



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

CITU SECRETARIAT'S CALL

Intervene to Stop Communal Riots

Expressing serious concern over the unabated communal riots taking place in different parts of the country, the Secretariat of the CITU in its meeting held on December 13 and 14 called upon the working class to practically and physically intervene in the situation to stop the riots.

Hundreds of innocent people have already been killed and properties looted and burnt. The CITU had earlier signalled the danger and warned against the communal riots entering the industrial cities and affecting the working class. It is of serious concern that the riots have now engulfed the industrial cities like Kanpur, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Baroda, etc. Earlier other industrial cities like Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Kota, Jaipur, Beawar, etc. were ravaged by the communal hordes. In several areas, particularly in UP the riots have spread to village areas also. It is a national calamity.

The blatant communal stand taken by the RSS-BJP-VHP, the open pronouncement of the BJP for a Hindu Rashtra, the continuation of the combine's Kar Seva and the escalating riots have made the situation extremely volatile, auguring for a more dangerous situation threatening disintegration of the country, and making it a breeding ground for the imperialists to destabilise it.

In this situation the Secretariat opined that mere issuing of statements or adoption of resolutions was not sufficient. The working class and the trade unions must come out as a force to stop the riots and stop any further advance of these black forces inciting communal polarisation in the country. The Secretariat issued the communique in this respect and sent instructions to all the State Committees and the affiliated unions to chalk out all possible programmes for physical intervention in the situation. The programmes may include communal harmony processions, street corner meetings, factory gate meetings, conventions, human chains and of course strike actions wherever possible, to protest against and stop the riots.

Since the last several years, the CITU has been warning against the unabated rise of the communal,

secessionist and other divisive forces. The country is witnessing an intensification of the imperialist conspiracy to destabilise it. The imperialist hands in Punjab and Kashmir are now fully exposed. The terrorist activities of the ULFA in Assam as a new outfit have grown in connivance with the AGP. The LTTE infiltration in Tamilnadu has disturbed the situation in the State. The semi-fascist terror in Tripura is going on unabated. The caste war by the upper caste anti-reservationists against the OBCs is still in the cauldron.

In this situation the RSS-BJP-VHP and their new ally, the Shiv Senas rampaged the country on the Ramjanam Bhoomi issue. The BJP was a party to the unanimous decisions of the Committee on Promotion of Communal Harmony, which in its meeting held at Delhi on September 18 recommended that there should be a continuing dialogue and discussion to consider and decide the site of the Ram temple at Ayodhya with a view to reaching an amicable settlement; that the decision of the court should be respected and that in the meantime no attempt should be made to aggravate the communal tension which already existed. This meeting was chaired by Atal Bihari Bajpai and attended by L. K. Advani himself. But immediately there after, on the plea of these recommendations having been leaked to the press, the BJP boycotted the meeting of the National Integration Council held at Madras on September 22 and defying the appeal made by the NIC and all public opinion, Advani took out his Ratha Yatra with the ostensible desire to build the Ram Mandir, but with the ulterior motive of election campaigning, thus spreading the communal virus throughout the country. Going back on its professed support to the N. F. Government, the BJP thus deliberately created a condition and an alibi to withdraw the support to the N. F. Government and undermine the uncompromising secular stand taken by V.P. Singh. The communal conflagration that took place was the direct result of the RSS-BJP-VHP's crusade against secularism and pronouncement for a Hindu Rashtra.

The betrayal by the Chandra Shekhar group, by

Mulayam Singh Yadav and Chiman Bhai Patel, the formation of the puppet Government at the Centre under the Congress (I) thumb and the opportunist stand of the Congress (I) suggesting building of the temple at the disputed site of Shilanyas which Rajiv Gandhi permitted to do last year, have given a boost to these communal forces. The planned manner in which they went ahead, beginning with the Ratha Yatra, Ram Jyoti, then the Asthi Kalash processions and now, the brazen distribution of the banned video and audio cassettes propagating the rabid harangues of the BJP MP Uma Bharati, the Hindu Mahasabha MP Mahant Avidyanath and the VHP General Secretary Ashok Singhal, coupled with the continued Kar Seva, has successfully whipped up such a communal frenzy that was not seen during the pre-independence riots even. The notorious PAC in UP, the PAC in Rajasthan, etc instead of protecting the minorities from the communalists, have on the contrary been striking back on the minorities and scaring them.

The poor people are the overwhelming victims of this frenzy of religious fanaticism. The downtrodden work force of the vast unorganised sector—in small scale industries, brick kiln, handloom, beedi, agriculture and daily wage labourers are badly affected. The administration has failed to protect the life and property of the common people and the minorities.

In this situation the CITU in various states of course has demonstrated its concern over the deteriorating communal situation. Massive rallies, conventions, human chains, communal harmony processions are being held in various states like W. Bengal, Kerala, U. P. Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar, Punjab, Delhi, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and in Andaman & Nicobar too.

However, these campaign movements had little effect on the situation as indicated by the mounting communal riots and the tension pervading the entire country. The manner in which the NF-Left leaders were attacked at Saharsa, Bhopal and Gorakhpur, lays bare the intension of these fascist hordes. The situation demands direct physical and practical intervention by the trade unions to stop the carnage and protect the common people and the minorities. This has to be put at the top of the agenda of the trade union movement to keep the working class and the people united and to mobilise public opinion to isolate and defeat these communal forces to save the nation from disintegration. The CITU has to initiate the process and get cooperation of all the trade unions to launch all forms of movements including strike actions wherever possible. Cooperation of all secular, patriotic and democratic forces has to be sought. Cooperation with the Co-ordination Committee of the Left and the Janata Dal, which is being formed, has to be furthered. Peace Committees in every factory, area and towns have to be formed to guard the areas from the communal gangsters, to extend all relief to the affected people and to protect the minorities.

The trade union movement must realise that it is because of its weakness to intervene in such calamitous national issue, because of its weakness to defend the religious minorities in trade unions, that these communal and reactionary forces are having field days since the last several years in the country. It is because of this weakness that the divisive forces like the RSS and Shiv Sena have penetrated into the trade unions to disrupt the class unity of the workers and to undermine their foremost task to defend national unity and the secular fabric of the Constitution. Taking advantage of this weakness, the bourgeois-landlord Governments and the parties make the question of national unity a question of law and order and finally compromise with these divisive forces and split the secular and democratic movements for mere electoral gains and to remain in power.

The working class cannot afford to remain complacent over the shape of things to come depending on the Government's administrative machinery. The trade unions must accept the challenge and take up the task. The examples of W. Bengal, Kerala and Tripura are the beacon lights. Whenever the communal and the division forces come out on the streets, the workers with the red flag of the CITU also come out to challenge them in these States. In Punjab and Assam our cadres are being martyred. The coming months will be the testing time for the CITU and the trade union movement in the country to come forward as a force to defeat these communal forces and save the unity and integrity of the country.

CITU Condemns Murderous attack on NF Leader

M. K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU has issued the following statement on December 3 :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns the premeditated and murderous attack at Bhopal Railway station on 2nd December '90 by the VHP-BJP gangsters on V.P. Singh and other Janata Dal leaders. The total inactivity of the Madhya Pradesh police when the lives of national leaders were at stake clearly shows the complicity of the police administration in this dastardly crime.

The Bajrang Dal volunteers even went to the extent of preventing V. P. Singh from holding the press conference which clearly shows how the communal and divisive forces are contemptuously respecting the freedom of the press. The attack on the press persons and cameramen also underlines this callous attitude.

Above all, the non-chalant justification of this attack by the BJP Chief Minister of the state Sunderlal Patwa only exposed his utter disregard for law and order in the state as well as democratic norms in the country.

The CITU appeals to all secular forces in the country to come together to save the fine traditions built in the country over the period of years and defeat the communal and divisive forces which alone will save unity of the country.

Movement Against the Communal Forces Continues

(In continuation of the reports published in the last issue, we are publishing hereunder more reports from the states on movement against the communal forces—Ed).

Karnataka : CITU State Committee reviewed the situation arising out of recent communal disturbances in the state. It noted that although the working class in the state did not join the BJP's call for Bharat Bandh on 24.10.90, they cannot be credited to have done anything positive to assert themselves in favour of secularism, democracy and social progress. The CITU State Committee noted that the normal life of working people was seriously affected by the communal disturbances.

During the prohibitory orders and curfews, many among the toiling masses who have no fixed employment or income, found it difficult to earn their livelihood. Vested interests in several factories initiated steps to divide the workers on communal lines. It was necessary to organise the workers to prevent recurrence of such incidents and to work for secularism, democracy and social change.

CITU State Committee called upon all its unions to conduct a sustained campaign against communalism. The State Committee decided to observe December 6th 1990 as communal harmony day by organising human chain in Bangalore, KGF, Mangalore, Mysore, Harihar, Hubli—Dharwar and Dandeli.

Response to this call was overwhelming and besides the CITU, DYFI, SFI, Janwadi Mahila Sangathan, AIKS, AIAWU, Hotel Workers Union and other organisations, CPI and Janata Dal also came forward. The Republican Party of India, DMK and Dalit Sangarsha Samiti also supported the programme. The LIC and Bank Employees, Samudaya cultural organisation, several intellectuals, journalists and people from several other fields also announced their support. In all major towns and cities, people joined hands in the evening at 5.30. At many places, according to available reports, even the people who came to watch the programme became a part of the chain.

In the State capital Bangalore, from Russel Market to Sirsi Circle i.e. over a stretch of ten k.m., more than 12,000 hands were linked in the chain. Here at one place some so-called Ram Bhaktas tried to disrupt the programme. But swift action by the law enforcing agencies saved the situation. The meeting held at Russel Market was addressed by CITU State President S. Suryanarayana Rao, Janata Dal legislator Roshan Baig, and others.

At Mangalore, about six kilometer long human

Chain was formed. Some Hindu fanatics tried to break the chain but had to retreat in the face of a determined opposition by secular forces. They even pelted stones at the public meeting held at the conclusion of the programme in which a few participants were injured. Bidar, Ballary, Gulbarga, Mysore, Kundapura, Raichur, Malavalli and Bijapura were some other places where Human Chains were formed.

The working class of the State played a major role in making the Human Chain programme in Karnataka a great success. In all, about half a lakh people including women, children and youngsters belonging to all communities, participated. Colourful wall writings, posters, lakhs of pamphlets, printed by different left, democratic and secular organisations spread the message of communal amity all over the state.

Tamilnadu : CITU unions all over the state observed 6th December as a day for communal harmony and conducted hundreds of meetings at factory gates all over the state. Thousands of leaflets of an appeal from the CITU State Committee were distributed all over the state. The State Committee has called upon the unions to continue the campaign all over the state.

Punjab : On December 16 more than two hundred leading workers and employees from different organisations such as AIRF, AIREC, NFPTE, NZIEA, BEFI, Punjab Agricultural University, Nagar Nigam Transport, PSSF, Para Medical Co-ordination Committee, Working Women Co-ordination Committee, Govt Teachers Union Punjab, Tech-Services Union Punjab State Electricity Board and Centre of Indian Trade Unions (all constituent units of United Council of Trade Unions) participated in the convention on National Integration which was held in the N. Railway, Institute Ludhiana. Com. Harcharan Singh, President UCTU Presided.

Com. Dev Raj, Vice President Tech-Service Union Punjab State Electricity Board inaugurated the convention. Com. Ram Saroop, Paramjit Singh, Daljit Singh from railway, Manjit Singh from Nagar Nigam Transport, Com. Sukhtej Singh NFPTE, Com. Narinder Singh from Insurance Surinderjit Kaur, Working Women Co-ordination Committee, Nirmal Gill, PSSF spoke on the subject. Com. Mangat Ram Pasla who was the Chief Guest spoke on the subject in detail and told the workers about the serious situation prevailing in the country. He also asked the workers that unless they come forward as class, no one else can save the country from the danger looming over our heads, and instructed to take the message of communal harmony to every door, to every nook and corner. The convention

decided to hold peace marches to mobilise public opinion against the communal elements.

The Punjab state Committee of CITU in an extended meeting held on December 15 and 16 chalked out elaborate programmes against the communal forces. The programme includes gate meeting, rallies, etc. in each industrial centres and districts culminating in a state level rally. Efforts to organise strike actions by workers are also being made.

Andaman & Nicobar : At the call of the CITU Central Committee, the period 24th October 90 to 30th October 90 was observed as 'Anti-communal Week' in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Various programmes were chalked out and conducted all over the territory in which people from all walks of life participated. Public meetings were conducted in Baratang, Kadamtala, Biliaround, Nimbudera, Mayabunder, Dairy Farm, Municipal Park, Port Blair and Dalanipur. Large crowds were drawn in all these meetings. In Port Blair, the meeting was presided over by K. Srinivasan, President, NGO's Association. Speaking on the occasion Com N. Vasudevan, Secretary CPI(M) A & N State Committee and Counsellor (Forest & Health) made a scathing attack on the BJP for creating communal clashes in the country. He said that the BJP is mixing religion with politics and pointed out with instances that whenever religion was mixed with politics the country had to bear bloodshed. He called upon the working class to keep away from the communal and fundamentalist organisations which are all out to disturb the communal harmony in the islands. Com. H. N. Parial, Vice President CITU A&N State Committee and Chairman Port Blair Municipal Board, Com. K. G. Das, General Secretary, A&N Govt. Employees & Workers Federation, and Com P. Abdul Samad, Secretary, DYFI, A&N State Committee also spoke on the occasion. Comrades B. Chandrachoodan, General Secretary, CITU A&N State Committee, Projit Kumar Sarkar CPI(M) A&N State Committee Member and Counsellor (Revenue), Shri Tapan Bepari, Party State Secretariat Member and Com. Nikunjo Biswas, Middle Andaman Local Committee Secretary of the CPI(M) addressed the meetings in Middle Andamans.

On 26th October 1990 a Human Chain around the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Port Blair, was formed in which government employees, workers, trade union leaders, students, and women participated in large number and took a pledge to keep the unity and integrity of the country.

Maharashtra : The unprecedented response that greeted the inauguration of the Janata Dal—Left joint campaign in Bihar on November 24-26 found its echo in Maharashtra on November 27-28. In his first visit to the State after staking his Government at the altar of national unity, secularism and social justice, the former Prime Minister V.P. Singh addressed massive meetings in Pune and Bhiwandi, in

each of which over a lakh of people enthusiastically participated. The mass response exceeded all expectations, and it was especially significant in a State that had been polarised between the opportunist Cong(I) on the one hand and the communal Shiv Sena—BJP combine on the other during the last Parliamentary and Assembly elections.

It was significant that though Pune is traditionally an RSS stronghold, the Janata Dal, in close cooperation with other sympathetic organisations, chose to make VP's visit a fitting launching pad for the party's preparations for a forthcoming mid term poll. With his visit planned to coincide with the celebrations organised by the left parties, dalit groups and progressive organisations drew massive crowds. The public meeting at Shaniwar Wada, addressing a 10,000 strong audience at a women's meet organised by the Satyashodhak Mahila Parishad and a massive procession through the streets of Pune drew a crowd of over two lakhs. People who had poured in from innumerable villages listened to the former Prime Minister, the former Labour Minister Ram Vilas Paswan and the leaders of parties like the PWP, the CPI(M), the CPI, the Republican Party and the Dalit Panthers.

At Bhiwandi, the response was indeed spontaneous, and overwhelming. According to the local policemen, the rally was the biggest ever witnessed in Bhiwandi which has a population of three lakhs. The entire male population of Bhiwandi seemed to have converged at the dusty Dhobi Talao ground to hail the dislodged Prime Minister who, according to the Muslims in the area, has come to symbolise the hopes of the community all over the country. Bhiwandi, the powerloom town, it may be recalled, has often been the scene of heinous communal riots, the May 1984 holocaust triggered by the Shiv Sena, RSS, BJP as well as muslim fundamentalist groups like the Jamaat-e-Islami still rankling in the people's memory.

Women's Conference: The same afternoon a huge women's conference of nearly 5000 women was held at the Shivaji Maratha High School in Pune. The conference was organised by over 30 different women's organisations, with the AIDWA itself having mobilised nearly 1000 women from several districts in the State. It was inaugurated by progressive Marathi screen and stage artist Nilu Phule, while Phulwantabai Zhodge presided. Dr. Neelam Gorhe placed a 44 point Manifesto of Women's Demands which was adopted unanimously. Papers on subjects such as Women and Religious Fundamentalism, Share of Women in National Wealth and in Family Income, Problems of Women's Education were presented by Nalini Ladke, Kumud Pore, Vijaya Chowk and Jyoti Lanjekar. V. P. Singh and Ram Vilas Paswan addressed the conference, as also Pramila Dandavate, Tara Reddy, AIDWA State President Ahilya Rangnekar, AIDWA State General Secretary Amita Deshmukh and many others. After the conclusion of the conference all the women delegates joined the large procession that culminated in the Saniwar Wada public meeting.

Forward to The Seventh Conference

E. Balanandan

Calcutta will be the host to the Seventh Conference of the CITU from 12th to 17th February, 1991. Nearly four years have passed since the sixth conference was held at Bombay in May 1987. The delay in the main is due to the rapid pace of political developments in the country.

It is for the first time since the inception of the CITU in 1970 that a conference will be held without Com. BTR in the Chair. The guide and the moving spirit behind the CITU from its birth to maturation as a strong contingent of the organised working class in India, Com. BTR, is no more. To say that this void cannot be filled, is to say the least. Even in his absence he will continue to inspire us and the coming generations.

From Bombay to Calcutta we have traversed a long path. Reverses and setbacks notwithstanding, we have made sizeable gains and advance. The Calcutta conference will evaluate these and frame out the tactics that the working class will have to employ in order to advance further.

Here, it is not my intention either to give an analysis of the political situation or an evaluation or review of our work. I would only like to highlight the canker that is spreading like wildfire eating the very social fabric of our country. If the working class does not arise to put out this wildfire it will engulf the whole country and the working class will be the worst sufferer.

For the first time in the history of the Indian Parliament, a government was voted out on the floor of the House on 7th November, 1990. Though V.P. Singh undoubtedly knew the fate of the motion of confidence he had moved in the Lok Sabha, he wanted the Indian masses to witness as to who stood with whom on the issue of secularism. The nation was witness to the Congress (I) and the Janata Dal dissidents led by Chandrashekhar joining hands with the rabidly communal BJP. And it was precisely due to the withdrawal of support by the BJP in the wake of Advani's arrest, to the National Front Govt headed by V. P. Singh that led V. P. Singh to face Parliament. Curiously enough, the Congress(I) which was loud in demanding the arrest of Advani and stopping the Rath Yatra with full knowledge of the consequences, voted with the very same BJP against the Government. The crucial issue posed was, should we in the name of 'belief' or 'faith' discard one of the principal tenets of our Constitution—Secularism? Should sections claiming themselves to represent one community, in this case the majority, be allowed to trample upon the very foundation of the country in the name of 'restoration' of temples in places where now mosques exist? Should the generations of today be put to trial or called upon to answer for the

'injustices' or 'crimes' supposed to have been committed by somebody in the past? The answers to these questions are in the negative. And therefore the Government had to go.

Not that efforts were not made by the government to find an amicable solution to the dispute. But a solution could be arrived at only by either the contending parties to the dispute agreeing, or await a judicial verdict. The BJP/VHP/RSS combine were not in agreement. They refused any settlement other than the handing over of the disputed structure to them and refused to abide by any court verdict. Religious matters cannot be decided by courts, said Mr. Advani.

The same Mr. Advani candidly admitted in a widely published interview that the Rath Yatra was indeed political. With inflated ambitions of capturing the throne of Delhi, Advani commenced his Rath Yatra from Somnath to Avodhya via Delhi. The Rath left in its trail death and destruction. Communal passions were aroused to a yet higher pitch. Blatant lies and falsehood were spread in the name of religion. The massive propaganda blitz unleashed by the BJP/VHP/RSS combine distorting and misinterpreting history had as its central aim—spreading hatred. Venom was poured through video and audio cassettes in addition to the use of other medium.

Let it not be forgotten that it is not the Ram-janambhoomi Babri Masjid site alone on which they lay their claim. This is but the beginning of the 'liberation' of about 3,000 structures where mosques now exist, including the ones at Mathura and Varanasi. And now they have said it loud and clear that their ultimate aim is that of 'Hindu Rashtra.' The consequences of the virulent campaign of hate are there for all to see. Communal riots broke out throughout the length and breadth of the country. Unfortunately, this time even though on a miniscule scale even in states where the working class movement is strong viz Kerala and Bengal, were not left unaffected. This is but an indication to the intensity and depth to which the poison has spread. They challenged the secular order, in fact the basic tenets of our Constitution, the rule of law and the democratic set-up. They are advocating a theocratic state in which people belonging to other communities and faiths will have no place. What are the Sikh terrorists advocating? 'Khalistan', a theocratic state of the Sikhs. If even for arguments sake, if Advani's theocratic state is conceded, will others remain behind?

The violence that was unleashed in the wake of the Rath Yatra was unprecedented in scale and intensity. Advani had to be arrested. On 23rd October Advani was arrested and the Rath stopped at

Samastipur in Bihar. As expected, the BJP withdrew support to the National Front Government on 24th.

This brought to the fore the dissensions within the Janata Dal. Encouraged and egged on by the Congress (I) a split was engineered in the Janata Dal. Chandrashekar colluded with the Congress (I) and joined hands with the BJP in voting out the National Front Government. An unholy, unprincipled alliance between the Janata Dal(S) and the Congress (I) came into being. Chandrasekhar, heading a minority group of sixty, elected on an anti-Congress (I), platform, supported by the Congress (I) the major party with 194 members, assumed office. Principles and policies were thrown to the winds in their lust for power.

It was an anti-climax for the BJP. It had expected fresh elections and was readying itself to cash in on the 'Hindutva Wave' that its campaign had generated. But the assumption of office by Chandrasekhar laid to rest their dreams at least temporarily.

But they have not taken it lying down. They have launched a new phase in their campaign. The second phase of the 'karseva' now converted into a 'satyagraha for the right to perform kar seva' with the consent of the Chandrasekar Government, combined with the carrying of ashes of those killed in the October 30 and November 2 incidents at Ayodhya has further aggravated the already vitiated atmosphere. In the days preceding the Rath Yatra and further more after December 6, we witnessed the tragic sight of town after town, city after city and state after state being engulfed by the communal fire—Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh. Even Kerala and West Bengal where communal amity was maintained till now with the left parties in power, were not left untouched. The frenzy, its intensity and depth was unparalleled. The mind boggling brutality did not even spare small children, some even below the age of five. Parents had to stand mute witness to their dear children being massacred in front of their eyes. Tiny toddlers horribly stood witness to their elders being hacked to death. Unwary passengers were pulled out of trains and beheaded. The savages indulged in rape, cut off the breasts of young women. Unheard of brutalities were committed—all in the name of religion.

This campaign of lies, falsehood, vilification and spreading of hatred has taken its toll. The virus has penetrated deep into society. This can be gauged by the partisan role of the law enforcing machinery. Whether it be Aligarh or Ahmedabad or any other town or city, the police has fallen prey to the communal poison and has acted in a partisan manner. Small children were gunned down by people in uniform. The role of the media too is in question. Stories based on blatant falsehood without a fringe of truth in them were brought out in print and spread large and wide to be digested by the people. The result can be nothing but madness.

Price rise is of no concern to these peddlers of hate; unemployment of millions of youth does not

matter for them; untold miseries, sufferings, poverty and destitution are of no importance to these brokers of death and destruction. All that they want is temples. In their plan for recovery of just one—Ramjanambhoomi, the country has already paid a very heavy price. Much more is in store. What will be left of this vast country with its multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, diverse cultures and traditions, India, till 'justice' according to them is given? We will have to cry for a halt to this senseless campaign. Otherwise, the very future of democracy, the gains of the freedom struggle will be in peril. The challenge is grave. The working class as the most conscious section of the society will have to accept this challenge. A dangerous trend was witnessed during these riots. Even in labour dominated areas riots occurred. Vigilance will have to be maintained and the unity of the working class protected.

A multi-faceted challenge stands before us. Punjab, Kashmir, Assam are problems that are defying solution. The threat to national unity and integrity is indeed very grave.

Workers in the factories, in the mills and in establishments will have to unite as never before. The united might of the working class can foil the game of the communalists, the separatists and the secessionists. They will have to come out of their factories, their establishments to counter the offensive of the communal forces, the forces of disruption and disintegration, the forces that are sowing the seeds of disunity amongst our ranks. It will have to intervene in this situation, if need be in a given situation even physically to stop riots, to stop the virus from spreading further and ultimately defeat these forces.

The BJP today stands isolated from other political forces in the country. It will have to be isolated from amongst the people as well. Its nefarious designs will have to be defeated. In the best traditions of the working class that the CITU represents, it will rise to the occasion. The Seventh Conference of the CITU scheduled to be held at Calcutta will see the CITU devoting utmost priority to this task.

Seventh Conference of CITU

Venue : Netaji Indoor Stadium, Calcutta

Dates : February 12 to 17, 1991

Detailed Programme:

February 12, 3 P.M. : Working women's Conference.

February 13, 9.30 A.M. to 1 P.M. : Working women's Conference (Continued)

February 13, 9.30 A.M. to 11 A.M. : Working Committee Meeting.

February 13, 11.30 P.M. to 1 P.M. : General Council Meeting.

February 13, 3 P.M. : Inaugural Session, Delegates Session.

February 14 to 17, 1 P.M. : Delegates Session.

February 17, 3 P.M. : Open Rally.

1990—A year in Retrospect

R. Umanath

The historic year 1990 has passed. The year ushered in the breaking of Cong (I) monopoly of power at the Centre and several states, and formation of a non-Cong (I) N F Government at the Centre. The year 1990 ushers in with a treacherous defector's Government at the Centre, with major dangers facing the country, its unity, and the living conditions of the people.

The world over, though the year 1990 witnessed the signing of various welcome agreements on reduction in armaments by USSR and US, attainment of independence by countries like Namibia, South African People's struggle being on the threshold of victory, the period also witnessed the serious set back to socialism in Eastern Europe and the anxious developments in the USSR. The year also reminded the world, that notwithstanding the disarmament agreement, imperialism is imperialism with its lust for blood and loot of the third world countries, through their provocative role in the Gulf crisis.

In India 1990, with the N F Government having taken charge in the Centre, opened up tremendous prospects to undo the havoc wrought by Rajiv Gandhi. It raised high hopes and expectations among the toiling millions of the people.

Beginning of the year opened up certain avenues for the advance of the trade union movement and the left and secular forces. Repeal of 59th Constitution Amendment Act, enactment of Prasar Bharathi Act, protection of the popularly elected State Governments to rule for their full terms, constitution of the Inter-State Council, restoration of the rice allotments to Tamilnadu, Kerala and West Bengal, vindictively cut by the Rajiv Govt, and a number of other similar steps that were intended to be taken by these measures, the N F Govt embarked upon a serious process of dismantling step by step the authoritarian structure built and nurtured by Rajiv Gandhi Govt. A longer life to the N F Govt would have seen much more advance in this direction.

Year 1990 saw the acceptance by the N F Government of certain basic democratic demands of the T U movement, which were consistently rejected by the Cong (I) Govt. for past many years.

The total scrapping of the anti-working class Industrial Relations draft legislation, which the working class has been resisting for the past 15 years, was achieved during the year. The year also saw the introduction for the first time a legislation on worker's participation in management on the basis of secret ballot, introduced in Parliament, even though it required some amendments. It was during this year, the right to union recognition by secret ballot,

which was consistently rejected by the ruling Cong (I) Government in the centre ever since independence, was accepted by the National Front Government and a bill was under preparation. Amendment to Bonus Act. was under consideration by the Government. It was during this year that the long standing demand of the most unorganised section of workers—construction and agricultural workers—for central legislation was not only accepted, but draft legislations prepared.

“Right to Work as a Fundamental Right” initiated as a slogan by the CTTU, DYFI, SFI and left parties, not only became a nationwide slogan, but also the government announced in the Lok Sabha that a constitutional amendment would be brought forward. But it required a major job oriented developmental strategy. The Durgapur Convention initiated by the Steel Federation of India, created history as the first ever initiative by the working class to make the slogan a reality, by their proposals.

Though very much belated, the N F Government announced its decision to reinstate all Railwaymen dismissed under Rule 14 (ii) of DAR with continuity of service, eligibility of promotion etc. Though much had remained to be done, the year 1990 saw the attempts at reversal of anti-working class reactionary policies of the Congress after 43 years of independence. The consolidation of this trend and fructification of major gains to the working class and further advance was halted by toppling of N F Government by the Cong (I)-BJP-Chandra Shekhar combine.

1990 witnessed the biggest blow to the Indian Trade Union movement, and the revolutionary movement, particularly to the CITU and CPI (M)—the passing away of Comrade BTR at a crucial moment in the international and national situation. All of us will have to unitadly lend our shoulders to fulfil the Herculean task of filling the void.

On the economic front, the economy was already pushed to the brink by Rajiv Gandhi's reactionary economic policies. But the N. F Government, during its tenure in 1990, did not effect and break from Rajiv's policies which resulted in continued miseries, unemployment, closure, inflation, widening deficit, rock-bottom foreign exchange reserves and sky rocketting prices etc. The CITU has consistently and sharply criticised these policies, both inside and outside Parliament, pressed for alternative policies, mobilised millions of people, and even organised massive united actions against the continuation of these policies and their consequences.

But the blackest chapter of the year 1990 was

the biggest ever threat to national unity and communal amity. The hydra-headed monster of secessionism, communalism, fundamentalism and ethnic chauvinism raised its ugly head and opened its fangs. 1990 saw the furious and inhuman assault mounted by the RSS-BJP-VHP on secularism and national unity during the second half of the year particularly the last quarter. Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute and defence of secularism against this onslaught became the central issue during this period. At the same time the threats to national unity in Kashmir, Punjab and Assam due to depredations of the extremists continued. The depth of the crisis in the country is gauged by the fact that during the last quarter while a facade of peace is shown up in Ayodhya, several hundreds have died and maimed and continue to die all over the country in widespread communal violence, in terrorist attacks in Punjab, Kashmir, and Assam (ULFA inspired) and anti-reservation agitation. A large number of industrial centres in the Hindi speaking belt and Hyderabad were engulfed in the communal fire affecting working class unity. Muslim minority is sought to be terrorised into submission to the Hindu fundamentalists by the BJP-VHP-RSS combine. The gravity of the situation faced by the country could be seen, when the Govt., the press and allied institutions succumbed to the dictates of the Pakistan based Panthic Committee to observe a "Code of Conduct". It is a matter of pride that the leaders and cadres of the CITU, CPI(M) and CPI and the members of the mass organisations led by them paid with their precious lives, in openly challenging the terrorists, in defence of national unity.

The year that has passed exposed the brutal semi-fascist nature of the Cong(I)-TUJS combine as seen in the murder of a number of CPI(M) cadres and supporters, rape of women, and in the economic blockade imposed by the combine in the tribal areas, to force the CPI(M) supporters to surrender to the Cong(I). The heroism of these leaders and cadres in their resistance to this semi-fascist brutalities will be written in history in golden letters.

The year 1990 also witnessed the brighter side, wherein a bourgeois secular combination, undeterred by the deserters, for the first time, sacrificed power in preference to defence of secularism and national unity.

The year showed up the potential of the united left to make favourable impact on the political developments in the country.

It also witnessed the shameful spectacle of Rajiv Gandhi openly joining hands with the Hindu fundamentalist villain, the BJP, to pull down a Government for the crime of standing firmly by secularism and national unity.

The New Year 1991 dawns with a defector Government with the support of Rajiv Gandhi in the

saddle. With this new combination in power the situation is fraught with new dangers.

The defector Janata Dal (S) is giving a longer lease of life to the Hindu fundamentalist BJP Govt. in Rajasthan by giving it open support. Chandra Sekhar is openly calling for talks with the Pakistan based determined extremists and that too without any conditions. This poses graver threat to national unity. It has already embarked upon an authoritarian course.

Process of toppling of elected state governments has been started with the dismissal of Assam Govt. intimidating Orissa and Tamilnadu Governments, with Cong(I) mounting a violent assault on Left Front Government of West Bengal and left and democratic Government in Kerala. All the gains of the working class during the 11 month old rule of N F Government is going to be nullified.

The new year begins with a grim economic situation. Chandra Shekhar Govt. is out to further ruin the economy. At a time when the IMF and World Bank is out to take advantage of the political and economic instability, Chandra Shekhar Govt. has decided to approach for a loan. Without any hesitation, the excise and customs duties have been hiked from December 15th to the tune of Rs. 1340 crores in a year, which will will terribly aggravate the price situation. Combined with the Gulf crisis impact, the people's lives will become horrible. The Finance Minister has called upon the people to tighten their belts. All this means that a brutal offensive on the living conditions of the people is in the offing.

1991 must be the year of counter offensive against the separatist, communal and divisive forces.

(1) Even when communal tension is building up, the working class must unitedly and physically intervene through various mass forms including downing their tools, marching out of the factories and appealing for communal amity and thus averting any communal clash.

(2) The CITU must take initiative to unite all TUs to compel the Government to complete the incomplete labour legislations regarding participation in management, recognition through ballot, and other legislations already proposed in favour of sections of unorganised workers and to resist all new levies and proposed levies and any form of attack on the working class.

(3) The CITU unions must continuously take up the urgent problems of the people in their livelihood. In this, top priority must be given to the united anti-price rise movement.

(4) The silver lining in the midst of these dangerous
(Cont'd on page 20)

Public Sector Workers to Observe 15 March as Defend Public Sector and Self Reliance Day

Somesh Basu

"Fight against the serious drift towards privatisation, protect public sector so that it can play its important role of building up a self-reliant national economy and uphold the banner of economic independence and national sovereignty."

Thus concluded the three days deliberations of the second all India convention of Co-ordination Committee of public sector trade unions, held at Bangalore from 19 to 21 December 1990.

Altogether 350 delegates from 12 states representing 99 public sector industries and undertakings like Steel, Coal, BHEL, Bank, Insurance, Airlines, HAL, HMT, ITI, BEL, BEML, etc took part in this convention,

The Convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of Sunil Basu Roy, Basudev Acharya, Jibon Roy, V. B. Cherian, T. K. Rangarajan, Narasingha Reddy, Ashoke Rao, S. K. Mukherjee, V. Saroja and Munni Reddy.

The convention was held after a gap of five years and many important developments had taken place in the country since then affecting the public sector undertakings. The publication of the secret report of Dr. Arjun Sen Gupta Committee on public sector by the CITU exposed Rajiv Gandhi Government's plans to denigrate and privatise the public undertakings. It was the CITU which first brought to the forefront the BPE guidelines for wage negotiations and campaign against these guidelines. The publication of Confidential Report of the World Bank on Steel Industry, releasing the recommendations of Mishra Commission for 67 undertakings have enhanced the prestige of the CITU among the public sector workers. The emergence of CPSTU and one day strike against Govt's policy towards public sector on 21st January 1987 and three day strike of public sector workers in March 1988 were important landmarks in the working class movements in India, the struggle for interim relief, the fight for successful wage settlements bypassing the BPE guidelines, the struggle for full neutralisation at all levels, the drawing of officers' organisations in public sector struggle are important developments in this period. The Co-ordination Committee of Public Sector Unions formed in the first convention played a significant role in these developments.

A remarkable unity of the public sector employees was built in the last five years. As a result of this achievement the INTUC was forced to join hands with other trade unions on various issues facing the workers in public sector. The delegates

attending the convention had been in the thick of all these developments.

The convention paid a glowing tribute to the memory of Com. B. T. Ranadive, the greatest architect of Indian working class movement. It also paid rich tribute to the memory of Com. Mohammed Ismail. The convention mourned the loss of life of toiling people in the communal carnage.

The most notable feature of the convention was that it devoted a full day to deliberate the problems of working women. This is the first time that a convention was held to discuss specially the problems of working women attached with different public sector units.

The inaugural address to the main session was delivered by Com. Samar Mukherjee, General Secretary, CITU on 21.12.1990 in which he explained the nature of growing international and national crises and the ultimate impact of these on the working class of India. He pointed out that the struggle which the workers and employees of public sector had embarked upon was basically a struggle for changing the anti-people policies of the Govt. So unless those who were at the helm of affairs in formulating policies were thrown out of power, the struggle would not achieve its desired result. It therefore was going to be a very protracted and long drawn bitter struggle. He in this speech as well as in his concluding speech drew the delegate's attention to the menace of communal conflagration and how it was eating away into the very fabric of working class unity. He emphatically said that the working class could not afford to remain a passive and neutral spectator to the communal disturbances. Working class must confront this menace headlong to protect secularism and to defeat communal and fundamentalist forces.

Com. M K Pandhe, Convenor of the Co-ordination Committee and also a Secretary of CITU, placed a general report. With factual informations the report thoroughly exposed the hollow nature of the virulent campaign against the very concept of public sector and also against its workers and employees.

The report starts with the warning that the privatisation lobby is fully active with the blessings of multinational corporations while World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is not losing any opportunity to pressurise the Government of India to privatise public sector undertakings. The dark clouds of privatisation are hovering over the sky

today and waiting for an opportunity to devour the public sector in India."

The report brings forth the extremely serious situation created by communal disharmony, secessionist movement and the reign of terror created at Tripura. It calls upon working class of public sector to take initiative in raising the banner of secularism and national integration which is extremely vital for the advancement of our economy and well being of the mass of the people.

The report highlighted the important role played by CPSTU in forging a very broad based unity of public sector workers and employees and in protecting the living standard of the workers by snatching out favourable agreement from the unwilling hand of the Govt.

The report has devoted considerable space to trace out the plight of the working women and contractor workers. It called upon the convention to take up the cause of these sections of public sector employees for the greater interest of the workers of PSU.

The report also brings forth the interesting phenomenon of growing militancy among public sector officers and asks trade unions to explore all possibilities to build up common understanding on some common issues.

It is also interesting to note that one of the members of the presidium was Ashoke Rao, the president of NCOA, during his speech pointed out how a rapidly developing crisis which is threatening the very existence of public sector units, was compelling workers and officers to come closer. The thin wall separating workers and officers was crumbling down.

Basudev Acharya MP, Chairman, Committee on Public Sector Undertakings of Parliament observed the need to strengthen the public sector in the economy and to improve the performance of the public sector undertakings.

Sixty eight speakers who participated in the discussions explained their own experience in their specific undertakings and how the Govt of India's policies were immensely harming the further advance of the public undertakings. They elaborated some of the formulations of the Report and gave facts to enrich the understanding given in the report. Speakers emphasised the need for strengthening the union organisation, its membership strength and making them function more democratically. They also stressed the need for improving the functioning of the Co-ordination Committee so that it can discharge its responsibilities more effectively.

The convention adopted a resolution on communalism which gave a strident call to protect commu-

nal harmony at all cost. Apart from this, resolutions on strike in Coal industry on 7th January 1991, Nationalisation of Shipping Industry, National Industrial Tribunal Award for Bangalore based industries etc were adopted.

The convention also adopted unanimously a Declaration, which decided to organise anti-privatisation convention all over India, decided to organise regionwise T.U. classes of public sector workers and to hold a special workshop to consider the steps to strengthen the organisation of public sector unions.

It has further called upon public sector employees to observe 15th March, 1991, as "Defend the Public Sector and Self-Reliance Day" all over India through rallies and demonstrations, the day when historic Bharat Bandh was organised two years ago.

The convention elected a 75 member Co-ordination Committee and 17 member Steering Committee comprising of Coms. MK Pandhe, R Umanath, Jibon Roy, VB Cherian, Tapan Sen, S. Deb Roye, TK Rengarajan, Sunil Basu Roy, Mrinal Banerjee, Ashis Sen, NM Sundaram, Narsimha Reddy, Suryanarayan Rao, S. Kumar, Debanjan Chakrabarty, Kali Ghosh and Dipal Bose.

The Co-ordination Committee will include 12 working women so that the co-ordination of their movement could be strengthened.

The convention ended in a mass meeting of Bangalore workers which was presided over by Suryanarayan Rao and addressed by Samar Mukherjee and MK Pandhe.

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Convention of Working Women in Public Sector

The first convention of Working Women working in various public sector units was held in Bangalore on 19th of December 1990. The women working in BHEL, BEL, Steel, Coal, Electricity, India Meters, Nurses and from a number of industries under public sector numbering about 70 attended and narrated their grievances. Women workers in industries and in different private sector face discriminations of the worst type by the employers and contractors. The special attraction of the conference was the three women attending from Air India.

The convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of Dipali Bose (Steel) Krishnabai (BHEL), Rohini Char (Air India), V. Saroja (IDPL), Sheela (Cochin Shipyards) Khurshid Begum (Bangalore), Parbati Das (Durgapur).

M. Rajamma, Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates. In her welcome speech she spoke on the important role of working women, especially under public sector.

Vimal Ranadive, Secretary CITU and Secretary, All India Co-ordination Committee of Working Women, while inaugurating the conference heartily welcomed the gathering of women and men attending the conference under public sector for the first time. She said women in steel and nurses in coal held their conferences and formed the committees. She congratulated the heroic air hostesses, who were facing blatant discrimination since many years for their determined struggle. She gave instances as to how the AICWW was formed in 1979 to fight against the discrimination faced by working women because of the feudal tendencies existing among the male dominated society and also in trade unions. She also drew pointed attention to the meagre representation of working women in the union's committees. Now, the unions, associations of employees hold their women's conferences along with their own, write on the women's struggles in their journals and also try to give representation for them in the unions, though these things are still not satisfactory. She called upon the working women to join the struggle of the workers for the safeguard of the public sector against privatisation.

M K Pandhe, Secretary CITU moved the main resolution on working women. He expressed his happiness on holding the conference for the first time in the annals of the trade union movement of public sector employees. This he said shows the growing consciousness among the women employees. He mentioned in this context that the conference also is being held on the 86th Birth anniversary of Com BIR, who always championed the cause of working women and their struggle against discrimination. He always denounced the male chauvinist attitude in the trade union movement. He admitted that the trade union movement of public sector employees have neglected the problems of working women, though some attempts have been made to tackle them by the union. There are only about one

lakh and 25 thousand women under public sector i.e. 6% of the total employment. He then spoke on the technology and its effects on women who would be the first victims of retrenchment. It is known that thousands of women were thrown out of jobs in mines. Women who refuse voluntary retirement were immediately transferred to far away places, meaning it was a compulsory retirement for them. Women are given jobs only as typists, steno, PA etc. But women are rarely found in technical nature of jobs. He also pointed to the conditions of working women in various public sector units in contractual jobs and in small scale industries. He highlighted the struggle of the Air hostesses against discriminations in retiring age. He called upon them to join the public sector workers' struggle as a part of the Co-ordination Committee.

There were a number of speakers from different unions. Sri Devi from HAL urged upon the unions to come forward to help the working women in getting their specific demands conceded by the managements.

Shobha Maitra from Durgapur Steel Plant said that the country was facing an unprecedented crisis and women became the greatest victims socially, economically and politically. They were condemned to traditional jobs such as typists, clerks, teachers, receptionists etc. The employers were not enthusiastic to give jobs to women. She urged upon the unions to launch struggle in support of the working women's demands.

Mani Mekala from Hindustan Teleprinters came forward and said there was no equality as far as LTC is concerned. Maternity leave is only 84 days and not 90. Com. Padmini from Andhra said there should be special leave if in case children suffer from illness. There are lack of safety measures and voluntary retirement is not applicable to staff.

Sheela Moses from KGF said there was no creche even though there are 80 women. Rs. 75/- only is given for allowances. No union takes women in the committee, nor women are consulted any time. Ambika Laxmi from BEL expressed the urgent need of a woman Welfare Officer who can protect the interests of women much better.

Krishnabai from Tamilnadu, working in BHEL said dependents on the women workers are not treated properly they are given only menial jobs for their dependents. There is six years training for men and two years for women. The delegate from Hindustan Photo Films also spoke about irregularity in granting maternity leave.

Purnima Sengupta from HCL hospital said that 30% reservation for women in public sector was declared. But in HCL women are a negligible force. No woman employee has been provided to run the

machine inside the factory. Due to the policy of privatisation by the Government the workers are being victimised. With regard to the medical facilities, the male employees get facilities for their dependents, but the female employees are deprived of the same. Shyla Baplist, BHEL Mysore, criticised the management for the discrimination in office. Those ladies whose husbands are also working in the same factory are deprived of the benefits like LTC and medical benefits. Com. Gouri Bose, Durgapur Contract worker spoke on the working condition under contractors.

Asha Mulgaonkar the General Secretary of Air Hostesses' Association spoke in detail about the blatant discrimination they were facing since many years.

Dipali Bose complained that the unions are not taking proper steps to send women delegates for the participation of women in the convention.

Nilima Ray spoke in detail the working condition in banks and discrimination they face. Others who spoke were Amastha Khasi (BEL) and Prasanna Sengupta (HCL).

Ahilya Rangnekar, the Vice President of CITU summed up the discussions. She said that in public sector privatisation is going on. The percentage of women workers is small here. She appealed to all the delegates to come forward and fight for their demands.

A resolution on the discrimination of air hostesses was moved by Rohini Char. She called upon all the unions to send protest telegrams to the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

A declaration on the points raised and the demands of the women in public sector was read out and adopted unanimously. It was informed that 10-12 women would be taken in the Co-ordination Committee of Public Sector Unions.

Tamilnadu Unorganised Workers Prepare for Strike

The workers of the unorganised industries in Tamilnadu will observe one day strike in March, 1991. The decision was taken in three regional conventions of unorganised workers from different industries held at Madras, Madurai and Erode on December 16. The programme was organised by the Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU in pursuance of the 11-point demands of the unorganised workers as per the resolution adopted in the Kanpur General Council meeting. In preparation for the strike, a massive hunger strike will be organised in 50 industrial centres on January 15, 1991.

The Convention at Madras was attended by A.K. Padmanabhan, W. R. Vardarajan and D. Janakiraman. The Madurai Convention was attended by S Chandrasekharan, P.M. Kumar and G. Rama Krishnan, while K.M. Haribhat, K. Vaithinathan, M. Narjappan and A. Soundarajan attended the convention at Erode. The Tamilnadu State Committee has already enrolled about 50,000 workers from the unorganised sector in the CITU unions.

Convention of Road Transport Workers

The first North Zone Convention of All India Road Transport Workers' Federation was held at Chandigarh on December 15. Inaugurating the convention, M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU severely criticised the wrong transport policy pursued by the Government of India which is absolutely elitist in nature, which is neither serving the interests of the Road Transport workers nor of the common man. He therefore, emphasised the need for all India unity of the road transport workers so that concerted struggle could be launched. He further stated that because of wrong policies of the previous Cong (I) which ruled the country for a very long period there has been mass closures of factories, there is mounting unemployment.

He pointed to the communal forces which were weakening unity and integrity of the country by dividing the people in the name of region, caste, language, religion etc., and urged for united struggle of the working class to keep these forces at bay. He congratulated the workers of Punjab for their valiant struggle against the Khalistani secessionists.

He said that the present Govt which is under mercy of the Cong (I), may try to undo whatever little initiative was taken by the V.P. Singh Government with regard to the participation of labour in the management, declaration of right, to work as fundamental right, recognition of unions through secret ballot, etc. He appealed to the working class to remain alert to resist any such anti-working class move. Among others who spoke included Balwant Singh and Chander Shekhar, President and General Secretary of the Punjab CITU, Bhag Singh Sajjan, Vice President of the Chandigarh unit of CITU.

The convention demanded as under :

1. Formulation of uniform wage structure for transport workers at all India level;
2. Amendments should be made in the Motor Vehicle Act and Motor Transport Act in consultation with the representatives of the workers;
3. Determine working hours, leaves, working conditions, workload and speed etc;
4. Nationalise the transport industry for its proper expansion and development;
5. Constitution of Transport Safety Board at all India level and Transport Safety Councils at the State level with adequate representation to the workers.

The meeting paid rich tributes to Com. E. Padmanabhan and Com. Mohd. Ismail, General Secretary and President of the All India Road Transport Worker's Federation who have passed away recently. The meeting also paid rich tributes to all the martyrs who laid down their lives for the unity of the country and have been killed by the extremists in Punjab.

Top Priority to Fight Against Communal Forces

The three State Conferences of the CITU, viz of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan held during the past one month were significant in focusing overwhelming attention to the Ramjanam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid issue and the depredations perpetrated by the communal forces represented by the RSS-BJP-VHP combine and called upon the affiliated unions to give top priority to fighting the communal forces to maintain the unity of working class, protect the religious minorities and safeguard the unity and integrity of the country. It is to be noted that all these three conferences had to be postponed and rescheduled due to communal riots that swept the regions.

The conferences at the same time assailed the Chandrasekhar group for splitting the Janata Dal and forming the Government at the Centre with the support of the Congress (I), which undermined the secular stand to fight the communal forces and at the same time portended a renewed attack on the working class and the common people. The conferences called upon the workers to simultaneously revive and step up united struggles on all the vital issues facing the working class and the people like against unemployment, closures and lockouts, against price rise, etc. Following are the brief reports of the conferences-

Uttar Pradesh :

The UP State Conference was held at Agra from November 27 to 29. The place was named as Com. B.T. Ranadive Nagar. Although the conference dates were rescheduled after postponement due to the communal riots, yet because of the tension still pervading the State and curfews in several places, about 100 delegates could not attend the conference. Yet about 116 delegates and 12 observers attended the conference.

P K Genguly, Secretary CITU hoisted the red flag and then after placing of wreaths at the martyrs' memorial, inaugurated the conference. He warmly congratulated the workers for their massive participation in the statewide rallies for communal harmony, which were held prior to the beginning of Kar Seva attempt by the VHP-RSS-BJP at Ayodhya. In view of the worsening situation thereafter and the betrayal by Mulayam Singh in taking the support of the Cong (I) to run the Government, he called upon the delegates to take up the responsibility of carrying forward the struggle against the communal forces to isolate them from the people. UP being the cauldron of the communal tension, and its PAC being notorious for its partisan attitude against the minorities, particular responsibility rested on the State CITU and the unions to mobilise full resources to check the riots and protect the minorities, he pointed out. Laxmi Sehgal, Subhasini Ali, MP and several other fraternal delegates also addressed the conference.

The conference was presided over by Ravi Sinha, the State President. K N Bhatt placed the General Secretary's report. The report dealt with the details of the struggles launched in the State industrywise as well as on national issues, against the communal forces, etc. The report also focused on the international situation and called for intensification of ideological campaign against imperialism. 33 delegates participated in the discussion. They narrated their experience in the struggle against the communal forces, against closures, against privatisation, on unorganised workers, etc.

Summing up the deliberations, PK Ganguly while appreciating the struggles launched, urged for strengthening the weak areas emphasising on unorganised labour, working women, publicsector, on giving support to the Tripura comrades and on the other divisive and secessionist forces like the Khalistanis in Punjab, Jamaite Islamis in J&K, ULFA in Assam, etc. The conference adopted resolutions on all these vital issues facing the working class and the country.

The conference elected a 3-tier leadership—a 78 member State Council, a 31-member State Committee and an 11-member Secretariat with K N Bhatt as President and Daulat Ram as General Secretary.

Haryana:

The Haryana State Conference was held at Com. BTR Nagar, Faridabad from December 14 to 16. The conference began with an open rally on 14th afternoon. The rally was attended by over 6,000 workers, who came from the different industrial centres of the State. The rally was addressed among others by H K S Surjeet, President, All India Kisan Sabha, Inderjeet Singh, President and S N Solanki, General Secretary of the State CITU.

On 15th the conference was inaugurated by E. Balanandan, Treasurer, CITU. He drew the attention of the delegates to the nefarious game played by the Devilal-Chauthala group to split the Janata Dal and undermine the secular stand taken by V P Singh to fight the RSS-BJP-VHP combine. The formation of the puppet Government with Cong (I) support was a great betrayal, he pointed out. He congratulated the workers for their militant struggles against the corrupt State Government and the mafias while fighting the communal and the divisive forces and called for mobilisation of all workers and other trade unions to build up united struggles on the issues. Among others who spoke were P K Ganguly, S B Bhardwaj, the Delhi State General Secretary and several fraternal delegates including from AITUC and HMS.

Inderjeet Singh, the State President conducted the deliberations of the conference. 207 delegates and some observers attended the conference. 34 delegates participated in the discussions. The conference adop-

Seven Lakh Coal Miners to go on Strike on 7th January

M K Pandhe, President, All India Coal Workers' Federation (CITU); Shafiq Khan, Joint General Secretary, Indian Mine Workers' Federation, (AITUC); TS Jumde, Patron, Akhil Bhartiya Khadan Mazdoor Sargh (BMS) and Jayant Poodar, General Secretary, Hind Khadan Mazdoor Federation (HMS) issued the following joint statement on December 5, 1990 :

We deeply regret to note that the Coal India management is determined to implement the clandestine agreement signed with the INTUC unions despite assurance given to us in the meeting of the Joint Bipartite Committee for Coal Industry on 26th October, 1990. The agreement deprives the workers even the minimum bonus payable to all the workers in coal industry. Strong resentment is prevailing among the coal miners all over India and agitations are developing in all the coal mines.

The CIL management has kept all the pressing issues of the coal miners pending for several years without any settlement. Despite repeated demands the management has been adopting dilatory tactics to avoid any settlement. By signing a unilateral settlement with INTUC unions only the management has bypassed the JBCCI. We, therefore, call upon the 7 lakh coal miners to go on one day strike on 7th January, 1991 in support of the following demands.

1. 8 1/3 per cent minimum bonus to all the coal workers for 1989-90 without any ceiling.
2. Full neutralisation of DA to all the workers.
3. Immediate implementation of Pension Scheme as agreed by JBCCI.
4. Increase of PF contribution to 10 per cent as in other public sector undertakings.
5. Full implementation of all the clauses of NCWA IV including those relating to welfare amenities and both clauses of 9.4.3.
6. Abolition of contract system and regularisation of contract workers.
7. Regularisation of all casual/temporary workers.
8. Piece rated workers should be given time rated jobs after 10 years of service.
9. Employment to land losers with full compensation.
10. Reclamation of land in open cast mines.
11. Ensure all safety measures and rules in

CITU condemns Imposition of Additional Taxes

Samar Mukherjee MP General Secretary, CITU has issued the following statement to the press on December 18 :

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly condemns the additional customs and excise duties imposed by the Chandra Shekhar Government which will only push up all prices and which will further aggravate the misery of mass of the people of India.

The reasons ascribed for the higher taxation about the short fall in revenue during the first six months of year is not convincing. The failure of the Government to recover tax dues cannot be a justified reason for these fresh imposts just two and a half months prior to the general budget.

The hike in excise duty and customs to the tune of Rs. 1,340 crores on the eve of the budget is also making a mockery of the budget by Parliament. It also clearly indicates that the dose of taxation in the forthcoming budget is likely to be unprecedented. The deficit financing is also likely to go up to Rs. 14,000 crores this year.

The CITU calls upon the trade unions to raise their voice of protest against these arbitrary rise in excise and customs duties and demand their withdrawal. It also appeals to them to campaign against the possible rise in the taxation and deficit financing in the forthcoming budget.

coal mines.

12. Enhance income tax exemption limit to all workers.

We appeal to all the workers/unions to give strike notices on 20 th December to the managements of all the mines under the Industrial Disputes Act and send copies to the Labour Department.

We are confident that the coal miners, irrespective of their affiliations, will respond to our appeal and make the strike of 7th January, 1991 a resounding success.

LATE NEWS

The Strike of the Coal Workers has been withdrawn following an agreement signed by the Coal managements with the Central Trade Unions on December 28.

The Report will be published in the next issue—Editor.

Deceptive Pension Scheme for Air-India Employees

A pension scheme for the employees of Air-India is reportedly on the verge of being signed by the management with the 'recognised' minority union—Air India Employees Guild. As per provision of the scheme titled 'Air-India Employees' Superannuation Benefit Scheme, the employees will have to contribute 2% to 6% of their pay depending on age. In addition to the said contribution the employees will have to forego some welfare benefits like canteen subsidy etc. The most obnoxious part of the scheme is that there would be no contribution from the management.

The public sector managements are agreement-bound to introduce contributory pension scheme as a third retirement benefit. In many undertakings the scheme has been worked out having equal contribution by the management and employees and the process of implementation has started. Ofcourse final clearance of the government is awaited. In such a situation the so called pension scheme of Air-India is nothing but a deception to the employees.

Earlier also one such scheme was signed by the management of Indian Airlines with IATA but the same has been successfully opposed by the employees. The Air Corporation Employees Union, Bombay Region has called upon the employees to raise their voice against the proposed pension scheme.

Tripura Fund

Contribution Announced for Tripura Fund in the Kalyani Working Committee Meeting

West Bengal State Committee	Rs. 15,000
Kerala	Rs. 10,000
Maharashtra	Rs. 5,000
Assam	Rs. 2,000
Tamilnadu	Rs. 2,000
Bihar	Rs. 2,000
UP	Rs. 1,000
Punjab	Rs. 1,000
Haryana	Rs. 1,000
Delhi	Rs. 1,000
Rajasthan	Rs. 1,000
MP	Rs. 1,000
Singarene Collieries	Rs. 1,000
Texmaco Workers' Union	Rs. 2,000
Hind Motors Workers Union	Rs. 4,000
Steel Workers' Federation of India	Rs. 5,000
Hindustan Steel Employees Union	Rs. 2,000

Jessop Workers' Union	Rs. 1,000
Construction Workers' Federation of India	Rs. 1,000
SEB Workers Union	Rs. 1,000
Nadia Committee of CITU	Rs. 500
BCMU (Hukumchand)	Rs. 500
BCMU (Naihati)	Rs. 500

Receipts till 17.12.90

14.9.89 Punjab State CITU	Rs. 1,000.00
18.9.90 M.P State Committee, CITU	Rs. 1,000.00
18.9.90 MP Koyla Mazdoor Sangh	Rs. 500.00
18.9.90 Waraseoni CITU Union(MP)	Rs. 50.00
22.9.90 Construction Workers Federation of India	Rs. 1,000.00
16.10.89 AP State CITU	Rs. 425.00
	Rs. 880.00
19.10.89 T.N. State CITU	Rs. 2,000.00
26.10.89 Bihar State CITU	Rs. 1,000.00
17.11.89 Andhra State Committee of CITU	Rs. 3,745.00
11.1.90 Water Transport Federation of India, Calcutta	Rs. 5,600.00
12.1.90 AP State CITU(3 unions)	Rs. 300.00
13.8.90 Haryana State CITU	Rs. 1,100.00
13.8.90 Com. Raj Bala Chowdhery, Rajasthan	Rs. 100.00
13.9.90 Punjab State CITU	Rs. 2,300.00
15.9.90 Centre of Working Class BEML Nagar, Kolar Gold Field	Rs. 500.00
24.9.90 Hindustan Steel Co. Union Rajhera	Rs. 825.00
3.10.90 Hindustan Steel Co. Union Bhilai	Rs. 900.00
15.10.90 Dakshina Kannada Dist. Committee Mangalore	Rs. 4,344.25
20.10.90 RDPL Karmachari Union, Jaipur	Rs. 75.00
1.11.90 Kheda Jilla Factory Kamdar Union & Non Desori Vibhag Kamdar Karmachari Union, Vidya Vallabh nagar (2 unions, Gujrat)	Rs. 501.00
17.12.90 Punjab Lal Jhanda Bhatta Mazdoor Union	Rs. 1,000.00
Total	Rs. 29,145.00

All State Committees and Unions/Federations are requested to expedite sending their contributions for the Tripura Fund to the CITU Centre.

AIREC Plans Agitation

The Central Working Committee of the All India Railway Employees Confederation has in its meeting held in Delhi on December 17, 1990, decided to launch a phased programme of agitation to press the demand for vacatlon of all victimisations on Railways for abrogation of Art 311 (2) (b) of the Constitution with rule 19 (ii) and for grant of negotiation channel to the AIREC. Besides the meeting also discussed measures for strengthening the organisation. This being the first meeting of the AIREC panel the major political changes that has taken place in the country during October-November and onwards, it has reviewed the situation that has developed consequent on the changes in the political scene. The meeting took serious note of how the bureaucrats of the Railway Board doggedly resisted the decision of George Fernandes, the Railway Minister of the ousted National Front Govt. (which itself was a belated one) to reinstate the employees dismissed/removed under rule 14(ii) of RS (D&A) Rules and ultimately managed somehow to block the implementation of the Minister's clear order.

The meeting further took note of the fact that George Fernandes' order did not cover all cases of victimisation and victimisation in all forms. The meeting once again reiterated the demand for vacation of victimisation in all forms and in all the pending cases. In addition the meeting also demanded the abrogation of Article 311 (2) (b) of the constitution. Along with these demands, the meeting also reiterated its long pending demand for grant of channel of negotiation to the AIREC at all levels. It was understood that George Fernandes had also issued instructions with some positive content regarding communication with unrecognised unions. The Railway Board would certainly not implement those instructions. The overall attitude of the Railway Board would continue as ever to be staunchly anti-labour, there is absolutely no room for any illusion, the meeting felt. The firm conclusion was that chances of vacation of victimisation and grant of negotiating facilities were remote unless the Board could be compelled through massive agitation of the workers. Accordingly the meeting adopted the following programme to press for the above three demands:

—Dharna at Zonal Head Quarters on January 22, 1991

—Dharna in front of the Railway Minister's residence on the same day by central office bearers of AIREC and the General Secretaries of its constituents.

—Massive demonstration at Boat Club, Delhi on

13th March, 1991.

It was also felt necessary by the members of the AIREC Working Committee to ascertain the attitude of the present Railway Minister in regard to these demands. Therefore a deputation of the AIREC leaders including its President, Secretary General and the General Secretaries of its constituent units waited on the Railway Minister on 17th December at Rail Bhawan. The above three demands having been explained to him, the Minister assured the delegation that he would soon vacate the victimisation. As regards other demands he refrained from making any commitment.

In spite of the assurance given by the Minister, the AIREC leadership has in view of their experience in recent past called upon its units to carry on full steam the preparation for the success of the programme of Dharna and demonstration.

With a view to strengthening the organisation, and enabling it to effectively participate in referendum if secret ballot is introduced for the purpose of selecting bargaining agents, the AIREC appointed a committee to recommend suitable amendment to its constitution. It is believed that the committee has formulated a few proposals which are aimed at broadening the base of the organisation among various categories of railwaymen who were hitherto out of its orbit through changes in rules governing membership and affiliation. The working committee is known to have broadly accepted the recommendations. The authority for changing the constitution however vests in the General Body. These proposals will be effective only when the General Body approves them by a specified majority.

AILRSA Meet

All India Loco Running Staff Association which is the strongest unit of the AIREC and to which belong most of the victimised workers had held the meeting of its Working Committee on December 18-19, 1990, following the meeting of the AIREC. Besides deciding upon some steps for strengthening the organisation, the meeting called upon all its units to work in right earnest for successful implementation of the AIREC programme of zonal dharna and Boat Club demonstration. The Working Committee has also decided to approach trade union members of Parliament to take up the question of vacation of victimisation with the new Railway Minister.

Traction Workers Association

The Central Working Committee of the Indian

(Contd. on page 20)

Fourth Calcutta District Conference of CITU

The 4th conference of the Calcutta District CITU was held on Nov 2-4 at CIT auditorium at Rabindra Sarobar Stadium, Calcutta. After hoisting of the CITU flag by Rajdeo Goala, President, Calcutta District Committee, CITU, and adoption of resolution paying homage to the memory of the martyrs of working class and democratic movement and the departed leaders viz B T Ranadive, Saroj Mukherjee, Md. Ismail, Krishnapada Ghosh, Bhola Basu, Rathin Das, Ramen Sengupta, Shyama Sarkar and others the conference was inaugurated by the West Bengal Labour Minister Santi Ghatak. He stressed the importance of the working class waging struggle in the interest of all sections of common people, instead of keeping confined to struggles for the workers' cause alone. He drew pointed attention of the delegates to the serious danger posed by communal forces led by BJP and asked the working class to remain alert. Referring to the problems of different industries Santi Ghatak said that with limited power, the State Government was trying its level best to solve them but all the problems could not be solved by law. Workers would have to wage organised struggle for their solution. The workers must have thorough knowledge of their industry, otherwise correct step will not be possible on their part.

Manoranjan Roy, General Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of CITU addressed the conference on the second day. In his speech he also pointed to the serious threat to national integration that had developed due to the activities of the communal forces and called upon the working class to remain prepared to effectively meet any situation. He said that though we criticised the N F Govt. for some lapses, nevertheless it adopted some positive measures and some others also were on the anvil. Now the communal forces and the puppet Govt. are out to torpedo them. The working class would be the greatest sufferer if these forces succeed, he said. He asked the workers to remember the authoritarian role played by the Congress(I) and its opportunist stand in respect of communal forces. He asserted that industrial sickness was a countrywide phenomenon. This was the consequence of the Cong(I) policies since the last 43 years of its rule. The demand for setting up of new industries should be upheld as an important political demand. Referring to the question of reservation he said that one need not fear that due to Mandal Recommendation scope for employment of others would be totally blocked. But the main thing is genuine land reform, and the working class would have to play its leading role in the movement for land reform in different states.

Addressing the conference on the 4th November, Laxmi Sen called upon the workers to carry on movement for defending the rights acquired through prolonged struggles of the working class along with

their movement on economic demands. He urged upon the delegates to carry to the workers the CITU's message in regard to communalism and secessionism. He praised the role of the Left Front Govt. of the State in maintaining friendship and amity among the various religious and linguistic groups. Com. Md. Amin, Secretary, CITU also addressed the conference.

In all 41 delegates out of the 820 attending the conference took part in discussion on the Secretary's report presented by Raghunath Kusari.

The conference was greeted by the leaders of various organisations such as All India Engineering Federation, W. Bengal Provincial Krishak Sabha, North 24 Parganas Dist CITU and other fraternal organisations.

The resolutions adopted in the conference included those against communalism and secessionism and for national integration and secularism, against semi-fascist terror launched in Tripura by the Cong(I)-TUJS alliance, on tri-centenary of Calcutta, on worker-peasant alliance, on Ho Chi Minh birth centenary, etc.

The meeting elected a 95 member working committee with Rajdeo Goala, Raghunath Kusari and Jaigopal Roy as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

The proceedings were conducted by a Presidium consisting of Rajdeo Goala, Laxmi Sen, Sushil Ganguli and Md. Nizamuddin.

CITU PUBLICATION

"WAGE AGREEMENTS IN PUBLIC SECTOR (1988-89)"

(With recommendations of Mishra Commission report and other materials : Foreword by B.T. Ranadive, Late President, CITU and introduction by M.K. Pandhe, Secretary, CITU)

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Chandra Shekhar Govt. and the INTUC

M.K. Pandhe

"The Indian Worker", the INTUC journal in its issue dated 17th December 1990 has published an article on the front page entitled "Labour Policy Again in Melting Pot" in which an attempt has been made to advise the Chandra Shekhar Government what policies it should pursue in the forthcoming days.

The National Front Government initiated several welcome measures though they had some limitations. It had accepted the concept of right to work as a fundamental right. It initiated a Bill on Workers' Participation in management based on secret ballot though it required amendments to bring it into full conformity with the commitment made by the government. It also announced its decision to bring a Bill on recognition of trade unions on the basis of secret ballot of all the workers. Bill on construction labour and agricultural workers were under preparation while enhancing the ceiling on bonus was being considered. The National Front Govt had withdrawn the hated Industrial Relations Bill introduced by Rajiv Gandhi Govt. and a new Bill was proposed to be formulated. These were some positive measures which were being demanded by trade unions for a long time. INTUC does not insist that these incomplete measures should be completed expeditiously. On the contrary it wants that the "Union Labour Ministry has to immediately take up the review of the entire gamut of Government's labour policy de novo." This means that INTUC wants Chandra Shekhar Govt to give up the V.P. Singh Government's policy and review it de novo to suit the INTUC's and employers' policy framework,

Chandra Shekhar Govt which depends on the support of the Congress party cannot adopt any independent policy. The working class cannot expect this Govt to take issues facing the country and the working class seriously. However, the INTUC thinks otherwise. It feels that "most of the issue left unresolved by the National Front Government will have to be dealt with in all seriousness by the present Government under the leadership of Chandra Shekhar." INTUC cannot conceal its glee for the downfall of V.P. Singh Govt and emergence of a puppet Govt under Cong (I) support.

The INTUC calls upon the new Govt to review the measures taken by the previous Govt but "not to be influenced" by these measures" while taking steps to "improve the industrial relations climate in the country." The article does not mention that the Chandra Shekhar Govt should go ahead with the Bill on workers' participation in management, it cannot be expected to ask the new Govt to go ahead with the Bill on recognition of trade unions through

secret ballot. The INTUC does not say anything about the right to work as a fundamental right. It is also silent about bills concerning construction workers and the agricultural labour.

The INTUC welcomes the formation of Ramajunam Committee by the V.P. Singh Govt and it is understandable. But it has the following to say about the note of dissent written by the CITU, AITUC, UTUC, UTUC (LS) and TUCC: "The submission of a joint dissenting note by the left trade union centres is understandable as almost all their differing stands on the issues had been included in the main report itself." The INTUC may not understand the implication of the note of dissent written by the five Central Trade Unions. The main report has put the views of the five organisations in such a manner that the views of the INTUC and its supporters and employers were given more emphasis and focus arguments in favour of them, but the dissenting views were put in extremely weak and "touch and go" manner by Ramajunam. The five trade union centres debated their views in the Bipartite Committee meetings. The first report prepared by Ramanujam did not include these views and so it was rejected unanimously. Then even when the second report did not include these views, the five organisations rejected it and informed the Bipartite Committee that they were going to give the note of dissent. Hence the note of dissent clarified the position of the five trade unions correctly and there is no reason why it should be "understandable" to the INTUC. The INTUC article admits that all the view points of the five central trade union organisations were not included in the Report. The article claims "almost all the points" were included. Then why this prevarication?

The criticism of the INTUC about the delay in conducting verification of Central Trade Unions is all right. The difficult question of verification of membership of agricultural workers is there, due to lack of record, lack of permanency in job etc. Hence CITU proposed that at this stage it should not be taken into consideration for the purpose of verification. The INTUC however hopes that "may be, the new Govt is able to find an answer" Is INTUC expecting that through pressure from the Congress party on Chandra Shekhar Govt it would achieve what it wants? INTUC perhaps is telling the new Govt to adopt the same policies which were pursued by Rajiv Gandhi Govt which were rejected by the entire Trade Union movement.

Regarding the question of DA for the public sector employees the criticism on the National Front Govt may have some justification but what happened

to the threat given by the INTUC to the V.P. Singh Govt. that the INTUC would give a call for strike in public sector if the DA. question is not settled earlier. The article does not mention what happened to the INTUC's call to boycott the tripartite DA. committee if the committee does not complete its deliberations by the end of October last? Perhaps in a new situation INTUC leadership does not want to embarrass the new Govt as it is a virtual Congress(I) Govt.

The INTUC article does not give any call for united movement on pending issues facing the working class. Perhaps it is hoping too much on the competence of the Chandra Shekhar Govt! The INTUC's concern for bipartite machinery in India was clearly seen in the coal industry when the management and the INTUC came to an unfavourable settlement in October only two days before the meeting of the Joint Bipartite machinery in Coal industry (JBCCI). The issues of settlement were on the agenda of the JBCCI and naturally overwhelming majority of coal miners have rejected the treacherous agreement. That is why the management had to agree to keep the implementation of the agreement in abeyance. The management further admitted that signing of a settlement with INTUC only on issues pending before the JBCCI was a wrong step and in future it would not be done. However, after the formation of the Chandra Shekar Govt. the CIL management and the INTUC are conspiring to implement the agreement. In addition to this the coal workers have several other demands which were jointly put by all the trade unions including the INTUC. The INTUC agreement forgets the pressing demands of the coal miners, but colliery workers cannot do so and the strike call by CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS on 7th January 1990 stands. It is totally wrong to say that the non-INTUC unions in coal industry wanted to by-pass the INTUC. As a matter of fact INTUC was reluctant for a joint movement and wanted to strike a separate deal with the management.

INTUC would do well to give up its pro-management and pro-Chandra Shekhar Govt stance and be prepared to join the other central trade unions for a countrywide movement. If it refuses to join the united movement of the workers on common issues the other trade unions will have no other alternative to go ahead with the programme of movement.

One only hopes that the INTUC leadership will rethink about their policies and be with the workers and their united movement in the overall interest of the working class of India.

(From page 17)

Railways Traction Workers Association met in Delhi on December 19, 1990 and decided to organise divisionwise workers meetings to educate the workers on the question of safety of the employees and the public, which is threatened due to gross violation of national and international safety rules and norms by the Railway Administration resulting in death and maiming of a large number of workers. The process will be complete by end of February 1991. The Working Committee has called upon its units to make utmost effort for the success of the AIR C programme of massive Boat Club demonstration and other programmes. The Association will hold its annual general meeting at Bombay in May 1991.

The representatives of the association had met the Railway Board authorities on December 19 to explain to them the long pending demands of the employees of electric traction department. The most important of these demands is the one for end of unsafe working condition. The other demands discussed were those for bringing the traction staff under the pervue of occupational risk and hazard scheme; scientific job analysis for fixing of yard stick and determination of staff strength accordingly; and vacation of all victimisation and repeal of all black acts. The Board authorities assured the representatives that proper instruction would be immediately issued to the zonal authorities for ensuring implementation of all safety rules and norms.

(From page 8)

and ruinous developments is the emergence of the new platform of the National Front with the Janata Dal in co-ordination with left parties to give a determined fight to defend secularism and national unity at any cost.

Though at a heavy price, the National Front has realised and taken up a firm position to prevent the Cong(I) from staging a come back and to isolate communal and divisive forces. A big mobilisation around the new platform that has emerged, must be the decisive task of the CITU in the coming days. The recent massive mobilisations around this platform in Tamilnadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, UP, Maharashtra and other states is a pointer that the new year 1991 will be the year of left and secular forces in defence of national unity, communal amity, and people's living conditions.

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Worldwide Strike Actions by the Working Class

The deepening crisis of the capitalist system has resulted in sharpening contradictions between the working class and the ruling cliques leading to strike struggles by the working class in different countries of the world including in the erstwhile socialist states, which turned to market economy, as well as in Soviet Union. Following are some reports obtained from the WFTU pamphlet, "Flashes"—Ed.)

France

A wave of strikes has been going on in France since 22nd May in public transport companies in Amiens, Valens, Nimes, Nantes and several other towns, with a common feature: opposition to management attempts to cut back on both wages and working conditions. In Amiens, for example, for the last four weeks, bus drivers have been refusing to work 39 hours instead of 35 without any increase in wages.

The strike by seafarers on the La Fiesta Ferry, which carries freight across the English Channel, has been going on for more than a month. Negotiations between representatives of the CGT and CFDT seafarers unions and management, in the presence of a government appointed mediator have stalled.

The CGT metal workers federation in France is resisting the decision taken by Philips to make 10,000 workers in Europe redundant. It has stressed the need for the 23,000 workers of the group to join forces for their demands and not to accept any redundancies or factory closures.

The French airline company, Air Inter, was forced to cancel 60% of its flights on 27 and 28 July, due to a strike by ground personnel, the third and most effective since the beginning of the month. This stoppage was decided by almost all the company's trade unions following the failure, on 25 July, of negotiations concerning the demands of all categories of employees for wage increases, increased number of staff and better working and career conditions.

The Air Inter management, who were obstinately refusing to satisfy the justified demands of the workers, had tried to cancel the strike by referring it to the High Court at Evry, which rejected the request that the strike be suspended. The management's resorting to legal proceedings provoked lively protests as "the attack against the right to strike", even from trade union centres which had not approved the strike or were against it.

South Africa

Tens of thousands of Black South Africans took

part in a general strike organised by the African National Congress and other anti-racist organisations of the country on 2nd July. The main aim of this strike was to force the government and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Zulu tribal group, Inkatha, to halt the programmes taking place in the province of Natal.

"90% of workers did not turn up to work at Port Elizabeth and in the towns in the south of Natal", declared the leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). 80% of workers supported the strike in Durban, Johannesburg and its suburbs. The general strike was part of a week of mass action aimed at securing the disarming and dissolution of Inkatha's para-military organisation.

Surinam

Air and sea transport workers came out on strike to demand an increase in salary to compensate for the rapid increase of prices. They are also protesting against government corruption and the participation of important government officials in the drug trade. No planes are being allowed to land at the international airport of Surinam while work on freighters at the country's ports has been at a halt for several days. The trade unions have announced their determination to fight until their demands are fully met.

Honduras

The strikes which have shaken the country recently were the result of a rationalisation programme adopted and implemented by the Callejas government. As part of this prices of basic food stuffs have been greatly increased. Which has led to a strike by approximately 9,000 banana plantation workers, which began on 25 June. Strikers are demanding a wage increase of 60%. 5,000 health workers also stopped work in opposition to the privatisation of hospitals and clinics. The only petrol refinery in Honduras, owned by the American Texaco company, was completely paralysed. Traffic and work came to a halt in all the country's ports.

Ivory Coast

The 600 workers at the Blothorn Unilever factory in Abidjan began a strike in May, which spread to two other subsidiary companies. The strikers demanded pay parity with white collar staff, a training system which will enable promotion and the presence of a doctor in the Vridi factory. An agreement was eventually negotiated at the Abidjan which led to a return to work.

Greece

The third 24-hour general strike in six weeks was held in Greece on 4th of July. It was organised by the General Confederation of Greek Workers to protest against the economic programme of the Conservative 'New Democracy' government.

A draft law on development, recently discussed in parliament, has been severely criticized by the main opposition parties and trade union centres. Continued privatisation of state enterprises, which according to the government programme will cost approximately 120,000 workers their jobs, has led to particular discontent.

Norway

The first few days of July were marked in Norway by the closure of gas and oil pipeline pumping stations and a strike by North Sea oil rig workers. This was the beginning of the largest national strike of oil workers in the history of the country. 5,000 workers initially stopped work and were joined by others in the following days. The conflict began after the failure of lengthy negotiations between the General Confederation of Oil Workers and representatives from oil companies. The workers are demanding a 5% wage increase, an improvement in their working conditions and acknowledgement of their right to negotiate directly with the management of oil companies without the mediation of the Norwegian management association.

Gas supplies abroad were stopped and a number of national enterprises, primarily refineries, faced shutdown due to a lack of raw materials and fuel. According to experts, the strike cost the country's economy approximately 150 million crowns a day (121 million French Francs).

GDR

On the 6th of July, 120,000 metal workers took part in token strikes. They were demanding a wage increase, a 40 hour working week and the adoption of measures on training and retraining. The stoppages affected several East German regions and was particularly noticeable in Berlin and the surrounding area, where 220 enterprises came to a halt. On the 4th of July, thousands of workers came out on strike to demand a guarantee of employment. This apparently spontaneous movement began the very same day as the June unemployment figures were published. These showed a 50% rise over April. In the north of the country strikes often led to marches, particularly by engineering and steel workers.

Hungary

2,000 Hungarian miners, who had been on strike for two days, went back to work on the 4th of July, having won a 50% pay increase.

Niger

The 48 hour general strike called by the Federa-

tion of Trade Unions of Workers of Niger (USTN) was widely supported, despite the fact that it had been declared illegal by the government. The arrests of several USTN leaders resulted in various acts of solidarity by trade unions.

Israel

Over 20,000 workers in Israel's public health service voted on 3 July in favour of a token strike. State hospital workers rejected the finance ministry's refusal to renew an agreement signed the previous year on overtime payments. The strike affected all public medical services apart from emergency services.

13 trade unions, including workers at the general Electricity Company, have announced their intention of striking in support of the health workers' demands.

Nicaragua

The strike by State employees in Nicaragua, called by the National Workers' Front (FNT) is spreading. By 2 July, according to the ENT, 41,000 workers were on strike. The ENT is calling on the government to concede "the right of workers' participation of national economic policy". Strikers are protesting at the authorities' economic policy which, they say, "has led to instability in the country, rises in the cost of living, a fall in production and mass redundancies". The trade union front is demanding a halt to the continual devaluation of the national currency and the introduction of a 200 monthly minimum wage.

An FNT delegation sent President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro a letter containing these demands and asked for a meeting with her. However, Mrs Chamorro refused to see the strikers or negotiate with them. The Ministry of the interior declared the strike illegal.

At a press conference in Managua, FNT coordinator Lucio Jimenez said that the trade union organisation was ready to call a general strike and wage an all-out fight, and that they were "not responsible for the consequences if the government refuses to negotiate with them".

Sweden

Approximately a third of the regular flights of international and domestic airlines were cancelled on 16 July following strike by Swedish pilots from the SAS group, in which airlines from Denmark, Sweden and Norway are involved. The conflict was caused by the refusal of SAS to meet staff demands, notably for an increase of 10% in wages in newly negotiated contracts. Swedish pilots held an earlier 24 hour strike on 12 July in support of their claim.

Ecuador

Organised by several trade union centres, a general 24 hour strike was held in the middle of June.

"The Working Class" extends New year's greetings to all the State Committees, unions and the readers.

The trade unions are demanding wage increases, a freeze on the prices of basic food and the continuation of agricultural reform.

Dominican Republic

The nine main trade unions of the country organised a general 58 hour strike in the Dominican Republic to protest against the government's economic measures aimed at reducing the budget deficit and the level of inflation. These measures were proposed by the government of Joaputn Balaguer, who was recently elected President of the Republic. They include in particular, an increase of 48 to 50% on food products. According to the authorities, during confrontations with the police, 10 people were killed, dozens injured and approximately 1000 arrested. 60 police officers were injured. According to trade union representatives, at least 2000 people were arrested.

USSR

During the first half of 1990, losses incurred directly by national strikes and conflicts in the USSR amounted to 935 million roubles, announced the "Glasnost" newspaper in its monthly "News from the CC, CPSU". Between January and July of this year, almost 65 thousand people were absent from work daily.

Benin

Primary school teachers in Benin held a 48-hour warning strike. The 12 demands put forward by them included an improvement in working conditions and compensation for wages not yet received.

Great Britain

More than 1000 British oil-rig workers in the North Sea held their 5th 24-hour strike since the beginning of the year on 18 August. They are demanding recognition of their trade union and an improvement of safety conditions in view of increased production and the risks which this involves.

According to the organisers of the strike, at least 30 wells were brought to a standstill by this 34-hour strike which lost 200,000 barrels of oil from the North Sea for Great Britain. For the first time, the strikers were supported by almost 500 workers from the gas pipeline in Morcambe Bay.

The strike was called following the failure of negotiations between the representatives of 7 national

trade unions defending the workers' demands.

Bulgaria

The Secretariat of the Bulgarian Trade Union of Journalists has threatened a general strike by newspaper workers if the Parliament of the Republic do not react in the near future to its recent appeal concerning the serious lack of paper in the country.

Zaire

On 24 July Zairean civil servants were still continuing the strike which they began on 10 July. The civil servants rejected the ultimatum of the Zairean authorities and continued their protest movement to obtain wage increases.

Poverty in USA

According to a poll carried out by Gallup, 45 million US citizens live below the poverty line, that is more than thirteen million more than the figure provided officially by the United States administration.

Price of Privatisation

National Power, the largest British Producer of electricity, which will be privatised soon, intends to cut 5,000 jobs during the coming three years, announced several British newspapers on 22 July.

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The Palestinian Struggle for Homeland

On September 5, the Intifada, the uprising of the Palestinians against the brutal and fascist Zionist forces of Israel entered the 1000th day, and on December 8 its fourth anniversary was observed. Both the days were marked by massive general strike actions by the workers, the main instrument of struggle of the Intifada by the Palestinians for the realisation of their homeland. The Israeli Government answered the observances with random shooting and third degree tortures killing large number of Palestinians and injuring hundreds.

The ruthless repression by the Israeli Government on the Palestinians, which is backed by the US imperialists, have stunned the world. About 6 millions of Palestinians are without a home of their own. About one millions are living on the West Bank; 650,000 in Gaza Strip; 750,000 in Israel, and the rest scattered all over the world. In West Bank and Gaza Strip they are under the Israeli military rule. In Israel they are second class citizens and in the neighbouring Arab countries they live as refugees.

Their agony and deprivation beggar description, as well as the savage brutalities by the Israeli forces. The Israeli soldiers deliberately mistreat, shoot at point blank range and systematically beat the Palestinians and their children mercilessly with truncheons, kicked and knocked till their arms and legs are broken. They go to hospitals and pull the patients out of their beds, from the operation tables to arrest them.

The whole world condemns the Israeli brutality, except the United States. The USA desperately tried to prevent the UN Security Council from adopting a resolution on the Israeli repression and sending a fact finding mission to Jerusalem, but could not succeed. However, Israel still refuses to accept the mission.

The Palestinians however are undaunted. Their only weapons are stones, iron rods and Molotov Cocktails. But their greatest weapons is their vow to get a homeland, and with this weapon, with the support of the world democratic forces, they are fighting a life or death struggle against the mighty Israeli force in an astounding manner.

The Palestinian Vow

We will no longer be a subject people.

If you order us to disperse, we will assemble, Shoot us if you will.

If you confine us to our camps, we will roam the countryside

Dig up our soil and bury us alive in it if you will.

If you direct us to work in your factories, we will confine ourselves to our homes.

Herd us into your concentration camps if you will.

If you instruct us to buy your produce and your products, we will grow and make our own.

Destroy our houses and our gardens if you will.

If you demand taxes from us, we will give you nothing.

Lob tear-gas grenades into our huts if you will.

If you rule that we must carry identity cards, we will carry Palestinian flags.

Cut off our water supply and starve us if you will.

Whatever law you pass, we will break, whatever demand you make, we will ignore, whatever action you prohibit, we will undertake.

Bring out your clubs and steel pipes and break our bones if you will.

When one of us falls, ten will take his place.

Drag ten of us to your jails and you will find a hundred waiting for you when you return.

Break twenty anns, and a storm of stones thrown by a townful of healthy arms will explode around you.

When your bullets make us childless we will adopt the children you have orphaned.

Starve us and we will return to our roots and berries, seal our wells and we will sip the dew, raze our homes and we will live in caves.

You have nothing to gain but our hatred, and our hatred can be costly.

We have nothing to lose but our life, and if this is the life we are destined to have, we offer it gladly.

JOB CUTS IN USA

The American Good year Tyre and Rubber Group, the second biggest tyre company in the world, has announced a restructuring plan which will lead to the loss of 1,100 jobs as part of a programme to deal with a loss of 35 million dollars during the second half of 1990. Sales organisation in the United States will also be reorganised.

Goodyear registered a loss of 78% in its net profits (20.9 million dollars) during the first half of the year. The firm attributes its bad results to increased competition in the car market and higher production costs.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN YUGOSLAVIA

According to the Belgrade daily "Borba", at the end of May 8,608 Yugoslav enterprises employing 3.2 million people were "unprofitable" and responsible for 10.6 billion dinars in losses (5 billion French francs). 523 of these enterprises have laid off 306,000 workers who will join the 1.2 million already unemployed.