutions, in public sector, healthy, viable and vibrant, free from the evils of unconcealed politicisation of nationalised banking system and other financial institutions.

On a careful scrutiny and study of the manifold recommendations of the Narashimham Committee, this Rally is constrained to observe that the same are on expected lines conforming to the known recommendations of the International Monetary Agencies.

This Rally rejects the basic recommendations of the report to make the financial system a "deregulated necessary commitment of the trade and indus-

trial policy liberalisation" adopted by the Government of India at the behest of the World Bank and IMF.

The Meeting notes with grave concern the recommendation relating to slashing down of social lending to a mere 10% with the 'ultimate aim of phasing it out' as against the existing 43-44%. This would mean virtual denial of credit to the poorer and weaker sections and choking of credit to rural sector and throwing rural masses at the mercy of rapacious money lenders. This attempt at denial of much needed credit to the rural and poorer sections inclusive of the tiny and small scale industries, self-employed persons, artisans etc. is detrimental to national interest and must be resisted resolutely.

The 'restructuring' of the banking system as recommended by the Committee in effect means free-for-all positions with unrestricted proliferation of the banking institutions. Its suggestion for fragmentation of banking in two segments—urban/metropolitan and rural is a deliberate design to bring about a permanent divide, fraught with far-reaching consequences to the detriment of rural masses and their economy.

While prescribing for 3/4 banks with 'global' transactions and 8 to 10 national banks with 'universal' banking, it has also called for establishment of 'local' banks without specifying even their number. The Committee has also recommended for setting up of unrestricted number of private banks subject to satisfying some ground rules to be framed by RBI. The existing private banks will remain as they are in the context of Committee's declaration against any further nationalisation. On top of all these, the Committee has recommended for unfettered entry and expansion of foreign banks in India. The Committee has also recommended for immediate partial disinvestment of the share capital of well managed public sector banks under the garb of 'capital adequacy' to the level of international banking standards.

As a part of its restructuring scheme, the Committee has also asked for sponsoring of subsidiaries comprising of all rural branches of a particular bank together with the RRBs sponsored by it or by swapping of their branches. Implementation of this suggestion means virtual decimation of rural banking since 'social lending' will be reduced just to 10% with the ultimate aim of phasing it out and these subsidiaries delinked, from parent banks, will suffer from chronic resource crunch. This will result in rural branches left with hardly any banking functions and the officers/employees, more than three lakhs in number, employed today in rural branches of commercial banks and RRBs, will face the threats of retrenchment and 'exit' policy. In the context of Committee's recommendations for delicensing of branches/opening/closure, large scale closure of branches is inevitable with all its disastrous consequences on economy as also job security of employees/officers.

The sum total of the above-noted recommendations means a definite drive towards denationalisation and privatisation coupled with all-round indiscriminate establishment, existence and expansion of private sector banking—Indian and foreign with the inevitable repercussion on public sector banking, squeezing it out of existence, making it prematurely decay, decline and die.

Some other harmful features of Narasimham Committee's recommendations are briefly summed up as under :—

1. Creation of "Assets Reconstruction Fund" the selling of bank's 'Bad and doubtful debt' to it at substantial discount without publishing the names of the defaulters is a clear attempt to cover up the systematic loot of the banks by large industry, trade and commerce in collusion with powers that-be and unscrupulous bank managements.

2. Inspection of banks reduced to a mere formality by confining it to scrutiny of internal auditors report only.

3. Unrestricted massive computerisation/mechanisation of banking operations to create surplus and retrenchment.

4. Encouraging wide spread growth of mutual funds, also in private sector, leading to diversion of bank deposits with extra emphasis to speculative capital at the cost of public sector.

In view of the above and other relevant facts and considerations, this Rally records its disapproval of the Narasimham Committee Report and declares its resolve to carry on a sustained relentless campaign and agitation there against in various forms including direct actions as and when warranted.

The Meeting calls upon the bank employees of the country to build up a united militant movement, irrespective of organisational and any other consideration, in the greater interest of national economy, in defence of public sector banking and for defeating the dictated designs for banks privatisation.

The Meeting once again appeals to the Government to refrain from going ahead with the implementation of the anti-national, anti-people and anti-employees recommendations of the Narasimham Committee Report. Instead, the Government, having regard to the view points and submissions made by various eminent economists, bank employees/officers organisations, different trade unions etc, should take immediate effective steps for depoliticisation of banking system, restructuring of banks covering nationalised/state sector banks, all RRBs and private sector banks so as to make it vibrant, healthy and viable and an effective instrument for accelerated socio/economic growth, for alleviation of poverty and for augmentation of rural economy. Attempts for establishment of new private banks and for free entry of foreign banks must be given up.

The meeting notes with satisfaction that in the meeting held on 2.4.92 with the Finance Minister by the Constituents of the Joint Committee-AIBEA-AIBOC-BEFI-AIBOA-, the collective view points of the four organisations have been placed in a very forthright manner with necessary emphasis.

This Rally declares that any attempt to dilute ownership pattern of the Banks wholly or partly by disinvestment of share capital or by raising of additional capital, under the garb of capital adequacy, to establish banks in private sector, to slash down rural credit to 10% from the existing level, to allow entry of Foreign Banks and their unfettered expansion or to create Assets Reconstruction Fund etc. etc. shall be immediately answered by agitational steps including direct actions by Bank Employees Movement unitedly.

The Rally demands of the Central Govt. for a Parliamentary Probe into the working of Banks particularly in respect of the portfolio of 'Bad and Doubtful Debts', estimated at more than 20000 crores, thanks to the Politicisation of Banks so that the misdeeds and happenings involving People's deposits are brought to public notice.

The meeting demands of the Government for publication of the names of the defaulting borrowers and reiterates its demand for immediate public take-over of the few private sector banks.

In the considered view of this Rally, the interest rates on Bank deposits should be so revised as to make them attractive, competitive and entitled to the same Income Tax and other concessions as other public deposits are. Interest rate on Savings Deposits, which have remained static @5% since 1977 in the face of enormous rise in Consumer Price Index and Money Supply Calls for an immediate upward revision.

The Meeting appeals to all trade unions—Central and Independent Federations—all political parties, members of the Parliament and Legislative assemblies, intellectuals and economists—all sections of the people for their whole-hearted support for defence and expansion of public sector banking and against dilution of objectives of Bank Nationalisation in any manner.

It is necessary to emphasise that the offensives of the Government are multi-pronged, of unprecedented dimensions and magnitude. The situation is grim having no parallel with the past. The very existence of public sector banking, in the face of brisk preparations by the Government for implementation of Narsimham Committee Report, is at stake coupled with the job security of the employees. The gravity and the grimness of the situation need to be grasped at all levels and mobilisation of rank and file through intensive and extensive explanatory educative campaigns and actions are the need of the hour.

Enlistment of people's support is another immediate task. Beneficiaries of nationalised banking i.e. rural masses, small and marginal farmers, agricult-

ural labourers, tiny and small scale industry owners, self-employed persons shall have to be approached for the sake of enlistment of their active support to this movement.

The Meeting is conscious of the fact that there is considerable scope for further and continuing improvements in customer service. The meeting calls upon all bank officers/employees to bring about significant improvements in the field of service to banking public.

This Massive Rally congratulates the Bank Employees/Officers—men and women—coming from all parts including farthest corners of the country, for taking part in this historic march to the Parliament in pursuance of the call of the Joint Committee in defence of public sector and for defeating privatisation designs. The meeting calls upon them to further close up their ranks and be ready for further struggles and sacrifices so that the designs of the Government are defeated and country's Banking System becomes healthy, vibrant and viable, free from the multiple ills afflicting it.

The meeting declares that Public Sector Banking System, its defence and expansion in the interests of national economy, for alleviation of poverty, for employment generation, for providing much-needed credit to the rural and agricultural sector, small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, artisans, self-employed persons, tiny and small sector industries etc. coupled with an efficient customer service are matters of article of faith, on which no compromises shall be allowed to take place.

The Rally resolves to take part and implement all agitational and other programmes evolved jointly by various central trade unions—Independent trade federations against the offensives of the new economic policies, of which privatisation of banks is an integral part.

B. T. Ranadive

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Cement Workers on Agitation Path

Several months ago the unions and federations in the Cement industry submitted the Charter of Demands to the Cement Manufacturers' Association and individual managements for revision of wages and other benefits, but neither the employer nor the Government have taken any steps for a negotiated settlement of the Charter of Demands.

The Cement industry is passing through an unprecedented boom signified by high profits and dividend payments and share prices of cement companies are scaling new heights in the stock exchanges. Meanwhile, the ACC management is pursuing a nefarious game of dividing the cement workers and subverting any possible national level settlement of the Charter of Demands by pressurising workers and some unions at plant level to enter into a set pattern of settlement of the charter of demands. The benefits offered in these agreements are totally inadequate compared to the present paying capacity of the cement industry. Moreover, the agreements do not mention anything about revising the DA rate, wage structure etc, but seek to impose onerous conditions like free hand for rationalisation etc.

Under these circumstances, we appeal to the INTUC and BMS leadership for a united stand for a national level negotiated settlement of the charter of demands and thus defeat the game of the cement employers.

We would appeal to all unions to intensify their agitation for a national level settlement of the charter of demands without further delay and foil the game of the employers to divide the cement workers and offer inadequate and unsatisfactory benefits even when the cement industry is passing through unprecedented prosperity.

In order to discuss these developments and take a common stand, we would convene as early as possible a representative meeting of cement unions.

We would congratulate the workers of Bhupendra Cements Works Swarajpur (Haryana) of ACC for rejecting the settlement entered into by a section of union leadership. We would also appeal to all independent unions to join the agitation and participate in the convention which will further strengthen the united movement.

Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-
M.K. Pandhe (CITU)	T.N. Siddhanta (AITUC)	A.D. Nagpal (HMS)

Sd/-	Sd/-
Kanai Banerjee (CITU)	H.N. Narendra (AITUC)

CITU to Boycott Reconstituted Industrial Committee on Jute Industry

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) has conveyed to the Government of India its decision to boycott the reconstituted Industrial Committee on Jute Industry. The objection of the CITU is that the Committee has been reconstituted on the basis of the 1980 verification of T.U membership which was boycotted by many Trade Union Centres including the CITU.

In the reconstituted committee the CITU has been given only one seat whereas the INTUC has been given six seats and two seats each to BMS & UTUC (LS). Incidentally it may be mentioned that in the Jute Industry the CITU is having the largest membership.

The letter written to Shri P.A Sangma, Minister of State for Labour on the subject is reproduced below:

Dear Shri Sangma,

31, March 1992

The CITU records its strong protest at the decision of the Government of India to reconstitute the Industrial Committee on Jute with only one representative for us while the INTUC has been given 6 seats, the BMS and UTUC (LS) two seats each.

The CITU is having the largest membership in Jute Industry compared to any other Central T-U organisation and the representation given to us is only an insult to the CITU. In the earlier Industrial Committee on Jute the CITU was not given any nomination at all. It shows the discriminatory attitude shown by the Government in constituting these Committees.

The CITU has been repeatedly drawing attention to the Government of India that it is wrong to reconstitute these committees on the basis of 1980 verification results which was boycotted by us. However, the Government of India is insisting on this discriminatory treatment with political motives. We cannot accept the stand of the Government of India.

The CITU therefore will not send its representatives to the meeting of the Industrial Committee on Jute being held in the Union Labour Ministry Office on 3rd April 1992 as a mark of its protest at giving us only one seat in such an arbitrary manner.

With regards,

M K Pandhe
General Secretary

Trade Unions Congratulate Jute Workers

[We are publishing hereunder the joint statement issued by 18 unions and federations in the Jute industry, which congratulated the workers for their successful united struggle and also warned the few millowners who have not signed the agreement forcing those mill workers to continue the strike—Ed.]

We express our happiness and convey warm greetings to all jute workers for their magnificent unity during the period of 50 days valiant strike struggle to achieve glorious victory, which created another land-mark in the history of the united struggle of jute workers.

The Industrywise Tripartite Agreement was signed on 17th March, '92 at the Writers Buildings in presence of Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal and Shri Shanti Ranjan Ghatak, Labour Minister of West Bengal and other Conciliating Officers. IJMA, Non-IJMA Mills and all the 18 Central Trade Unions signed the Industrywise Agreement. The unity of workers and helping hands of the Left Front Government have brought this victory.

We condemn the attitude of those mill-owners who did not sign the Industrywise Agreement are namely: 1. Agarpara Jute Mills 2. Ambica Jute Mills 3. Hanuman Jute Mills (Eastern Packaging Ltd) 4. Empire Jute Mills 5. Probartak Jute Mills 6. Tirupathy Jute Mills (Naskarpara) 7. Northbrooke Jute Mills 8. Baranagore Jute Mills (signed but did not open the mills) and as such the workmen and the unions decided to continue the strike in these mills. We congratulate the workers of these mills, for their unflinching morale to fight for the victory.

The management of IJMA member mills like Auckland Jute, Hooghly Jute Mills, Hukumchand Jute Mills, Birlapore Jute, Ludlow Jute and Gagalbhai Jute Mills etc. are the party to the industrywise agreement even then they are violating the agreement since begining in various manners by drastically reducing the existing complement and imposing the more and more workload on the workers to snatch away the gains of the agreement.

The management of Auckland Jute Mills declared lockout in its mill since 25th March, 1992 at 6.00 a.m. and Kankinara Jute on 27-3-92. This is a betrayal of the agreement on the part of the mill owners and vis-a-vis IJMA. These unfair, malafide practices and nefarious games of the managements have created serious repercussions among the workmen as well as the Trade Unions. This attitude of the jute millowners may jeopardise the industrywise settlement if it is not checked in time and the industry will have to face the consequences.

We urge upon the jute workers to be vigilant to fight against any eventuality unitedly and defeat the ulterior and nefarious game of the jute mill employers.

We also urge the State Government to take appropriate steps against these employers who have not signed the agreement and are violating the agreement and to stop these malpractices of Jute millowners with immediate effect.

Govt. of India and Ministry of Textiles should act immediately with a sense of responsibility and direct NJMC authority to sign the Industrywise Agreement and the E.S.I. facilities to all jute workers be restored immediately without further delay.

1. Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union (CITU).
2. National Union of Jute Workers (INTUC).
3. Federation of Chatkal Mazdoor Unions (AITUC).
4. Bengal Provincial Chatkal Mazdoor Union (UTUC).
5. Paschim Banga Chatkal Mazdoor Union (TUCC).
6. All India Jute Textile Workers Federation (HMS).
7. Rashtriya Chatkal Mazdoor Union.
8. Bharatiya Jute Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)
9. Bengal Jute Mills Workers Union (UTUC-L.S.).
10. Jute Workers Federation (HMS).
11. Jute Textile Workers Union 59-B, Chowringhee Road, Cal-69.
12. National Union of Jute Workers 24-D, Ekbalpore Lane, Cal-23.
13. Indian Federation of Jute Textile Workers (NFITU).
14. West Bengal National Jute Mill Sramik Union. 1, Mirbahar Ghat St.
15. All India Jute Workers Federation (CITU) 53, A.J.C. Bose Rd. Cal-16.
16. Indian National Jute Workers Federation (INTUC) 177-B, A.J.C. Bose Road, Cal-14.
17. National Union of Jute Textile Workers, 10/39, Radhanath Chowdhury Rd, Calcutta-15.
18. West Bengal Chatkal Sramik Karmchari Union, 129/A, Karl Marx Sarani, Cal-23.

Convention of Unorganised Workers in Bihar

A joint convention of unorganised workers was held at Patna on March 26, organised by CITU, AITUC, BMS, UTUC, TUCC, UTUC (LS) and AICTU. The convention was attended by over 300 delegates from the unions representing about 60 unorganised sectors of industries.

The convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of Chandi Prasad (CITU); Ram Chandra Paswan (AITUC), Tarakant Prakash (UTUC), Sankar Singh (UTUC-LS), Kumar Arjun Singh (BMS), N P Mahto (TUCC) and Kusheshwar Verma (AICTU).

Inaugurating the convention, Chandi Prasad emphasised on the minimum wages and depicted the deplorable conditions of the unorganised workers because of their wages below even the poverty line.

The main resolution demanding Rs. 1500/- as minimum wage was moved by Gajanfar Nawab of AITUC.

The convention was also addressed by the Labour Minister of Bihar, Vasist Narian Singh, who condemned the Central Government for its apathy to the unorganised workers and extended full support to their struggle. He promised to extend better wage conditions and laws for them.

Addressing the convention, J. S. Majumdar, General Secretary of the State CITU assailed the Central Government's economic and industrial policies and drew attention to the fact that the new policies had permitted the entry of the monopolists and the multinationals into the unorganised sectors also. He congratulated the workers for their participation in the 29th November strike and called for further united preparations for the forthcoming second countrywide strike against the new economic and industrial policies of the Government.

Among others who spoke were Chakradhar Prasad Singh (AITUC), Chandra Prakash Singh (INTUC), Mithilesh Kumar (HMS), Tarakant Prakash (UTUC), Sankar Singh (UTUC-LS), Ram Sringer Singh (UTUC), Kushewar Verma (AICTU) and delegates from various industries.

The convention demanded Rs. 1500/- as minimum wage with VDA and a central legislation which is to be included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. It decided to launch joint actions with conventions in the month of May in each district, joint rallies in each district in June, central rally at Patna followed by statewide united strike.

Homage to Satyajit Ray

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions expresses profound grief at the passing away of Satyajit Ray, the great doyen of Indian Cinema, on April 23.

Satyajit Ray, who became a legend in his lifetime itself, laid a new vista in the film world bringing to the forefront the deep and minutest realities of the human society. The subtle depiction of the vices of the feudal caste ridden society and the struggles of the have-nots were unique and exemplary.

But not only in the world of cinematography, a versatile genius as he was, born of a family of literatures, art and literature with a progressive philosophy were the other sides of his multi-form talents. In his innumerable writings for children, short stories and scientific fictions, he revealed his astoundingly vast knowledge and deep understanding of a very wide ranging subjects on history, geography, science, technology, art, music, culture and customs of various peoples of the world.

With his progressive outlook, he protested against the firing on the food movement agitations in Bengal in 1965-66 and participated in the silent protest procession, refused to make a film against China during the India-China dispute in 1962, and also raised his voice against the separatist Gorkha land movement. He condemned the brutal killing of Safdar Hashmi. Even on the recent set back to socialism, he asserted that the events are not the final say, Marxism will evolve again from the ruins.

The CITU pays respectful homage to Satyajit Ray and sends its heartfelt condolences to his wife and son.

New Exim Policy

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement :

The Secretariat of the CITU condemns the Government of India's decision allowing unrestricted and unbridled import of goods of almost all varieties under the garb of Exim Policy announced yesterday and expresses its great concern for exposing the entire economy to Transnational Companies exploitation. The New Exim Policy has also waived almost all restrictions on export allowing shipments even of the essential commodities including food items which are in short supply in the internal market. The New Exim Policy with the opening of the country for the import beginning from capital goods to consumer goods and unlimited export will roll the nation into total export orientation and

consumerism. This alongwith the withdrawal of industrial licensing would pave the way for de-industrialisation. The New Exim Policy is nothing but the consequence of the surrender to the IMF-World Bank dictate.

The cumulative effect of withdrawal of industrial licensing and unrestricted trade would bring the national economy subservient to the needs of meeting of foreign loan repayment, satisfy the lust of consumerism for a very negligible percentage of Indian population and would bring devastating ruin to the self-reliant industrial economy. The New Exim Policy would further facilitate the tightening of the knot of debt trap widening the growth of negative balance in the Balance of Payment.

The CITU demands the scrapping of the new proposal and calls upon the working class and the people to voice against the new policy.

Powermen's Workshop Extends Support to Striking Rajasthan Power Engineers

Messrs. E. Balanandan, MP., A. B. Bardhan and K. Ashok Rao Presidents of the Electricity Employees' Federation, All India Electricity Employees' Federation and National Confederation of Officers of CPSUs, have jointly released the following resolution to the press :

The Government of Rajasthan has resorted to ESMA and National Security Act, banning the strike of RSEB engineers, putting 100 engineers behind the bars, and putting the engineers' colonies under police occupation on April 20, 1992, as a preemptive action against their strike from April 23.

Their demands include, opposition to privatisation, undertaking projects departmentally, and extending time scale to engineers as in other states.

The power workers, engineers and officers gathered at the workshop, demands that the Government should open a dialogue with Engineers' Joint Action Committee, release all engineers, and withdraw all repression forthwith.

We extend full support to the engineers, and call upon all sections of workers to rally in their support.

NTC Workers' Convention

A joint convention of National Textile Corporation mill workers was held at Indore from March 31 to April 2. The convention was jointly organised by the MP State unit of INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS. The convention was attended by 114 delegates from several other states like Maharashtra, UP and Delhi also attended the convention.

The convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of one representative from each trade unions. It was inaugurated by Gopeshwar, General Secretary of INTUC. In his inaugural speech, Gopeshwar assailed the textile policy of 1985 and the new economic policy of the Central Government and warned against any closure or privatisation of the NTC mills. He called for united agitation against the Government's move for amalgamation or closure of the NTC mills.

The convention was addressed among others by Haribhau Naik (INTUC), Homi Daji, B D Joshi (AITUC); P K Ganguly, Badal Saroj (CITU), Bimal Malhotra (HMS); Tulsiram (BMS), and a number of delegates from each trade unions.

A resolution was unanimously adopted calling for united action to save the NTC mills. The resolution condemned the Government for marking a number of NTC mills under hit list and for reference to the BIFR without any consultations with the trade unions. It said that over 70 thousand workers will be affected in the NTC mills if they are closed. In the textile industry as a whole more than one lakh workers have already been thrown into the streets due to closures. It demanded taking the sick mills out of the purview of the BIFR and work for their revival in consultation with the trade unions. It further demanded utilisation of the full capacities and stoppage of all move for their amalgamation or closure, and extension of full budgetary support for their revival. The resolution called for preventing unfair competition of the mills with powerloom sector, steps for regular supply of cotton at cheap regulated prices and provision for adequate funds for modernisation without any retrenchment. It also demanded genuine participation of workers in management upto Board level.

The convention decided to submit a joint memorandum to the Prime Minister and called for united actions, demonstrations at unit levels and a massive joint rally before the Parliament. A Joint Action Committee was constituted on all India basis with two representatives from each central trade unions.

Calcutta Rally Protests Economic Policies

The campaign against the dangerous anti-national policies of the Narasimha Rao-led Congress government registered another high point on March 28, when thousands and thousands of people thronged the Brigade Parade Ground at the call of the Left Front state committee. Since 1973, March 28, every year has been observed by workers, youth, students and employees, as Anti-Unemployment Day.

In the background of the severe dimensions of the economic crisis today, with central government surrendering the country's economic sovereignty to the financial agencies of imperialism, the IMF and World Bank, the March 28 observance this year takes on added significance. Daily such policies are enunciated and steps taken that curb employment in the country. Hence the call for protest from all sections of society. There was a huge response to the call on the 28th, following a week of campaigning.

Despite the heat of the day, the people gathered for the rally scheduled for 2.30 in the afternoon, coming from distant villages and towns. With their feet they were registering their protest against their continuing impoverishment by none other than the central government. That the rally was going to be an impressive one was evident from the crowds that jammed Sealdah and Howrah stations the evening and day before the rally. The people of Calcutta came in long processions, all mobilised under their particular mass fronts.

The rallyists were first greeted and addressed by their chief minister, Jyoti Basu, followed by the Left Front chairman, Sailen Dasgupta, and leaders of the other constituents of the front—Chitta Basu of the Forward Bloc, Nikhil Das of the RSP, Swadhin Guha of the CPI, and representatives of the mass organisations.

The reason we were given for accepting the harsh conditionalities as the precondition for IMF loan, observed the chief minister, was that the nation was on the threshold of bankruptcy. The same reason was extended to us ten years ago, in 1981, by the Indira Gandhi government. But no explanation was provided, then or now, of what had led to this bankruptcy. No mention has even been made of the faulty and bankrupting economic policies of successive central governments for the forty years.

And this despite the fact that alternative economic policies have been spelt out by a number of the country's leading economists, and more pointedly, despite an alternative strategy for development which has so successfully been followed in West Bengal, and thus proved itself in practice.

The rally, Jyoti Basu urged, far from being the end of the matter, is a recognition and a realisation by growing numbers of people that the struggle must continue till victory is registered, and till by their struggle the people force a change of policies.

Labour Ministers' Meeting

A meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Labour Ministers of Maharashtra, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh was held today (25.4.92) under the chairmanship of Shri P. A. Sangma, Union minister of State for Labour to discuss the recommendations mainly the unanimous ones of Ramanujam Committee on the Trade Unions and the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill. The Labour Minister of Tamil Nadu was not present. The State Labour Ministers present unanimously opined against setting up of Industrial Relations Commission as a substitute for the existing provisions in the Industrial Disputes Acts for settlement of industrial disputes. The Labour Ministers expressed their views informally on various recommendations of the Committee which were placed before them by the Central Labour Minister. They held different views on almost all the issues. However, it was agreed that the Union Labour Ministry would be sending necessary papers to the respective State Governments in due time. Further discussions on the said issues and other related ones, if any, will be held in a meeting of the Labour ministers on 1st June, 1992.

The West Bengal Labour Minister, Shri Santi Ranjan Ghatak had separate discussions with Shri P. A. Sangma. He requested Shri Sangma to exercise his good offices so that the management of the National Jute Mills Corporation implement the recent tripartite industrywide wage settlement of jute workers in West Bengal without any further delay. He also requested Shri Sangma to intervene so that demands of the striking workers of the Engineering Projects India Ltd. are settled amicably at the earliest. He further drew his attention to the problems of the Units of the National Textile Corporation where production has come almost to a standstill due to shortage of supply of cotton and other inputs. He also drew attention of the Union Labour Minister to the problems that are being faced by the Sick Central Public Sector Undertakings for being referred to BIFR following amendment of the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985. He also stressed the need for adequate legislation so that the default in depositing the P.F./ESI dues deducted from the workers by the employers are effectively checked. He also referred to the issue of setting up of the Regional Occupational Diseases Centre in West Bengal. Shri Sangma gave a patient hearing and assured that he would look into all the above issues.

The Left Front chairman drew attention of the rally to how central planning in this economic framework and the central policies had only led to a growing pool of the unemployed—one of the outstanding characteristics of the past 40 year's path of development.

The rally ended with the enunciation of the new programmes for struggle and protest in the ensuing days.

Process of Dismantling of Public Sector in India

M. K. Pandhe

The Public Sector in India, built through resistance to the pressure of foreign monopoly capital for several decades is now facing a serious danger of liquidation as a result of the policies pursued by the Narasimha Rao Government. These policies have long term consequences since they change the main direction of the economic policies formulated during the early post-independence period.

The concept of public sector achieving commanding heights in the national economy was directed towards building a self-reliant economy in the country. Whatever limited planning introduced in India since fifties provided more and more Public Sector investments in the core sector of economy in order to accelerate the rate of economic growth.

The Public Sector in India owned by the Governments led by the big bourgeoisie, was essentially serving the requirements of the capitalist class. It was at the same time reducing country's dependence on foreign monopoly capital, it was entering into those economic activities which were earlier in the hands of multinational companies. Though the Government of India did not pay sufficient attention to reduce country's dependence on foreign technology and collaboration whatever steps taken were helpful in taking the country in the direction of building a self-reliant economy.

The Indian big business houses were not prepared to invest in sector where the gestation period was more and profitability less. If this process would have been allowed to continue the core sector industries would not have been developed in the country which would have only strengthened the stranglehold of foreign monopoly capital over our national economy. The public sector in India, despite its shortcomings, have played an important role in reducing India's dependence on foreign countries.

Government of India's overall policy was to build Indian economy in collaboration with foreign monopolies which prevented public sector from playing its full role, in the interest of self-reliant economy. Several public sector companies were having big import content and attempts towards import substitution were lacking. This was pushing up the cost of production of public sector units and bringing down the profit margin. The conditions became more critical when during eighties the Central Government adopted a policy of import liberalisation and easy foreign exchange was made available for the public sector undertakings.

The public sector would have performed much better if bureaucratic handling of public sector could have been avoided. Almost all the decisions relating to public sector have been taken in the employing

ministries who had no expertise of dealing with commercial undertakings. The public sector managements had very little role to play in taking decisions pertaining to the working of the undertakings, though complete autonomy was existing on paper. Even the meeting of the Board of Directors are only a formal affairs with the Ministry having a final say in all respects. The same bureaucracy is now crying hoarse about inefficient working of the public undertakings.

The Bureau of Public Undertaking or later known as Department of Public Undertakings has made a mess of working of all these undertakings. Instead of contributing in improving the performance of the public undertakings, this agency actually immensely damaged their working and made them more inefficient. Periodic guidelines issued by BPE has only proved to the hilt that it has no knowledge of running the economic and commercial undertakings and was only acquainted with bureaucratic procedures and red tapism.

The Government of India created top heavy administration to run the public sector undertakings. All the heads of the undertakings were political appointments and generally the appointments are finally cleared by Prime Minister's office. Several underhand deals are decided upon before the appointments of top posts are finalised. Huge funds have been funnelled to the ruling party by the public sector undertakings in a clandestine manner in the past. Persons who have been responsible for funelling out huge funds from public sector are those who talk so much about the inefficiency of the public sector and advocate privatisation.

The creation of hierarchy of CMD, Directors, General Managers etc. even for the undertakings where only 500 workers are working has caused heavy drain on resources of these undertakings. The number of executives in the sick units taken over by the Government were increased substantially despite reduction in manpower in them. While attempts to make them viable were lacking, the Govt. of India was merely meeting their cash losses adding to the interest burden of these undertakings. In this way the entire capital was eaten up and sickness of the units went on increasing. The urgent need of replacement of age old machines, modernising them wherever necessary, diversification of products, improving the managerial inefficiency was never given any priority by the Government which only aggravated their crisis. Over and above that corruption indulged in by some of the top officials became so rampant that the losses of these undertakings went on mounting year by year.

The trade unions and the workers working in these undertakings were never involved on revitalis-

ing them. Despite 3 schemes of workers participation in management prepared by the Govt. of India over a period of years, genuine participation was never introduced in any one of these undertakings. Since the workers' representative on the participative committees were not elected by the workers and were determined by the management or the Govt., they could not evoke any enthusiasm among the workers. The experiment of nominating one Director on the Board belonging to a pet union of the management had proved to be a sheer hoax. Moreover these committees were without any power of decision making which was the sole prerogative of the administrative ministries. When the master and servant relations were kept intact and trade union rights of the workers were trampled underfoot one cannot expect any involvement of workers in running these undertakings. The unanimous decisions of the seminar on workers participation in management held in January 1989 remained only on paper and no step was taken to implement them seriously. The promised bill on the subject could not see the light of the day. The assurance given by the trade unions to co-operate in mobilising resources for the public sector undertakings was not taken seriously by the Govt. of India. A national tripartite committee constituted for this purpose by the Central Government in mid-eighties was not allowed to continue due to refusal to make necessary data available to the committee by the employing ministries. The unanimous recommendations made by 10 Central Trade Unions on running of the public sector efficiently through co-operation of workers, though was accepted by the Government, was never implemented in practice. The joint proposal given by the Central trade union organisations to appoint a national level committee to monitor the working of the public sector undertakings with a commitment that trade unions would implement all the agreed decisions of these committees was not pursued by the Government. All these developments have only demoralising effect on the workers employed in these undertakings. Whatever positive suggestions were given by the trade unions to improve the working of the undertakings was not given due importance for implementation which has only added to the feeling of frustration among the workers.

The bureaucracy was always trying to put the blame squarely on the workers for low productivity and heavy losses of some of these units. They linked this with the job security of the workers and the welfare activities in the public sector units. Instead of highlighting the basic causes of mismanagement of these undertakings, the bourgeois press was always highlighting the absence of work culture in the public sector undertakings. They never underlined the proliferating growth of contract labour and swindling huge funds in the name of ancillary development in them. In some of the undertakings the number of contract workers is more than the regular employees. Most shocking conditions were prevailing for these workers and the management refused to implement the statutory obligations towards these workers.

There was an urgent need to take steps to improve the working of these undertakings in cooperation with the trade union movement. Instead of taking any step in that direction the Central Government took the decision of privatisation of these units.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund was keen to dismantle the public sector in order to crush the industrial base of the country so that market for the products of the multinational companies would be made available in the second largest populated country in the world. When the advanced capitalist countries are reeling under acute recession and these economies are facing cut in the volume of production, the opening of the Indian market was a great relief to them. The conditionalities imposed by the IMF while granting loans to India only reflected these requirements of the advanced capitalist countries during the period of crisis. The so called Suppliers Credit offered by the advanced capitalist countries was only to help their capitalist to find market in the third world countries.

The policy of disinvestment by the Government of India should be seen in this context. Last year's budget provided for disinvestment of 20% equity of profit making undertakings to mutual funds to raise resources of about Rs, 2000 crores ! This year again the Government announced measures to further disinvest equity of these undertakings while the commitment has been given to the International Development Bank to increase the total disinvestment upto 49 per cent of the equity in 3 years as a commitment prior to the obtaining of the structural adjustment loan by the Government of India. While the shares of the profit making undertakings were given at a cheaper price enabling the mutual funds to make speculative gains in the share market. The offer to sell these shares to multi-national companies has given them a golden opportunity to enjoy controlling interests in some of the public sector undertakings. Indian Commerce Minister, Chidambaram, took pride to note in the Press Conference after his recent US visit that some of the financial institutions in USA are prepared to sell the public sector shares to private individuals abroad. Though the disinvestment is stated to be partial it would lead to an increased grip of private sector over these undertakings. The IMF has every reason to be satisfied with these measures. Several representatives of the private sector have already been taken on the Board of Directors of the Public Sector undertakings and to that extent they have been converted into the joint sector already.

This is only a step towards complete privatisation of these units. Whatever limited social objectives were kept before the public sector units would be given up. The job reservation ensured in public sector would thus pose a serious threat ultimately and the welfare measures would be given a go-bye in the long run. Already privatisation of the welfare agencies is on cards in several undertakings.

The Govt of India is compelling many public

sector units to become subservient to multi-national companies. The BHEL was thus forced to sign agreements with a number of multi national companies to enabling it to bid in certain tenders in India. The machination of Siemens to take over BHEL are coming to light everyday. ABB deal regarding locomotives has only brought to the forefront how multi-national companies as resorting to corrupt practices to win some high cost contracts. The decontrol of Steel is only a measure in the direction of boosting private sector in Steel industry. The Govt. has offered power plant in the private sector while coal washeries are being offered to them on a platter.

The loss making units numbering about 58 are being referred to BIFR an agency of the Government which has statutory powers to deal with these undertakings. It has prepared a package which may involve retrenchment of large number of workers, increase in work-load and restrictions on wages and other benefits of the workers. It can also find another buyer to the public sector unit. It has also powers to order liquidation of the unit if no acceptable package materialises. When the unit is referred to BIFR no financial institution came forward to give immediate loan to such a unit which will make these units more sick. The Central Govt is further creating a ground to refer about 40 more public sector units to BIFR.

Thus the profit making units will be handed over to the vagaries of the share market mechanism and the loss making unit will be left at the mercy of the BIFR. Practically except the trunketed core sector as defined by the new economic policy every unit is facing the threat of dismantling.

The withdrawal of financial assistance to public sector through the budgetary support will only make some borderline undertakings sick and may be referred to BIFR. Some of the undertakings have no funds to purchase even raw material which will make their revival more difficult.

The creation of the National Renewal Fund is only a devise to dismantle the public sector. Though it is stated to be for refraining and redeployment, its real purpose is to retrench the workers. Despite opposition of the entire T.U. movement in the meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee held in January, the Government went ahead with constituting the NRF with Rs. 200 crores as a corpus. The current year's budget further provides Rs. 1000 crores through sale of asset of some of the public sector undertakings. The World Bank has already offered 500 million dollars (Rs. 1300 crores) as grant to this fund. Thus the Govt is determined to retrench lakhs of workers by giving them compensation which is given the name 'Social Security Net'. The official paper prepared by the Government already talks of retrenchment of 4.07 lakhs workers as a first step, while Dr. Sudipto Mandal, a noted economist, has estimated that about one crore of workers are likely to lose jobs in the next 2 years as a result of the new economic policy alone!

The recent proposal of the Govt of India to hand-over the sick public sector units to the Co-operatives of workers is also a step in the direction if dismant-

ling of the public sector and hence the CITU opposed it. The very fact that the profit making public sector undertakings are offered to the private sector and sick units to the workers Co-operatives exposes the real motive behind the Government's move. Sick units require replacement of old machines it needs huge investments to make them viable and it can be done by funds of the Governmental resources. The Govt wants to avoid this and is thinking of making a plea for their ultimate closure. For instance, now a sick fertilizer unit with more than Rs. 600 crore of investment can be seen as a co-operative when it requires a major capital investment? The Govt wants to abjure its responsibility and it is finding out ways and means of doing so. The gimmick of co-operatisation has become a handy proposal to the Govt of India. The CITU in the last meeting of the Special tripartite Committee meeting opposed the proposal though some trade units welcomed it without knowing its consequences.

The CITU unions have taken over some sick private sector units in consumer industry and is running them in the co-operative sector. However, this was the last resort when all other avenues of revitalising the unit resulted in the failure and it was necessary to protect the job of the workers. But it was a case of sick unit in the private sector. The Co-operatisation of the public sector is a retrograde step and involves denationalisation of the unit. The example of Kamani Tube is always put before the workers. Yet it was a case of private sector's unit and the unit is even now facing acute financial difficulties and workers can keep it going only at the cost of their standard of living.

The solution lies in Govt keeping the ownership of the public sector unit and handing over the management to the joint committee of the committed management and the elected representatives of the workers. The Govt should give necessary funds to revitalise these units so that they can be viable. All past loans given by the Govt to meet the cash losses on year to year basis should be written off which would enable the new management to run them efficiently. The Govt should sign a memorandum of understanding with joint management council and give it real autonomy. In such an eventuality the involvement of workers can be ensured and they would be able to contribute their best in making the unit viable. The Govt does not want to implement this proposal because it would be contrary to the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank. However, in this process the national economy suffers.

The process of dismantling of public sector in India will only cripple India's core sector and heavy industry and open the floodgates to multi-national companies. It will immensely harm the objective of building a self-reliant economy and adversely affect the growth of national economy itself. The sky rocketting unemployment and higher prices will only shrink the Indian market and further aggravate India's economic crisis. The trade union movement in India has therefore, to unitedly resist these draconian policies and get them reversed which alone will ensure further advance in the direction of a self-reliant economy.

CITU Condemns EPI Management for Apathy to end the 27 Days old Strike

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement :

The strike of Engineering Projects India (Ltd) sites employees has entered the 28th day today the 23rd April 1992, demanding immediate negotiation to evolve uniform service conditions, end of the "temporary" system of work even after fifteen or more years of service, introduction of pay scales and uniform benefits and also introduction of joint negotiating machinery with the participation of the majority union, namely, All India EPI Sites Employees Union.

The management, instead of attempting to solve the problems amicably and to make the company viable from the acute financial conditions has resorted to victimisation of workers. Scores of temporary workers have been terminated and regular employees transferred indiscriminately, thus obstructing the chances of peaceful settlement of the outstanding issues.

The CITU demands intervention of the Union Ministry of Industry to end the stalemate and force the management to negotiate with the workers representatives for an early settlement.

Yesterday a delegation of union representatives comprising Com. A. Dakshi, Vice President and Com. HK Saxena, General Secretary led by Com. Basudev Acharya, MP, met Shri P K Thungan, Industry Minister in the Parliament House. The Minister pleaded no knowledge about the strike. However he promised to look into the matter with a view to find an amicable solution. The Union promised to extend all co-operation for such a settlement.

The CITU congratulates the workers for their prolonged successful struggle and calls upon them to carry on the strike till an honourable settlement is achieved.

CITU Condemns Further Reduction in Custom Duty on Capital Goods Imports

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions condemns further reduction in customs duty on capital goods and components so as to bring it down only to 25 or 15 percent ad valorem.

The drastic reduction in this duty will put our machinery manufacturers in severe difficulties to face

the onslaught of the capital goods industries of other countries. Whatever capacity for manufacturing of machinery has been built up in the country during the last several years will have either to face closure or will have to drastically curtail their production. The unutilised capacity in this industry is already very high.

Even prior to the budgetary proposals, due to the liberalisation of imports our machinery manufacturing industry was in crisis which will be further aggravated due to this concession to foreign capital goods industries.

This is just another example of Government of India succumbing to IMF pressure to hit national industry and facilitate entry of multinational company in Indian economy.

The CITU demands that the notification should be withdrawn so that indigenous machinery manufacturing industry is given protection by the Government of India.

CITU Denounces Rajasthan Government for imposing ESMA against Electricity Engineers Strike

The Secretariat of the CITU has issued the following statement :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions denounces the Rajasthan State Government of BJP for imposing ESMA against the proposed strike by the Engineers of the Rajasthan State Electricity Board and making large scale arrests.

The Engineers of the RSEB have been demanding wage parity with their counter parts in other states. They had been urging upon the RSEB and the State Government since long to make negotiated settlement of their justified demands. Engineers from all other states supported their demands and extended full support to their struggle. But both the RSEB and the state Government adamantly refused for any peaceful statement, thus forcing the Engineers to give strike notice.

It is to be noted that when the Government of India recently took a move to reintroduce ESMA to ban all strikes by workers, all the trade unions unequivocally protested against the move. But the BJP Government of Rajasthan has gone a step forward to impose this draconian measure, thereby exposing its rabid anti-labour character.

The CITU demands immediate withdrawal of the ESMA and release of all arrested Engineers in Rajasthan. It extends full support to struggle of the Engineers and appeals to all trade unions to raise their voice of protest against the imposition of ESMA.

Japanese Working Class Are on the Offensive

Japanese workers under the leadership of their National Confederation of Trade Unions. ZENROREN, have been planning an offensive against the brutal and in-human working condition thrust upon them by the Japanese Monopolists in active collaboration with the Government in Power.

The capitalist dominated media all over the world so long glorified the model of Japanese management system & its development model as ideal stated to have ensured allround development of the industry and also the people. But the bitter experience of the Japanese working class as revealed in the Communique released by the ZENROREN and also in the deliberation of the international symposium of Trade Unions held in November, 1991 under the auspices of Japanese Trade Unions turned such glorification-campaign into mere myth.

In reality the working condition of the Japanese workers being utilised in the well founded industrial economy not only within the country but also all over the world in the Japanese multinational Corporation manifest the most intensive exploitation of the workforce accompanied by unmatchingly high level of productivity. Probably such a position explains the relatively higher degree of profit for the Japanese ventures to which the other part of the world is lagging behind. As rightly expressed by Mr Takeshe Oh'e, the President of the National Confederation of Trade Unions (ZENROREN) at Japan, "It is indisputable that the power of domination by Japanese Monopoly Capital and its high capital accumulation, resulted from its outstanding level of the rate of Surplus value by the international comparison, as shown by the extremely low level of wages and the unmatched level of high productivity. The reality of long working hours per year is also evidence that shows huge amount of surplus value generation". Such intensity of extraction of the profit by the Japanese Corporations through the much talked about "Japanese Style industrial relations management" is creating menace in the life and living of the Japanese workers.

Japanese Employers proved themselves also to be innovative enough in engineering such mechanism in the industrial management system to maximise the extraction from their workers while paying much less in comparison to their productivity. The wage productivity ratio in Japan by far still remains at a much lower level than its European & American counterparts. Added to this is the situation of much longer working hours, circumstantially forced upon the Japanese workers.

Compared to western counterpart Japanese workers had to work much longer hours in a year, with

less holidays since long. On the average, as different survey disclosed, the working hours of the Japanese workers are 200 to 500 hours more in a year than the workers in the developed countries in the west although the level of technology in Japan is much higher in many respects on international comparison.

Further the evaluation system of the performance of the Japanese workers are so designed so as to guarantee inhumanly intense work during the "Standard working hours" which are unilaterally set by the employer & do not take account of or exclude inevitably non-productive time required even to respond to Nature's call or repairing machines.

The Labour Standard Law in Japan has been revised in 1987 extending much wider to the employer to suck workers' blood. Flexibility has been introduced in all spheres of workers life from employment, service condition, transferability and working hours. Such flexibility empowers the employer to stretch working hours as long as they want and overtime work has been completely deregulated. As a result working hours with intensified workload is prolonged so that a normal cycle of every day living cannot be maintained in many places, making it almost impossible for many to continue their jobs thus leading to exclusion of more regular workers and their replacement by part time & contract workers with paltry wages.

Added to this is the grave deterioration in housing condition of the workers compelling them to live far away from work place to get cheaper & larger accommodation. The daily commuting ranges from 3 to 4 hours even, which alongwith longer working hours with almost compelling circumstances of overtime work has made the worker totally secluded from family life.

It is also interesting to note that the paid holidays and other leave facilities are quite less at Japan than that in other developed industrialised countries. Even then, the system is so developed and monitored with active support of the government, in the Japanese industry condition is created that hardly 50 percent of the paid holidays could be availed by most of the workers. Under the pressure of the intense working norms arbitrarily set by the employers Japanese workers are compelled to work long overtime hours including off days to augment their low wages. What is still worse that in many places, particularly in unorganised sector such overtime work are also mostly unpaid & thrust upon workers eventually by work-norms, productivity norms and service condition.

The Japanese big business, hand in hand with Government has been propagating that Japanese

wage level is highest in the world, which is to tally deceptive and product of statistical manipulation. While calculating Japanese wage level for international comparison many additional items such as cost of Social Security measures, special allowances for special assignment & many other extraneous items are taken into account which are never counted in respect of wage level of advance industrialised countries to which comparison is being made. If such manipulated discrepancies are corrected, Japanese wage level would rank lowest among the OECD countries.

Such system of intense & longer working hours accompanied with comparatively lower real wages level has been creating menace in the life of Japanese workers. The incidence of KAROSHI (death due to overwork) including suicide has been increasing day by day among Japanese workforce. A most conservative estimate shows that the KAROSHI deaths reached to the level of 10000 during a year, a high percentage of which have been young workers of the age of 20 years or around. Japanese monopoly capital having been empowered by the 1987 legislation has intensified their offensive on the working class. Alongwith intensifying the attack through flexible & intense working hours, shedding of regular workforce from the industry & the replacement of the same by part time contract workers with lower wages and no social security benefit is going on enabling the monopolists to further economise on labour cost. At NISSAN Murayama factory workforce was reduced by more than 50 percent during the last-decade although production got multiplied substantially. In Telecommunication sector workforce got reduced by 53000 during last six years and further reduction is on the anvil. And such is the trend in other industries also.

It is also note-worthy that the Japanese Government talking so loudly about democracy and human right has not ratified any ILO convention for working hours, weekly rest periods & paid leave. It has not ratified the first ILO convention, which 73 years ago called for 8 hour working day and ceiling on overtime work. The National Confederation of Japanese Trade Unions ZENROREN formed a struggle committee for the people's spring offensive for 1992 to carry on struggle under the slogan "FOR HUMAN RIGHT AND HUMAN WORK" against longer working hours and unpaid compulsory overtime work, and for increased wage, regulation of overtime work and increase in paid holidays and appealed to all the trade unions for solidarity.

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CITU Calls for Contribution to Cuba

The Secretariat of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions has issued the following statement :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions welcomes the formation of the National Campaign Committee for solidarity with Cuba in India. The Committee has been formed to help Cuba materially in the background of the continuing US sponsored embargo against the country and its brazen threat to subvert its socialism and blackmail all other countries in the world including India to stop all trades and help to Cuba. Following this embargo, Cuba is in acute distress and difficulties in getting even rice, medicines, etc.

While denouncing the USA for its brazen offensive against Cuba, the CITU condemns the Narasimha Rao Government for withholding its commitment to send ten thousand tonnes of rice to Cuba under pressure of USA.

Under such telling circumstances, the Committee has appealed to the Indian workers and people to generously contribute materials, particularly rice and medicines for Cuba.

The CITU extends full support to the Committee's appeal and calls upon all State Committees and unions to collect essential medicines and 1 K.G of rice from each family of the workers and other sections of the people.

Apart from rice and medicines financial contribution are also welcome with which rice and medicines could be purchased.

All the contributions should be sent to the State Committees, which will be duly informed as to the address to which it should be delivered.

(From Page 4)

Government employees for launching the strike.

On this May Day the CITU appeals to all Central Trade Unions and national federations irrespective of affiliations to demonstrate this massive unity in the All India Convention being held on 10th May to announce the strike date.

All CITU unions must launch independent actions throughout the country to mobilise all sections of workers and all trade unions for the strike at the earliest. Everyday's delay will only strengthen the position of the government and its mentor, the IMF. Let the May Day reverberate with the united call for the countrywide strike in each state, in each factory, in each gate and in each establishment.

Working Class in Building Socialism in China

(FIVE)

Chittabrata Majumdar

The trade union's two basic functions are (1) Social and (2) Concerning workers itself. Under the head "Social" matters related with (1) Safeguarding of the workers interests; (2) Ideological education; (3) Education to love the party and the enterprise; (4) To take part in decision making are covered. Under the head "Concerning workers itself" the matters related with (1) examining the schemes of production, operation and planning; (2) to examine and adopt some major regulations & rules of the factory concerning distributions; (3) concerning the welfare benefits of the workers; (4) information, assessment, right to penalise the workers/cadres; (5) nominate/elect director of the Plant.

The trade union committee uphold workers congress twice a year. The congress discusses and adopts the report placed before them which covers the issues like plant, production, suggestion for modification etc. Trade union committee organises the workers to evaluate the work of the cadres, promotion/demotion of cadres through secret ballots.

In all the state owned enterprises, instead of Board of Directors, there are Management Committees. The management committees are being constituted with not less than 30% from the elected representatives of the workers.

Similarly in Shanghai Ek-Chor Motor Cycle Company, a joint venture enterprise, the trade union committee plays role on the issues like production, technical renovation, decision making of the rules and regulations, wages, bonus & welfare benefits etc. The union committee signs collective agreement with the management on individual workers contract, rights, obligations, wages etc. They also educate the workers to produce more to improve their wages. In this company coordination meeting among the party, trade union, management and the youth league are regularly held. It has already been mentioned that like all other joint venture enterprises, the Chairman of the trade union committee attends the Board meeting regularly without vote.

Under this Company, there are two factories, kiz Motor Cycle making factory and Motor Engine making factory and one Head office. There are 3 trade union committees, one for each wing and also a trade union committee for the company. Vice-president of the trade union committee is the Chairman of 2 factory trade union committees. There are 230 trade union groups and 15 wholetime activists.

In solely foreign funded enterprises too, the formation of trade union is a must according to the

contract. In these enterprises also, the trade union committees intervene, if foreign investors move against the China's law. Beating of workers by the officers is illegal in China. In a Japanese enterprise, a Japanese officer beat one of the workers. Trade Union Committee then and there intervened and that particular officer was forced to leave China. Trade Union Committees also look after to protect the benefits of the investors. In a solely foreign funded enterprise, the workers raised unrealistic demands. Trade Union Committee intervened and pursued the workers not to demand so much wages.

ROLE OF WORKERS AS MASTERS

To strengthen the workers' right to participate in enterprise management, a new form of contract responsibility system, known as the assets contract system, is being introduced in certain industries in China on experimental basis. This system is becoming popular among the workers and the staff members and the performance of the enterprises are also improving.

According to the new system, the government departments responsible for the enterprise evaluates the assets of the enterprise and determines the contract targets. The workers' congress of the enterprise elects a working committee to sign contract with the government department on behalf of all the workers and staff members.

The working committee for the assets contract exercises the powers delegated by the congress. It is composed of representatives of the management, the trade union chairman, trade union cadres in charge of the matters concerning production, technical staff and workers' representatives. The staff and workers' representatives accounts for one third of the committee members.

The working committee evaluates the assets of the enterprise and proposes for offer to the state, organisation of election and appointment of the director or manager, supervision over the implementation of contracts by the manager and on important decisions concerning the enterprise.

Then the proposal along with the production targets prepared by the working committee after discussed by all the workers submitted to the workers' congress for approval. After all these, final decision is taken in consultation with the working committee and the relevant government departments and the contract is signed. This is the first stage of the new system.

In the second stage, the workers' congress would choose a director or manager through public bidding and sign a contract with him to run the enterprise. He enjoys full rights in the operation of the enterprise voluntarily accepting supervision by the workers.

According to the contract, the enterprise pays a fixed amount of their profits to the state each year and retains the rest for the enterprise. The enterprise assumes sole responsibility for any losses.

To ensure the implementation of the assets contract system, a risk fund is created involving all the workers and the staff members. In case the enterprise fails to meet the profit quota prescribed in the contract, the shortfall is being made up from this fund.

With the implementation of the assets contract system, the workers enjoy the right to examine, impeach and even dismiss the director or manager. The system has created enthusiasm among the workers and the staff members and has enhanced the sense of responsibility among them, which ultimately helps to move the broad masses to display their role as the main force in building socialist China.

In 1985, the ACFTU gave a call on the trade union organisations to take effective measures to combat poverty. In response to the call the trade unions in China at various levels and in various parts of the country have come forward to play their role in helping the people still under the poverty line through various means. Though the reforms have improved the income and the living standard of the workers, a section of them are still living below the poverty line. The trade unions at various levels, from local to ACFTU have conducted surveys on the workers living below poverty line. According to a survey conducted by the ACFTU, there are 8 million workers in China still living below the poverty line.

Their poverty is mainly due to low income and large family with few working members or low performance of the enterprise. Some of such families have idle hands but can not go into business because of shortage of funds. Some are suffering from lack of necessary skill. Most of such families live in economically underdeveloped areas.

For years, the Chinese trade unions have distributed relief to workers' families in need. They have set up relief funds for the purpose. This can meet an urgency but can not help them in overcoming poverty in the long run. So the trade unions have now come forward with a package of assistance to combat poverty.

To solve the problem of funds, the trade union committees are providing interest-free loans to those

families, who have idle hands but unable to go into business because of shortage of funds. Some trade unions have set up 'mutual-aid sid savings', which not only provide loans to workers according to their immediate needs but also guarantee their basic needs in case their enterprises lose money, slow down or even suspend production.

Some local trade union organisations provide hard-pressed families with vocational training and business information so as to sharpen their competitive edge on the market. A number of training centres have been set up by trade union committees at various levels for the purpose.

To find jobs for needy families and the unemployed trade unions are also assisting the management of the enterprises in diversifying operations and in going into the tertiary industries. They also are asking the management of the enterprises to transfer the low-income workers with adequate technical competence to better-paying jobs.

Over the past few years, the trade unions in various parts of the country have set up economic undertakings to help workers' families who are too poor to go in sideline production or to start their own business.

To develop clear understanding of the situation, trade unions also are trying to bring party and government officials into regular contact with poverty-stricken workers. At present, trade unions at all levels are assisting the government in formulating anti-poverty policies.

Through their efforts, the trade unions have been able to brought enormous benefit to poverty-stricken workers. Between 1995 and 1990, of the 2.5 million aid recipients, 1.4 million have already shaken off poverty and, if their family members were added to the list, the number totalled 6 million.

Thus the trade unions in China are developing the working class to play their role as master of the society.

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