



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING OF CITU

KALYANI, SEPTEMBER 4-6, 1989

76

Presidential Address

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Comrades,

We are meeting after our Dhanbad meeting after a long interval. You are aware of the reason for this delay and I offer my apology to you for failure to meet according to the schedule prescribed by the Constitution.

Before I turn my attention to the pressing problems facing us let me on behalf of all of you recall the courage and sacrifice of Comrade Safdar Hashmi, a devoted comrade of ours who has placed his art in the service of the working class and the people. Hashmi was murdered by gangsters while arousing and mobilising the workers of Ghaziabad through his inspiring drama. The entire progressive literary world condemned this outrage under the Congress (I) regime. Hashmi's sacrificing life, his identification with the cause of the downtrodden and his passion to fight the injustices of present day society recall to our mind lines from Mayakovsky's Order of the Day to the Army of Arts :

Streets for paint-brushes we'll use,
our palettes—squares with their wide open space.
Into the streets, the crowds among,
futurists,
drummers,
masters of rhyme !

Counter Revolutionary Rebellion in China

Comrades,

The most outstanding international event of recent times relates to May-June developments in People's China described in bourgeois press as a student struggle for democracy. What was passed off as a student struggle was in reality a struggle using the students and other sections against the Communist Party of China, for the rejection of socialist path of development and taking a turn towards capitalism, for replacing the state of People's Democracy by a bourgeois capitalist state.

Leaders of the movement circulated leaflets and raised slogans against the Communist Party calling for its ousting, denigrated socialism and people's democracy and called for bourgeois parliamentary republic. They expressed their determination to cooperate with Taiwan and the Kuomintang to overthrow the present order. And their ideological leader Fang Lizhi finding that the tide was turning, took hasty shelter in the US Embassy exposing what type of democracy he and his followers were demanding.

The world was made to believe that the movement was a genuine struggle for democratic rights; that the Government of China was suppressing the students, killing them by thousands. The entire imperialist and bourgeois press joined in a chorus of denunciation of the Chinese Government and the Communist Party of China. Many well-meaning people in our country were misled by this propaganda and joined in expressing their condemnation of the Government of People's China. Not one of them raised the question if it was a democratic struggle, why were the imperialists and their media vociferously supporting it. Since when Bush, Thatcher and their imperialist colleagues have become the champions of democracy? The ruling imperialists with their class instinct knew that the struggle was undermining socialism, that its protagonists were helping restoration of capitalism in China.

It is now seen that the PLA (People's Liberation Army) refused to open fire on the unarmed people and lost more than hundred soldiers with hundreds getting injured. Only when the masses were separated from the counter-revolutionary forces did the PLA decide to use forces ending in a total death of 300 of which more than 100 were PLA soldiers.

Here was an instance of the entire imperialist

camp coming to bring down a socialist state. Bush, Thatcher and others all with one voice denounced China and adopted several measures of sanctions against her. This gang of imperialists has resisted for years imposing of sanctions against South Africa for its apartheid. Now these marauders of other people's rights suddenly flowered into human right defenders. Their attempts to indict the Chinese regime shows the intensified contradiction between the two systems of socialist and imperialist.

The imperialists' support to the counter revolutionaries in China shows that imperialism will remain imperialism notwithstanding the illusions of some people that the contradictions between the two systems are getting moderated. This is a doctrine of negation of class struggle. We must never forget that the socialist world and the third world countries are an object of constant attacks by the imperialists and lack of vigilance will lead to betrayal.

While the Chinese revolution was being attacked internally and externally, while the imperialists camp was unitedly throwing all its weight in favour of counter-revolutionaries, the international working class stood confused, divided and disorganised.

Many ask the question why this challenge of counter-revolutionary forces should have arisen in China after years of successful socialist revolution. Some mistakes of earlier period have delayed the developmental process in China, but the main reason is that China which was a backward country when the revolution put the people in power, had to go through prolonged transitional period before it could be a fulfilled socialist country. In this transition process to move forward, many concessions have to be made to private producers, foreign capital and these concessions often create a climate in favour of capitalist values and outlook. These have to be fought repeatedly and those who are victims of these illusions are to be fought ideologically and defeated. It is obvious that this latter task was done in a half-hearted way as admitted by the CPC, otherwise the organisers of the movement would not have succeeded in securing the temporary support of masses including the students. The latter which claim universal sympathy were used by the reactionaries as a shield to cover their counter-revolutionary objectives. This was the third time that the CPC had to face such a challenge showing that such outbursts are possible till the end of the process of transition, though their appeal and impact will continue to weaken.

The CITU expresses its support to the Communist Party of China in the way it handled a very grave situation and expresses its joy that the counter-revolutionary challenge has been defeated. The CPC and the PLA have rendered tremendous service to the cause of the international movement by defeating this reactionary challenge. The world movement would have been thrown decades back had the reactionaries succeeded in their objective. The CITU calls for greater international unity and greater

working class vigilance in the intensified conflict between socialism and imperialism.

Sino-Soviet Summit

Comrades,

Another event of great importance which was overshadowed by the developments in China was the visit of Comrade Gorbachev to China and the beginning of normalisation of relations between the Governments of the two socialist countries.

For the international working class movement the Summit brings to an end an unprecedented nightmarish period. It witnessed the disunity of the socialist camp, sharp differences, opposition, even hostility between those who for years and decades held aloft the great banner of proletarian internationalism and marched forward to achieve decisive victories against capitalism. It witnessed the disintegration of that granite unity of which Lenin spoke and felt proud. Comrade Gorbachev has correctly observed in one of his meetings in Beijing that each side make its own assessment of the period. This is absolutely essential so that the world movement learns from the past and avoids such pitfalls in the future. The CITU and India's working class ardently wish that the present day normalisation within the framework of peaceful coexistence, non-intervention in each other's affairs will be soon transformed into the great fraternity of earlier years which liberated one-third of the world for socialism. The restoration of old relations will create an invincible force inspiring millions to intensify the fight against imperialism to march forward to socialism.

US Drive for Space War

Comrades,

The forces defending world peace continue to carry on the fight against nuclear war with greater vigour. On behalf of the USSR Comrade Gorbachev has made several new proposals to reduce nuclear armaments and conventional weapons but there is no response from the USA and its allies. The optimism of some people that the reduction of short and medium range missiles in Europe will lead to quick progress in further reductions has proved to be wishful thinking having no relation to imperialist practice, tactics and manoeuvres. The U.S. imperialists are attempting to circumvent the understanding on short and medium range missiles by placing missiles of larger nuclear potential in Europe. Besides huge sums running into billions of dollars have been sanctioned recently by the U.S. Senate for pushing forward the Space War programme of the USA. In recent times, every proposal made in the eleventh round of Soviet-American talks on nuclear space weapons has been turned down once again exposing U.S. obduracy and lack of sincerity for nuclear disarmament. Head of Soviet delegation said after the completion of the talks, "the only documents remaining unchanged are the texts of draft agreements on space. In this area sides' positions are too wide

apart to allow for any progress. The U.S. position holds that ABM deployment, in particular, space-based defences are possible in the framework of SDI programme — something which is incompatible with the ABM Treaty currently in force. As for the Soviet side, it stands for an agreement to observe the ABM Treaty as signed in 1972. It is our understanding that since there is an objective relationship between strategic defensive and offensive arms, a Treaty on reduction in strategic offensive arms can be made possible only if the ABM Treaty is observed."

This mild protest reveals the refusal of the USA to give up its plans of offensive Space War. The U.S. has accepted reduction of Short and Medium Range Missiles for Europe, but it is preparing for a Space weaponry where it thinks it is ahead of the USSR.

Other European allies of the USA are no different. Speaking before the Supreme Soviet on 1st of August on his visit to Britain, West Germany and France, Gorbachev said: "For the British leadership nuclear deterrent is a fixed idea; while West Germany is concerned about its being located on the line of nuclear confrontation and a special threat posed to it by any nuclear weapon. France is insistent on its specific position in Atlantic Alliance and stresses that "exceptional significance of its nuclear potential" In this connection Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union opposes the nuclear deterrent strategy which can depreciate conventional weapons cut and which runs counter to the task of eliminating military confrontation in Europe. In passing it should be noted that Gorbachev, who is an ardent advocate of a common European home had the following to say about the recent visit of President Bush to Hungary and Poland. In his speech to the Supreme Soviet he observed that the recent visits paid by U.S. President Bush to Hungary and Poland, this was natural on condition that temptation is controlled to take advantage of the complicated problems in countries with a different system hoping to drive them off the path they chose.

This is the dismal sequel to the high hopes raised by the agreement to reduce nuclear war-heads in Europe. It is now seen that the imperialist camp had no intention of reducing such less eliminating nuclear weapons. Their line was to produce more offensive and destructive weapons to replace them by the current ones. And they made people believe that they were sincerely interested in reduction of nuclear weapons.

Greetings to Democratic Struggles

Comrades,

We send our warmest greetings to the brave and courageous people of Palestine who are waging a heroic struggle in the occupied area and defying the terrorist Hitler-like repression of the Israeli Government. The Intifada has become a byword for resolute and fiery struggle for freedom. We send our

warm greetings to the people of South Africa fighting the apartheid regime and the courageous people of Nicaragua who have succeeded in frustrating US designs.

Comrades,

Nearer home, we send our warm greetings to the people and working class of Pakistan who are now enjoying a state of democracy though under constant attack from the reactionary forces. We wish them successes in the struggle to consolidate the democratic advance already restored and forge closer bonds of unity between the working class and people of Pakistan and the working class and people of India.

We send our warm greetings to the fighting people of Bangladesh, the progressive section among whom had already raised a voice of protest against the establishment of a theocratic Islamic state. The people of Bangladesh are still ruled by a military dictator and we wish them success in the struggle to eliminate military rule and establish a genuine democratic government under a free and fair election.

Settle Differences with Nepal

We send our warm greetings to the working class and people of Nepal and the working class and people of Sri Lanka. The working class of India calls upon both the Governments of India and the Government of Nepal to overcome the immediate differences and settle them in the mutual interest of both peoples and both countries. They should be aware that forces inimical to the freedom and integrity of both countries are ever ready to magnify the differences and exploit them for their own dominating interests. The working class of India calls upon the Government of India to ensure that the existing difficulties created by lapse of the earlier treaty should be immediately overcome to ensure that the people of Nepal are not put to any economic difficulties. The CITU congratulates the progressive forces in Nepal and the Communist Parties on their correct stand to protect the common interests of both people and friendship between the two countries.

Restoration of Friendship with Sri Lanka

The CITU expresses concern over the recent development concerning the relationship between India and Sri Lanka. It is, however, relieved to find that the two Governments are negotiating over the question of IPKF withdrawal and security of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. An agreed solution of the problems will restore the old friendship between the two peoples and also keep away all the mischief makers who want to take advantage of the present situation. The IPKF can remain in Sri Lanka only with the consent of the sovereign Government of Sri Lanka and not otherwise.

Homage to Martyrs in Punjab

Comrades,

We send our warm greetings to our fighting comrades in Punjab, who are fighting the extremist

disruptors of national unity despite terrorist attacks. Long to the list of martyrs that have earned glory in this fight against imperialist encouraged secessionist disruption in Punjab; the names of these martyrs will remain in our memory and the story of the courage of the families of these martyrs; the courage with which they bore their losses continue to be active in the fight will be told and retold all over India. We honour the memory of martyrs of other organisations who fearlessly faced the bullets of the Khalistani assassins.

Valiant Struggle of the People of Tripura

Comrades,

I am sure all of you will rise in admiration for the valiant fight carried on by our comrades in Tripura, our workers, CITU units, leaders and cadres, by men and women, students and youth by the courageous tribals and their women under the leadership of the CPI(M) headed by Com. Niripen Chakraborty, Dasrath Deb and others. No other section of Indian people is face to face with such fascist like terror. The gang rape of tribal women, murders of our cadres, occupation of our union offices, forcible migration of thousands of people have not created a dent in the fighting capacity of the working class and people of Tripura. The people of Tripura constitute the vanguard in the fight against authoritarianism of the Congress(I) and they are bearing the worst outrages with revolutionary zeal to fight the oppressive regime of Rajiv Gandhi.

ILO Indicts the Repressive Regime

This regime has now been internationally branded as colluding with murderers to dispose of political opponents and as suppressors of all trade union rights. On a complaint made by the CITU to the ILO committee against the misdeeds of the Tripura Government the Committee has made queries and arrived at conclusions which indict the Government with illegal deeds and violation of procedures. In regard to the complaint about the forcible occupation of CITU union's office by Congress(I) storm-troopers the ILO Committee has asked the Government to provide further information as to the manner in which the specific case of a capture of an office belonging to a CITU affiliate was attended to as per law. "The Committee regrets the absence of a climate in the State of Tripura which is conducive to the development and maintenance of a genuinely free and independent trade union movement."

Having thus indicted the State Government for repressing the trade union movement the Committee further suggested its collusion with anti-socials and noted its refusal to take legal actions against those who attack the Government's opponents. "The Committee further asked the Government to provide information as to the outcome of the investigations into the murders of Gopal Ghosh and Nripendra Rudra Pal including details of the outcome of any relevant court proceedings which may have been instituted in consequences of these investigations.

"The Committee further asked the Government to provide further particulars as to the alleged complexity of Badan Gope and Laxmi Narain Chauhan in the murder of Haripada Dey. In particular it asked the Government to indicate whether these individuals have been charged with any offence in relation to this matter and if so whether these charges have been brought before the court."

The gang rape and assaults on tribal rights in Tripura stand in bizarre contrast to Rajiv Gandhi's new promises of transferring power to the people through the Panchayati Raj Bill. For thirty per cent reservation for women promised under the Bill they have to accept gang rape of women with no punishment for offenders. The Panchayati Raj Bill provides that 30 per cent of Panchayat's expenditure should be spent for the benefit of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. But in Tripura the tribals are being deprived of land and other rights secured by them under the Autonomous District Legislation.

Raise Voice against the Semi-fascist Terror

Comrades,

The repression in Tripura, the terror against the masses, the total suppression of trade union rights should have been made a major campaign issue by all trade unions and secular political parties. The vicious and inhuman attack is an integral part of the authoritarian drive of the Congress(I). It should not be forgotten that the semi-fascist terror in West Bengal in 1972 finally led to the imposition of emergency rule all over India. Some parties at that time thought that the terror was an affair between the Congress-I Government and the CPI(M) and refused to fight against it. The mistake is being repeated again. Among the political parties only the CPI(M) considers it a major political issue. Even the left parties have left the Tripura masses to their fate. Among the central trade unions only the CITU fights for the people of Tripura the rest pass the terror in silence.

Our CITU must redouble its efforts in defence of Tripura and must constantly awaken all sections of the working class to the terror regime in the State and the brave fight of our comrades and the people of Tripura against it.

Economic Situation: Growing Penetration by Western Economy

Comrades,

Let me turn to the dangerous aspects of our economic situation. We have repeatedly warned that the new economy policy of the Rajiv Gandhi with its emphasis on imports liberalisation, call for competitiveness of industry and new openings to foreign capital to invest in our country will lead us into trouble and engender growing dependence of our economy on foreign loans and that this will jeopardise our efforts to build an independent self-reliant economy. This is precisely what is happening. Finding our economy to be in growing need of

Western help the US imperialists are now brazenly demanding total surrender and calling on the Government to open every avenue of our national economy to their penetration. In their new offensive they are charging India with following restricted trade practices which really means that Indian capital and industry should not be shown any preference and India must treat Indians as strangers in their own country and allow the Americans to take over. They further demand that they should be allowed to invade the services sector fields — insurance, banking, etc.

Imposition of Super 301 to Subjugate Indian Economy

The latest dominating demand under Super 301 is made in connection with what is called "The Protection of Intellectual Property Rights." As a newspaper despatch very aptly puts it the demand for Patent Trade negotiations under GATT, the demand that India and other countries conform to US dictates is intended to exercise a veto over technological development in India, capture India's market and subject her further progress to the US dictates. In short it is a demand for the subjugation of the economy. Once you accept it you are not allowed to do anything on your own. If you protect home market and restrict entry of foreign multinationals you will be charged with unfair trade practices and subjected to penal action against your trade. If you introduce licence for any purpose including location of industry or priority for industry you will be again charged with the same thing. If you invent new processes to manufacture existing patent product of a multinational you will be again charged with the same accusations. The entire gamut of economy comes under the GATT with the acceptance of the US demand on patent law.

Raise Voice of Protest Against Super 301

Though the Government of India has registered a strong protest and declared that it will not allow anyone to interfere with its right to manage its economy it is doubtful whether this good resolve can be implemented in the present situation. In fact accusations have been made that by agreeing to discuss US demand at the GATT level India has already yielded ground.

The anxiety comes from the fact that in the years since independence the USA occupies an important position as India's trading partner. Besides there are large scale US investments in India and collaboration agreements. It is also known that success of India's efforts to develop exports to foreign countries often depends to a large extent on US good will. All these factors raise doubts whether the Government of India with its present policy of propitiating foreign capital and foreign markets will stand the strain and pressure of adverse US acts which may dislocate trade and export markets.

The CITU and the country's trade union move-

ment cannot neglect this danger to national economy. They must raise their protest in time and save the country from being mortgaged to the US and its allies. It is a matter of great concern that most of the bourgeois opposition parties fail to recognise this danger. The working class must take the lead in fighting it, our trade unions must continually place this question before the mass of workers and rouse their united protest.

Growing Debt Burden Mortgaging the Economy

The vulnerability to outside pressure has increased because of our growing foreign indebtedness. India's aggregate foreign debt at the end of March this year totalled 68,851 crores of rupees, Lok Sabha was told in July this year. Eminent economists, however, consider this to be an underestimate and estimate India's indebtedness at Rs. 100 thousand crores. According to the figures given to the Lok Sabha the amount of interests distributed on the outstanding debt during 1988-89 amounted to Rs 2698 crores. Over the years interests and repayment of past debt i.e., debt service obligations amounted to more than 50 per cent of the new debt, reducing the net inflow of foreign assistance to that extent. In the earlier years 1980-81 debt servicing amounted for 30 per cent of the gross aid whereas in the years 1984-85 to 1988-89 the payment amounted to 52 per cent of the new debt. A conference of eminent economists held in Delhi this August has warned that the burden of debt service has mounted to 40 per cent of export earnings and more than 25 per cent of current receipts. External debt as a proportionate national income is 30 per cent as compared with 10 per cent seven years ago.

This speaks of a process of mortgaging our economy and imposing further unbearable burden on the people to meet the foreign obligations. India's hectic commercial borrowings are causing concern and World Bank circle feels that India will have to be rescued by an IMF loan i.e., India cannot afford to incur further obligation at commercial rates. If this happens, stringent economic condition will be imposed on India and that means that the masses will be made to swallow another dose of high prices, reduction of food subsidies and reduction of standard of living.

Unless this disastrous policy of Rajiv Gandhi is defeated and new viable policies are implemented India may face an economic disaster undermining our independence.

Fleeing by Growing Deficit Budget

Comrades,

The country's economy is run on huge deficit budgets which mounted every year and inflicted high prices on the people. The overwhelming majority of the Congress(I) in the Lok Sabha, a majority secured mainly because of emotional reasons, refuses to raise its voice against a financial policy based on borrowing from abroad and looting inside the country through deficit budgets. The Finance Minister

recently said that the budget deficits of 1989-90 will be higher by Rs 1500 crores than last year. The perennial budget deficits have already set the inflationary process in motion. On July 27 this year the Government informed the Lok Sabha that the rate of inflation in 1988-89 was 6.6 per cent against 10.6 per cent in 1987-88. In 1988-89 the value of notes printed amounted to Rs 15,018.20 crores. Lathis, police firing and the printing press are the instruments with which the Rajiv Gandhi is ruling and ruining the country.

Rising Prices

Inflation rate has further accentuated in the context of rising high prices of necessities of life and forcing starvation and semi-starvation on large sections of people. Latest official estimate of people living below poverty line is 37 crores. How can this 37 crores escape outright starvation with the rising inflation rate following from notes manufacturing business of the Government. Now under Rajiv Gandhi every year good or bad must sow distress among the people. The year 1988-89 saw a big bumper agricultural crop but wholesale price index went up by 7.5 per cent. The result is that despite good harvest the rural mass continue to starve because it cannot match its purchasing capacity with the rising prices of foodgrains.

Liquidating the Public Distribution System

It seems that Rajiv Government has found another way of forcing high prices on the people and mulcting them. Despite ample production, the Government agencies have procured less foodgrains this year. The result is that the open market has cornered the stocks. There is insufficient supply through the public distribution system. State Governments like the West Bengal and Kerala are complaining against short supplies. Rajiv's reply is "don't come with the begging bowl to the Centre." What it means is go and purchase in the open market at higher prices and inflict high prices on the people. This meets the demand of the World Bank that food-subsidy should be reduced and people should pay higher prices for food.

Now this is the situation deliberately created by the Rajiv Gandhi Government for the lakhs thrown out of their employment, for the crores employed in the unorganised industry those who have never seen a job and for the vast rural masses. A Government of this type have no right to continue and the crime it has committed is many times worse, more criminal than the Bofors deal.

Industrial Situation: Closing Down the Sick Concerns

The working class of India is the victim of this situation. There has been intense aggravation of working class distress since our last meeting. What is the official policy of Rajiv Government in relation to the industrial situation? Allow as many sick concerns to die as possible, never mind what happens to the jobs of the workers. The sick concerns

are to be considered as non-competitive and therefore to be wiped out. The World Bank objects to spend money for the revival and therefore the policy of gradually strangulating them is being adopted. The same policy is to be adopted towards textile mills under the NTC, the mills which are declared non-viable, and modernisation process is to be carried on in a few chosen mills. This modernisation will dispense with thousands of redundant workers to make the concerns competitive on the world market. Denotification of concerns is another measure to lessen the responsibility of the government which considers itself a socialist government. The concerns are to be handed over to former private owners who may promptly close them down. The more than 1,60,000 concerns are to be disposed of in this way. The responsibility of self declared welfare state to nurse back failing concerns is to be given up in the hunt for new competitive industry and new technology. But the matter does not end here. There are other ways in which the working class has been victimised. Illegal lock-outs and closures are not prohibited. The culprits are allowed to go scot-free. The fraudulent misappropriation of workers' Provident Fund contributions is again allowed to go virtually unpunished. In fact the Congress(I) Government's law provides such light punishment that the legislation becomes an incitement to rob the workers of their contribution. Private and government concerns are contriving more and more to reduce the number of permanent workers and increase the strength of temporary workers, the latter will be without the right of ESI and Provident Fund. A big saving in wage bills is to be achieved this way. And finally the Defence Department of the Union Government and other departments and private industries all are engaged in transferring part of the work to private contractors. The labourers engaged by the contractors have no rights even to DA, ESI and Provident Fund and even to a prescribed wage. It is a monstrous wage cut to save money for the Government and the capitalists. Day-by-day such rights as DA, ESI Provident Fund, leave with pay are being restricted to a narrowing circle of permanent workers in organised industry and their number is also being reduced daily. The workers in unorganised industry have no protection of legislation even minimum wage legislation. Their condition does not differ at all from that of Indian workers under British colonial rule.

Anti-Labour Legislations

In this situation to stem the tide of militant trade union movement, the Government introduced the new anti-working class legislations to curb the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining of all sections of workers and employees including the hospital and other employees. Yielding to the demand of the World Bank to relax labour legislations, it was an assurance to the multinationals that the field will be cleared for their exploitation of workers. The anti-trade union legislation should be considered as an attack on the fundamental rights of organisation and strike.

And now another technique is adopted to reduce the capacity of the workers to fight collectively to reduce the confidence of numbers. A number of big factories especially those connected with multi-nationals have started part of work outside the factory by dispersing production process. Part of work is transferred to low wage areas where government concessions are available in the name of helping the development of backward regions. In some cases production process is dispersed in the city itself, part of which are being handed over to industrial workers working at home and unable to defend their interests. And over and above this there is an attack of the revised fraudulent cost of living index. The trade union movement and working class of our country are face to face with these attacks in the midst of unheard of unemployment. No doubt last year has been a hard year for us to maintain our rights, our jobs and above all our organisation.

Fake Scheme of Workers' Participation

This was a situation in which there was utmost need to take counsel with the workers and secure their cooperation in running production in industrial concerns. It was above all necessary to secure their cooperation on equal terms to restore to health the sick concerns and eliminate huge losses due to non-utilisation of country's production potential. The CITU has repeatedly called for a genuine scheme of workers' participation based on equal status so that the skill and initiative of workers can contribute fully to social production. The workers do not wish to be silent spectators or outsiders in the production process. They want to play an active role in shaping, influence and improving country's production. But the capitalists and Rajiv's socialist Government have refused to accept any participation based on equal rights and status with the workers having all the rights to know about production details, state of orders, supply of raw materials, finances, etc. Even the farcical scheme of participation introduced by the Government was not implemented by them. The Rajiv Government's labour legislation pieces are only meant for international reporting and propaganda and not for implementation. The Rajya Sabha Committee on Government Assurances says in its 36th Report that the Board level participation of workers is more important than shop or floor or plant level participation. No suggestion has been made by the Labour Ministry on the question of consensus and due to its casual and perfunctory attitude the scheme would prove non starter. After hearing the statements, views and comments of the Secretary, Ministry of Labour, the Committee concluded that the Ministry of Labour and the Tripartite Committee had no teeth in effecting the implementation of the scheme of employees' participation in management — no mechanism whatsoever existed to check the veracity of the information furnished to them by the latter. The ministry of labour was not properly applying their mind to resolve the impasse over the mode of selection of workers' representa-

tives at the board of director's level and was simply harping upon consensus which appeared to the committee to be inapplicable. The clarification given by the Secretary, Ministry of Labour was highly unsatisfactory and unconvincing.

Crisis in Jute and Textile Industries

Comrades,

On behalf of the CITU, I express our warm sympathy for the cotton textile and jute workers who had to bear the main burden of the closures and retrenchement. Our sympathies are with the rest of the workers who also have been forced to accept prolonged lock-outs and closures. Despite the most critical situation the textile and jute workers have held their organisations and unity in tact. The lock out offensive could not shake their organisational loyalty.

I warmly congratulate the working class of Bengal, all sections of workers and employees for their magnificent contribution to the Bakreshwar project. Comrades, to make such a contribution in the midst of an agonising and excruciating industrial situation with tens of thousands without work was an expression of high political consciousness and loyalty to working class and democratic movement. It revealed the mighty support and confidence that the Left Front Government of West Bengal headed by Comrade Jyoti Basu, Vice President of the CITU has earned among working class.

The condition of jute industry can be imagined from the following: "The jute employers continue to be guided by speculative trading and greed for earning high profits. They are attempting to solve their problems at the expense of workers. One after another the mills are locked out for the purpose. The lock-out figures in jute mills vis-a-vis production figures indicate that the jute employers kept the total production figures almost stable though, about 25 per cent of the capacity remain idle during the period due to the periodical lock outs." (West Bengal Labour 1988)

The offensive takes the form of arbitrary changes in the man-machine ratio, increased work load and wage cuts. The offensive of synthetic fibre was to an extent reduced by the Government of India's order for mandatory use of jute goods for packaging of some articles. But the use of circular looms to manufacture bags of jute and synthetic fibre has created danger of large scale retrenchement. The Government of India is helping this process in the name of modernisation and also financing it. In this condition the nationalisation of jute industry provides the only way out of the present impasse when lock-outs and other pressures are used to overcome workers' resistance and gather profits for the mill owners. The demand for nationalisation has been repeatedly raised by the CITU and all left trade unions in West Bengal. A delegation of MPs from all Parties including the Congress(I) met the Central Industries Minister to press the demand. But the

Central Government showed no response. The Centre's policy is to solve the problems of the industry at the expense of the workers and for profiteering interests of the jute barons. While pressing for this urgent demand our CITU units must make every effort to ensure the opening of the lock-out mills by negotiating agreements which are acceptable to the mass of workers and which do not prejudice their future.

Along with the jute industry the cotton textile industry, the biggest industry in India is in the throes of crisis. The total number of workers involved in the production of cotton textile goods—mills, handloom and powerloom workers exceed a crore. Yet this mass of workers have been thrown into indescribable misery by the Rajiv Government. The new cotton textile policy has turned out to be a hoax, inflicting further suffering on the workers. The NTC mills, more than 100, are also run inefficiently and turning sick. The Government seems to have no other policy except of denotifying them and throwing the workers to the wolfs. Its policy towards powerloom has ruined the workers who have been getting starvation wage all along. So far as the handloom workers are concerned the official policy, notwithstanding tall talks, is one of continuous ruination and forced starvation. The lakhs of handloom workers continue to ply their trade just because outright starvation awaits them if they stop plying the handlooms. The CITU has held several conventions to voice the urgent demands of all these sections. In September again there will be a big rally of all sections to protest the official policies.

Nationalisation with Workers' Participation—the only Solution

On the 30th of August while demanding justice to powerloom and handloom workers the entire trade union movement must demand nationalisation of organised cotton textile industry with workers' participation. Sickness exposes the bankruptcy of private ownership. The plight of NTC mills exposes the bankruptcy of running the mills without participation of workers on equal terms. The more than 100 nationalised textile mills under the NTC have shown enormous losses leading to huge waste of public money because of failure to ensure genuine participation of workers and lack of desire and the will to produce the best possible results for the people. The nationalised textile mills and their working is not an affair between the workers and the management, but a trust held on behalf of the people of India.

The Government has no plan of running the industry in the interest of people and the workers. In fact they seem to have only one plan, a plan for massacre of jobs. Private capital circles and their research bureau forecast that the share of composite mills in cloth production will shrink to 10 per cent in another ten years. About 50 per cent of the composite mills will not see the turn of the century and the labour employed in the textile industry today is surplus by 25 per cent for available levels of

technology. The NTC is pursuing the same objective. It controls 14 mills in West Bengal, which employ about 14,000 workers. The management of the NTC has given a proposal for conversion of 14 mills into seven mills through amalgamation to make these amalgamated mills viable. But this will affect the job of 9000 workers. Nobody knows what fate awaits the workers of handloom and powerloom at the turn of the century.

There can be no relief for the workers concerned unless the organised textile industry is nationalised, workers' participation is ensured and transitional consultation with the trade unions. Besides, justice should be ensured to powerloom and handloom workers.

Pressure of World Bank

But it is not only a question of jute and cotton textile industry. Lockout sickness, closures affect thousands of engineering and other concerns. The drug industry in India is again faced with closures because of competition from multinationals. The policy regarding closures, lock outs, denotification, non-interference of the Government is to an extent influenced by World Bank pressure and guidelines leading to victimisation of lakhs of Indian workers. This is accompanied by a terrific computerisation drive. According to estimates of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, India's production of computers will be worth Rs 950 crores in 1990, Rs 3500 crores in 1995 and Rs 1400 crores in 2000 A.D. In 1991 production of micro-computers will go up from 75,000 numbers in 1989 to 1,10,000 numbers and mini-computers would register a growth from 35,000 numbers to 45,000 numbers.

Rising Struggles

Despite the adverse conditions facing all industries and all sections of workers the trade unions have continued to fight against the growing attacks and old and new contingents of workers have again and again taken up the fight for their demands. The CITU in Kanpur secured an outstanding victory for the textile workers compelling the authorities to withdraw an adverse award which sought to impose heavy workload to workers. Rail Roko agitation organised by the CITU and other trade unions and which was addressed by Comrade E. Balanandan proved effective and the Government had to accept the demand of the workers. In this militant agitation our CITU had played a leading role decisively mobilising the workers for the fight against the award. The CITU has succeeded in rousing the unorganised workers in defence of their rights including minimum wage. The Delhi State CITU Committee, the Punjab and other state CITU Committees have done creditable work and achieved some minimum success which should help in further consolidating the organisation.

A number of our State Committees are already attending to the problem of working women. The

conference of Anganwadi workers organised under the auspices of the CITU Working Women's Coordinating Committee was a big success. Following it several conferences and conventions are being held in many places. There is no doubt that the Conference provided a solid ground for building an all India organisation.

Sugar and Construction workers have shown further progress in the struggle for their rights. The sugar workers are now preparing for all India strike in support of their minimum demands. The electricity workers have made rapid progress and there is a joint call along with AITUC to organise an all India strike on 30th August in support of charter of demands. The Engineering and Transport workers are again preparing themselves to face new challenges. The workers of public sector industries, coal and steel and others have through strenuous negotiating efforts succeeded in securing substantial wage increases and other demands. This advance was the result of the united efforts of all concerned trade union centres. The agreement entered into by IISCO comrades guaranteeing employment for all those working at present after the expansion and modernisation of the plant is a notable achievement of IISCO workers.

Fight for Right to Work

Comrades,

Many of the tasks that face us are being discharged but yet much remains to be done to meet the needs of the situation. Take the struggle of trade unions for the unemployed workers, It has not yet become an integral part of our trade union activities. It is taken spasmodically. Conferences are held, resolutions are passed, but a movement of the workers for the defence of the unemployed is not in sight. Even a permanent organisation backed by the mass following of trade unions is yet to emerge. Without this our demand for right to work, a fundamental right under the Constitution will not have the required sanction. In the present condition of massive unemployment it is absolutely essential to rally round this demand the mass of unemployed and employed workers. It is a matter of some satisfaction that apart from central trade unions, industrial federations like the steel workers' federation are taking initiative on this front and mobilising the workers in support of the unemployed.

Fraudulent Price Index

Comrades,

Let me now recall how we have failed on a very important issue, an issue of importance to the workers. I am referring to the fraudulent cost of living index number and its imposition, which has already led to a cut in the DA amount. Comrade Pandhe's pamphlet exposing the fraudulent character of the index are sold in thousands in almost all states by our CITU State Committees. The exception was the Maharashtra CITU State Committee. Thousands of workers know about this fraudulent

character of this index and yet no direct action and strike were organised by the trade unions. Again the only exception was the Maharashtra CITU State Committee which despite their vacillations and sabotage by some elements, organised a successful protest strike. It seems here is an instance of relying too much on others and forgetting our independent activity our responsibility to the workers; Some of the trade union centres had already shown that they had no interest in fighting this battle. And we should have drawn a proper conclusion and gone ahead.

Physical Attacks on CITU Cadres

Comrades,

We should not forget that in many places our CITU cadres and workers have to face physical attacks at the hands of the goondas hired by the managements, and police repression and terror. I have already referred to the repression in Tripura. Let me refer to the terror attacks in another Congress (I) ruled state, attacks connived at by the state police. The Barbil mining belt of Orissa witnessed unprecedented goonda terror and police repression in December last year. The target of the attack was the CITU union and its members, mostly Adivasis. On 22nd December 1988, Suka Patra, a CITU leader was attacked by the hired assassins. His hands and leg have been chopped off. In the months proceeding these attacks, seven CITU members were physically assaulted. Comrade Dharanidhar Mahto and Com. Ganeshwar Patra were physically assaulted and had to be removed to the hospital. The police response was no arrest of the culprits but a ban on CITU demonstration.

It is surprising that under the non-Congress (I) Government of Devi Lal in Haryana the workers are not free from repression. The sugar workers of Palwal, Palwal Co-operative Sugar Mills, who struck work on January 1st and were observing dharna at the mill gate were lathicharged on the night of 20th January. 25 workers were severely injured. Several workers were arrested. Earlier the General Secretary of the CITU union was dismissed.

This was not the only attack on workers in Haryana. Employees, workers, students all have been subjected to police assaults and assaults at the hands of the gangsters.

The same situation exists in many Congress(I) ruled states. The CITU has to forge ahead facing this repression. Every step forward of our organisation demands physical suffering and sacrifices of our workers and cadres. Without this militancy and spirit of self-sacrifice our organisation would not have developed.

Struggles Advancing in other Mass Organisations

Comrades

Before I turn to other topics let me on behalf of you welcome the great strides made by the Kisan

and Agricultural Workers' movement. This movement forms the basic strength of Indian people's struggle for democracy, struggle against Rajiv Gandhi and our march forward to a new social order, socialism. We should also welcome the advance registered by the organisations of youth and students.

Comrades,

Outstanding is the progress registered in the women's movement in our country. The AIDWA is organising a massive rally on 8th of September and all our unions must render all help to make it a grand success. Participation of working women, CITU's women members must be ensured in large numbers. The success of this mobilisation with its demand will be a fitting reply to the Congress(I) claims to advance the cause of women.

Safeguard the Left Front Governments

Comrades

On behalf of all of you I convey my warm greetings to the Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Kerala, who have shown how to defend democracy, national unity and common man's interests despite the heavy limitations of the bourgeois-landlord constitution. They have distinguished themselves by the refusal to use anti-people laws and have protected the democratic rights of the people. They have refused to bow down before the vested interests and lent their weight to the defence of the legitimate and urgent demands of the working class, peasantry, and the working people as a whole. They have thrown the weight of the administration to defend national unity and fight anti-national communal forces. The workers of West Bengal would have been in a far more critical plight had the Left Front not thrown its weight in their favour during these years of economic crisis. The discriminatory policy of the Rajiv Government towards the Left Front Ministry and the recent food policy have made the people rally behind the left parties all the more and given a rebuff to the slanders of the Congress(I) propaganda. In Kerala also there is continuous vilification of the LDF Government by the Congress(I) in association with the RSS, BJP and the Muslim League. Here again the Rajiv Government has deliberately reduced the food quota allotted to the state forcing high prices on the people and disturbing the functioning of the public distribution system. While the Rajiv Government forces high prices on the people the Kerala, Congress(I) holds the LDF Ministry responsible for it and starts the agitation. The two Governments by their performances have raised the prestige of Left force in national life leading to new correlation of forces among the opposition parties and democratic forces.

Forge Trade Union Unity

Comrades,

On the question of trade union unity we have shown persistence in maintaining and strengthening it. National Campaign Committee is not the only forum of trade union unity though it is the most

important and effective. At various levels, at the level of unions, in the daily struggle at the level of industrial federations, at the level of coordination committees in private and public sector, various forms of trade union unity and understanding are developing, increasing the resistance capacity of the workers. There are occasions on which the INTUC also is a partner in united actions and such actions are increasing. It is because of this persistent struggle and maintenance of unity that in the present period of perilous economic situation we have been able to strike some good bargain for the workers.

Comrades,

To maintain and strengthen this unity at various levels is the common task before all of us. No form of united front and unity should be neglected and all must contribute to strengthening the appeal of the NCC. In relation to the NCC also one should not be disappointed if sometimes a common agreement on a vital issue is not possible. You will be surprised, perhaps shocked to find that on the call for strike on 30th August in support of the Bandh for Rajiv's resignation, the NCC could not issue a joint statement. The BMS declined to join others. The rest of the trade unions have given a united call for the success of the bandh. Perhaps all of you must remember that on the question of world peace and important international developments very rarely there had been a common agreement on the NCC.

Finally, I have to state that in spite of all our efforts and sincerity for trade union unity, actual performance of the trade union centres lags far behind the urge of the workers to unite and fight together. May we be soon in a position to overcome lag.

Fight the Divisive Forces, Safeguard the Unity and Integrity of the Country

Comrades,

The trade union and working class have to wage a united fight to protect their rights. Simultaneously they have to wage a fight on issues which affect the country and the people as a whole. They have to defeat the economic policies of the Rajiv Government and ward off the danger of growing penetration in economy by American and other multinationals which is bound to affect our policy of self-reliance and erode our country's economic independence. The surrender of the Government of India before the Union Carbide cheating the Bhopal victims of their compensation clearly marks the danger arising from multinationals in our country.

To fight these dangers, created by the imperialist machinations what we require above all is the steeled unity of our people to defend the country's independence, its unity and its integrity. Unfortunately all minds of reactionary forces are undermining our unity. The Hindu communalists and obscurantists, the Muslim fundamentalists, the Khalistani secessionists, the sponsors of Hindu Raj, the RSS, BJP, and those who raise Pakistani flags in Jammu

and Kashmir and all those who fan communal riots, all are the worst disruptors of national unity and have to be fought relentlessly. To adopt soft attitude towards any one of these forces is to betray the country and objectively join hands with the foreign forces who seek to redivide the country.

Government of National Disintegration: Hoax of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana: Subjugating the Power of States

The Congress(I) under Rajiv has failed to meet this challenge of divisive forces. The Punjab situation shows no sign of improving and there are reports that the Rajiv Government and his agent S.S. Ray are conspiring to negotiate an agreement with one of the Bhindranwale groups. In Kashmir the pro-Pakistani challenge gets intensified everyday. In the Hindu heartland communal forces are planning a holocaust on the Ramjanambhoomi/Babri Masjid dispute. The Congress(I) party panders to the communal element and seeks their help for maintaining itself in power. In Kerala it takes the help of the Muslim League while teaching secularism to others in the north. In Mizoram for winning election it openly made a communal appeal in the name of Christianity to secure Christian votes. In the communal riots the Muslim minority faces the worst under its rule. The disintegration of the country under its rule is the biggest crime of the Rajiv Government. But the Congress(I) is not repentant. It has no sense of loyalty to the people, otherwise it would have quit the stage to allow a new government to take over. After establishing a fascist like terror in Tripura and unleashing police repression against rural masses in several States, Rajiv and the Congress(I) now talk of transfer of power to the people under the Panchayati Raj and Nagarpalika bills. It is a device to get the confidence of the innocent mass, the force which will decide the result of the election. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana is intended to provide the job for each family in the rural areas. It is an old promise which has remained unredeemed for years and it is not likely to be fulfilled under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana also. Under it each person is supposed to get a job for at least 50 to 100 days a year and for this a grant sum of Rs. 75,000/- to Rs. 100000 will be provided. As a matter of fact perhaps no other major social welfare and rural relief has revealed such blatant corruption, false claims, appropriation of huge sums in the name of wages of non-existent workers and use of cheap labour for the rich and the landlords. Situation will not be different this time. The landowners and upper sections which dominate the Panchayat will put their own interpretation of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and spend money accordingly. Besides it is an election year measure. Its main aim is to get the attention of the rural masses concentrated on the Central Government and the ruling party so that they vote for the Congress(I). The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, the Panchayati Raj and Nagarpalika Bills have one feature in common. Politically they aim at attacking the power of State Governments in the name of decentralisation. To be able to achieve this purpose

the bills are loaded with promises like 30 per cent reservation for women, 30 per cent expenditure for the benefit of Harijans and Adivasis, freedom from state control to spend the money as they like, as the Panchayat likes. But in the end the Panchayat is completely dependent for finances on the centre and must act according to its orders.

Whatever provision you make for the powers of the Panchayat will not benefit the people so long as landlords and rural money barons dominate them.

To make it control over the Panchayat Raj complete, to keep away the States from having any relation with it, elections are to be ordered by the Election Commissioner, a central official, important decisions are to be taken by the Governor and new powers and finances are to be given at the expense of the state. Attacks on the State's powers constitute an act of criminality which will affect the unity and integrity of the country.

The Nagarpalika Bill also provides for new powers to the Municipal Corporations but makes them completely dependent on the Centre. For their success they will have to depend entirely on all-India finance bodies controlled by the Centre.

While genuine decentralisation of power to the Panchayats and municipalities is welcomed and necessary, the proposed bills have little to do with decentralisation.

Dethrone the Congress(I) Government

Comrade,

The five year rule of Rajiv Gandhi is preparing a disaster for our country's unity integrity and independence and economic progress. Rajiv Gandhi shows no signs of repentance and responsibility. His August 15th speech not only marred the serenity of the occasion but showed that he has no regard for the people and their sufferings. He claimed great success in economic advance of the country when crores were living below the poverty line. He claimed that he has rescued the country from the threat of disintegration when his five years rule has accentuated the threat and revealed the bankruptcy of his Government to meet it. He talked about fighting the communal and divisive forces when he and his party go to any length to compromise with them for remaining in power. He has nothing to say about corruption scandals surrounding his Government and showed his utter disregard for democracy when he made light of the resignation of the opposition from the Lok Sabha. Betraying his election pledges and caught in corruption scandals, the Rajiv Government and the Congress (I) tried to work the Parliament as an instrument of one party authoritarian rule. They threw to winds all norms and conventions of parliamentary democracy treating the opposition as irrelevant. Of late the Ministers and Congress (I) members have assumed militant postures to launch intemperate attacks against the opposition uttering half truths and even lies.

But the arrogance buttressed by an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha got deflated when opposition parties resigned en bloc from the House demanding the resignation of Rajiv Gandhi after the CAG exposure. This sudden opposition action and seizure of political initiative by it electrified the situation and served to enthuse people and forces which were fighting the Congress (I) Government policies in mass actions, strikes and struggles. This unprecedented step created panic and confusion in the arrogant majority holders. In their confusion they are making statements full of ridicule. Like a thief calling thief they charge the opposition with violating democratic norms. If they have not understood that the resignations constitute appeal from the Parliamentary majority to the sovereign people of India they have understood nothing of democracy.

Sugar Workers Decide for Indefinite Strike

THIRD all India Convention of Sugar Workers held at Lucknow on August 20 decided to go on indefinite strike all over the country from November 15. The Convention was organised by the National Sugar Workers Co-ordination Committee comprising of all the Central Trade Unions in the sugar industry, viz., the CITU, AITUC, HMS, INTUC, BMS, UTUC and HMKP and other federations.

The decision to hold the Convention and prepare for indefinite strike was taken by the Co-ordination Committee in its meeting held at Delhi on July 2 in view of the refusal of the Government to accede to the demand of the Co-ordination Committee to reject the retrograde recommendations of the Third Sugar Wage Board and start negotiations with the Co-ordination Committee on the charter of demands of the Sugar workers.

The Wage Board after about five years of deliberation had rejected all the major demands of the sugar workers despite high profits made by the sugar mill owners. This was virtually a negation of wage revision of the sugar workers which had practically remained frozen since the last one and half decades.

The two labour representatives in the Wage Board had opposed its recommendations and submitted their notes of dissent. Since the submission of report to the Government by the Wage Board in January last, the sugar workers went on almost continuous agitations.

As decided by the Co-ordination Committee in its meeting held at Pune on January 11 and 12, a successful one day strike was observed all over the country on February 15. Thereafter a mass all India rally of several thousands sugar workers was held at Boat Club, New Delhi on April 11 and a Petition signed by about one lakh workers was submitted to

The opposition parties in their separate statements have given a call for Bharat Bandh on August 30 to demand resignation of Rajiv Government. It is a timely call. The CITU, the AITUC, the HMS and several other constituents of the National Campaign Committee have called for industrial strike in support of the call. There is no doubt that our unions will make all efforts to make the call a grand success. The 30th August will be the opening shot in the coming battle of elections. The stronger the unity of left and secular forces, the wider the mass appeal, the greater the chance of electing the government of people's choice and dethroning the Congress (I) from power. The CITU and the working class must from now onwards get ready to fight the election battle and win it in favour of the democratic forces and the people of India.

the Lok Sabha Speaker for the Committee on Petitions. The central rally was followed up with state-wise rallies on April 26 when memoranda were submitted to the State Labour Ministers to prevail upon the Government of India to reject the Wage Board report. However, despite all these continuous movements, the Government remained callous towards the demands of the sugar workers and kept their wages under virtual freeze. Under such compelling circumstances the Convention gave the call for indefinite strike.

The Convention was presided over by one representative from each Central Trade Union and federations. About 800 delegates from all the sugar producing states and representing the various unions and federations attended the convention. The report was placed by Kishore Pawar, Convenor of the Co-ordination Committee. Leaders of the various Central Trade Unions and federations addressed the delegates. A number of delegates participated in the discussion. They narrated their deplorable experience of working and service conditions, poor and varying wage structures from State to State and from mill to mill, low Dearness Allowances, poor fringe benefits, retaining allowances, and all other facilities. They narrated the deplorable conditions of the casual, badli and contract workers. The conditions of those engaged in breweries and alcohol preparations were still worse although they worked under the same management and in the same factories.

The delegates showed their anger at the continued refusal of the managements to improve their service conditions and at the adamancy of the Government to negotiate their demands. They showed their determination to launch the indefinite strike and resolution not to allow crushing in any mill till the Government accedes to the demands of the Co-ordination Committee. The resolution calling for the indefinite strike from November 15 was passed unanimously.