



THE WORKING CLASS

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CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Comrades,

At the outset let me express our grief and agony about those who had suffered the worst natural calamity that has befallen our country after independence, which occurred in Maharashtra. Two villages, Latur and Khillari were wiped out and it is estimated that around 50,000 people lost their lives and several thousands were maimed, orphaned made destitutes overnight. We pay our homage to those who are dead and share the grief of those who lost their dear ones. The CITU organisations have taken steps to collect relief funds and send it to the Maharashtra Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Considering the magnitude of the tragedy, whatever is done is insignificant and all those who have not contributed in this gigantic task would do so without any delay.

During this period many of our leaders and cadres have lost their lives. I pay our homage in their cherished memory and send our heart felt condolences to the bereaved families.

CAPITALISM - CRISIS DEEPENS

Comrades, at Bhubaneswar I have dealt at length on the continuing recessionary trends in the developed capitalist societies of the world and their attempt to shift the burden of the crisis on to the working class. The trend is not only continuing but in many cases is on the increase.

In the EC countries unemployment rate has increased to 12% and it is expected to further increase in the next year. The total unemployed is 17 million today and is expected to cross 20 millions by the middle of next year. It is graphically put by economists that the number of unemployed in the EC is equal to the population of Belgium, Denmark and Ireland, The British "economist" on December 3 captioned Germany as a sinking ship and the recession which is haunting Germany can only be equated with the crisis of 1930s. The German trade unions were planning a nation wide strike against the job reduction. They have been forced for a

compromise with the employer and signed an agreement with the Volkswagen AG, the biggest auto-producer of Germany. As per the agreement the working hours is reduced to 28.8 hours instead of 36 hours ie 4 day week with a reduction of 10% wage in order to save 37,000 jobs out of a total workforce of 1 lakh. This agreement will come into force from the 1st of January 1994. But, however, the company has again threatened that they will reopen the issue of surplus labour in the next year.

In France, the rate of unemployment crossed 12% in September to reach a total of 3.28 millions. In Britain situation is further worsening. The attack against the workers welfare amenities in the name of de-regulation of social spending is on the increase. Another suggestion is made that Papa and Mama should take leave for 3 months per annum without pay alternatively. The 4 day week proposal is not acceptable to the British capitalist. Japan, the second mighty economic power in the world is also facing problems. The recent bank crash and the stock market crash with its continuing swoops and faintings spells disaster for Japanese economy. 60% of the Japanese corporations are planning severe job cuts and according to estimates 2.35 million workers are surplus in these corporations and their jobs are under threat. In the U S A too the official unemployment rate is continuing at 6-7% inspite of the economy showing some signs of improvement.

In Spain the unemployment rate is 23%. The Spanish workers are planning to have nation wide action against the plan of reduction of employment. In France the successful strike by Air France employees which has become a catalyst for trade unions across Europe. In Belgium the workers are on the move against Job cuts. On November 26 there was a successful strike and the country is facing strikes every Friday and it was planned to have December 10 a nation wide strike when Belgium hosts the European Communities summit meeting at Brussels. The high-tech areas of world capitalism.

TECHNOLOGY - FOR WHOM ?

American workers resistance against the gov't policies are on the increase. The gov't signed NAFTA agreement through which they can shift many industries of US to Mexico which was stoutly opposed by the American trade unions, though they could not stall the agreement from passing. This is the developing situation in the high-tech economies of the developed capitalist world. In order to cope with the developing crisis, further introduction of higher technology is sought to be the remedy. But the consequences is that the employment again will shrink. Here we are witnessing the contradiction between the ever increasing productive forces unleashed by the technological revolution and the obsolete production relations. Technology under capitalism is being used mainly for increasing profits and strengthening the capitalist monopoly power. The contradictions between the enormously strengthened productive forces on the one hand and the obsolete relations of production on the other have become even more visible from the impact of the on going crisis. Over production, stampede for markets, revival of protectionism, jobless growth and impoverishment on a global scale, increase in social tensions, criminal tendencies, terrorism and all round sense of gloom and pessimism are what capitalism offers even today instead of peace and new sense of optimism about man's own destiny, on the strength of the new technological possibilities that have opened up. Therefore, comrades, it is abundantly clear that under capitalist system the benefits of modern technological revolution cannot be utilized for the betterment of the lives of the majority of the population. The answer is only one, to fight against the capitalist system which hampers the development of productive forces which can be used for the better progress of humanity. It is evident that capitalism is not the answer for human progress.

NEW AWAKENING

I do not wish to cover the whole international developments today because of paucity of time. Only I wish to point out certain happenings which needs our attention. The Russian President Mr. Yeltsin who has been elected under the constitution used his military might against those who wanted to protect the very same constitution. The members of parliament who were trying to uphold the constitution and rule of law who were camping inside the parliament building were attacked brutally by the military forces and many of them were killed in the confrontation under the orders of Mr. Yeltsin and temporarily Yeltsin could defeat those who wanted to protect democracy in Russia. The awakening of the Russian people against Yeltsin's policies are on the increase and it is gathering strength among the

Russian people. The new election which is proposed to be held under the so called Yeltsin constitution this month will decide the fate of Yeltsin regime. However, the resistance against the economic and other policies of surrender before American imperialism. In the recent elections held in Canada and Greece the people have voted against ruling party since their policies which resulted in increased unemployment and impoverishment. Therefore, they have elected new governments which promised better lives for the people. In the recent elections in Poland, former communists were elected to power. The recent municipal elections in Italy shows the same trend. The people of the Western countries and the former USSR are slowly realizing that the bourgeoisie system is decadent and the fight against it is slowly gaining momentum in different ways.

Another important point to be noted is the adoption of the Cuban resolution by the United Nations General Assembly on 3rd of November 1993. This is the second time that the U.N. opposed the blockade against Cuba by the USA. Last year 59 nations supported the resolution while only 4 voted against it, including the U S A. This time 88 nations voted in favour of the resolution and again only 4 including the USA against the resolution. After the collapse of the Soviet Union due to the U S blockade Cuba had to suffer very much in the areas of food, medical imports and markets for Cuban exports. Cuba has lost 40 million dollars. Still Cuba is continuing the fight against the American imperialism and is earning international sympathy and support while USA is getting isolated. The courageous people of Cuba are not going to submit to US blackmail. They deserve all support in their heroic struggle.

American pressure to subjugate the Peoples Republic of Korea in the name of destroying their nuclear capabilities against which the DPRK is putting up a stiff resistance. Here again we see the US arrogance which needs to be condemned.

A mention may be made here in passing about the Chinese economy. The average growth achieved by them for the last several years is around 12%. They have opened up certain areas and specific industrial sectors for foreign investment and collaborations. This is helping them to have international market access and upgradation of technology according to them. With comparing diverse developments we have to remember that they have built a strong infrastructural and industrial base at least 3 times than that of India before this opening up process. They are almost keeping their socialist base intact with their special characteristics. Out of the 44 billion dollars foreign investment they had from 1979 to 1993, 80% has come from overseas Chinese.

However, while noting this advances, we have to study more about the Chinese experience.

Comrades, the outstanding event of the recent period which nobody can forget was the historic agreement arrived at on November 18 with Mr. D Clerk and Mr. Nelson Mandela agreeing for an interim constitution. It is envisaged that a democratically elected govt for South Africa will be established wherein the blacks and the whites will have equal voting rights and the apartheid system in Africa will come to an end. The transition executive taking over power ends the era of minority rule and the beginning of power sharing between black and whites as a prelude to a govt of national unity. The non-racial elections are scheduled to be held in April 1994. This is not only a victory for the ANC but a victory for the whole of humanity in so far as it dawns a new era of democracy in South Africa. We have to hail this victory and wish all glory to the people of South Africa. The lives of thousands who had to lay down their lives for democracy and for an end to apartheid system did not go in vain.

NATIONAL SITUATION

Comrades,

We have had our Working Committee at Bhubaneswar from 4-6 June 1993 where we finalized our organizational report. Also we decided to prepare extensively for the success of the Bundh and strike call issued by the platform of mass organisations. Intellectuals, students, youth and organisations of women agricultural workers and peasants besides the trade unions - all worked hard to make it a success. Participation of these mass organisations on common slogans has given new impetus for the struggle, not only against the economic policies followed by the government but also against the compromising attitude being shown by them towards communalism. The disruption caused to the democratic movement due to the growth of communalism and the threat posed by them to national unity also came to the focus in the campaign. The response for the Bundh and strike was tremendous. The Bundh was total in West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala and Tripura as per press reports while in Tamilnadu, AP, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Punjab, it was near total. In Assam, UP, M.P, Gujarat Delhi and Haryana, the Bundh created considerable impact. In other states too the impact was felt in varying degrees. Nearly 2 crores of workers took part in the strike which was unprecedented in the recent history of the Indian trade union movement. I congratulate all those who participated in this

massive action and the cadres and leaders who worked for the success of this movement. In spite of this massive show of opposition the govt is continuing with their liberalisation and restructuring plans without any restraint.

The prices of essential commodities according to official figures has gone up to 8.5%. In reality the life of the people are becoming miserable due to the rise in prices of essential items of daily use. The Govts claim of reduction of the fiscal deficit is not being materialized and it is on the increase. Our external debt is now stated to be over 85 billion dollars i.e. around 2,65,000 crores which when Dr Manmohan Singh took over was only Rs.90,000 crores. This puts the country virtually in a debt trap.

RUPTURES IN THE MONOPOLIST CAMP

A section of big industrialists of the country too have expressed concern about the capacity of the govt to service such a huge loan liability, and said that the country is going towards a debt trap.

Many of these big industrialists who were all along praising the new economic policies of the govt saying that it was the only way to progress have now started criticizing these policies.

Now the famous "Bombay Group" of industrialists - the big industrialists of India have expressed concern about the complete liberalisation of import of capital goods into the country. They have said that the concessions being given to the capital goods imports to the country will ruin the domestic capital goods industry. Also they have gone on record that they may not be able to compete with the big foreign multinationals like General Motors and IBM whose yearly turn over is more than the gross national product of India. Demanding "level playing ground", they have pointed out the difference in taxes between TNCs and Indian companies, the Govt's guarantee of 16% profit in dollar terms to the foreign multinationals in power and oil sectors etc. The standing conference of public sector enterprises have also demanded equal treatment for Indian and foreign companies. Thus a strange phenomenon is developing - that the govt of India should ensure "equal treatment for Indian firms like that of foreign companies".

TNCS ON A GRABBING SPREE

Since the FERA restrictions are removed and the TNCs are allowed to take more than 50% shares in the Indian companies they have started grabbing control over many of them with 10% to 15% shares participation. The following table will give us an idea as to where we are heading for.

MNCS WHICH ARE RAISING THEIR STATE IN INDIAN VENTURES

	From	To	Parent Co's Base
Kinetic Honda	28.56	51	Japan
Maruti Udyog	40	50.24	Japan
Ashok Leyland	39.5	51	UK
Digital Equipments	40.03	51	USA
Colour Chem	40	50.52	Germany
Corn Products	40	51	USA
Cadbury India	40	51	UK
ABB	36.8	51	Sweden
Alfa Lavel	39.92	51	Sweden
Indian Shaving Products	40	51	USA
P & G	40	65	USA
Indian Sweing Machine	40	51	USA
Bata India	40	51	Canada
AKG Acoustics	39	51	Austria
Schenick Avery	40	50	UK
Madura Coats	40	51	UK
Sesa Goa	40	51	Italy
Glaxo India	40	51	UK
Nestle	40	47	Switzerland
LML & Piaggio	25.5	51	Italy
Carrier Aircorn	40	51	USA
PSI-Bull	40	51	France
Philips	40	51	Holland
Brooke Bond	39.58	49.9	UK
Lipton	40	51	UK
Pepsi Foods	39.89	44.35	USA
Indian Oxygen	39.76	51	UK
SRF-Nippondenso	26	40	Japan

PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE SLAUGHTER HOUSE

Thus the foreign multinationals have brought these firms under their control. In the power sector as well as coal sector foreign multinationals are invited by giving big concessions. In the oil sector these multinational companies who were packed up and sent out when the nationalization took place are ceremoniously being brought into the country. The Caltex, Mable, Shell, Oman Oil and other oil gaints are again back in India. The biggest public sector pharmaceutical company in the country, The Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd (IDPL) is awaiting liquidation before the BIFR, which will give the most notorious multinationals a free run of the Indian health care system, taking it out of the reach of the majority of our people. The resultant effect of all these I need not explain here. If power and oil becomes costly and controlled by TNCs interests it will go against our national progress and sovereignty. It is a foregone

conclusion.

I do not wish to deal here with the frantic efforts which are being made by the Govt of India to implement the World Bank IMF directives to destabilise and privatise the public sector etc which are dealt with in detail by our general secretary. However I wish to invite your attention to the disastrous consequences of these policies - in the agricultural sector. In the name of curtailing the fiscal and budgetary deficits further drastic cuts are being imposed on fertilizer, water and electricity subsidies and the cost of all these are going to be jacked up. Directions are being issued to the state govts to raise electricity and water charges based on their actual cost. The fertilizer industry itself is sought to be destabilised and many are to be closed. This may bring in foreign companies in this sector which will virtually push up fertilizer cost to unbearable levels for large majority of our peasantry. This is not only going to ruin our peasantry at large, but also adversely affect our agricultural production - including food and slowly we are being pushed to become dependent on imports for our food needs too.

Therefore, comrades you have to redouble efforts to mobilize the whole of the trade union movement with the mass organisations of all sections of our people to intensify our struggle and launch for bigger and stronger actions for forcing the govt to change their ruinous course.

A FITTING REBUFF TO THE COMMUNALISTS

In the recently held elections to the State Assemblies of Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Mizoram, people in general have given their verdict against communal politics and the dangerous tactics of the BJP. They have faught the elections with the claim that they are going to capture power in all the states and this would be a prelude for them to capture political power at the centre. This dream has been shattered to pieces by the politically conscious voters in U.P where the elections were faught mainly on the temple issue. People have rejected their claim and voted them down. In Rajasthan too they have been made a minority, though they have come to power through horse trading. In the other 2 states, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh also they have been defeated. Only in Delhi, the newly formed state, they got majority due to the unpardonable sins committed by the Congress in the Delhi riots after Mrs. Gandhi's cruel murder. Thus the people of these states has given their verdict in favour of upholding the secular foundation of the country and its unity. Secondly the BJP is not to be underestimated. Thirdly the casteist elements came into the fore though using the social inequalities which is also

dividing the people on the basis of caste and community. The social problems are serious and needs to be addressed to by progressive political parties and organizations. The scheduled castes and backwards are drawn into the mainstream together with the other sections in the fight against the social evils. These should not be left to casteist parties alone. This can be effectively done only through the fight for economic mobilization of these sections which should include the fight for radical land reforms and better wages and amenities for the agricultural labour. The trade unions should take initiative for drawing these sections of the people in collective mass actions. However, the maturity exhibited by the people in the elections has to be appreciated.

GROWING JOINT ACTIONS

The ever widening joint movement of the working class against the govts offensive deserve our special attention. Besides all India general strikes in several industries and factories, workers are getting united to fight back the various offensives of the employers and the government. The unity shown in the September 7 all India steel strike by all the trade unions is a pointer. The strike by central govt employees for wage revision and other issues were also fought on the basis of building unity of different trade unions though the gain which they have attained not seizable. However, the policy of wage freeze propagated by the govt has been given a rebuff. The united strike of the Tamilnadu transport workers and the Kerala Road Transport Workers are other examples. The 5 lakh Kerala state govt employees also had a joint united fight and have got concessions from the Govt. Against closures and sickness. Unity is being exhibited in all sectors of industry. The latest is that the unions of the employees of HMT have formed a Save HMT Committee including officers. In the case of FACT and Cochin Ship Yard also the very same has happened. All the trade unions and the officers associations came together in order to protect their industry and employment. Besides in many public sector industries the workers, employees and officers though organized in different unions are coming together to fight back the offensive. In the NTC mills efforts are on to take a united stand for the revival of the sick units and to have a common approach. The govt had declared its intention to throw out 90,000 workers from the NTC mills out of a total of 1,35,000 workers. However, this sector also needs our attention. The latest is the united strike by the 6 lac postal employees. These developments are to be noted and needs our special attention.

When the crisis comes it is only natural that those who are affected are coming together to counter the offensive. But at the same time in the working class movement the new element of trade union unity is

coming to the fore together with the exposure of the class policies of the govt in power and many who were backing those policies are also coming in the open to oppose them. In many of these united movements, the CITU is playing a vital role in mobilizing the entire class for the workers' cause. The situation demands that the CITU should take appropriate steps for organisational cohesion. The organisational report adopted by the CITU correctly highlighted this point and decided to approach all the trade unions for the formation of a Federation of Trade Unions. This has special significance in the present circumstances. Therefore for widening and strengthening unity, factory level, industry level, state level and national level approaches has to be taken up seriously by the CITU. It is our task to build stronger trade union unity and cohesion to fight back the offensive of the govt and employers under World Bank dictates.

As we know the economic policies of the govt is surrendering our economic freedom by allowing the foreign multinationals to dominate our economy which brings in broader sections in conflict with the government and therefore the possibility of broadest unity is also developing. In these spheres the CITU should actively intervene and see that the unity of peoples is broded and strengthened.

Our organisational report stressed about the importance of taking up the cause of unorganized sector workers on which we have already taken some steps. However, since the new policies have allowed the big companies to enter the field, in the small scale sector many industries are finding it difficult to carry on their business and closures and lockouts are increasingly taking place against which we have to take suitable steps. The recent all India Beedi conference highlighted the plight of the beedi workers numbering over 60 lakhs throughout the country. Majority of them are women. They are not even given the minimum wages prescribed and in many states no proper minimum wages is not even declared. They constitute 11% of the total unorganized workers of India. Therefore, comrades, this section of the workers are to be brought into organization by taking suitable steps by the state committees of CITU. The new all India committee formed for the beedi workers have chalked out a plan of action which must be taken seriously by our comrades.

The decision to have an all India convention of sick industries to formulate an action plan to fight back the govt offensive was taken. This must also be taken up immediately.

Comrades, we are going to hold our Eighth Conference from 8-12 March, 1994 at Patna. We have to prepare for the success of the conference while taking all steps for stronger and mightier actions for defeating the attacks against the working class and our people.

CITU Working Committee Meeting Denounces Govt for Signing Dunkel Draft: Calls For Countrywide Agitation

□ P K Ganguly

The Working Committee of the CITU Held at Guwahati from 13 to 15 December denounced the Narasimha Rao Govt for deciding to sign the Dunkel Draft to conclude the GATT agreement. In a resolution on the economic policy of the govt and the immediate task of the trade union movement, the meeting expressed serious concern over the government's total insensitiveness towards the deteriorating situation in the country and the growing mass opposition against the IMF prescriptions ;and going ahead with implementation of the policies culminating into acceptance of the retrograde Dunkel proposals. Members after members condemned the supine attitude of the govt and called for countrywide agitational plans to mobilise all sections of people to intensify united actions to fight and defeat these policies. The meeting reiterated that the Dunkel proposals postulate the most dangerous provisions to undermine the economic and national sovereignty of the country. In short the draft calls for no restrictions on foreign equity participation, no restrictions on areas of investment, no licensing, no export obligations to fund imports; free import of components and intermediaries, no obligation to use locally available products and raw materials and above all to repeal all laws and policies that put restrictions on free entry and functioning of the multinationals giving equal treatment with the Indian sector. The meeting further pointed out that though the three strategies under the Dunkel Draft viz Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) are inter linked and orchestrated to enable the multinationals to have full control over the Indian economy and create a new imperialist regime, the TRIPS singularly constitutes one of the worst forms of neo-colonial exploitations. By this they want to amend the intellectual property rights of India including the Patent Act and take the country to the pre-independence days by forcing it to be a member of the Paris Convention on Patents of 1883. This will result in a process of complete de-indigenisation and de-industrialization of the country by handing over both agriculture and industries including the service sector and the financial sector to the multinationals.

The meeting appealed to all trade unions and mass organizations irrespective of affiliations to unitedly intensify action plans to safeguard the national sovereignty.

The meeting started after flag hoisting by the President, E Balanandan on the martyr's memorial. Com Sasha Kamal Handique, Chairman of the Reception Committee delivered his welcome address. A condolence resolution was moved from the chair on Com.Achinda Bhattacharya and other leaders who died during the period. Another condolence resolution was moved on martyrs and on the people who died due to the devastating earthquake in Maharashtra. Com.Balanandan then delivered his presidential address.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Com.M K Pandhe placed the report of the General Secretary. He set in motion the next phase of countrywide movement by assailing Narasimha Rao Govt's policy which with its implementation posed an ever growing threat to the nation's sovereignty. The report stated that one after another the govt of India had accepted all the conditionalities of the World Bank and IMF culminating in the signing of the Dunkel Draft which has caused real danger to the national sovereignty. He pointed out that during this period of the economic reform the manufacturing sector had showed a stagnant character of growth while in some sectors there has been actual decline in production. The per capita consumption of the industrial goods had declined indicating increase in the poverty level of mass of the people in India. Regarding exports, he said, they have actually declined in terms of dollars. They stood at 18.1 billion dollars in 90-91, but was reduced to 17.9 billion dollars in 1991-92. As a result of devaluation of Rupee, the loot by the advanced capitalist countries had increased phenomenally. India had to sell its products at low prices in order to boost exports and export more to earn less than the previous year in terms of dollars. Since the advanced capitalist countries are in dire need of markets, he pointed out, they were selling goods to India by resorting to dumping. The govt is unable to assert its right against it.

He further referred to the new trade block (NAFTA) which pointed to the growing trade wars amongst the advanced countries and their dictating terms to the third world countries. He pointed to the growing sickness in the private sector industries which recorded a figure of 4,70,000 but under pressure of IMF the Govt was creating an atmosphere that sickness has become a feature in the public sector only, as it has embarked on a path of privatisation. He said that the logic of market economy always strengthened the growth of monopoly houses at the cost of small scale and traditional industries. Closures and sickness had aggravated the unemployment situation in the country. The govt failed to protect even the existing jobs. Further under pressure of World Bank, the govt had taken a move to amend the labour laws to put a halt to the organised trade union movement which is opposing the economic policies. He dealt with the diabolical plan of privatisation and subversion of our self reliant economy by dismantling of the public sector, disinvestment and opening up the core sectors to foreign investment and called for further consolidation and development of united struggles. He referred to the privatisation issue of IISCO and hailed the united struggle of the trade unions which had included INTUC and BMS also in the common fight.

He severely assailed the role of BIFR. The public sector units referred to BIFR were actually meant for liquidation or privatisation. In the hearing of cases the BIFR was openly advocating the policy of the govt and advocating the case of closures of these sick units without considering the genuine revival plans given by the unions. All this was done as per the pressure of World Bank which called upon the Govt to give the power of liquidation to the BIFR, so as to expeditiously deal with the sick PSUs. The Goswami Committee report was in tune with this World Bank recommendation to hasten the process of winding up the sick PSUs. In this respect the report referred to the Exit Policy and the so called National Renewal Fund which was constituted by taking a contribution of 500 million dollars from the World Bank to implement the policy of closure and dole out the workers to increase the rank of the unemployed.

He made a review of the 9th September Bundh which demonstrated the massive unity of the working class, the peasantry, youth, students, women and other professional groups in the bundh. Preceding the Bundh, on 19th August the court arrest programme was the most massive witnessed in the country in the recent period.

Simultaneously he pointed to the unity of the mass organisations to resist the growth of the communal forces which were trying to disrupt the united movement against the economic policies. The report drew pointed attention of the delegates to the demolition of the Babri Masjid on 6th December by the BJP, RSS, VHP combine, which signified a qualitative change in the national situation showing the aggressive character of the Sangh Parivar to impose a fascistic Hindu Rashtra in the country, tearing apart its secular fabric and Constitution. The report called for intensified action against these twin dangers to safeguard the economic sovereignty of the country as well as its unity and integrity.

The report referred to the struggle of the unorganized workers and their first ever countrywide strike on 14th July last under the banner of CITU in pursuance of a 22 point charter of demands. It also referred to the mobilisation of the different sectors of the unorganised workers and pointed to the recent All India conference of the beedi workers under the banner of CITU at Canannore. He called for increased mobilisation of the workers in the different sectors of the unorganised industry who had participated in the Bharath Bundh in large numbers.

The report elaborated the experience of trade union unity during the recent struggles and called for further consolidation so as to achieve the objective of the CITU for the formation of a Confederation in the country to effectively and unitedly meet the new challenges. He referred to the activities among the working women and called for further improvement in this area including Anganwadi women. The report specifically drew attention of the comrades on the organisational report prepared by the CITU and called for implementation of the various aspects and tasks at all levels of the functioning of the CITU from the centre down to the union levels. He also briefed about the growing international relations of the CITU and the exchange of visits between CITU with various other international trade union organisations.

Concluding his report Com Pandhe called for further development of united movement of the working class and other mass organisations. In view of the deteriorating situation since the 9 September Bharath Bundh and the signing of the Dunkel Draft he called for further intensification of mass actions under the banner of the National Platform of Mass Organisations and invited suggestions from the delegates. He also briefed about the forthcoming 8th Conference of the CITU which was to be held at Patria from 3rd to 7th March and called for gearing up of organisational machinery to make the conference a grand success.

DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT

26 comrades took part in the discussion on the report. The delegates narrated their experience of the 9th September Bharath Bundh and the 19th August court arrest. They elaborated their experience of trade union unity and cooperation with other mass organisations.

They further narrated their growing experience with the implementation of the new economic and industrial policies, closures, joblessness, offensive of VRS and attack on the organised movement. While pointing to the progressive dismantling of the public sector units, they also pointed to the growing incidence of sickness in the private sector units as well. Several delegates pointed out that the CITU and the Sponsoring Committee must convene national convention to look into the problem of sickness in the private sector also. While fighting the economic policies, they said, equal emphasis has to be given to defending the public sector, its continuing contribution to the economic growth and other positive factors to counter the govts propaganda against it and also to the growing sickness in the private sector and its worthlessness to contribute to the growth of employment and national economy.

Since during the deliberations the Govt was signing the Dunkel draft, almost all the delegates pointed to this surrender of the Govt and called for mounting opposition to it. Many delegates suggested that the Dunkel Draft should be focused as the most retrograde part and summary of the entire imperialist sponsored economic policy which is being imposed on India and several other third world countries.

While fighting the economic policy, the delegates put equal emphasis to fight the communal forces as well, because according to them when the mass organisations required to consolidate their unity to safeguard the economic sovereignty of the country, these communal forces under the Sangh Parivar with their fascist slogan of Hindi Rashtra tried to disrupt the class unity of the workers and the unity and integrity and the secular character of the country.

COUNTRYWIDE JATHAS AND MARCH TO PARLIAMENT SUGGESTED

So while standing at such cross roads, the delegates suggested massive mobilisation of all sections of the people and the patriotic sections and the secular democratic forces to fight the economic policies and the communal forces in the next phase of movement to start within the earliest possible time. They suggested countrywide Jathas to mobilise the

peasantry, agricultural workers and point to the dangers posed to them from the Dunkel proposals particularly and to mobilise the workingclass, students, youth, women and the common people against the ill effects of the new economic policy. They pointed out that with growing closures and unemployment each family was getting affected. And the common people have to be mobilised against such anti-social and anti-national activities of the govt. According to their suggestions the Jathas should be organised jointly by the mass organisations under the banner of the National Platform of Mass Organisations from village to towns, from district to cities to culminate in the state capitals and from state capitals from various points of the country to Delhi to culminate with a massive rally at Delhi before the Parliament.

RESOLUTIONS

The meetings adopted several resolutions vis on struggle of Haryana State Employees, greetings to the postal employees strike, on maternity benefit to working women, on South Africa, on the victory of Left Front in Tripura, on the proposed New Industrial Relations Law, on the New Economic Policy and the immediate task of the trade union movement.

Comrade Pandhe replied to the debate, accepting the various proposals given by the delegates. He welcomed the proposals for countrywide jathas as the next phase of the movement and assured that it will be placed before the National Platform of Mass Organisations. He called for gearing up the organisational machineries as per the task laid down by the CITU so as to carry forward the movement successfully. The report was adopted unanimously.

Com. Balanandan summed up the deliberations with a stirring call to move forward for the next phase of countrywide action and further for the success of the 8th Conference of the CITU. He congratulated the Assam State Committee of CITU and the volunteers for organizing the meeting successfully.

PUBLIC MEETING

Later on a public meeting was held in the Judges Field. Workers converged at the ground from various parts in processions. About 10,000 workers attended the public meeting. The public meeting was presided over by Com Sasha Kamal Handique MLA, President of the State CITU and addressed by Com. E Balanandan, M K Pandhe, Vimal Ranadive, Amal Ghosh Dastidar, Subhas Chakraborty, Udhav Barman MP and Nandeshwar Talukdar.

Resolution Against The Economic Policies and on The Next Phase of Movement.

This Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Guwahati from December 13-15 denounces the Narasimha Rao Govt for deciding to sign the Dunkel Draft without any amendment. It is reprehensible that the Govt of India signed the draft despite massive opposition by the trade unions and all the mass organizations and other patriotic and democratic sections of the people and despite the note of caution given by the Standing Parliamentary Committee in the Ministry of Commerce.

Signing of the Dunkel Draft was the culmination, leading to virtual surrender of the country's economic sovereignty to the imperialist agencies, the process of which started with the formulation of the new economic policy dictated by the IMF.

The statement made by the govt that the free trade system as formulated in the Dunkel Draft to conclude the Uruguay Round of GATT talks will benefit India, is a hoax and totally unfounded. Access to the markets of the industrially advanced countries is the principal carrot which is being used by the advanced capitalist countries in the GATT. This is to blackmail the third world countries and trap them into the neo-colonial net of exploitation by an imperialist regime through a growingly unequal trade, where the intellectual property laws must conform to those of the imperialist countries and to achieve this objective the third world countries must remove all constraints on foreign investment and services including amending and repealing the domestic laws to facilitate the surrender of their sovereignty to the multinational corporations.

It is the world wide experience, particularly in the third world countries that with the increase in so called free trade, poverty has certainly not been eliminated, on the contrary it has been increased. The actual sufferers are the common people, the workers and the peasantry. It is therefore, that the workers and the farmers in the European and other countries went on massive demonstrations against the Dunkel Draft. The workers in America, Canada and Mexico also resorted to direct agitational actions against NAFTA, another free trade agreement where Mexico particularly was at the receiving end.

So far as the Dunkel Draft is concerned, the three strategies viz Trade Related Investment Measures

(TRIMS), Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) are inter-linked and orchestrated to enable the multinationals to have full control over the Indian economy including the agriculture, financial and services sector. The TRIPS singularly constitutes one of the worst forms of neo-colonial exploitation. They want to take the country back to the pre-independence stage by overall amendment of the Indian Intellectual Property Rights including the Indian Patent Acts and make India a party to the Paris Convention on Patents of 1883. This will result in a process of complete deindigenisation and de-industrialization of the country. It will increase the prices of drugs by even 200 to 300 times. Since multinationals will have control over our agricultural produce, this will adversely affect the public distribution system also and cause further spiralling in the prices of all essential commodities.

During the period of nearly 3 years of the economic reforms, prices of all commodities have been rising unabated creating insurmountable miseries to all sections of the people, particularly the rural poor. Closures and sickens have increased from nearly 3 lakh to 4.7 lakhs units particularly in the private sector during this period. This has affected tens of thousands of workers. Dismantling of the public sector and privatisation have been going on at a faster pace while the shares of profit making public sector units are being sold out at extremely low prices, 98 sick PSUs are awaiting for liquidation at the BIFR. Under pressure from World Bank, the BIFR has been given liquidatory powers to wind up the sick PSUs, the implementation of which has also started, which will affect about 10 lakh workers. The SICA is being further amended to make BIFR a fast track machinery for liquidation in line with the Gowsami Committee's recommendations. Similarly the banking and financial sector and the insurance sector are also being pruned to facilitate entry of the multinationals and give them dominance over this vital sector of national economy.

The recent clearance issued by the Govt of India to five private power projects raises important issues of public interest, as these are the first private power projects being cleared under the new policy

framework. With 16 per cent guaranteed return on equity and covering all exchange variation risks. The crucial issues in the above clearances is the cost per unit that the State Electricity Boards will have to pay the power companies and the resultant price of electricity to the different categories of consumers, the economic costs to the various sectors of the economy as a result of massive price escalation of electricity prices or alternatively the consequences of uncovered deficits on the finances of the State and Central Governments. The guarantees and terms being offered to private investors, both domestic and foreign are not being extended to public owned utilities like the NTPC and State Electricity Boards. Besides, the foreign power companies are asking for sovereign guarantees which the Central Government has given. This implies that if the State Electricity Boards are not able to pay the private power companies, the Central Government will have to make the payments from the Consolidated fund, or - as is more likely - deduct these payments from the plan assistance provided by the Centre to the States. The result would be a drastic cut in the total resources available to the States for social and economic expenditure. Once this type of an agreement is approved for the power sector, pressures for similar guaranteed returns in other areas of infrastructure investment are certain to arise.

The condition of the small scale sector, the traditional industries and organised sector also deteriorated steeply during the period because of the infiltration of the monopolists into these sectors. The meeting congratulates the workers of the unorganised sector of industries for their first ever countrywide strike on 14th July and their participation in the Bharath Bandh against the economic policies.

While the country under the new economic reforms is already burdened by a negative trade balance, the GATT agreement will further widen the trade imbalance. The foreign debt during this period despite tall claims by the govt have increased from Rs.90,000 crores to a staggering Rs 2,65,000 crores. Thus India is virtually in a debt trap. According to the economic review 1992-93 itself the per capita external debt amounts to 82 dollars (about Rs.2,624/-). Unemployment has grown from 34 million to about 38 million during this period.

Despite the above progressively deteriorating situation in the country in all aspects, the govt is showing complete insensitivity to the realities. It has further remained totally inconsiderate to the growing mass opposition to these policies which was

reflected by the two countrywide strikes, the massive rally at Boat Club and the 9th September Bharat Bundh. On the contrary it has been adamantly implementing these policies under direct supervision of the IMF.

The meeting warmly congratulated the workers and the trade unions and the organisations of the peasantry, agricultural workers, women, students, youth and other professional workers for their growing resistance to the call of the Platform of Mass Organisations to oppose these policies. The meeting congratulates them for their protest action from December 3 to 9 against the Dunkel Proposals. The meeting also congratulated the workers and trade unions in the steel industry including the INTUC and BMS for coming together in the massive united strike against privatisation of IISCO. The meeting congratulated the trade unions and workers for their efforts to wage united struggles against these policies in other industries like fertilizer, coal, textiles, road transport, oil, financial sector, etc. It called upon them to further consolidate the unity achieved through these struggles and intensify the agitations through concrete action plans so as to further mobilise into these action plans the common people from the rural areas to the urban sectors.

The meeting calls for organising jathas by all organisations independently as well as jointly starting from the rural areas to the state capitals and countrywide jathas from the state capitals to culminate in a massive rally before the Parliament at Delhi as early as possible. The meeting appeals to the National Platform of Mass Organisations to take action plans accordingly as the next phase of movement.

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Massive Rally In Capital Denounce Dunkel Draft Thousands Court Arrest In Protest

The National Capital witnessed a massive rally of several thousand protesters from the trade unions, peasantry, students, youths and intellectuals from Delhi and adjoining areas denouncing Govt of India's abject surrender to pressure of World Bank and IMF to accept Dunkel draft proposals and thereby surrender the interest of the country as a whole to imperialist design.

The rally was called by National Platform of Mass Organisations consisting of trade unions, and organisations of peasants, students, youths, women and intellectuals of various political affiliations to voice protest and cry halt to government of India's move to formally accept Dunkel proposals. Which is designed to destroy the indigenous industrial sector and also the agriculture and thereby the economic sovereignty.

The demonstrators assembled at Jantar Mantar ground and after a brief meeting proceeded towards Patel Chowk. Both at Jantar Mantar ground and Patel Chowk, leaders of different mass organisations and several members of Parliaments addressed the rally and called upon the people to build up massive struggle to stall and called upon the

people to build up massive struggle to stall the nefarious game of the Govt of India in collusion with Bank/Fund combine to make the country subservient to imperialist interest. Among the speakers notable were M K Pandhe(CITU); B D Joshi(AITUC), V K Patol(IFTU), Swapan Mukherjee(AICCTU), Thampan Thomas(HMS) Md Salim MP(DYFI), Sujan Chakrabarty(SFI), Hari Prakash(UTUC-LS), Chitta Basu(TUCC).

N K Sukla(AIKS), Suneet Chopra(Agricultural Workers Federation), Joginder Dayal(AIKS), Asit Ganguly(RYF), Sony Thengamam(AISF) Sarala Sharma(National Federation of Wome, G D Saini(Haryana Janata Dal) etc. Among the Members of Parliaments, who spoke in the meeting were Md Salim, Malini Bhattacharya, Susheela Gopalan, Sanat Mandal, Brahmananda Mandal.

After the meeting the rallyist led by leaders of all central trade unions and student youth, women and peasant organisations courted arrest by breaking the barricade. Total 5174 courted arrest out of which 293 were women and 32 were members of Parliament.

Workers Dharna Protests Proposed IR Bill

As a part of the all India programme adopted by Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions to observe National Protest Day against the move of Govt of India to enact the New Industrial Relations Law in favour of the employers, curtailing drastically the rights of the trade unions and the workers, the trade unions of Delhi have staged a massive dharna in the Patel Chowk, New Delhi on 7th Dec 1993.

The New Industrial Relations Bill aimed at replacing the existing enactments and designed for virtually illegalising right to strike and legalising all retrenchment and closure is slated to be brought in the current session of Parliament, against which the dharna was organised. The dharna started since morning 11 a.m where besides the leaders of the National Trade Unions viz., CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, UTUC(LS), TUCC, AICCTU and IFTU many Industrial Federations from Insurance Railway, Bank, Pharmaceuticals and Engineering sectors participated. Among the speakers in the dharna were M K Pandhe General Secretary, CITU, M S Krishnan,

President, AITUC, Sri Nagpal, HMS, Asit Ganguly, UTUC, K K Neogi, AICCTU, Dr V K Patole, IFTU, R K Sharma(UTUC- LS), D D Shastri(TUCC). Besides Jibon Roy MP, Secretary CITU, Sri P S Gill of FMRAI, S R Saini of All India Insurance Employees Association, Sri Nirode Prity of All India News Paper Employees Federation, Sri Mishra of All India Railway Employees Confederation also addressed the gathering. Com.M K Pandhe announced in the meeting that the Labour Minister P A Sangma communicated him over telephone that no Bill on Industrial Relations will be brought to Parliament without consulting the trade unions.

The Dharna declared its support to the continuous strike action being organised by Postal Employees all over the country. Dharna has also called upon all the trade unions and mass organisation to make the Parliament march and Jail Bharo programme of 9th December against Govt of India's surrender to Dunkel proposals a total success by rallying in thousands.

CITU DEMANDS REVERSAL OF ECONOMIC AND FISCAL POLICIES

In a pre-budget discussions with Central Trade Unions convened by the Minister of Finance on 4th December 1993 the CITU strongly criticised the Govt of India's economic policies and demands its reversal. M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary and Jibon Roy, MP, Secretary represented the CITU during the discussions. Criticising the pre-budget discussions as a merely ritual M K Pandhe pointed out that whatever suggestions trade unions have given during the past three budget discussions, have not been accepted by the Govt of India.

The CITU representatives demanded a Conference of all the economic interests to discuss the working of the two and half years of economic policies. Dr. Manmohan Singh intervening immediately accepted the proposal to hold such a Conference to discuss in details the outcome of the new economic policies.

M K Pandhe pointed out that whatever concessions the Govt of India gave to big business during the last 3 budgets have not been used for growth of the economy. He demanded enquiry into this aspect so that suitable measures are taken to use the resources for advance of the national economy.

The CITU criticised the concessions given to multi-national companies to flood their goods in the Indian market. These companies are displacing Indian products and causing additional sickness in Indian industries.

The CITU demanded increase in the exemption limit of income tax to Rs. 50,000 so that working class is given proper relief. The demand for removal of ceilings in the Bonus Act was also emphasised by the CITU representatives.

Pandhe observed that the Government of India failed to take action against economic offenders with the result that big business houses are violating all the laws to make illegal money. He demanded probe into foreign exchange swindling by the Indian and

foreign industrialists by indulging in under-invoicing and over-invoicing techniques in export-import trade.

The CITU criticised the failure of the Government in introducing land reforms, which would have generated several lakhs of jobs. The CITU demanded introduction of tax on agricultural incomes to mop up resources for creation of more jobs in the rural sector.

Pandhe drew the attention to the assurance given by the Finance Minister that public sector units showing profits in current operations but are having losses due to past liabilities would be given the benefit of writing off the past liabilities and pointed out that the same has not been implemented. The Finance Minister reiterated his commitment to the assurance.

The CITU representatives criticised the Govt's policy of not giving sufficient orders to public sector units and passing them gradually to multinational companies and the Indian private sector units.

The CITU expressed concern at the growing sickness and unemployment in the country and observed that if the Govt went ahead with the Exit Policy it would lead to confrontation with trade unions in the country.

Pandhe drew the attention of the Finance Minister that despite his categorical assurance, working capital for the old fertilizer units has been denied resulting stoppage of operation by many units. He urged upon the Minister to release fund for revival of the sick units, restore full subsidy for all the fertilizers and restrict imports.

The CITU opposed the privatisation of IISCO and demanded that it should be modernised as part of SAIL. The CITU warned the Government of physical resistance if it proceeds with its plan of privatisation.

Noting that all central trade unions are opposed to the economic policies of the Govt of India, the Government under these circumstances, should not ignore the views of the trade unions and must make changes in the policies to suit the needs of the country.

Beedi Worker's Conference Decides for Countrywide Movement

□ P K Ganguly

The All India Coordination Committee of Beedi Workers (CITU) held its first conference at Canannore from December 3 to 5, 1993. The Conference was attended by 496 delegates from AP, Karnataka, Bihar, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Tripura, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Kerala.

The conference started after flag hoisting by Com C Kannan. A Presidium consisting of Com. C Kannan (Kerala), Abul Hasnat Khan (West Bengal), V J K Nair (Karnataka), K Vaithinathan (Tamilnadu) and K Hemlata of A.P conducted the the proceedings of the conference. The conference was inaugurated by Com.Vimal Ranadive, Secretary, CITU. In her inaugural address she pointed to the deplorable conditions of the beedi workers and the unorganised sector workers in the country and urged for countrywide united movement for amelioration of their conditions.

P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU and Convenor of the Co-ordination Committee placed the report. The report paid homage to Com B T Ranadive, Founder President of CITU who took keen interest in organising the beedi workers and the workers of the unorganised sector of industries in the country. The report also paid homage to Com.P Ramamurty, Founder General Secretary of CITU, Com Nrisingha Chakraborty, Com.Md.Ismail and other leaders who made special efforts to organise the beedi workers in CITU.

The report pointed to the condition of the Beedi industry which employed about 50 lakh workers, 70 per cent of whom were women workers, and was under the control of monopoly capitalists. The production is done through intermediaries, by the monopolists without direct appointment of labourers. Instead of establishing factories and engaging workers they converted the dwelling houses of the labourers as the centres of producing beedi. This is being done to exploit the workers to the maximum and deprive them of minimum wages, labour laws, social security measures and equal wages and maternity benefit to women workers. Although the Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act is applicable to them the beedi workers do not get benefits under the Act. The contractors and principal employers take advantage of a number of loop holes in the Act. Because of this loop holes the govt itself is loosing huge amounts by way of excise duty which are being appropriated by the owners. The Welfare Funds Scheme for workers is also not being implemented. One of the major problems of beedi workers is that they do not get even identity cards. According to the Govt data itself, out of about

50 lakh beedi workers in 14 states, identity cards have been issued to only about 24 lakh workers. Apart from this, they face accute problems in regarding house building schemes, hospital facilities,etc. The report also discussed the problem of welfare cess and demanded imposition of welfare cess on tobacco released from excise godown to the manufacturers with the objective of supplementing the welfare measures of beedi workers. The report further focussed on the problem of tendu leaves, the most important raw material required for beedi making. Madhya Pradesh being the producer of 70 per cent of the tendu leaves was the deciding factor in this business. The other beedi producing states like Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, U P, A P, Gujarat, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Bengal,etc depended on M P for supply of tendu leaves. They faced accute problems because of lot of unfair manoeuvres being played by the private capitalists despite nationalisation of the tendu leaves trade by the M P government. The high prices of tendu leaves and its export created further problems for the beedi workers. The homestead production of beedi constituted the most major part of beedi production in India as this was greatly handicapped with growing unemployment among the beedi workers. Besides, the monopoly tendu leave merchants who had licence for purchase and sale of tendu leaves, do not manufacture beedi themselves. The report further demanded issue of licence for purchase and sale of tendu leaves only to the manufacturers to stop racketeering in tendu leaves and exploitation of the small and medium beedi manufacturers. It also demanded supply of tendu leaves to meet domestic demands instead of exporting them outside.

The report dealt with the organisational position of the beedi workers and their staewise and countrywide struggles in pursuance of the charter of demands formulated by the Co-ordination Committee. It also pointed to the directives given by the Supreme Court to the States and Union govt for amelioration of the conditions of beedi workers. The report congratulated the beedi workers for their participation in the strike struggles and Bharat Bundh against the IMF dictated economic and industrial policies of the Govt and in the 14th July countrywide strike of unorganised workers conducted by the CITU. It called for further mobilisation of the beedi workers and struggle unitedly with other trade unions and gave the call for formation of all India Confederation in near future. The report particularly emphasised on looking into the problems of the women workers and mobilise them in the union's struggles.

The report was discussed by 22 comrades from all the representing states. The main thrust of their discussion was on the question of minimum wage, abolition of contract system, on welfare fund, on non-receipt of identity cards, the directives of the Supreme Court and the discrimination against the women workers. On the question of minimum wage, most of the delegates spoke demanding need based minimum wage as per the 15 Indian Labour Conference. According to their experience, the contract system in beedi had further aggravated their condition. When workers approached the contractors for their demands, they said that they are working on commission and therefore not responsible for the worker's minimum wages, while the principal employers refuse to recognise the workers as their own employees. This had resulted in a total chaotic situation on the question of minimum wage. Further, minimum wages varied throughout the country from state to state, region to region and in the same state between urban workers and rural workers. Even the minimum wages fixed by the state govts were not being paid. The women workers have been the worst victims of discrimination.

The comrades from Kerala and some comrades from Karnataka and Tamilnadu pointed to the necessity of formation of worker's cooperatives in the beedi industry which would go a long way in improving the conditions of Beedi workers and removing the discrimination against women workers. The example of Dinesh Beedi Workers Cooperative Society of Kerala was stated in this respect. The delegates also pointed to the necessity of amendments of the Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Service) Act and wage struggles in pursuance of the amendments sought by the co-ordination committee. They also pointed to the necessity of proper amendment and implementation of the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Scheme.

Another issue which was raised by the delegates was regarding the implementation of the Supreme Court directives. The directives were given by the Supreme Court on a case filed by Tirunelveli District Beedi Workers Union (CITU) through Com Rajangam, General Secretary of the union. The representation gave details of the plight of several lakh beedi workers at the hands of the trade mark beedi manufacturers and non-implementation of the provisions of various Acts, non-payment of minimum wages, etc. The Supreme Court in its judgment dtd 19.11.91 issued directives to the Union and State Govts to implement several measures as per the Beedi & Cigar Act, the Welfare Fund Scheme, labour laws, social security measures like PF, maintenance of pass books, issuing of identity cards, etc. Almost all the delegates spoke in favour of formation of an All India Federation of beedi workers and carrying forward a countrywide agitation in

pursuance of the demands. The delegates also spoke about their participation and experience in the 14th July countrywide strike of unorganised workers and in the 9th September Bharat Bandh.

The report was adapted unanimously after the reply given by P K Ganguly.

The conference was addressed by Com E Balanandan, President of CITU and E K Nayanar, former Chief Minister of the LDF led govt of Kerala. They lambasted the economic policies of the Govt which further aggravated conditions of the unorganised sector workers and those in the small scale and traditional industries like beedi industry. They also pointed to the danger of communalism and urged upon the beedi workers to fight it unitedly. They pointed to the recent election results in the 4 formerly BJP ruled states and said that the secular minded people of those states had given a fitting rebuff to the forces of communalism and the preachers of Hindu Rashtra led by the RSS and BJP.

The conference also organised one industrial seminar which was addressed by G K Panikar, Chairman, Kerala Dinesh Beedi Workers Cooperative Society, K N Ravindranath, General Secretary of the Kerala State CITU and Dr Thomas Isac, the eminent economist. They spoke on the prospects and problems of the beedi industry, industrial policy of the govt and how it would affect unorganised sector of industries in the country.

The conference adopted a number of resolutions on national need based minimum wages for beedi workers as per 15th Indian Labour Conference, on abolition of contract system in beedi industry, on implementation of the Supreme Court directives, on inclusion of minimum wages in schedule 9 of the Constitution, and against the new economic and industrial policy of the govt.

COUNTRYWIDE ACTION PLAN

The main resolution of the conference took into account all the problems of the beedi workers vis a vis the new economic policy and called for countrywide direct agitational actions by the beedi workers in pursuance of a 18 point charter of demands. The resolution called for organising district and state level conventions of beedi workers to be completed by the end of March 1994 and an All India Demands Day on 31st January, 1994 by organising joint rallies all over the country and submitting the charter of demands to the State Labour Ministers and to the Union Labour Minister at Delhi. The resolution further emphasised for development of joint movement with other trade unions and developing united struggle in the industry.

PUBLIC MEETING

Earlier on 3rd December the conference was

preceded by a public meeting and a huge procession which was participated by over 20,000 beedi and other workers from the Cannanore district. The workers came in 2 jathas from the North and South points of the district and converged at Cannore on 3rd December. The public meeting on the Collectorate ground was presided over by S Chandrasekharan and addressed by C Kannan, V J K Nair and P K Ganguly.

The conference formed a 41 member All India Committee of Beedi Workers instead of the earlier coordination committee. Also, instead of a convenor it elected a set of office bearers with C Kannan as President, Vimal Ranadive as Vice President, P K Ganguly as Secretary and Md. Nizamuddin, S Chandrasekharan and V J K Nair as joint secretaries. It also constituted a sub-committee to function in a regular manner. Apart from the office bearers K Hemalata with one comrade from Bihar and one comrade from Rajasthan were included in the sub-committee. The conference also decided to engage one whole timer to function from the CITU Centre to assist the sub-committee. It also gave a call for a fund of Rs. 1.5 lakhs to be raised immediately for the functioning of the committee.

The conference ended with a vote of thanks by Com T K Balan, Chariman of the Reception Committee.

Demands of Beedi Workers

1. National Minimum Wage: A National Minimum Wage of Rs 50/- per 1000 Beedies linked to All India Consumer Price Index of 1300 points (1960 = 100) for all Beedi workers in the country.

2. Dearness Allowance at the rate of 5 paise per point over and above 1300 points (1960 = 100) per 1000 Beedis. In a certain areas where DA is paid on per day system of work load basis, the rate of DA of 5 paise per day shall be applicable and not per 1000 beedis rolled.

3. Bonus: 20 percent of wages as Bonus.

4. Guaranteed work for six days in a week. 50 percent wages should be given if there is no work any day.

5. Contract and subcontract system should be abolished and the contract subcontract workers should be brought directly under the principal employers.

6. Amendment to Central Excise Rules 1944 under section 174 & 178 in such a way to incorporate certain conditions before issuing L4 Licenses to beedi manufacturers to abide by the beedi and cigar workers (conditions of employment) Act 1966 and minimum wages Act and other labour laws etc after consulting state labour department. This amendment is necessary as the trademark employer is evading sections 3 and 4 license provision under beedi and cigar workers (conditions of employment) Act 1966. L4 licenses should be granted only in the name of all principal beedi employers.

7. All Beedies branded or non-branded should be

subject to Excise Duty without any exemption.

8. All Beedi workers whether industrial or homestead workers, should be granted one day weekly off with wages, and the beedi and Cigar Act and the Minimum Wages Act should be suitably amended and brought under the purview of the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

9. The system of Leaf Cutting Average should be abolished and there should be no deduction of wages on this basis. The workers must get full wages earned by them. Sufficient quantity of leaves and raw materials ensuring good quality must be supplied to ensure rolling of the required number of Beedies according to their sizes.

10. Provident Fund Account Codes should be given in the name of the principal employers and the Account Numbers should be in the name of the actual workers, whether men or women. The facility should be extended to all workers connected with the Beedi manufacturing process. All Code Numbers so far given in the name of Contractors should be brought back in the name of the principal employers.

11. All PF arrears from 1977 to 1985 due from the employers should be recovered and credited to the workers.

12. All workers should be given Identity Cards and Log Books. The Identity Cards should be signed by the Trade Mark and other employers to enable the workers to get benefits of the Welfare Fund Scheme. Log Books should contain all the relevant entries.

13. The Welfare Fund Scheme should be reviewed by the Government so as to remove the bottlenecks that prevent the workers from enjoying the benefits of the Scheme. The rules should be amended and liberalised so that all workers get benefit of the Scheme.

14. There should be provision for Pension Scheme and a monthly Pension of Rs 300/- should be provided to workers attaining the age of 58 years. Other workers attending the age of 50 years should be given a monthly subsidy of Rs 150/- from the Welfare Fund Scheme as they loose speed of rolling beedies due to growing age.

15. An amount of Rs 5,000/- should be paid from the Welfare Fund to the family of a worker who dies while in service.

16. All Central Trade Unions should be represented in the State Advisory Committee of the Beedi Workers' Welfare Fund Scheme.

17. Tendu Leaves: There should be no export of Tendu leaves. The Tendu leaves supplied to the manufacturers should be on the basis of actual requirement at reasonable prices without involving middlemen and wholesale dealers.

18. For Women Workers: Equal wage for women workers at par with men and maternity benefit, creche, etc for them.

7th Convention of LIC Working Women, Coimbatore

The seventh LIC Working Women's convention under the auspices of Insurance Corporation Employees Union, Coimbatore Division was held at Vyasa Mandir Kalyana Mantapam, Coimbatore on 12.12.93. A record number of 246 women employees from the three districts of Periyar, Nilgiris and Coimbatore, of whom a large number is from newly recruited female employees, participated in the convention. A presidium consisting of COM Krithika, COM Uma Maheswari, Com.Saradamani, COM S Nagaglatha, and COM T Shanthi conducted the proceedings of the convention. COM G Madhavan, general Secretary, Insurance Corporation Employees Union, Coimbatore Division, welcomed the delegates to the convention.

Addressing the convention, COM NM Sundaram, general secretary, All India Insurance Employees Association, called upon the women employees to take active interest in the functioning of the trade union as they will be required to take up the leadership at various levels in the future. He observed that in the recent recruitment more than 50% is women. He said that even if they get equal wage in institutions like LIC as men it does not mean that they get equality in the society. They are more

vulnerable for attacks when the reform measures are implemented with shrinking job opportunities due to privatisation and the government withdrawing even the meagre allocation of resources for health and education, the lot of women is going to further worsen in the country. The solution to these problems lies only in united and sustained struggle with all other toiling and democratic movements in the society.

The convention was greeted by Com.Jayammal, President Coimbatore City unit of AIDWA. There was a lively and well informed debate on the various issues faced by working women in particular and women in general. Ten delegates participated in the debate. Summing up the proceedings, COM. R Govindarajan, Joint Secretary, AIIEA, declared that real emancipation of women is closely linked with the transformation of the society from the present exploitative character. He called upon them to prepare themselves for struggles in this direction.

Resolutions condemning atrocities against women, against privatisation and on the tasks facing the movement were unanimously adopted.

COM R Rangaswamy, Joint Secretary, Insurance Corporation Employees Union proposed a vote of thanks.

Working Women Demand withdrawal of the Amendment to the Maternity Benefit Act

The All India Coordination Committee of Working Women(CITU) condemns the reported move of the Congress Government to discontinue the Maternity Benefit to women after two children and demands the withdrawal of amendment to the Maternity Benefit Act 1973. The proposal is being made under the plea of the population control. While recognising the importance of family planning to control the unestimated growth of population, it is totally opposed to such steps which punish the working women only for no fault of theirs. Already the employers are denying the jobs to women because they have to pay maternity leave and benefit and creche under the various Acts. Despite these measures, working women are not getting the maternity benefits and provision of creche, with the result the enforcement machinery completely ignores

the provision to protect the interest of women workers.

Instead of providing the education and literacy and employment for their livelihood and the welfare benefit in a better way, the government is bringing the atrocious legal clauses to deprive women their jobs and benefits, by punishing them. It is also regretted that the National Commission on Women too has given a green signal to this proposal despite the fact it promised to protect the interest of women.

The AICCWW demands the withdrawal of the amendment and suggests better methods of education improvement in the family planning centre and in their economic status.

It calls upon all units of the AICCWW to protest against this move by sending telegrams to the government, as well as by holding the meetings demanding withdrawal of the proposal.

COUNTRYWIDE MOVEMENT PLAN BY TEXTILE MILL WORKERS AGAINST CLOSURES

The Joint Action Committee of Trade Union in Textile Industry comprising of the INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS, BMS and NLO met at Delhi on 22 nd December evening.

The meeting expressed serious concern over the move of the Government to close down a large number of NTC mills in the country and throw out over 70 thousands workers officers and employees out of job, according to the plans given by the various Textile Research Institutions, which was hardly better than the Govt's turn around scheme that proposed to throw out about 80 thousand workers jobless.

The trade unions in th meeting of the NTC sub committee held on December 21 and 22, suggested for modernisation of the mills without tears which is possible, without any closure or merger. The unanimous 5-point proposals submitted by the trade unions is being released herewith.

The joint Action Committee also discussed the growing sickness in organised mills in the private

sector and decided to take united countrywide action plans to mobilise all workers in organised mill sector in the textile industry, both in the private sector and public sector.

The meeting decided to hold an All India Convention of workers in the organised textile mills in the private and public sector at Indore on February 7 and 8, 1994. The Convention will decide countrywide action plans in the textile industry. As preparatory meeting of the unions will be held on 16th January at Indore to chalk out the details of the convention.

Sd/- Hari Bhaui Naik,
(INTUC)

Sd/- B.D. Joshi.
(AITUC)

Sd/- Veereshwar Tiagi
(HMS)

Sd/- P.K. Ganguly,
(CITU)

Sd/- Vishwanath Satam
(BMS)

Sd/- N.M. Barot
(NLO)

Successful struggle by Unorganised Workers

Weeklong dharna by nearly 2 thousand unorganised workers from different parts of the State which started on Nov 22nd ended on 27th night by the intervention of the Chief Minister Veerappa Moil and Labour Minister Blasier D'Souza. In the joint meeting held on 27th night with the CITU leads the Chief Minister assured that the notification for Minimum Wages with regard to Beedi, Plantations will be suitably revised by 30th of December 1993. Minimum wages with regard to Hotel workers will be suitably fixed early. Out of 13 establishments regarding which the Minimum Wages committee has already unanimously agreed, govt has already issued three notification and other ten notifications will be issued immediately. Besides, the Chief Minister and Labour Minister, Secretary to Labour Dept., Labour Commissioner attended on behalf of Govt. S Suryanarayana Rao, V J K Nair, N K Upadhyaya, Mohamad Dastagir and Nityanandaswamy on behalf of CITU attended the meeting.

S Suryanaranrao congratulated the Chief Minister and the Labour Minister for effectively intervening and also for their assurance. He also congratulated the workers who participated in the

Dharna for o6 days inspite of cold weather and other inconveniences with young kids. He also thanked the CITU unions and workers in Bangalore for rendering food and other requirements to those who were on dharna. Handloom, plantation, beedi, hotel, agarbatti, garments angangwadi and other workers participated in the dharna. This is the first time CITU conducted a State level dharna at Bangalore demanding minimum wages to unorganised workers. This ended successfully after the meeting with the Chief Minister.

Read
The Working Class
(English)

&
CITU Mazdoor
(Hindi)

A Monthly Journal of C.I.T.U.

Victorious Strike of Haryana Govt Employees

The people of Haryana witnessed a just struggle of state Govt employees. The govt of Haryana let loose a reign of terror on its employees as well as their families and sympathisers. Services of more than 10,000 employees were terminated without assigning any reason. 11,000 employees were arrested. Draconian laws like ESMA and Art 311-2-B were mercilessly used. Bhajan Lal Govt issued orders to recruit 20,000 new persons in place of terminated and arrested employees. Families were forced to vacate residential colonies. One Haryana Roadways employee dies of torture in Hissar jail. Even democratic people were arrested. More than 200 CITU, JMS and DYFI activists were arrested at Hissar, Rohtak and Jind CPI(M) office at Hissar was raided by the notorious police and party secretary Com.Krishan, Swarup, alongwith other comrades was arrested. The office was ransacked and files were taken in police custody. Procession, rallies were banned in the state.

But this could not cow down the morale of the democratic section of society in general and employees in particular. Haryana employees and democratic people defied repression to press demands.

Despite this heavy repression, the Jail Bhara agitation of Govt employees which began on November 23 was continuing. All the jails of Haryana and union Territory Chandigarh were packed with thousands of satyagrihis. Three day strike call on December 7, 8 and 9 was a big success. Strike was complete in Chandigarh directorate and in all the 16 districts of the state. Haryana Roadways buses were off the road. No work in Govt and corporation offices. But the Govt continued repression.

Then the strike was extended up to 15th of December. 14th December was to be observed as anti-repression day. On this day CITU, DYFI, JMSA and Kisan Sabha, Khet Mazdoor Union, SFI and members of Joint Action Committee of employees and their families participated in demonstrations at all the district headquarters and Chandigarh. On 13th of December 1993 secretariat employees joined the strike. A huge rally was held at Chandigarh and it was addressed by Govt employees, leaders from Himachal and Punjab. It gave a great boost to the struggle. The CPI(M) MP Com.Mohammad Salim

raised the Haryana Govt employees issue in the Rajya Sabha on 11th of Dec 1993. On 13th JMS Delhi gheraoed the Haryana Bjhawan in Delhi. The same day an all party delegation consisting of CPI(M), CPI, SUCI, SP and Janata Dal submitted a memorandum to the government of Haryana. The pressure on the Govt was increasing. Even Congress(I) dissidents supported the employees cause and pressed the Haryana govt to negotiate with the Joint Action Committee of the employees.

The Haryana Govt could not bear the pressure of the movement and their repressive machinery failed to terrorise the struggling employees. The Govt had to negotiate Chief Minister Bhajan Lal who was determined not to negotiate with the employees, had to bend and negotiated with the Joint Action committee on 14th and 15th of December 1993 because again the strike was extended upto 20th of Dec 1993.

The main demands of the employees were Class III and IV employees should be entitled to two promotions in their service career(it may be noted class I & II employees get three promotions); the pay scales should be similar to Punjab because being a parental state; introduction of pension scheme in semi- govt organisations and opposition to the move to privatise bonus for the year 1991-92, 92-93.

For these demands the employees had to struggle during the Chief Ministership of Bansilal and Devi Lal. The Bhajan Lal Govt's false propaganda did not work that employees get 56% of the budget. The true figure is only 18% of the budget.

In the final round of talks the Chief Minister accepted that all the terminated employees would be reinstated, the police cases under ESMA and other clauses would be withdrawn. All the employees are released police cases withdrawn, and reinstated immediately. Two time bound promotions are accepted. Rs 100 as interim relief is accepted. Bonus for two year would be deposited. Services of those who have covered 240 days would be regularised. With this the strike was withdrawn. Committee for Punjab grade has been appointed. The employees are in a triumphant mood. The final round of talks is on 22nd of Dec 1993 to give a final shape to the memorandum of settlement.

SUCCESSFUL STRIKE OF POSTAL EMPLOYEES

Six lakhs Postal Employees conducted a victorious united strike from 7th to 10th December 1993 compelling the Department of posts to accept most of the demands enlisted in the 10 point charter of demands. The three Federations NFPE, FNPO, BPEF and three non-federated unions of Postal Accounts and the Association of Inspectors and Asst Supdts of Postal and RMS wings jointly served the notice for indefinite strike from 7th December. The Postal Board and the Govt of India did not take the strike notice seriously non made efforts to settle the demands. Instead, they tried to break the unity and weaken the strike, which did not succeed.

The three Federations and unions formed a Joint Council of action, conducted joint tour programmes and mobilised the employees under a single banner of JCA. A negotiating committee formed at the apex level with representatives of all the organisations conducted discussions at various stages. The negotiations conducted by the Postal board and Minister of communications did not yield any substantial result. Therefore, the strike became unavoidable.

When the strike commenced from 6 AM on 7th December a magnificent upsurge of the Postal Employees was visible throughout the length and breadth of the country. In most of the states the strike was near total the very first day. In certain states like UP, Gujarath and J & K the strike on the first day was in a low key but picked up from the second day making a virtual standstill of the postal services. The coverage of the strike by the media has exposed the bankruptcy of the Govt and justifying the cause of the workers. The total collapse of postal system reflected in both the houses of Parliament. Announcement of the Minister that the postal strike is illegal, came up for severe criticism inside the Parliament. The employees ignored the announcement and threats unleashed by the Board. Such threats only helped to intensify the struggle. When the strike was on, the Minister as well as Secretary to the Dept of Posts repeatedly stated that unless the strike is withdrawn no further negotiations will be held. The JCA categorically said that the strike will continue until the Govt comes forward for a negotiated settlement. At last the GOvt had to change its stand thanks to the unity exhibited by the workers and the determined stand of the JCA.

The totality of the strike and the support inside and outside the Parliament created compulsion on the Govt to start negotiations with the unions putting

forward proposals for settlement of various demands. In the meeting with the Minister on the third day of the strike, it was assured that none of the demands will be rejected, those which are within his powers will be implemented and the remaining items will be taken up with Ministry of Finance, etc. As directed by the Minister the Postal Board invited the JCA leaders for negotiations on 10th noon. Specific assurances on most of the demands have also been given by the Board with a commitment of no victimisation. Accordingly the strike was withdrawn with effect from 5 PM on 10-12-93. A written communication was also handed over on behalf of the Board to the negotiating committee of the JCA.

The historic postal strike is an example as to how the unity among unions of different ideologies in a sector can rally the entire workers and launch victorious struggles. In the CGE sector more or less similar unity came up recently which exhibited a massive mobilisation of workers on 25th August 93, but was not carried forward to action. Non-clinching of most of the demands was a direct consequence of that premature retreat. Not only the CGE movement but also the entire T U movement has to draw proper lessons from the experience of the strike conducted by the Postal workers.

PSU Dividend

a) GAIL Dividend:

The Gas Authority of India Ltd paid Rs 20 crore as dividend to the government for the year 1992-93. GAIL earlier paid Rs 10 crore as interim dividend bringing the total to Rs 30 crore for the year. This is the first dividend payment by GAIL.

b) IFFCO Dividend:

The Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd paid Rs 17.38 crore to the government as dividend against the equity held for the year 1992-93. This brings the dividend paid by IFFCO to more than Rs 103 crore. It is the largest cooperative in the fertilizer sector with a membership of 30,000 societies from village to national level.

c) ITDC Dividend:

Indian Tourism Development Corporation paid Rs 1.44 crore as dividend to government for 1992-93. The year closed with record turn over and net profits. The corporation's turn over increased from Rs 139.60 crore to Rs 158.39 crore in the year.

COAL UNIONS TO STRIKE ON 31ST JANUARY, 1994

The following joint statement was issued by the INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS and BMS on 17.12.93.

The situation in Coal Industry has become extremely critical due to policies pursued by the Central Govt. in the wake of New Economic Policies. While the Govt has withdrawn the subsidy to Coal India, the coal prices are being fixed by the Govt much below the cost of production. The CIL had to recover more than Rs.2200 crores of arrears from SEBs which is throwing the economy out of gear. Over and above that the Govt of India has reduced import duty on coal paving the way for more import of coal from Australia and Indonesia while huge stocks of coal are accumulated at the pit head of coal mines. Unless this policy towards this Core Sector industry is changed the Coal Industry will face many difficulties in the forthcoming days.

Due to arbitrary bureaucratic directives from the Government on various occasions the Coal Miners are facing erosion in their standard of life. The pension scheme signed in the JBCCI is not being implemented by the management. The wage negotiations are stalled and the management have offered only Rs.40/- due to the Govt guidelines. The CIL management has refused to grant interim relief to the workers pending settlement.

The agreement signed with unions to raise the Bonus ceiling to Rs.3500 is being scuttled due to the directive from the Deptt of Public Enterprises. The demand of removal of ceiling is being rejected by the CIL management as a result of this skilled and highly skilled as well as workers of productive jobs are deprived of bonus.

The CIL management is producing large quantity of Coal through newly appointed Contract Labour while the regular employees are declared surplus. Over and above that several existing facilities are being curtailed unilaterally by the management without consulting the Trade Unions. Huge dues of the workers such as LTD, LITC, CMPF contributions, VRS payment, LIC Premium, Bank advances of workers and gratuity are not being paid by the Management causing great deal of hardship to the workers.

Despite repeated efforts jointly made by all the Coal Unions the CIL Management are curtly refusing to the appeals by the trade unions.

We therefore call upon 7.5 lakhs Coal Workers to go on one day strike on 31st January, 1994 to press the following demands.

1. Implement the Pension Scheme in full with effect from 1-4-1989.
2. Early settlement of NCWA-V and immediate payment of interim relief to all the Coal Miners.
3. Payment of annual bonus for 1992-93 to all workers without any ceiling.
4. Stop all measures to privatise the Coal Mining Industry.
5. Abolish Contract System in permanent and perennial nature of jobs.
6. Restore all existing facilities made available to the workers.
7. Immediate payment of all dues such as gratuity, LTC/LLTC, CMPF contribution etc. to the workers.
8. Restore subsidy to Coal Industry to meet the losses of mines due to fixation of prices by the Govt. of India.
9. Reimpose the import duty on Coal to restrict Coal import to the minimum.
10. Implement all welfare measures as per NCWA-IV.

We call upon all the coal workers to issue strike notices all over India on 15th January, 1994 for a token strike on 31st January, 1994 and be prepared for even bigger actions in case no settlement of these demands is arrived at by that time,

Sd/-
(S.Dasgupta)
General Secretary,
Indian National Mine
Federation
(AITUC)

Sd/-
(Shafique Khan)
Jt. General Secretary,
Indian Mines Workers
Workers Federation
(INTUC)

Sd/-
(M.K. Pandhe)
President
All India Coal Workers
Federation
(HMS)

Sd/-
(Jayanta Poddar)
General Secretary
Hind Khadan Mazdoor
Federation
(CITU)

Sd/-
(B.K. Roy)
President
Akhil Bharatiya Khadan Mazdoor Sangh
(BMS)

Hundreds of Fertilizer Workers Court Arrest Before Parliament House.

□ Swadesh Dev Roye

More than eight hundred fertilizer workers including about 50 women workers along with ten members of Parliament courted arrest breaking down police cordon in front of the Parliament Street Police Station on 22nd December '93.

The Fertilizer workers assembled at Delhi representing more than 20 trade unions functioning at 15 public and co-operative sector nitrogenous and phosphatic fertilizer producing companies operating at all the four regions of the country, right from Assam to Maharashtra and Punjab to Kerala. The Delhi programme included a national convention held at the Constitution Club and demonstration and courting arrest before the Parliament.

CRISIS BEFORE THE FERTILIZER INDUSTRY

It may be reiterated that as a direct fall out of the Fund-Bank dictated industrial policy pursued by the Narasimha Rao Government, the fertilizer industry has fallen into a very serious crisis. Nine fertilizer plants under three public sector companies mainly functioning in the east and north-eastern India have been referred to BIFR, declared sick and are facing serious threat of closure as a consequent of which about 25,000 employees may be retrenched. These plants have been suffering from technological obsolescence and the government appointed about two dozen Expert Committees both foreign and indigenous during last ten years. Although all the committees submitted rehabilitation schemes, the Government did not implement a single scheme and allowed the situation to deteriorate continuously. Schemes submitted by the managements and also by the employees jointly did not receive any serious positive consideration of the Government. Even the recommendations of the Government appointed committee for de-rating the name-plate capacity of the HFC plants, although accepted by the Fertilizer Ministry, has not been implemented by the concerned agency. Money released by the Finance Ministry at the parliamentary intervention is not given to the company by the Fertilizer Ministry.

On the other hand, the phosphatic fertilizer units, mainly located in the southern and western regions of the country, have become the victims of the pricing policy adopted by the Government, favouring the foreign multinational companies. Immediately after the last budget was passed as many as 11 such units were closed down on account of complete withdrawal of subsidy. Subsequently with restoration of partial subsidy and that too indirectly and on ad

hoc basis, these plants are running at reduced capacity utilization and facing complete uncertainty as to what is in store for them in the coming budget. Further, taking advantage of the concessions offered to the foreign companies, they are dumping phosphatic fertilizers in our country at a price much lower than that of their own home market price, obviously to drive out the indigenous companies from the market and then to turn it into an unrestricted sellers market. Indigenous phosphatic fertilizer worth about Rs. 1500 crores are lying unsold creating serious liquidity problem for these units.

THE CONTINUOUS AGITATION

The FWFI has been mobilizing the fertilizer workers all over the country and conducting continuous agitational programmes with the determination to save the indigenous fertilizer industry from being ruined due to the anti-national policy of the Government. The courting arrest programme is the culmination of three months long phased agitational programmes conducted by the Federation, which included local, district and state level joint conventions, dharnas, road blockade etc throughout the industry.

DEMONSTRATION OF ONE LAKH FARMERS:

The West Bengal unit of the All India Kishan Sabha organised a demonstration before the Haldia and Durgapur fertilizer factory on 15th December '93 which was attended by about 60 thousand farmers at Haldia and about 35 thousand farmers at Durgapur. The demonstrators demanded inter alia the resumption of operation at Durgapur and commissioning work at Haldia. The CITU unions at these factories organised more than one hundred meetings at the adjoining villages wherein they explained the policy of the central government to the farmers, which has brought these units at the current critical situation, which helped the success of the demonstration.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

On 21st December '93 the national convention on 'Deepening Crisis in Fertilizer Industry' was held under the presidentship of R.K. Pandey, President, FWFI. The prominent speakers who addressed the convention included E. Balanandan and M.K. Pandhe, President and General Secretary of CITU respectively, Members of parliament namely Dr. Ashok Mitra, Basudev Acharya, Dr. Ashim Bala, Satya Gopal Mishra and many more belonging to CPI (M), Chaturanan Mishra and others belonging to CPI and Mohan Singh of Janata Dal. Apart from these speakers, K. Ashom Rao, president, NCOA and other

leaders of the FWFI also spoke in the convention. Pratap Narayan, Executive Director of Fertilizer Association of India also greeted the convention. The speakers extended full support to the fighting fertilizer workers. All of them severely criticized the suicidal fertilizer policy of the Government.

THE DEMONSTRATION BEFORE PARLIAMENT

On 22nd December, 93 more than 800 workers assembled at the Jantarantar Park from 10.00 am with flags, festunes of the respective unions and placards of the demands. Those who addressed the demonstrators included many Members of Parliament among whom were Haradhan Roy, Prof. Sudhir Roy, Dr. Asim Bala Jibon Roy all belonging CPI(M) and Surya Narayan Singh of CPI. Shri K. Ashok Rao, President NCOA and the FWFI leaders also addressed the demonstrators. At about 1.30 p.m. the demonstrators took the street forming a lengthy, discipline and colourful procession and started marching towards the Parliament. In front of the Parliament Street Police Station the demonstrators broke down the cordon and they were arrested by the police and taken inside the Parliament street police station. The arrested demonstrators continuously shouted slogans inside the police station itself. According to police report the number of demonstrators arrested were 670 including 47 women and 8 M Ps.

DEPUTATION TO PRIME MINISTER, LABOUR MINISTER AND FERTILIZER MINISTER

Three separate delegations of the FWFI leaders led by several prominent and senior Members of parliament met the Prime Minister, Union Labour Minister and the Fertilizer Minister separately.

On 21st December, 93 the FWFI delegation met the Union Labour Minister, Shri P A Sangma under the leadership M K Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU. The delegation while apprised the Labour Minister about the alarmingly growing crisis in the fertilizer industry. Mr Sangma while assuring to convene a tripartite meeting of the Industrial Committee at the earliest also informed the delegation that in a review meeting at the PMO it has been decided to quickly convene the meetings of the Industrial Tripartite Committees to finalise the pending revival packages within the month of February, 94 itself.

On 22nd December, 93 a delegation of the FWFI alongwith more than 20 MPs belonging to CPI(M), CPI and Janata Dal led by Somnath Chatterjee and Basudev Acharya met Prime Minister at his Parliament House Chamber. A memorandum signed by the MPs detailing the prevailing crisis situation before the entire fertilizer industry was presented to the Prime Minister. The question of technical rehabilitation of the FCI, HFC and PDIL plants, immediate resumption of operation of the HFC plants including commissioning work at Haldia, immediate

steps for making the coal-based fertilizer units of Talcher and Ramagundum etc figured in the discussion. Finally the P M assured the delegation that he shall asked the Fertilizer Ministry to discuss the matter with him and take necessary steps at the earliest possible.

On 22nd December, 93 the delegation of FWFI led by Indrajit Gupta, MP and Dr Asim Bala, MP had a protracted discussion with Eduardo Faleiro, Minister for Fertilizers and Chemicals at his Parliament House Chamber. The Secretary and Jt. Secretary of the Department of Fertilizers and the CMD of HFCL were also took part in the discussion. The question of working a concrete Techno-Economic Revival plan on the basis of various schemes submitted to the government by the experts, managements, by the trade unions and Engineers Association jointly was raised by the delegation. Immediate implementation of the recommendations of the technical Committee appointed by the GOVERNMENT of India for de-rating the name plate capacity of the HFC plants and capital restructuring, release of the amount of Rs.19 crores sanctioned by the Finance Ministry for immediate resumption of operation of the HFCL plants and also the unspent amount of Rs.55 crores earmarked for FP & ARD and lying with the Deptt of Economic Affairs were some of the majors issues which came up in the discussion. FWFI leadership urged upon the Minister that before the ensuing hearing of FCI, HFC and PDIL at the BIFR a tripartite meeting should be called so that a joint presentation can be made to the BIFR. While the Minister took deep interest and active participation in the discussion, noted the views of the trade unions, assured that he will look into the issues on top priority basis and definitely take necessary action.

THE MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF FWFI

In the evening on 22nd December, 93 meeting of the FWFI was held at Delhi under the Presidentship of R K Pandey, President of FWFI. The meeting noted in single opinion that the two days Delhi programme was a grand success which has generated tremendous hope and encouragement amongst the participants and would go a long way in further intensifying the movement.

The meeting has decided to further approach the other trade unions centers, who are yet to be drawn into the movement of the fertilizer workers seriously, so that the next programme of action can have more participation and achieve total unity of the fertilizers workers. It has further been decided that the next meeting of FWFI will be held on 30th and 31st January, 94 to finalise the next course of action. In the meantime the affiliated unions have been asked to immediately go for preparation for either, another march to Delhi or a one day strike throughout the industry or both during the ensuing budget session.

Asian Employment Planners Meet Highlights Growing Unemployment

□ M K Pandhe

The Fifth meeting of the Asian Employment Planners convened by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was held at Bangkok on 29-30 November 1993. The meeting was attended by representatives of South and East Asian developing countries. The ILO invited two representatives each from the workers and the employers to attend the meeting. From the workers side the representatives of India and Indonesia were nominated by the ILO.

The meeting was inaugurated by the Deputy Minister of Thailand. On behalf of ILO Ms Mary Chinery-Hesse, Deputy Director General of the ILO from Geneva attended the meeting. While addressing the inaugural session she said, "We, in the ILO, have consistently maintained that the creation of full, productive and freely chosen employment is the most effective means of fighting poverty and ensuring equitable and sustainable development."

She further noted, "I have deliberately highlighted the nature of Asia's growing economic disparities and other employment challenges to focus more sharply on the enormity and complexity of the challenge that lies ahead, while there are numerous fronts on which action is urgently required simultaneously. There is little doubt that a critical element in economic adjustment lies in the effective implementation of an employment-led growth strategy built on mobilisation, efficient development and upgrading of human resources. The adoption of such a strategy is the only way of combining growth with equity and ensuring that the gains of economic development reach the vast majority of population."

Three papers were presented before the meeting for discussion. Dr. T. S. Papola, Advisor Planning Commission, India presented a paper on Employment in South Asian countries. While Dr Somsak Tambunlertchai of Thailand submitted a paper on Employment and Labour Market in ASEAN. Dr Ajit K Ghosh of ILO presented a paper on "Issues of Employment and Labour Policies in Asian Centrally Planned Economies Mainly Dealing with the Problems of China, Vietnam and Mongolia."

It was clear from the papers that in Asian countries the unemployment has been increasing at a faster rate while the job creation has not taken place compared to the increase in the labour market. Partial employment in these countries has been growing reducing the quality of employment. After the introduction of structural adjustment programmes in certain Asian countries in the wake of the imposition of conditionalities by the IMF, the unemployment has risen higher. The dimension of the problem in India is much bigger in view of its size.

Another aspect that was discussed was the low employment level of women who were being denied jobs of skilled nature. They are deprived of training facilities.

In China, Mongolia and Vietnam however despite emergence of some unemployment due to technological advance, the governments of these countries have been making serious efforts to provide jobs to the new entrants in the labour market.

Zhang Guo Quin from Ministry of Labour, China participating in the discussion observed, "The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to labour and employment and made tremendous efforts to provide more job opportunities. Especially, in the past decade has achieved eminent results in the field of employment."

He continued, "In 1991, employment in towns and cities covered 153 million people, an increase of 38 percent over that of 1981. New placement in the decade totalled 7.4 million with 42.19 percent newly created jobs. The rate of unemployment dropped greatly from 4.9 per cent in the early 1980s and has been kept at 2.5 per cent for nine years since 1984. In the rural areas, more than 100 million farmers have shifted to non-agricultural sectors, a 92.20 percent increase over that of 1981, accounting for 22 per cent of the present rural labour force."

Nguyen Van Cuong of Vietnam pointed out how despite difficulties the Govt of Vietnam has been creating more jobs for the people by developing new industrial undertakings.

Mend Sarantuya of Mongolia while explaining the nature of reforms in her country noted that the employment aspect has been given necessary importance by the Government.

Some of the speakers pointed out how competition from multinational companies adversely affect the task of employment generation. In the name of regional groupings, the advanced countries have been protecting their markets and trying to enter the markets of the developing countries.

M K Pandhe representing workers of India observed how the economic policies of the Govt have been generating more and more unemployment in both urban and rural sectors. He emphasised that in India much employment can be generated if the genuine land reforms are implemented, but such steps are not taken due to pressure of vested interests in the rural side.

Criticising the conditionalities of the IMF and the World Bank, Pandhe pointed out that these conditionalities are directed against the third world countries and their economies. The industrial units

are closing down adding to the already high unemployment while the domestic market is getting flooded with imported goods.

The CITU representative criticised the Exit Policy and National Renewal Fund and noted that it would open floodgates of unemployment in India.

Criticising the fallacy that structural reforms would lead to creation of more jobs Pandhe observed that the experience in India showed that it only displaces human labour.

Criticising the Employment Guarantee Schemes he noted that the wages paid are extremely low and jobs are given only for 100 days in a year.

The CITU representative noted that no economic reform which are opposed by the trade union movement

would succeed. He explained how in India the entire TU movement is opposed to the economic reforms.

Pandhe attacked the concept of globalisation which seeks to use the third world countries as a supplier of raw material and market of the finished products produced by advanced capitalist countries.

The CITU representative noted the danger to the ILO conventions since the competition for market leads to ignoring the ILO standards.

The booklet containing the Declaration of Durgapur Convention on Right to Work as a Fundamental Right was circulated among the participants which was highly appreciated by several representatives attending the meeting.

89th Birth Anniversary of B T Ranadive

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TRADE UNION UNITY

□ Jibon Roy

The 89th birth anniversary of Com B T Ranadive, the founder President of CITU is marked with a unique event. It was the occasion of holding a National Symposium on Trade Union Unity. This was the first time in the history of Indian Trade union movement where the leaders of all the national trade unions joined in an open gathering to talk about the dialectics of trade union unity. The symposium was addressed by the leading luminaries in the trade union movement. It was a great event to celebrate the birth anniversary of a towering working class leader like Com B T Ranadive who worked untiringly throughout his life for the unity of working class and trade union unity.

The seminar has been organised by CITU on 20th December at Constitution Club. About a couple of hundreds eminent personalities associated with the trade union and workers mass movement heard the speakers with deep interest. Com.E. Balanandan presided over the meeting.

Com M K Pandhe, General Secretary of CITU initiated the discussion with the clarion appeal to the trade unions to come closer. He said advancing the trade union unity is the historical necessity in the context of increasing assault over working class as a consequence of new economic policy. Otherwise he said trade unions failing to meet this need will ultimately invite apathy towards the movement. He argued that achieving total unity as a perspective to be achieved finally All National Trade Unions and National Federations can come join together in a confederation. He said even in the process Industrial Federations can merge together as an initial step.

All the speakers in their speech appreciated the need for trade union unity. Generally all felt there has been considerable advance in the direction. But in view of the developing crisis and constraints, advance towards unity should be rapid. Com.Chaturan Mishra, the AITUC leader said that the danger of recolonisation has changed the entire perspective and called for total unity. The other stalwarts like Com Gopeshwar, INTUC General Secretary echoing Com Mishra's views said that in place of earlier East India Company, economic imperialism is impeding our economic sovereignty. He also argued that he is for

total unity and said that the movement should consider policy. R K Bhakt, the INTUC General Secretary warned against foreign domination over the economy and said there can be no alternative to trade union unity. Vireshwar Tyagi the veteran Trade Union leader of HMS while expressing satisfaction at the increasing collaborations amongst the national trade union saw the main obstacles to trade union unity in the linkage of trade unions with political parties. R P Sharma of UTUC (LS) while stressing the need of advancing trade union unity argued that failure to see the class manifestation behind the GOvt. Policies trade union movement will be having round in bewilderment. D S Shastry of TUCC and Abani ROy of UTUC also made strong appeal for trade union unity. Ashoke Rao, President NCOA said that in view of the fact that organisational unity of professional managers being checkmated through all designs by the govt, the unity of trade unions is most important to professionals.

E Balanandan, the President of the meeting in his concluding speech spoke about the emerging danger of re-colonisation in the present day world. He explained that in view of growing crisis in the economy of capitalist countries and the emergence of a unipolar world, India's danger has further increased. In this context he stressed that it should be the prime endeavor of trade union functionaries to consistently fight for trade union unity.

BOOK POST