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report at coimbatore

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26th session
january 6-12, 1961

by
s. a. dange

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S. A. DANGE

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foreword

The 26th Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress was held at Coimbatore from January 6 to 12, 1961. A report surveying the international and national situation, conditions of the Indian working class, specially about wages in the context of increase in productivity and fulfilment of the Five Year Plans and the tasks before the trade union movement during the coming period, etc., was presented to the session by Com. S. A. Dange, M.P., General Secretary of the AITUC.

This report was discussed by over 1,500 delegates and observers who attended the session, both during the plenary meeting as well as in State-wise groups. Following discussion, the report was adopted with certain additions and modifications.

It is very much regretted that the report could not be printed earlier.

The struggles that have taken place during the last few months since Coimbatore Session prove the correctness of the analysis made and the stand taken by the AITUC in regard to trade union movement in particular.

June 5, 1961

AITUC SECRETARIAT

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I

socialism advances imperialism retreats nations liberated

WE HAVE JUST CLOSED THE YEAR 1960 AND ARE TRYING TO LOOK at the future that we have to shape. Each year, since the end of the World War, brings forth memorable events, which in their total effect, advance history in favour of the working class, in favour of the people, in favour of socialism, peace, democracy and freedom.

You may remember that during the days of the Second World War, there were many good people in India, who were sorry that the Soviet Union, its people and its Red Army, was crushing Hitler and that it had accepted the alliance of Britain, the arch-enslaver of India and several other countries, in the anti-fascist war. India's millions, pining under the heel of British imperialism, would not relish the idea of the victory of the British imperialists in the war. True, they did not want Soviet Russia to be lost but their main desire was to see that Britain was somehow defeated,—by whom it did not matter. They thought Britain's defeat in the war, even at the hands of the fascists, meant liberation of India and all subject countries. If Britain were saved, so they argued, there would be no freedom for us.

Britain was saved by the Soviet victory, France was

saved and America became the richest and most powerful country in the world.

And, yet, what happened in the fifteen years after the war?

The victory of the British imperialists, of the French imperialists, of the American imperialists, did not help them to grow and develop their imperialism further, to retain their loot of the world, to continue to hold vast millions in their colonies in subjection. Was it not a strange victory of imperialism by which the victors lost the essence of their loot, where the victorious imperialisms have to face defeat and see the chains by which they enslaved millions broken to bits? Why this paradox?

It is because, the victory was not led by the imperialists but by the country of socialism. The victory of the socialist Soviet Union directly led to the establishment of several socialist States in Europe and later to the victory of the Chinese Revolution. India too attained independence and many other countries of Asia and Africa began their battle for freedom and won it.

In the last fifteen years, since the war, about forty new sovereign States have arisen in Asia and Africa.

That continent of one hundred and fifty million—enslaved, tortured, looted by a handful of imperialist marauders and colonisers, described in the school textbooks of the imperialists as a land of barbarians, blacks and wild beasts, but from where they mined gold, diamonds, uranium and radium and got their cocoa and ivory, from where they captured the Africans and sold them into slavery—has now risen in revolt. After the First World War, several countries in Asia stepped into the national revolutionary movement. But Africa was comparatively dormant except for Egypt, Morocco, etc. After the Second World War, the liberation of Africa is on the march. Over fourteen new sovereign States have come up there though, even as yet, the apartheid fascists of South Africa are unwilling to surrender to the forces of freedom.

Another vast belt on which the imperialists fattened was that of Latin America. There too, they are overthrow-

ing the rule of American capital. The most outstanding event in that sphere in recent times is the Cuban Revolution.

What does this phenomenon mean?

It means that the might of the socialist camp is becoming a decisive force in the world arena by its economic, political, technical and social achievements. The economy of the imperialists is suffering from the usual crisis of capitalism, while the economy of the socialist camp is fast heading to become bigger and richer than that of the imperialist camp.

As a result of this and the growth of the national liberation movements of the countries ruled or controlled by the colonialist powers, the vast reserves on which imperialism grew and lived have crumbled.

Long ago, when the Soviet Union was born, we used to speak of one link in the imperialist chain being smashed.

Today, the imperialist chain has been broken all along the line. They may be holding on to a broken link here and there and trying to restore it by military bases, dictatorships and coups, but it is futile. The all-embracing chain is finished and cannot come back.

Such is the world in which we step in, in the year 1961. That should give us, of the working class and toiling people, a new confidence, a new sense of unity and solidarity and greater zeal to fulfil our tasks.

The imperialists are no doubt suffering defeat after defeat. The fiasco of their attack on Egypt, Syria, shows that their warmongering can be halted. They must now be forced into disarmament and to live in peace with the freedom-loving world and try their luck or ill-luck, whether they can keep their own working class and people with them and away from socialism, when it comes to peaceful competition with the socialist camp. But they still refuse to follow that road. Hence, while being confident that the forces of peace, united, can halt and defeat the warmongers, we all have to campaign for peace in real earnest and in vigilance. We have to make people conscious of the horrors of nuclear war, the atomic weapons that can kill millions of people and devastate vast areas of civilisation. In our

trade unions, we must educate the workers in the capacities for good and bad of the new forces of science, their use in the hands of imperialists for destruction and their use in the hands of the working class and socialism and better life. Only an enlightened class-conscious working class, with the help of other peace forces, can halt war, preserve peace and freedom and take the world to socialism.

We in India have never been in the real theatre of war and hence we are not so keenly sensitive to the question of war and peace. But now in the atomic age, no country, even a neutral one or far away from the actual scene of war can be saved from the horrors of nuclear reactions. The advanced worker knows it but not yet the millions. To tell them this is one of our tasks.

The imperialists are suffering defeat after defeat, but they will not give up their adventures easily. Apart from threatening a world war, they try to stage a comeback in new guise. They thwart the development of newly liberated countries, by imposing militarist dictatorships over them and suppressing the growth of parliamentary democracy in these countries and fulfilment of measures that are beneficial to the toiling people. They still try by force of arms to defeat the national liberation movements. The French imperialists refuse to give up Algeria, the Belgians, aided by the American imperialists, refuse to give up Congo. The Americans are planning to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. While, on one side, their puppets are suffering defeat in Japan, South Korea and Turkey, they are trying to set up new ones in Congo, in Latin America, Laos and so on. The Dutch imperialists defeated on the mainland of Indonesia refuse to give up West Irian. Even petty Portugal refuses to surrender our territory of Goa to us.

Our workers and trade unions have campaigned for solidarity with the struggles of the people of Algeria, Cuba and Congo. But these campaigns have not been as widespread as they should have been. We have not taken up the work in real earnest. For example, we have hundreds of trade union offices in our country. May I ask a very simple question? In how many of them have we hung up maps

to tell our workers where Congo, Cuba or Algeria are? Why not have those maps in every office? Dr. Fidel Castro's portraits are seen all over in socialist countries. Lumumba is held a prisoner by the hirelings of Belgian-American imperialists¹. Are their faces seen on our walls, in our trade union offices? Do their slogans appear on factory walls or in houses of even our advanced workers? Should not the unions do that simple job of education, which then can become the basis of further movements of solidarity?

Our workers are proud of the great socialist countries and their achievements; they speak of and discuss the achievements of the Soviet Union and China and other countries. We are familiar with the idea of two camps—the *Camp of Imperialism* and the *Camp of Socialism*. But there is also the wider and bigger *Camp of Peace*. It consists of socialist countries and also those which are not socialist but are neutral and peace-loving, opposed to war. If you take the map of the world and hold it to the worker, and show him how big the Camp of Peace is, which includes the mighty socialist camp, he will feel amazed, proud, confident and sure of victory. Should not our trade union organisers carry such an eloquent symbol of peace, freedom and socialism everywhere, in processions, strikes, tribunals, offices, homes?

The Camp of Peace and the peace forces comprise, as you know, the following:

1. Soviet Union which leads the world in the decisive branches of science and technology.
2. The entire socialist camp, whose material and political might is on the side of peace.
3. Growing number of peace-loving countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America who are vitally interested in peace.

¹ The gangster regime of Mobuto handed over Lumumba to Tshombe and the Belgian Fascists in Katanga, who murdered him and his two colleagues in cold blood. The news broke out on February 14, 1961 which shocked the world and led to widespread demonstrations everywhere. See **appendix 1**.

4. The international working class and its organisations.
5. The national liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries.
6. The world peace movement.
7. The neutral countries who want no share in the imperialist policy of war.
8. Sections of the bourgeoisie of capitalist countries who take a sober view of things.

India stands in this vast peace camp and, as such, is on the side of the socialist camp for purposes of peace and opposing war. The Indian Parliament denounced the racists of South Africa and the massacre of Sharpeville. Nehru at the United Nations stood on the side of Congo and for the resolution calling for end to colonialism.

With such favourable circumstances, we should be able to campaign better and secure vaster masses for our cause of aiding the liberation movements, for popularising the achievements of the socialist countries, for international solidarity, for peace and socialism.

These questions should not be treated as remote to us. The military coup in Pakistan gave us a jolt near at home some time back but now we have almost got used to live with it by side. In Pakistan, the Generals of the Army arrested the President and marched him off. In Congo, the President and the mercenary Colonel, fed by the American and Belgian imperialists and secretly aided by the so-called neutrality of the U. N. forces, arrested Prime Minister Lumumba, dissolved the Parliament and established a rule of terror and of the foreign monopolists wanting the vast mining wealth of Congo. And now, on our north, the King of Nepal, has become a turn-coat, dissolved the Parliament, arrested the elected Prime Minister and legislators and ushered in a personal rule relying on the Army Generals.

The Indian democratic movement has not yet reacted sharply to the events in Nepal. The Indian reactionaries favour the events in Nepal. It is known that the police and

army in Nepal were built by the advisers lent from India. It is worth noting that Birla's journal, the *Eastern Economist*, welcomed the coup in Nepal. It is at this very time that the President of the Indian Republic raised just casually the innocuous looking question, before a gathering of lawyers, whether according to the Indian Constitution, the President was bound to abide by the advice of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. What a fantastic question to raise after ten years of the Constitution? Was it a suggestion that the Constitution places the President above the Cabinet and even the Parliament?

It would thus seem that the anti-democratic trends, which elsewhere are overthrowing even bourgeois parliamentary democracies and establishing military dictatorships in the service of the monopoly profiteers, are trying to infiltrate in the Indian climate also. No doubt, the position of Pandit Nehru among the masses is an obstacle in their way. But this very factor reveals the weakness of the position. The Congress regime is so ridden with factional squabbles, corruption, waste, anti-democratic measures, bureaucratic methods and the self-aggrandisement of the monopoly profiteers and landowning elements that the masses are becoming apathetic to the question as to who is in power. Parliament is used as an instrument by these anti-democratic interests to carry out their self-aggrandisement at the cost of the people and the country. Premier Nehru, in spite of his vast influence, is unable to check this development and strengthen the democratic forces, because he fails to realise the necessity of complete elimination of reactionaries from the making and execution of the political and economic policies of the state, and because he refuses to believe in the initiative of the masses and their capacity to manage things and curb the bureaucrats and the vested interests. The result is that this vast country of ours, interested in peace and progress, positively on the side of democracy and freedom and against imperialist adventurers, is unable to play a more positive and bigger role in quickening the pace of freedom, democracy and socialism. The reactionaries, who are yet not organised nor strong

enough to do the dirty work in India, are carrying out their rehearsals in Nepal and elsewhere.

In such a situation, we cannot merely remain silent spectators or critics. Many look at these events with the attitude that "it cannot happen here". Yes, it cannot, if the masses and especially the working class and peasantry are roused to the sense of the danger, to the need to guard democracy in our country.

No doubt, ours is not a people's democracy. Ours is not even a national democracy like that of Cuba, which has firmly ousted the American imperialists and nationalised all their undertakings, disarmed the reactionaries and given the workers, peasants and intellectuals full initiative and power to manage the country's government and economy. Ours is a bourgeois democracy where power is not with the masses but with the bourgeoisie. Even then it is a bourgeois democracy based on parliamentary system and some democratic rights. It is not a personal or military dictatorship of capital. It still leaves elbow room for the masses to speak and act in defence of their interests. Hence it is necessary to protect and develop further this parliamentary democracy and not be indifferent to its fate on the ground that it does not serve truly and fully, the interests of the democratic masses. The trade unions have a role to play in protecting, using and further developing this parliamentary democracy so that it is not either overthrown by military and personal dictators or used by the monopoly profiteers for their narrow class interests.

In my visits to certain factories, in talks with officials and politicians including men in the military line, I have found in them a growing contempt for the parliamentary system that prevails in our country. Their pet slogan is that it is the politicians and political parties that are making a mess of the country. The factory and the country must be run like the military units. Then things will be done quickly, efficiently and better. At the meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry, addressed by the Finance Minister, the President, Mr. Williams "wondered if adequate consideration had been given by employers

to the recruitment of army personnel for positions of responsibility. . . . They could make an invaluable contribution to the solution of certain problems facing industry." Here you have an open call for a sort of "militarisation" of the factory.

In the opinion of some, this talking shop of Parliament and the "so-called democratic freedoms" are ruining the country. Strikes must be banned altogether, peasants must work and stop talking of land for themselves, the student must learn, obey and serve, and so on. There are, as you know, some well-known politicians who support these sentiments and want a 'firm' government and dissolution of all political parties. Their next step would be dissolution of all trade unions or their complete subordination to the State administration. Such line of thinking is dangerous to our freedom, to the workers, to the trade unions, to all people.

What then is our task in this sphere? No doubt, at present, the bourgeois-landlord majority in the Parliament and State Legislatures goes against the interests of the workers, peasants and the middle classes. The remedy to cure this is not to bring into contempt the parliamentary system as such and thereby pave the way to its suppression. The remedy is to change its composition; i.e., win it for the democratic masses. The trade unions are vitally concerned with this. It is not solely a task of the political parties but of the workers and the whole people in general.

For this, the trade unions which are the broadest organisations of the workers must mobilise politically, act politically, while defending their day-to-day economic interests.

We must also campaign among the Congressmen, their legislators, who are not hardened reactionaries, to make them see the danger to all of us, by the way things are going.

Unity of the working class and its action, even simple, vast, united, peaceful mass action, can many a time defeat the dictators and reactionaries. The united strike and action of the Japanese workers, students, intellectuals, moving in millions and facing boldly the army, turned back Eisen-

hower and brought down the Kishi Government. The determined march of the students, workers and other citizens drove Syngman Rhee from South Korea despite his guns and his American supporters. The dictators are not always so invincible as some think; and united, peaceful mass action is not so ineffective as some maintain.

Our trade unions have to learn to act positively in defence of democracy. We have to come to such a level of consciousness that the arrest of Lumumba or Koirala, the suppression of Parliament in Congo and in Nepal, the attack on Cuba or Iraq, ought to evoke a protest strike, in a few factories at least, at least for an hour, if not more. That would be the measure of our general political class consciousness. That would enable us to fight the reactionaries in our country also, when they act against the workers, against the people. The question is: shall we do it henceforth with plan and vigour?

Hence our duty to ourselves and to the international working class enjoins us to organise, educate and act for the following :

To educate our workers—

1. About the advance in the economic, cultural, scientific fields made by the Soviet Union and its defence of peace, freedom and socialism;
2. About the advance made by the socialist countries and the power of the working class, which has enabled them to do it;
3. About the national liberation movement and the strides it has made in Asia, Africa and Latin America and particularly the events in Cuba, Congo, Algeria and South Africa;
4. About the struggles of the working class, in the imperialist countries such as USA, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, etc., against the capitalist monopolies;
5. About the need for universal and complete disarmament, banning of atom bombs, and the peace movement;

6. About the dangers of revival of German and Japanese militarism; the need for peace treaty with the two German States and solution of the Berlin question;
7. About the seating of the People's Republic of China in the UNO;
8. About the reactionary conspiracies which the imperialists and monopolists are hatching to turn the clock of freedom and democracy backwards, the capacity of the people to halt them on the basis of united action;
9. Against war; for peace;
10. For defence of democracy and freedom; against monopolists and dictators.

To teach our workers to act in solidarity and unity, to discharge the above tasks.

The platform of the AITUC which is the platform of the internationalism of the working class, of unity and solidarity, must more and more campaign for these issues and also act. Let us win all the unions and workers for this. The World Federation of Trade Unions shows us the way to do it. We, as its detachment, are confident of winning victory.

II

plan production—growth and new dangers

IN THIS YEAR, THE SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN IS COMPLETED AND the Third Plan, whose outline is already before us, begins to work.

The Planning Commission has given us an outline of the progress achieved in the Second Plan and also in the last ten years from 1950 to 1960. In these ten years, Indian economy has been growing, despite its ups and downs. The salient points of this growth are worth noting.

“Over the ten years 1951-60, national income (at constant prices) will have increased by about 42 per cent, per capita income by about 20 per cent and per capita consumption by about 16 per cent.” (*Third Five Year Plan—A Draft Outline*, p. 17.)

In agriculture, production will have gone up by about 40 per cent in these ten years.

The index of agricultural production (1949-50 = 100) as given by the Draft is as follows:

INDEX OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

(Base : 1949-50 = 100)

	1950-51	1958-59	1960-61 (expected)
All commodities	95.6	132.0	135.0
Food Crops	90.5	130.0	131.0
Other Crops	105.9	136.0	143.0

PRODUCTION OF MAJOR CROPS

	1950-51	1960-61 (likely)	Percentage Increase
Foodgrains (cereals and pulses) (mil. tons)	52.2	75.0	43.7%
Oil Seeds ,,	5.1	7.2	41.0%
Sugar Cane ,,	5.6	7.2	29.0%
Cotton (mil. bales)	2.9	5.4	86.0%
Jute ,,	3.3	5.5	64.0%

(Third Five Year Plan—A Draft Outline, p. 17)

Thus the overall production in agriculture has risen by 39.4 points in the ten years. Foodgrains, as expected, before the year-end figures are available, have risen by 43.7%. At the same time, it is worth noting that the production of the most attractive money crop and one which is so much on the speculative markets, that of cotton and jute, has risen more than that of food. Both these have risen by 86.6% and 64.0% while sugar cane has lagged behind food crops even, with an increase of only 29%. Oil seeds have gone up by 41%, nearer to food crops.

All these are tentative figures. But they show the trends which are verified by the actuals of the previous year.

The growth in the industrial sector has been much more and was bound to be so. The Second Plan placed great emphasis on heavy industry and despite many obstructions, encouraging results have been obtained.

“Overall industrial production is expected to record an increase of about 120% between 1950-51 and 1960-61.” *(Third Five Year Plan—A Draft Outline, p. 20)*

This more than doubling of overall production is in highly important lines which are absolutely necessary for our growth and preservation of our independence.

The first and foremost rise is in iron and steel. Three steel plants in the public sector (Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur) have been established. The two in private sector, Tata's at Jamshedpur and Martin-Burn's at Burnpur have

been expanded. However, the actual finished steel production is still lagging behind capacity, as some of the plants are not yet ready for full working.

There has been growth in the fields of machinery manufacture and chemicals, fuel, power, transport, cement, textiles and so on. There is not a single commodity in which one can point out a fall in production to old time levels. Some figures on this are worth noting.

	1950-51	1960-61 (likely)	Percentage Increase
Finished Steel (mil. tons)	1.0	2.6	160%
Cement	2.7	8.8	226%
Coal	32.0	53.0	65.6%
Iron Ore	3.0	12.0	300%
Diesel Engines ('000 Nos.)	5.5	33.0	500%
Fertilisers ('000 tons)	9.0	210.0	2300%

(Third Five Year Plan—A Draft Outline, p. 19)

The percentage increases, no doubt, look astounding. But compared to our needs, the quantity as such is not very high. But the point here is that production has gone up and at a good rate, though it could have been better, of which we will speak later.

In the matter of consumer goods, only one or two items need be mentioned.

	1950-51	1960-61 (likely)	Percentage Increase
Cotton Textiles (mil. yds.)	3720	5000	34.4%
Sugar (mil. tons)	1.10	2.25	104.0%
Bicycles ('000 Nos.)	101	1050	940.4%
Automobiles (Nos.)	16,500	53,500	224.0%

(Third Five Year Plan—A Draft Outline, p. 20)

In textile production, which is one of the most essential things for life, the production of handloom cloth has increased from 742 million yards to 2,125 million yards.

Khadi production will have gone up from 2.0 to 3.7 million yards. A number of medium and small-scale industries have developed and the old countryside of India, which ten years ago knew only the plough, the bullock and the huts, is getting interspersed with small industries, which, though small, do introduce a new element in the old dormant village.

In spite of the pruning that the Second Plan suffered at one stage, due to the attitude of the imperialist countries and their capitalists, our production targets in certain vital lines have come nearer fulfilment. In certain lines, though there is no production yet on hand, foundations of absolutely new and vital industries have been laid. The stranglehold of the oil monopolists of USA and Britain is about to be broken, thanks to the aid given by the Soviet Union and Rumania. Heavy machinery manufacture, mining machinery and such others will soon be on the production line.

To be able to manufacture our own machines is the basic need of our country. In the Third Plan, we shall be able to do it, with the foundations laid in the Second Plan.

We, the workers and trade unions, whose labour is the prime creator of all these things, should rejoice that we are overcoming our backwardness in which the imperialists left us and still want to keep us. Our workers, technicians, intellectuals and the honest sections of the industrialists have discharged their duty to the country and the people.

I have said "honest sections of the industrialists" very deliberately. Many of the big names in industry first tried to mislead the Plan in the wrong direction. Some of them tried to sabotage production in one section or another. But many of them increased production in some lines because it paid them super-profits. Of course, all industrialists are in the field because of profits. That is the law of capitalism. Even the honest sections do it for profit. But many there are, who really want the country's economy to develop, to be independent of foreign dependence and to be efficient. It is these sections of the bourgeoisie whom I included in the above compliment.

But to say that is not enough. These production achievements have had several drawbacks, several black spots, including treachery to the country's interests and people's welfare on the part of certain monopoly interests and their allies.

The first who merit denunciation are the foreign imperialists and investors, who have all along been holding us at ransom. They spend millions on arms and armaments. But they refuse to give aid to our country unless we join their warmongering pacts, unless we give up our anti-colonialism, unless we change our peace policy, unless we give up our State Sector and cease to dream of becoming an industrialised nation. True, some of them have helped with the Durgapur and Rourkela plants for iron and steel or with the Heavy Electricals, some with wheat supplies (which are unsaleable in the world market) and so on. But all that help started coming in only when the Soviet Union and the other countries of the Socialist Camp offered unstinted help on low interest, in rupee terms, and of the best technique in the true socialist manner. The socialist countries' plants have been built according to schedule and are in production without difficulties because there is no corruption and negligence in what they have been doing for us in Bhilai or in oil or machinery enterprises. But Rourkela always breaks down somehow, somewhere. Durgapur goes on limping though we get reports of production also and big plans of their further expansion, even before the present phase is hardly completed. The attack on our oil venture is so open and blatantly anti-national that those who have been trying their hardest to sabotage our oil sector should have been thrown out of the country and some of them sent to prisons as saboteurs. But in the name of democracy, these saboteurs are running their "free enterprise" at the cost of our people's interests.

The Oil Commission, assisted by the Soviet Union and Rumania, has found oil and is on the way to establish its own refineries. In the meanwhile, the Anglo-American oil monopolies were asked to reduce prices of their products, as they had fallen in the world markets and their prices.

were robbing our economy. As the companies refused to be helpful, the Government imported crude oil from the Soviet Union at cheaper prices. Unfortunately, the selling agencies, pumps and storages are all in the hands of the Anglo-American companies. They refused to refine our imported oil in their refineries, refused storage facilities and did everything to sabotage the Government deal. Any Government, which is not under the pulls and pressure of foreign monopolists, would have taught a lesson to these companies and thrown them bag and baggage out of the country. The little Cuba did it and our big country could have done it. But the Government of India, divided within itself, some of whose ministers rightly want our independent oil industry to grow, while some others in the same Government oppose it and from within help those foreign monopolies, would not allow any drastic measures against the foreign oil monopolies.

But the most astounding fact is that when the Government started selling the oil to the States, to the State-owned transport companies and such others, some of these States and public concerns made contracts with the foreign companies and refused Government of India's oil. The excuse given was that the oil companies' quotations in the tenders were lower than the price quoted by the Oil India Ltd., i.e., the Government of India's oil company. The excuse of lower quotation was a racket. The quotation of Oil India was revealed to the oil companies by persons who are secretly allied with them and the companies, to defeat our oil policy and stop us from buying cheaper Soviet oil and break the Anglo-American monopoly, quoted lower figures by a few naye paise. This situation does require attention and inquiry. The main culprits, however, are those who oppose our independent oil policy and the State Sector and insist on befriending the foreign monopolies.

Another field, in which harm has been done by vested interests to our growth is *Coal*. The coal industry has been a preserve of foreign capital, though of late, some Indian monopolists have been taken into partnerships by them to blunt Indian nationalist opposition and to secure conces-

sions from the State. The Government of India rightly decided to develop coal in the State Sector and stop these companies from massacring coal seams by unrestricted mining of good coal for quick profits.

This too was opposed by some of our own ministers and industrialists and strongly resented by the coal magnates. They bluntly said that the coal target would not be fulfilled. And it did happen that way. Neither in the State Sector nor in the private sector, did coal advance as was required. The private sector had a short fall of 3.5 million tons and the State Sector, of 9 million tons.

Not only production lagged, even the supplies to the factories failed. And it was a scene of shame that the Railway Ministry blamed the Mining Ministry for the failure by which the Bhilai Steel Plant and several other concerns had to hold up production and the Mining Ministry retorted back and exposed the Railway Ministry. The truth is that both the ministries have failed in their tasks. The reason is not that coal cannot be produced or that it cannot be transported or that there are no means for it. The real reason is that inside the Government, there are interests and elements, who hate the public sector, and want to see it fail in its objectives. And the private sector held back their hands as they wanted their demands to be fulfilled. The essence of their demand is higher prices, unrestricted field for expansion and large subsidies from the State. What they themselves would do to help production would be to help in swallowing the profits that would fall in their hands.

The World Bank mission which is the inspirer of all these tactics of foreign and Indian reactionaries had the following to say on this question:

“The expansion of the private sector has been restricted as an act of Government policy, which has reserved the opening up of new areas to the public sector. Price control has also discouraged the private companies from investing more in the industry. It is possible to sympathise with some of the considerations underlying the Government’s policy and yet to feel that the

way in which this policy has been applied is contrary to the nation's economic interests. As the Mission sees it, the overriding need now is to get more coal quickly and other considerations should be subordinated to this purpose." (*Commerce*, October 29, 1960, p. 750)

As a result of the deadlock that took place for want of coal in factories, the Government of India have now agreed to let the private sector all that it wants—larger fields of expansion, higher prices, subsidies, etc. The *Commerce* (October 22, 1960) wrote:

"By all accounts, the coal industry in the private sector has not been fighting a losing battle. That its pleas are just beginning to be heard is confirmed by the latest agreement at Calcutta, between its representatives and the Union Ministry of Steel, Mines and Fuel."

The Panel of Economists of the Planning Commission had long ago said that for the Plan to be successful, essential minerals like coal, ores, etc., should be in the hands of the State. It means that coalmining should have been nationalised and managed on a democratic basis with the aid of the workers and patriotic managers. But such a policy was not to the taste of those who did not want to attack the entrenched position of the monopolists. They tried only to restrict their hold and side by side expand the State Sector of production. The tactic failed with the result that the monopolists have come back in the saddle in the field of coal—one of the most strategic things for industrialisation.

I have only cited the example of oil and coal to show how the foreign imperialists and their friends in India, among the big financiers and the ruling circles, entrenched in some of the key positions of the Congress ministries and public bodies, are doing everything to sabotage the State Sector of industry and the further rapid development of our economy, even in some parts of the Private Sector as in coal, unless the Government and the country agrees to their terms. I cannot cover the whole field in this report.

Some sections of the big monopolists in the early days vehemently denounced the State Sector. But later on, when they found that rather than encroach upon their profits, it would, in fact, help them to do jobs which for the time being, they were unable to do and that too with public money, they acquiesced. But only some have acquiesced, while others continue to snipe at it hoping to destroy it for good.

An innocent looking move was recently proposed in certain circles of the Congress Party and the Government of India—that some percentage of the shares of concerns in the State Sector should be sold to private investors. That would give money to Government and keep the sector open to competent supervision of the private industrialists who know things better. Even an official study group, headed by Mr. D. L. Mazumdar, Secretary to the Company Law Department was appointed to study the proposals and the group has recommended that the “experiment” can be made in certain undertakings. And what lines were suggested for this sell-out? The Hindustan Machine Tools, the best going concern and some selected Transport Corporations. Even the Life Insurance Corporation is being mentioned.¹

This proposal is the most dangerous one and must be fought by all people, including the trade unions. The proposal is nothing but one of *de-nationalisation*. The *Commerce* (November 12, 1960) wrote:

“By and large, however, a balanced approach of limited ‘denationalisation’ or ‘privatisation’ is discernible in the extracts from the group’s report which appears to have leaked out to a small section of the press.”

These sinister developments have not evoked that indignation and protest it should have from all those who do not want our State Sector to be sold out to the anti-national profit-hunters. There is a two-pronged drive to land India on foreign dependence in economic field and to keep it under the heel of unrestricted anarchic capitalist exploitation. These two prongs are the demand for an end of the

¹See *Appendix 2*.

Public Sector and sell-out and if that is not just now possible, to try for its restriction and ultimate failure. Second, to open the gates of India for penetration of foreign capital. The second campaign is blessed by the Finance Minister whose address to the concluding session of the Conference of Industrial Leaders organised by the National Productivity Council, was reported as follows :

“Mr. Desai said that there was wider recognition both at home and abroad of the scope of foreign business investment in India. The number of applications the Government had received for collaboration with foreign enterprises had increased in the last one or two years.

“Recent estimates of the net inflow of private long-term capital from abroad had also shown an increasing trend and indications were that the flow of foreign capital would be larger in the coming years.” (*Times of India*, December 19, 1960)

Similar sentiments were expressed by Mr. J. R. D. Tata at the Annual General Meeting of Tata Iron and Steel Co., on October 6, 1960. He said:

“In this context, we welcome the shift in our country’s policies towards foreign participation in industry. We have gone a long way from the days when such participation in industry was looked upon with suspicion and discouraged and this is obviously to the good.”

One would ask if the help of the socialist countries is not listed as foreign capital. It is listed as loans to the Government of India. It is in a sense inflow of capital. But it is not inflow of “private” capital which is being very much sought after by the monopolists of the Indian big bourgeoisie and which is being referred to here. It is further stated by Mr. Morarji Desai: “In the coming years, private enterprise, whether Indian or foreign, would have ample opportunities for growth....”

It is not our position that all private enterprise should or can be done away with in the present stage. But we have

to see that the State Sector grows in extent and depth, that it embraces all the strategic lines of production, that nationalisation grows further and not that the State Sector is "denationalised" as some propose.

Some may think that India is politically strong enough to take in foreign private capital and yet retain its political and economic independence. Yes, political independence may remain in form but its substance will get corroded and economic independence will not remain at all. Even a mighty industrialised nation like England has succumbed to the dictates of American capital. Now millions of workers there have awakened to the danger of the wholesale sell-out of British factories, of the atomic bases in England and so on. India will not be able to resist the onslaught on its political and economic independence, once it opens its flood-gates to foreign capital and destroys its public sector and surrenders to the dictates of foreign and Indian reactionaries on the policies of India's industrialisation.

In every public sector undertaking, in every large-scale concerns, the trade unions must rouse the workers to the consciousness of this danger to our country and our economy. Greater the growth of monopoly capital, greater will be the attacks on our democratic rights, on our wages, on our freedom.¹

Another serious danger to our economy is the failure to raise agricultural production to the required levels. Because of this, we are getting slowly mortgaged to the American imperialists, from whom we buy wheat. We are already indebted for over Rs. 1000 crores to them under PL 480 loans.

The failure in this sphere is again one arising from refusal to carry out fundamental land reforms in favour of the peasantry. All the heroic resolutions on land ceilings, cooperative agriculture, State trading in foodgrains have remained a dead letter. The bitter opposition launched against these resolutions, which were adopted under the pressure of the masses, was not countered by a sweeping mass move-

¹ See Appendix 3.

ment, with the result that the peasantry has been left where it was, except in a few spots, where some ceiling laws have been nominally adopted. Even then, the ceilings are such that very little land is left for distribution to the peasant. A movement, as in Maharashtra, by the landless labourers got them a few thousand acres of fallow land and no more.

Land reforms and supply of capital to the peasant alone can raise agricultural production to high levels. The growth in production of diesel engines, fertilisers, channelled into the agrarian sector has led to some increased production, but that is limited to sections of landlords ("self-cultivating") and rich peasants. But they by themselves are incapable of raising the economy to a higher level. A joint movement of the working class and peasantry, of the trade unions and the Kisan Sabhas and agricultural labour unions is clearly called for to overcome the lag in the situation.

The perspectives that the Third Five Year Plan holds before us are more or less a continuation of the Second Plan in the matter of allocations and related priorities. The Third Plan has given a little more weight to agriculture than before and a little less to transport and the total industrial pool. But quantitatively and in money terms, the Third Plan is bigger. The Second Plan has laid down a total investment of Rs. 6,750 crores, while the Third envisages investment of Rs. 10,200 crores, an increase of 51 per cent. The investment in Public Sector will increase by 70 per cent and that in private sector by 29 per cent. One table giving an overall picture will suffice here.

(in crores of Rs.)

	PUBLIC SECTOR			PRIVATE SECTOR	Total Investment
	Outlay Plan	Current Outlay	Investment		
Second Plan	4600	950	3650	3100	10200
Third Plan	7250	1050	6200	4000	6750

It is good to see that despite the criticisms of some monopolists like Tatas and others, the emphasis on heavy industry, engineering and metals, has not been given up and the Public Sector has not been subordinated to the private. But one has to be vigilant and see whether private sector steals from the public sector as was done in the Second Plan and put it in difficulties. Our trade unions will surely fulfil their duty to the people, where the Plan will work in national interest, and give efficient and honest work.

A proper analysis and understanding of the Third Plan, however, is not possible until it is finalised.

Basing on the achievements and failures on the Second Plan and the broad perspectives of the Third, certain crucial questions can be raised.

What does the fulfilment of the Second Plan mean for the country and the people?

In so far as the Second Plan has laid foundations for building heavy industry, it has taken steps towards strengthening the economic independence of the country. Each iron and steel plant completed, each machine-building plant raised, each oil well sunk is a step towards economic independence. The Plan broke the blockade that the imperialists had imposed against the development of our own heavy industry.

Quite an important part of this—such as, iron and steel, oil, coalmining machinery plant—has been done in the State Sector, a sector that belongs to the nation and whose profits in the Third Plan will go to the State.

It is for these reasons that the AITUC has all along supported the Plan.

At the same time, it must be remembered that the development of the country is taking place on the basis of capitalist relations of production. The Plans are building private capitalism and State capitalism. Hence these mighty efforts of the country and the people are being used to enrich the monopolists. The gains do not flow to the people to mitigate their poverty and raise their standards of living. Hence the AITUC has all along criticised this aspect of the Plan.

In short, what do we support and what do we oppose?

We support the Plan in relation to the *country* and not in relation to the *class*, who owns the factories or forms the Government. We oppose the power of the class but support the Plan, because the Plan builds an economy, an industrialisation which strengthens our economic base or base of independence as against imperialism.

That is why imperialists oppose our Plan and would not give help to build its heavy industry, until the Soviet Union came forward and broke their blockade.

Does not support to the Plan mean, we as a working class, are helping to build capitalism? The answer would be—yes and no.

In so far as the Plan development weakens imperialism but at the same time builds capitalism in the country, our support to the Plan does mean supporting capitalism in the country as against the foreign imperialism. Hence we say we support the country in the Plan even though the country today is not a socialist country.

But we do not support the class in the Plan, in so far as it is against the working class, against the people. Our capitalism is playing a dual role in the Plan.

So we summed up our position thus:

Support the Plan for the Nation—

Oppose the class power in its attacks on the workers and the people!

Our workers and trade unions, our toiling people and the intelligentsia have nowhere deliberately held up Plan development.

But the imperialists and their agents in the monopoly group in this country have tried to sabotage it or frustrate it.

Yet, who has pocketed the fruits and the cream of all this mighty endeavour of the country and the toiling people? Who is gaining from this growing prosperity and wealth? What is the share of the workers and the people in the vast wealth they create? These questions must be answered.

III

prices, wages —who is prosperous ?

EVERYWHERE AMONG THE TOILING PEOPLE IN TOWN AND country, the question is asked: where is all this prosperity, all this money, all this rise of 42 per cent in the national income, going? One feels proud about the country's prosperity but if that prosperity is not of the people, then who is prosperous? The answer is plain and clear. The overwhelming part of this wealth is garnered by the exploiting classes, particularly the big capitalist-landlord groups and their friends in the ruling circles.

This needs no elaborate proof. But continuously challenged by this statement, the Government has appointed a Committee to find out where all this is going.¹

The first outstanding fact to show the manner in which people are being fleeced is the rise in prices of everything that the common man needs. The major part of the present rise in prices has nothing to do with wages or the cost of raw materials or any other factor, except the power and greed of the big financiers, traders, factory owners, bankers, landlords and those bureaucrats and ministers who help them.

¹The Committee includes Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis as Chairman, Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, Dr. P. S. Lokanathan and others, with Shri Vishnu Sahay, Cabinet Secretary, as Secretary of the Committee.

The clamour of the people, workers' protests against price rises, fail to move either the Government or these classes to reduce their loot of the people, until they are seriously threatened with action. The scandalous rise in cloth prices to the extent of 40 per cent did not move the Government and the ministries concerned to any action, until the Government employees' general strike in July 1960. Even then it is seven months now and Government is still "pleading" with the millowners to cut prices voluntarily.

That prices have risen inordinately and require to be drastically reduced and controlled is admitted by all. But the Government will not act against the vested interests who make the high prices. That is the character of the capitalist order we have in India.

The extent of the rise in prices is well known to all. The consumer price index number with 1939 as 100 was 431 in 1959. With 1949 as 100, it was 121.

- By raising prices to a pitch, totally unrelated to cost of production and by refusing to increase the incomes of those who labour and produce things, the exploiting classes are earning vast super profits and running away with the cream of the prosperity and growth of the national income.

In spite of the 42 per cent growth in national income and 20 per cent in per capita income, there are many on record who have had to commit suicide because they had not got a pie of the per capita income and had nothing to eat.

In order to guard the interests of the country and the toiling people from these profiteering classes, who are robbing us of our labour and wealth, it is necessary to struggle. And that struggle has a two-fold aspect.

One aspect is of general demands directed against the exploiters and their sources of power and wealth.

Such demands are: extension of the State Sector of economy in strategic industries, land reforms in favour of the peasantry, State-trading in foodgrains, nationalisation of banks and key industries like oil, jute, plantations and mines. In view of the record of the textile and sugar mill-owners, in robbing the people, it is time to put them under drastic control. Abolition of the stock exchange and specula-

tive markets is also necessary. Unless the fangs of the concentrated big bourgeois houses are blunted you cannot control prices nor distribute the growing national income to the toiling people or use it in a planned manner for the country's development. For this, the working class along with its allies have to wage a political battle against the ruling classes.

The second aspect of the struggle is against the direct employer for day-to-day demands on questions of wages, dearness allowance, bonus and conditions of work.

This day-to-day struggle is the constant daily task of the trade unions. By fighting for higher wages, dearness allowance, bonus, etc., the worker fights for a larger share of the wealth, the goods which he is producing (and which are the real national income), a share which the employer always wants to reduce in some way and for which the worker must always fight in the ways open to him. How has the working class fared in this struggle so far? Let us take a brief review.

During the Second World War period, the conditions of the workers had deteriorated in the extreme. The index of real earnings had fallen to 73.2 taking 1939 as the base year.

It took us nearly five years to reach the real wage level of 1939, after we achieved independence. The index number of real wages during the period 1947-52 gives us the following picture:

1947	...	78.4
1948	...	84.4
1949	...	91.7
1950	...	90.1
1951	...	92.2
1952	...	101.8

(Indian Labour Statistics, 1960)

The trend of recovery of pre-war real wages continued further and in 1954, the index of real wages was 102.7.

Therefore, in the Ernakulam Report, it was pointed out that:

“What we have really achieved is to overcome the

heavy wage-cuts of the war period and to secure a wage rise to neutralise the rising prices which soared even after the end of the war. The Indian big bourgeoisie even after securing power did not hesitate to fleece the working class and people for their selfish profits and the workers fought them back."

Thus the rise in prosperity and national income did not advance further the interests of the working class. Even to keep what he was getting, he had to fight.

It has to be said that upto date data is not available to give you the true picture of wage trends till today. The data regarding the average annual earnings is available only upto 1958 and hence index of real earnings also can be computed only upto that period. Only the general trend can be pointed out.

The major factor that influences the fluctuating wages of the workers in today's conditions is the price trend in the country. The rising prices continuously force the worker to raise new wage claims. The failure of the Government to hold the price line has harmed the workers and enriched the exploiters as stated above. The failure is seen in the table below.

The All-India Consumer Price Index number during 1956-60 period went up from 105 to 124 (1949 = 100). The table gives the annual rise of food index as well as the general index.

Year	Food Index (1949 base)	General Index (1949 base)	General Index (1939 base)
1956	105	105	374
1957	112	111	395
1958	118	116	414
1959	125	121	431
1960	126	124	441

(Indian Labour Journal)

The Consumer Price Index in 1960 taking the base as 1939 was as high as 449 for food and General Index was 441.

Thus during the first four years of the Second Five Year Plan, the consumer price index showed a rising trend. The draft outline of the Third Five Year Plan while admitting this, puts it as if rise in prices is an inevitable accompaniment of planned progress, a proposition which is totally invalid for socialist planning but is true only in conditions of capitalist monopoly control. The Draft says: "In the ordinary course, the progressive set up in investment which the Plan envisages is likely to exert an upward pressure on prices." The planners, therefore, can give for the future only an assurance that the task of the policy would be to ensure that "prices, especially of essential consumer goods, remain relatively stable despite this pressure."

In terms of this, let us measure what our real earnings are even if our money wages have gone up.

The trend about the real earnings since 1955 is given in the following table:

INDEX NUMBERS FOR REAL EARNINGS OF FACTORY WORKERS

Year	Average Annual Earnings	Index of money Earnings (1947 Base)	Consumer Price Index (1947 Base)	Index of Real Earnings (1947 Base)	Index of Real Earnings (1939 Base)
1955	1173.5	159.4	110.0	144.9	113.5
1956	1208.1	162.6	120.8	134.6	105.4
1957	1233.9	170.2	127.5	133.5	104.5
1958 (provisional)	1282.4	176.8	133.2	132.7	103.9

(*Indian Labour Statistics*, 1960)

As the table indicates, the real wages of the workers after 1955 show a declining trend even though money wages have increased. It is also seen that the index of real wages in 1958 was just a little above that of the 1939 level. Even this level could be kept up only as a result of the continuous fight of the Indian working class for dearness allowance to

neutralise rise in prices, by means of strikes or collective agreements, tripartite decisions, tribunal awards and Wage Board reports.

In view of the continued price rise during 1959 and 1960, the real wages of the workers cannot be said to have gone up during the period. Even though we take into consideration the wage rise received by the workers in various awards, reports of the Central Pay Commission, Textile, Cement and Sugar Wage Boards, the wage rise is not enough to change the all-India trend. The real wages of the workers of those particular industries remained stationery, instead of going down as a result of the increases given by Wage Boards.

Though in these industries, the wage rise awarded has neutralised the rising cost of living to some extent, on an all-India plane, for all workers as such, the real wages have definitely gone down.

That the real wages of the workers depreciated after 1958 was admitted by Shri G. L. Nanda, Union Labour Minister, during the course of his speech in Lok Sabha on April 11, 1960, initiating the discussion on the demands for grants for the Ministry of Labour and Employment. He said:

“Between 1939 and 1947, the standard of living of the workers had declined by 25 per cent. By 1951, they had just recovered lost ground. By 1955, the real wages had increased by 13 per cent. But since 1956, when again prices started rising, their gains have been to an extent wiped out.”

It has been claimed by students following the wage trends in the country that considering the trend of reduction in the real wages of the workers, the real wage of the workers in 1960 would be almost again on the level of 1939, if not below that.

After completing two five year plans, the workers in our country have only that much real wage as they had before the Second World War. That shows that it is only the exploiting classes that are appropriating the major portion of the wealth that is growing in the country.

Does it mean that workers are producing less or employers find it difficult to run their industries profitably? Not at all. On the contrary, as pointed out by a study on "Productivity: A Value Aspect", based on the Reports of the Census of Manufacturing Industries, since independence, workers have been increasingly producing more value for the employers. The biennial averages of the value added by manufacture and wages of the workers give us the following picture:

	Value added per worker	Value added as percentage of workers' wages
1946-47	Rs. 1,578	237.7
1948-49	1,923	210.7
1950-51	2,142	217.7
1952-53	2,189	198.3
1954-55	2,542	229.2
1956-57	2,792	239.0

(Monthly Abstract of Statistics, Oct., 1960)

This table is the most vital part of our armoury of arguments to show how much capitalism is exploiting us, expropriating the workers of the product of their labour and at what rate they are enriching themselves. And those, who always criticise the workers' wages as being higher than the average per capita income, let them see what we hand back to the employer and society in return for the wage we receive.

For every rupee I get for my wages, I return to the employer that rupee plus two rupees and thirty-nine naye paise (239 per cent), i.e., Rs. 3.39. I not only reproduce what I earn but nearly two and half times more. And in all this, I keep his capital intact and safe. So not only the wages I earn are mine, but all the wealth that my employer or his class takes is also my creation, mine.

In the year 1956-57, in factories covered by the Census, employing 16,77,255 workers, Rs. 1,95,91,90,183 were paid as wages to the workers. The value added by the workers in return was Rs. 468,32,83,220. Where did all this addition of Rs. 468 crores go? To the factory owners. What did the

workers get? Deeper poverty, curses for demanding more wages and for protesting against high prices. Such is the law of the capitalist order. The producers starve, their expropriators prosper. Hence we call for the expropriation of the exploiters, if we are to have a socialist order, a humane and prosperous society.

While the above table of value added is the real measure of the gains of the exploiting classes, the index of profits shows the trend of their individual appropriation as acknowledged by them according to law.

Excluding the hidden profits and reserves, the Index of Profits as shown in the balance-sheets of the companies, indicate the growing trend of profits earned by the employers:

Year	Index of gross profits in all industries (Base : 1950 = 100)
1955	150.8
1956	165.0
1957	151.7
1958	168.7

(Reserve Bank of India Bulletin)

This gives a lie to the claim of the bourgeoisie that the growing wage costs have created difficulties for the employers in running the concerns "economically".

I have said above that statistics show that the real wage of the worker after two Five Year Plans is on the level of the wage of 1939 or even below.

This may induce a line of thinking that in these twenty-one years, despite our struggles, the working class has made no advance. Then what have the struggles given to us, beyond holding our feet to the old ground, only warding off attacks and advancing no further than 1939. Such thinking way also lead to pessimism. Or it may induce the question whether this method of computing results is at all correct. Because those who have seen, worked and lived in 1939 and see things today, definitely see a change, an advance in the life and demeanour of the working class in India, despite the hardships that it has to face.

Hence we must not draw hasty conclusions only from statistical averages of real wages. The workers in the last fifteen years since the end of the war, have not only made up the fall in real wages of the war period but have made an advance on several other vital counts, which have to be pressed further. Let us see some of them in brief.

The *first* difference between 1939 and now is that the wage in those days was on a nine-hour day; now it is an eight-hour day. *Secondly*, what in those days was an occasional uncertain thing like bonus, provident fund or gratuity, is now becoming a universal practice, every day spreading to various industries, where the TUs are strongly organised. *Thirdly*, in the old days, medical service was a favour of certain few rich employers to their workmen. Today, even though it is contributory and not so well-managed, it is available to all organised factories and is going to embrace almost all workers. *Fourthly*, holidays with pay have become a right and paid festival holidays are established. *Fifthly*, service conditions including the dignity and rights of the worker in the organised sector have become subject to laws and conventions which did not exist before. In this the tripartites have played a positive role. *Sixthly*, the right of the worker to demand neutralisation of rise in cost of living, i.e., a continuously changing wage in the form of D.A. has been acquired. It is a valuable shield against the attack of the monopolies. And it may be noted that this is a system peculiar to India, which first arose out of its backwardness but now is a better system than the battle of annual wage-claims which the workers of the advanced capitalist countries have to wage. *Seventhly*, the workers by their determined battles are pressing hard on the employers to introduce the standard rate for the job, gradation and minima. This evens out the conditions of the sale of our labour power and helps our own unity in this sphere. It is a hard struggle but inch by inch, we are winning.

I have chosen to list the advance on all those counts which help the worker directly or indirectly to add to his economic gains. The sixth point, of service conditions and

rights may appear to be an exception to this, if one were to leave out of account the fact that they too react on production and hence wages. *It will, therefore, be seen that the mere statement that our real wages are only at the 1939 level does not give us the picture in its completeness.* We have made a number of gains. Though the employer tries to cheat us of them, yet, if we are organised, they are there in our hands. And we have to fight still further to improve them and also to raise the direct wage level.

In the matter of wages which is the most vital question for us, a number of changes are taking place, whose extent and effect is not yet assessed by us. But they are of great importance and the trade unions should note them.

The wage structure in India has been undergoing very significant changes and we have to organise this change more consciously in the near future. The labour policy in the Second Plan was not much helpful in this nor is the policy in the Third Plan going to be any better. The planners have little power over the phenomenon of wages in the direction of bettering them, unless the workers move. The planners initiate sometimes good principles but when they are good, their execution is obstructed by the employers. If some of the principles are to the benefit of the employers but are adverse to the workers, though on the face of it they do not appear to be so, then the employers are quick to act on them.

The wages question in the Third Plan is going to be a tough question. The Plan and the employers are now harping on linking wages to productivity, i.e., speed-up and rationalisation in general. As this question directly brings in problems of retrenchment, unemployment and workloads and with the attitude of employers as it is, it is not going to be a smooth sailing. Over and above this is the question of rising prices. Hence the question of wages is going to be a difficult question for all.

In this context, it is necessary to have a quick look at the structural changes at present taking place in our wages.

The AITUC has, all along, in the recent years emphasised the fact that we have to concentrate on the question

of *sliding scale of D.A.* in all trades and industries. In how many industries has this been achieved?

Some of the big organised industries have got a *sliding scale*. We had to struggle for the last ten years to get the sliding principle of D.A. extended to many more industries than those which had already achieved it in the pre-independence and war days. The textile industry of Bombay and Madras was the only solitary spot but a big spot, which paid the worker a sliding scale. This enabled the workers in the other trades in Bombay City to get the principle extended to them. Even then, huge belts of most profit-making industries and trades remained on fixed D.A. or no D.A. As prices advanced, the employers sold goods at the new high prices but paid the worker at the old price of his labour power and thus reaped huge extra profits.

In the last five years, the workers fought struggles to protect their wages and secured success in many cases. Now the principle is applicable to the whole of the *textile industry*, according to the recent Wage Board award, though some employers in some areas are resisting it. That means, a block of seven lakh workers is covered by it. All the important trades in Bombay City are covered, which means another block of about two lakhs of workers, in engineering, chemicals and such other trades.

The *cement industry* and the *sugar industry* have been given the award of sliding D.A. now. *Metal and Engineering* in Calcutta's big belt has been brought into that principle by a recent award. *Coal miners* also have got it after a hard battle. Thus it will be seen that the battle for protecting and keeping stable the existing wages has been advancing to larger and larger areas. But the struggle is yet incomplete. The battle given by the two million *government employees*, both industrial and non-industrial, railways and ordnance factories, and the lakhs of office workers, has not been successful in getting the sliding scale.

Some very profitable industries, despite huge profits, reserves, assumed markets, State help and all that, have been doggedly refusing. The most notorious in this are the iron

and steel industries of TISCO and IISCO and along with them are the new plants in the State Sector.

The deepest black spots in this failure of the working class movement is in the huge belt of *jute* industry which, in the matter of wages, is the greatest criminal in industry. Along with them stand the *tea* plantations. Among middle-class employment, it is only the banking industry which has got a sliding D.A.

It will thus be seen that while quite large chunks of industry and trade have won victory and got the sliding D.A., there are equally large chunks who have not.

Many industries have got fixed D.A. payments. But that is not a proper protection of the existing wage because the revision of fixed D.A. always lags behind rising prices and nothing short of a strike moves the employers to add on to the fixed D.A. as was seen in the Tatas and elsewhere. In the meanwhile, they continue to appropriate the extra profits arising out of older lower rates of D.A. and newer higher prices of their products.

Sliding scale of D.A. has become one of the fundamental principles of wages stability and protection in our country. The TU movement has to wage a serious battle for it and win it, most urgently, first and foremost in the organised industries producing goods for the market.

The vast spread out of smaller trades like biri-making, cashewnut processing, printing, etc., has also the problem of D.A. But the nature of their work and structure of their trade or industry and capital make it somewhat difficult for them to embark on such a struggle to secure a sliding D.A. In biri and cashew, for example, the struggle has been more for the minimum and revision of the direct rates than for D.A. In such trades, the general principle has to be applied as may suit the particular conditions. There it is difficult to insist on the sliding D.A. formula in all cases.

The *second element* in the structure of wages is the question of consolidation of D.A. with basic wages. This demand was, in principle, conceded by the Gadgil Committee. It was accepted by the Second Pay-Commission and also by some industries as textiles. This question affects

wages indirectly in the long-run on the matter of gratuity, etc. In some cases, it partly corrects the ridiculous position where the dearness allowance is nearly three times that of the basic wage. This is a demand, which is subsidiary to the question of reorganising the structure as such. Though it confers some benefits, it does not play such a vital role in the wages of the big organised industries. Its reflection on the question of bonus, which is generally based on basic wage, is also indirect, because bonus is first allotted as a total quantity and then distributed by linking it to the measure of individual wages. Even if the measure is changed by consolidation of basic wage and D.A., the quantum does not change.

The *third element* in the wages structure is the question of the minimum, the grades and categories. Reporting to our Calcutta Session in May 1954, I had raised the question of wages. I said then:

“Some of the struggles and gains have been noted. But we have to take serious note of the fact that the most vital part of our demands—i.e., *wages for our work*, a living wage that will truly pay for all the labour that we do for the capitalists and will represent a just share of the product, as far as is possible under the capitalist wages system—has yet to be attained. This major task on the question of wages remains to be fulfilled.

“The wage structure of our country has to be reorganised and improved in all essentials, because today, as it is, it is a very erratic structure.

“The first thing to be fought for is a *national minimum* throughout the country, below which no wage shall be paid in any *organised* industry....

“The Government of India pretended to move towards a minimum wage by instituting the Minimum Wages Act for the sweated and unorganised industries. But this Act, apart from its periodical postponements, has not been instrumental in raising wages to the accepted normal minimum, but has in cases reduced wages. The minimum, as is usual with the employers, tended to be made the maximum. The AITUC, at the Mysore Tripartite Con-

ference disapproved of the four categories of Minimum Wages proposed by Government as a compromise between the demands of workers and employers. The lowest category there is Rs. 1-2-0 which in today's conditions is ridiculously low.

"By their report of the CPC (Central Pay Commission) and its application of a national minimum in their services, the Government has unwittingly helped to blow up the theoretical opposition to a national minimum. The basic CPC minimum is paid everywhere in all centres, despite variations in conditions in several sectors of State capital. Variations in rent and other prices are provided for in the allowances, but a basic minimum of Rs. 30 has been accepted. We must demand an upward revision of the basic wage.

"A national minimum has got to be fought for, because that brings about uniformity in the conditions of the working class wages throughout the country and prevents the capitalists from playing one centre or one sector against another. It helps to eliminate competition within the ranks of the workers themselves and thus unifies them." (*24th Session of the AITUC, Report and Resolutions, pages 62-63*)

At that time, I also proposed, though we could not work it out, that "in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of this problem on the basis of data on wages in various areas and trades, I propose that the AITUC should appoint a Commission of its leading trade union workers to work out the national minimum and the reorganisation of the wage-structure."

Over six years have passed since then. What happened in between?

The Government of India appointed a Steering Group on Wages to study the problems mentioned above. But that is not so important. The most important fact is that in 1957, at the Delhi Tripartite, a resolution of far-reaching importance was adopted—the resolution on *minimum wages*.

There were, even before this, Minimum Wages Acts in various States. That is not the main point of the Delhi re-

solution. The Delhi Tripartite gave concrete content and positive form to the minimum wage in terms of food, cloth and housing and asked the wage-fixing authorities to be guided by it. The resolution was a unanimous one. The employers repented of it later on. One Ministry of the Government of India gave the impression of repudiating it. The Second Pay Commission followed suit and the General Strike of the Central Government employees fought a battle on it. *The resolution became a memorable fact of history, a fact, inconvenient to the employers but a weapon in the hands of the working class. No one ever suspected that that innocent resolution on minimum wages would resound in the TU movement as an immediate goal to be fought for, would provide such ammunition to the fighting workers, such defeat, embarrassment and loss of face to the Government and become a source of conflict and division inside the ruling circles. The Delhi Tripartite will live down in history for this resolution. The fight for the minimum was raised to a higher level and the resolution provided a banner and a unanimously agreed moral, economic, constitutional political banner at that, to the whole TU movement.*

Another resolution of the Delhi Tripartite was meant to carry forward this banner and revise the wage structure of the major organised industries. And that was the resolution on *Wage Boards* for various industries.

The Wage Boards were resented by the employers. The enlightened ones saw, however, that if the Boards were to introduce a rational wage structure embracing an industry on an all-India level, all the employers in an industry, as a whole, would be put on the same level of competition in the matter of price of labour. Such a situation always benefits the large-scale organised employer with his large resources of finance, technique, etc. Even then, many of them objected but had to agree as the TU movement began pressing for the Boards.

The Boards take a long time to get "cooked" and to come into existence because the Government will not appoint them unless the employers agree. It takes them

quite some time to come to conclusions. Then, more time for Government to take a decision, some more time for the employers to decide and then comes at last, the application of the award, the wage-increase, etc.

Despite these delays, we have had three Wage Board awards so far—cement, sugar and textiles. Two more Boards have been appointed recently—on jute and tea plantations. The next hard battle is for Boards on iron and steel, engineering, transport, and so on.

Side by side with these Boards worked the Second Pay Commission and also certain important tribunals. There is also a Bonus Commission trying to do re-thinking on the bonus formula which has been a bane of the bonus demands of the workers, since the notorious formula of the Labour Appellate Tribunal.

Have any tangible results come out of all these activities on the wages-front, both from the side of the workers, the Government and employers, each trying to put through its approach to the matter?

Yes. These Wage Boards, All-India Tribunals, Commissions and Tripartites are, for the first time in our wage history, introducing some order in the wage structure of capitalism in India, after it had had its long run of anarchy and unrestrained behaviour. For the first time, the major large-scale industries, the organised sector of big capital is being regulated in the matter of wages on a national all-India level.

The process had begun with the First Pay Commission and had halted. It has gathered momentum, when the hectic activities of jubilant capital fattening on the Second Five Year Plan came on the ascendant and the workers also began to defend themselves against the attack. *The Delhi Tripartite, the minimum wage resolution, the Wage Boards, the Second Pay Commission hoped to stay off a big strike wave, reorganise the wage-structure and secure a peaceful growth for industry and the Plan.*

The hopes were not without foundation. The strike wave did calm down to a certain extent in expectation of the

Boards fulfilling some claims of the workers, especially on wages.

The hopes have not been belied, though not fulfilled to expectations. All the three Wage Boards have given a wage-increase, have retained, where it existed, the sliding scale in D.A. and applied it where it did not. They have introduced a minimum though not exactly in terms of the Delhi Tripartite. Still they have accepted the principle of that Tripartite resolution. All of them have gone into the grades and differentials and also other questions.

This problem of the minimum and the grades has been taken up before the Tribunals, as for example, the tribunal on the Brooke Bond dispute or the Coal Tribunal. Some of them have introduced minima in a whole industry. All of them have had to deal with grades and categories and put proper wage values on them. Industry after industry has been forced into this question of introducing orderly norms in the wage structure.

Due to the thousands of crores of capital being poured into new industries, thousands of factories have sprung up, each one paying whatever it could force on the worker in search of employment and bread. Trade unionism and wage claims did not take long to arise among these workers. The bourgeoisie tried to carry on, as of old, threatening and suppressing struggles. But that could not go on long. A compromise was imperative and it was made and is being made, thanks to the sacrifices of those, who organised, struggled, argued, bargained and won.

The fight for the minimum, grades and categories is a complicated and uphill task—especially the one on grades. Even under socialism, the problem of the minimum and the grades requires attention. But there it is the worker, his own State that owns the industry, who decides as to how much of his social product will be taken by him and in what measure of grades. It is not so in capitalism.

The minimum is easier to define though not easier to make the employers agree to. It starts with bare human subsistence at the given level of civilisation in the given country on the basis of simple unskilled physical labour.

The grades and categories take their starting point from there. In a newly rising capitalist country from a backward economy, these differentials and grades based on differing skills or nature of work have no history, no norms and therefore, their price of labour power is determined in a very ad hoc manner. This soon proves inadequate and claims for determination of categories, grades, their number and value becomes the most pressing demand of the trade unions. As a result of the two Plans, these claims have risen in each trade and industry on a nationwide scale. They are most conspicuous in the engineering and metal trades.

Along with the problem of fixing the minimum and the grades, is the problem of *raising the floor of the minimum*, now in terms of the Delhi Tripartite resolution and not leave it at the level of the sweated industries' minimum.

Then the difference between the minimum and the maximum has also to be looked into.

In the matter of grades, it is not only a question of determining them and their value. There is also the question of reducing their inordinate number where they have grown in a haphazard way.

The First Pay Commission, for example, found innumerable categories of grades and wages in the Government services, including their factories and wanted to reduce them to 156 scales of pay. But it failed since the Government prescribed 517 scales of pay. Twelve years after the Second Pay Commission took it up. The Government could not act on its recommendations for two years, until the strike came. That should show the difficult nature of the problem.

The old time tribunals had not much of a problem on this score when they just put three grades—skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, and put all the differential skills in this wide undefined classification and awarded wages with a difference of a rupee or two between each. That was the method followed by the Bengal Tribunal in Engineering. There are trades, where the grades and differentials run into hundreds. The mere intellectuals of the lawyer or the

professor type sitting on the tribunals, boards and commissions are unsuitable as they are untrained for the complicated job of delimiting grades and categories and fixing wage values on them. From experience of several years working, some of the intellectual cadres of the Tribunal benches have developed knowledge of some industries, their jobs and grades. Quite a large body of literature has now sprung up through these Boards and Tribunals on this subject.

The trade unions are faced with a big problem in this sphere. As our trade unions are not manned by workers direct from the job, the TU leader, negotiating an agreement or appearing before a Board has to go through a lot of study and training. Some find it very difficult to take decisions on negotiated agreements, whether to accept an offer or not, as they are doubtful of its outcome. Some hesitate for just the fear that it is a commitment with the devil of an employer! Hence the trade unions have to have trained new type of cadres, who are both fighters and negotiators, if our unions have to lead correctly the workers in the new conditions.

Many AITUC unions nowadays enter into collective agreements. In some cases, I have seen our leading people, even after negotiating a good agreement, recoil from signing it lest there be a catch in it, lest it may contain some unknown evil. The best thing in all such cases is to put the negotiated draft before the workers concerned and take their opinion. Generally, they react correctly and properly. I have seen the method tried in some important cases. The workers overruled some of their dissenting leaders and agreed to the draft. In these cases, all agreed that the workers were right and those who sided with them were also right.

Let us not hesitate to make collective agreements, where we can seize the problem boldly and settle, with the knowledge of the rank and file workers. For this, greater contact with them and more detailed functioning is necessary and if in spite of this, an agreement turns out bad, call for its revision and fight to get it revised.

To get the minimum and fix the grades and differentials

is to get the worker the proper value of his labour power, to each one according to his skill and the cost of acquiring it and in relation to the surplus he yields to his employer. Therefore, the struggles, negotiations and collective agreements we do, are a necessary part of our day-to-day class-struggle, to enhance the value of the workers' labour power and reduce his expropriation by the capitalist, a struggle carried on in concrete terms in the factory and at the job level.

The Third Plan is going to heighten this problem of the wage structure. New factories will be coming up. Prices are going to rise, and the Government and employers both are raising the slogan of "wages linked to productivity". If it had the straightforward meaning, that the backward worker will be trained to do a better job and get a higher wage, one would have no objection. But, as we have said before, productivity and rationalisation become only so many instruments to retrench people or simply increase workload and a device not to give a rising wage for the same job. There are cases in which scheme of productivity can be so fitted as not to lead to any of the bad results but leads to more employment, increased production and wages without greater fatigue. In such cases which have to be individually studied, there should be no objection to the scheme. In our conditions, where we have to develop an underdeveloped country fast towards industrialisation, we agree to do all we can. But it has to be a mutual obligation of benefits on either side. Productivity, speed-ups, rationalisation are only instruments of increasing exploitation under capitalism. As such we oppose them. Their modification in Indian conditions can be and should be given consideration on the merits of each case.

I have taken long on this question. Let it suffice to mention here the *fourth element* in our wages structure--the system of various kinds of bonuses. This also is a feature of backward capitalism, which refuses to pay the proper wage, but is made to surrender a part of its profits as "ex-gratia" payments or gives "bonus" to drive the worker harder. Profit-sharing bonus has, however, become an

established part of the wages-system in India. How to distribute the profits is now under argument on the question of the "bonus formula". The production bonus and incentive bonus are, however, not very healthy systems, from the point of view of the general interests of the workers' in capitalist conditions.

Experience in some important factories has shown that where production bonus and incentive bonus schemes have been in existence, the workers do not concentrate attention on struggling to raise the basic wages and dearness allowance. They try to make up the rise in prices and cost of living by increased production and its bonus thus facilitating the employers' tactic of diverting attention from the basic problems. Such was the case in Jamshedpur and Burnpur.

In some trades, however, where certain jobs are directly related to identifiable individual skill, the existence of production or incentive bonus helps to raise skill and earnings without sidetracking the common problem of raising wages. This happens in some engineering lines.

All these bonuses, however, exist today. How to utilise them in listing our demands and not allow them to sidetrack the main problem is a task for the trade unions to decide according to the given condition in each factory or trade.

The *fifth element* of the wages question is that of piece-rates which are now being pushed forward more and more.

From this cursory review of the wages problem, the tasks that stand out before us seem to be the following:

1. The struggle for the sliding scale of D.A., with full neutralisation, in all organised industries, trades and professions, continues to be the central task on the wages front.
2. Wage Boards: To get Boards for the organised industries not covered so far. To fight for good awards, and for their quick decisions and applications.
3. Fight for the application of the national minimum

as defined by the Fifteenth Tripartite, fixing the grades and proper differentials in all trades and industries and to make collective agreements thereon.

4. Fight against rationalisation or productivity that leads to retrenchment, to greater workload and no commensurate rise in wages.
5. Fight for a rise in basic wages.
6. Fight against rising prices.
7. Fight for bonus as a due share of profits and prosperity.

Some years ago, the trade union movement and all central organisations had put forward the demand for a general rise of 25 per cent in wages. That demand is not being repeated nowadays. The reason is that since then the workers in various industries, trades and professions have secured wage increases as a result of awards or Wage Board reports. The industries that have secured advance in wages are coalmining, cement, cotton textile, sugar, engineering in some areas, government employees, insurance, etc. In some cases, the rise has been of the order of 25 per cent. In some, it has been less. Some more Wage Boards are on the agenda. The old slogan has become outdated. Hence to repeat it in the same form would be to ignore these developments and would not serve the needs of the present situation. The seven demands formulated above would meet the situation better.

IV

struggles —unity of the class

IN THE RECENT PERIOD, WE HAVE HAD TO FIGHT BIG BATTLES FOR our just demands. And in these struggles, working class unity advanced further, both from below and from the top.

There were united strike struggles in several industries and trades. The State Bank employees fought a strike and the other bank employees had a sympathetic one-day strike. There were cashewnut workers in action in Kerala, all organisations uniting in one common action for securing minimum wages. There was a united tramwaymen's strike struggle in Calcutta. There was a fifty-day stay-in-strike in the big India Fan Works, Calcutta, as the quarrels among the partners deprived the workers of the wages dues, until the Government took over the factory. The Textile Wage Board award was given last year and the millowners started delaying tactics and tinkering with the question of giving the awarded wage increase. The AITUC called a consultation of its leading comrades in the textiles and decided on notices and then strike action throughout India. This had its quick effect in Bombay and there the award was applied. In other places, workers had to struggle in order to secure agreements. In West Bengal, there was a protest action and also in Tamilnad and Rajasthan.

The plantation workers of West Bengal and the jute workers had united protest strikes. When the W. Bengal

Government wanted to introduce an obnoxious law against the trade unions, there was a united protest action and the Bill was withdrawn. Along with this report, we are giving a Struggle Diary¹ which records the strike struggle of the workers in all industries as far as information is available.

One of the notable features of many of these big united industrial actions was that the local or State leadership of all the four central organisations, the AITUC, HMS, UTUC and INTUC, joined together to give the call for united actions. In some of them, such as in cotton textiles, the INTUC held back but in many others, particularly in jute in Bengal, the common call of all the four was very fruitful in its results.

The *Indian Labour Journal*, published by Government has constructed an interesting table regarding strike struggles and disputes in 1959.

**DISPUTES IN 1959 CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO
AFFILIATION OF WORKERS' UNIONS TO
CENTRAL WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS**

Central Organisation	No. of Disputes	No. of workers involved	No. of mandays lost
AITUC	368 (46.2%)	1,54,100	20,86,758 (53.8%)
INTUC	214 (26.9%)	1,98,371	9,51,568 (24.6%)
HMS	146 (18.3%)	97,944	6,00,955 (15.5%)
UTUC	69 (8.6%)	44,018	2,35,975 (6.1%)
Total	797 (100.00)	4,94,433	38,75,256 (100.00)

(*Indian Labour Journal*, Oct. 1960)

It appears from the table that 46.2 per cent of the disputes were led by unions of the AITUC, while the INTUC

¹ Struggle Diary and other reports are being published separately.

led 26.9 per cent and HMS 18.3 per cent and UTUC 8.6 per cent. But according to the number of workers involved, the INTUC disputes covered a larger number, namely 1,98,371 and the AITUC covered 1,54,100. But the disputes in which the AITUC unions were involved were more prolonged and cost 20,86,758 mandays, while the INTUC cost 9,51,568 mandays. These figures require further study and could give useful conclusions if the results of the disputes were also known. The present figures, however, show one thing clearly that the AITUC unions are not lagging behind in leading the workers' struggles in a determined way. And the second conclusion would be that the INTUC unions also have to resort to strike struggles, though with what results one does not know. But they are happy enough to have their disputes more quickly settled than the AITUC.

The most outstanding struggle of the last year, one which was unprecedented in the history of our TU movement was the General Strike of the Government employees, arising out of their main demand for sliding scale of D.A. and minimum living wage in terms of the Delhi Tripartite. The AITUC has published a report¹ on this great strike and the Working Committee has adopted a resolution, which you all know. The resolution in part states:

"The strike of July 12 was an unprecedented event in the history of our working class movement. There had been strikes of different sectors of Government services from time to time such as in railways, post and telegraph, defence, etc. But a common strike call of all services at the same time had never taken place.

"Moreover, the call had been given by the united Joint Council of Action, a body composed of the representatives of all the organisations of Government employees. This united front of all organisations in the trade union field was itself a great factor of hope and strength.

"As against this, the offensive of the Government too was highly organised, utilising as it did, not only the law and police forces of the whole State machine but also moral-

¹See **Five Glorious Days, July 1960, AITUC Publication.**

political forces of the Congress and its subsidiary organisations. Over and above this, Prime Minister Nehru hurled the most astounding accusations against the strike by calling it 'civil rebellion'. With that accusation, the Government hurled its forces against the two and a half million workers, as in a war.

"Yet, it is a great achievement for the Government employees that the big centres of employment and the hub of economic political life of the country like Calcutta and Bombay had a more or less complete strike, with other centres following with lesser success. The services of the P. & T. were in the forefront of the shut-down, followed by the Civil Aviation, Defence Federation and the smaller services of Accounts, Income-Tax, Customs and so on. The railways closed in the cities of Calcutta and Bombay, with workshop closures in other places.

"Police terror on unprecedented scale was let loose. About 21,000 people were arrested of whom 17,000 were employees and the rest sympathising helpers, pickets and demonstrators from among the people and other trade unionists.

"Civil liberties were suspended, meetings and assembly of people banned. Workers' houses were broken into and hundreds were given the alternative at pistol point to march either to work or to the prison. It is to the glory of those who preferred prison to breaking the strike.

"Under such conditions, the fact that over five lakhs of workers responded to the call is no mean achievement. Despite the fact that it was not so complete and so wide and deep as was expected, it was a great action in face of the terror that was launched, the forces of blacklegging that were organised with the whole backing of the State and the absence of the leadership that took place by the arrests on the very eve of the strike.

"The opponents of the working class call this great action a complete failure, while some trade unions would call it a great success in the context of the conditions facing the workers. Without going into a debate over it, one cannot but say with truth and emphasis that the employees fought a

great and heroic battle against heavy odds, that those who descended into the field were no mean in numbers or lacking in determination and courage. The strike of July 12 changed the face of all the services and the whole TU movement. The workers need not repent their great action. The whole working class had undergone a great experience and the ruling class too had learnt a lesson. History will alone show the real fruits of it."

On the question of TU unity, the role of the AITUC in the strike and the problems that face the victimised, the resolution says:

"The Working Committee feels that it was a step forward when all the organisations of the Government employees joined in one united front of the JCA and acted unanimously and unitedly. This unity, however, is likely to suffer a setback after the strike, when the whole movement now rightly sits down to assessing the gains and losses, the mistakes and achievements, not only of individuals and parties but of the whole TU movement and all its wings....

"The AITUC for its part feels that the great action of the General Strike and its gains would have been still better and the losses less, if the whole TU movement, including the central TU organisations and the various Government employees' organisations had united on a common understanding, common slogan of action and common pooling of all their forces in a planned and agreed way, long before the JCA was formed and the decision to strike and its date was taken.

"One of the greatest shortcomings was that the JCA and the Federations of the Government employees had all along kept the problem to themselves as their own and had not mobilised the public in their favour. The central TU organisations, for their part, had also not shown sufficient awareness to mobilise the general workers and the public behind the employees and made the problem and the action common for all, in time and before the strike materialised.

"The AITUC considered the question in its General Council meeting of February 1960 but it could not give any slogan of strike, as it was the question for the independent

Government employees' organisations to decide. The AITUC, however, made useful suggestions to its sympathisers in these organisations and in the Convention of April 2, 1960, they proposed a one-day strike to begin with. The proposal was, however, not agreed to on the ground that it was too mild an action.

"The AITUC feels that sufficient preparations were not made and the problem was not taken seriously even by its own centre for a long time as it was not certain that the strike would, after all, materialise. There was ground for such a feeling to some extent till June 23. But when the JCA met and actually fixed the final date on July 12, and gave notice, the strike preparations should have been taken seriously. The AITUC accepts its part of the blame in not doing all it could and should have done in this matter, though what it did throughout this period was correct and the work done by thousands of its adherents, before, during and after the strike is worthy of the traditions of the AITUC. Hundreds of its workers were arrested, including many of its MPs and MLAs, trade union functionaries and its President. The AITUC unions should review their achievements as well as mistakes, learn the lessons for the future and work for further unity to defend the victimised, to defend those whose bread-earners fell in firing and skirmishes and to stand for defence against the coming attack on trade union rights of the Government employees' organisations and the trade unions in general.

"All trade unions of the AITUC must exert more to enroll in greater numbers the vast number of workers still out of its fold, fight for recognition of its unions and strengthen its influence in all strata of the working class. The AITUC while strengthening itself should take steps to bring all the central trade union organisations and those who are independent into one central organisation throughout the country, irrespective of political differences. All-in trade union unity alone can defend the working class and take it forward in fulfilling its tasks towards the country and its own class."

There were signs that the Government was going to

bring-in legislation to ban all strikes in the essential services. The Tripartite Conference (18th ILC) was due to meet on September 24-25, 1960 in Delhi. All the trade union organisations wanted the subject of the strike and all that it involved to be discussed in the Tripartite Conference. If this were not allowed on the agenda, we had decided to boycott the conference. It was feared that the very institution of the Tripartite was going to crack in this crisis, such was the mood of the unions. But the Labour Minister, Shri Nanda, resolved the deadlock by putting the subject on the agenda and, in fact, this Tripartite discussed almost nothing else but the question of the strike, the public sector, Government's role as an employer, in relation to labour laws and conventions, the question of the right to strike and ban on 'outsiders' in unions.

While on one side, the Government intends to impose Draconian laws on their employees in public services, it refuses to observe even the ordinary labour laws in many of their public sector concerns. The vital plants like those of Bhilai and Rourkela witnessed serious strikes and demonstrations last year. Apart from the question of retrenchment of construction workers, it was found that in Rourkela, the Government or the Hindustan Steel Co., was not observing any of the factory laws. There are no proper grades of pay as yet in the steel plants. The excuse is that they are not yet completed. But that is no reason to pay miserable rates to those who are working and in those departments which are running. Incomplete plants surely cannot set aside labour laws, when thousands of workers are daily in employment.

Our unions there have tried to reason with the authorities and failing to convince them, have had to take to strike action. However much we may dislike such a step in the vital public sector undertaking, we have to take that step, after exhausting other means of settlement.

The situation in iron and steel and coal in the public sector is not very happy. We have already referred to this subject before. Unless the Government and management on the spot abide by laws, and settle the problem of wage-

fixation, unless freely elected Works Committees are set up and allowed to function and the unions are given recognition, the workers will find it hard to fulfil their duty to the public sector because, to discharge that duty itself, demands must be fulfilled quickly. At the same time, the Public Sector cannot be allowed to be sabotaged due to the incompetence of the ministries or their policies. The working class and people of India must consciously intervene to preserve and develop further what belongs to the nation, built out of their money and so vitally necessary for our future.

ON T. U. UNITY

In the recent period, trade unity on common action has shown more progress than before. There have been more industrywide united actions than before, as mentioned earlier, in spite of the fact that the leadership as a whole of the central organisations are nowhere near any unity. The rising costs of living, the need to take common action to secure the implementation of Wage Board awards which embrace a whole industry on an all-national level, the necessity to protect wages against the effects of rising prices and taxes, have been compelling unions and workers to unite for common action, even though temporarily or from issue to issue. The biggest unity was shown at the time of the strike of the Government employees in July 1960, which brought together all the Federations of the various sections of Government employees in one Confederation and in common action by the Joint Council of Action.

My report on the Government employees' strike sums up this question as follows :

"In some Federations there were differences between the adherents of different trade union centres. The Railwaymen's Federation was most susceptible to these differences so much so that the AITUC union on the Southern Railway was refused affiliation by the AIRF, whose General Secretary, Peter Alvares, belonged to the HMS and the

PSP. Attempts were made to affiliate united railway unions by force of vote to the HMS, though it was an understanding that, as far as possible, united unions should not be appropriated by any one TU centre. Even then the adherents of the AITUC continued in the united federations. In the Defence Federation, in one local election of a union, handbills were issued against a candidate by the PSP adherents, directly denouncing the rival candidate who was a union secretary and an employed worker as a 'Communist' and a 'Chinese agent', thereby indirectly inviting his victimisation and dismissal. Yet the Defence Federation with such diverse leaders as S. M. Joshi of the HMS, K. G. Sriwastava of the AITUC and S. M. Banerjee, independent ex-employee, elected with Communist support to the Parliament, continued to remain united. While the PSP and Communists clashed in Kerala, they united in the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti. While the HMS and PSP refused textile unity in Bombay, all other parties united and established the biggest textile union of Bombay with S. M. Joshi as President and myself as General Secretary, with Vice-Presidents of the Republican Party, the Peasants' and Workers' Party and the Lal Nishan Party. Even while the memories of the overthrow of the Kerala Government were fresh, the cashewnut workers' unions of Kerala belonging to the AITUC, UTUC and even INTUC united for a general strike for minimum wage and struck. The jute and plantation workers of Bengal and tramwaymen of Calcutta had united strikes for wages and wage-boards.

"Thus the stream of trade union unity was taking a zigzag course. No one could predict where the AITUC, HMS, UTUC would quarrel and where they would unite. That was because unity did not depend merely on leaders and ideological or tactical differences. The masses down below had a say and not all top leaders were blind to the moods of the masses. Hence, in places, the top leaders and masses, both united. In places, only the masses united and acted, dragging the leaders behind them. In places, the top leaders would agree and the middle leadership would not. And so on.

“Working class and trade union unity in India is bound to take diverse forms and zigzag way and not conform to the set policies or formulae of any one organisation. That many a time confounds some leaders, who refuse to understand the masses or some of the peculiarities of our country and the vast changes that are taking place among our workers, our peasants from whom the new working class is being drawn in the development. The new working class, young in age, forced to leave the fields and go into the factories after independence, yet inexperienced in class battles and the wily tricks of the bourgeoisie and its Governments, is different in consciousness from the old veteran worker of the British days, who had fought on all fronts, political and economic. The old tried worker is now less in number, in the new set up. Hence, trade union unity has to begin anew, with new ways, new approaches. Once again the old leaders in the TU movement have to learn new language and express their class experience in new forms, suitable to the changed conditions. Even personal friendships and manners and talks count in this hard task of unity, where thousands of new cadres and leaders have come up in the movement, who yet cannot easily distinguish between national tasks and class duties or between class and class. Hence it is no surprise that TU and working class unity takes unexpected forms and zigzag roads. The point is to see the essence of the whole thing. The oppression of rising prices and fall in wages, the callousness of the Government and the employers towards the workers and the people, the unbridled profiteering of the monopolists and Government’s failure to control them, were moving the masses into action, into unity and breaking down the subjective prejudices or ideological differences among the leadership and the masses. Even the attempt to use the India-China dispute to confuse and stall all action of the masses in defence of their conditions of living and work had lost its edge. That was plainly seen in the recent Government employees’ general strike.”

There are many more aspects to which reference is necessary. We have put these questions in separate reports.

Questions of Code of Discipline, Productivity, social insurance and labour legislation, organisation of our unions and their recognition, verification of membership, works committees, etc., are there for consideration in the other sectional and organisational reports.

The Code of Discipline is a voluntary tripartite agreement. But the employers and Government are trying to bring in legal sanctions to enforce those parts of the Code which can be used against the workers. The sanction which is demanded most is against strikes and demonstrations. We cannot agree to this as it will lead to a ban on all strikes and demonstrations and deprive the workers of their only weapon of defence.

As against this, no attempt is made to secure compulsory recognition of unions by creating legal sanctions for this provision in the Code of Discipline.

Productivity Councils and Works Committees are tried to be used as appendages of the management to secure the consent of the workers to greater workloads and higher speeds and to block workers' demands and grievances even on those questions which fall within the sphere of the Works Committees. Where Works Committees refuse to become the tail of the managements, these are suppressed and made obsolete. In hundreds of factories, they are not allowed to be formed at all and their elections are banned.

The elections to the Works Committee indicate the workers' mood and the popularity and support which the different rival unions enjoy in the factory. Generally, the recognised and so-called representative unions of the INTUC lose in these elections and the hollowness of their claims is exposed. Hence, the INTUC and some Governmental circles and employers want that the Works Committees should not be elected but nominated by the representative or recognised unions. The AITUC does not approve of this. The correct principle is that the Works Committees, which speak for all the workers in a factory, whether they be union members or not, must be elected by them. If the representative and recognised union is really representa-

tive, its leadership is bound to be accepted by the workers in the elections also.

In the absence of ballot for recognition and status, verification of membership must be taken seriously by our unions. Though it is true that many unions have no apparatus to prepare all the documents and record for verification, yet, we must not neglect this part of our work and we must create the necessary cadres for it. On verification depends in many places, the question of recognition. Verified membership figures are also used politically by our opponents to deny us our rights and our rightful place. Verification has become a part of TU struggle.

These and other problems are dealt with elsewhere and hence I will not take more time here.

In the period before us, the TU movement has to devote some special attention to the question of the women workers and the young workers. The entrance of millions of new workers in the industrial field has brought forth this problem on the agenda on a large scale. The AITUC must devote special attention to this question, which we have not done so far, though we have often spoken about it.

government labour policy, unity of the class and political consciousness

WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD PLAN AND THE NEW YEAR, we shall be confronted with the same problems but with new emphasis and intensity. The Labour Policy of the Third Plan is not going to be much different from that of the Second Plan.

The labour policy of the Second Plan failed the workers on two main points—*one*, the rising prices; and *two*, unemployment.

The failure to hold the price line meant the failure to keep the real wages of the workers from falling. The failure to deal with unemployment meant more competition among the workers for jobs, enabling the employers to buy their labour power at lower wages or use them to break the organised workers' resistance to worsening conditions.

Does the Third Plan hold forth any better prospects on these two matters which are vital not only to the workers but to all the people in general? It does not. The Plan hopes to hold the price-line but all previous prophecies on this have proved futile.

On employment, the position is that employment in the Second Plan has risen. Nearly five to six million new work-

ers have come into employment. But those who came newly on the market for jobs are computed to be eight million. Thus, increasing construction and production has not been able to absorb all the new hands that want to work and new mouths that must be fed.

The Third Plan on this score also is not certain of its position.

The cure for this does not lie only in the field of industrialisation. Unless the ruination of agriculture is halted, and the millions that flock to the town are partly absorbed by agrarian reforms, the crying misery of unemployment cannot be controlled or halted. And even then that would not be enough to really do away with unemployment.

We have mentioned before the advance made by the working class movement and the gains made by it in the matter of wages, organisation, rights and status of the working class. Today we are not that downtrodden, speechless, dumb working class which cannot defend itself or fight for its rights and win them. We have by our struggles forced many a change in the policies of the employers and the Government.

But, if one were to ask as to what in essence is the character of the Labour policy of the Government, what answer can there be? The answer has to be that in essence the labour policy of the Government is pro-employer and anti-worker. Such a policy may adopt progressive measures from time to time. That is due to the working class movement, its fighting strength, its organisation and its action. Left to itself, what policy will capitalism follow in relation to the working class? Obviously a policy which is in the class interests of the employers and, as such, opposed to the workers.

If we look into the happenings on the working class and Government's and employers' actions, we come to note the following anti-worker features:

1. Refusal to increase wages until struggles break out—and workers fight and suffer.

2. Delay and sabotage by employers of agreements, laws, awards, conventions permitted.

3. Refusal or failure to translate conventions in favour of workers in practice, though accepted in theory.

4. Helping employers with money and other means to impose rationalisation, etc., without agreed safeguards for workers.

5. Not punishing employers effectively and quickly for frauds, closures, violation of laws on safety and health. Not making laws against them stringent enough to allow such a punishment.

6. Allowing use of police forces and resort to firing and killing to give protection to blacklegs and to break strikes, even when they are peaceful and legitimate.

7. Use of military forces in case of strikes.

8. Curtailing democratic and civil liberties when workers organise and are in a position to defend themselves and succeed.

9. Weighting the law against the workers on the industrial field and using criminal law against industrial actions (*viz.*, Goonda Act, Police Act, Section 151, 107 Cr. P.C., etc.).

10. Denial of compulsory recognition of trade unions and ballot.

11. Pro-employer attitude in taxing and management of social security and welfare funds.

12. Helping disruption of working class unity by means of patronage in recognition of trade unions and by other means.

13. No strict implementation of measures that can be really beneficial to workers, if properly enforced (*viz.*, bonus in coalmines, safety rules, awards, etc.).

14. Neglect of working class housing and health.

15. Right of meetings violated by Section 144.

16. Arrests and detentions, launching of false cases against trade unionists, arbitrary dismissals.

17. Whole towns and areas being allowed to be converted into virtual private kingdoms of employers, where all democratic rights and liberties, even including right of visit to workers' houses by their relatives and friends, can be banned by the owners.

Go anywhere in India, and particularly in plantations, mines and industrial combines called "Nagars" (Tatanagar, Modinagar, Walchandnagar, Dalmianagar, etc.) and you will find hundreds of instances illustrating the above features of Government's labour policy. Firing and killing is so frequent that one cannot even keep count of it. Hundreds of trade union workers are involved in cases in which most fantastic charges including murder are launched against TU leaders, just to break a union and defeat the workers.

In view of this, if the policy of the Government and the employers is described as pro-employer and anti-worker, it would be a correct description, in spite of the good measures we are able to secure, after struggles and prolonged negotiations and suffering. We cannot forget that we are living under capitalism, where concentration of wealth, money and power in the hands of the rich and ruling classes is growing to the detriment of the people. Hence the imperative necessity to unite the working class and instil greater class-consciousness in it.

No doubt there are democratic forces outside the working class, who also view these developments with disapproval. They are our friends and allies. But to move all into action, it is necessary for the workers to have political consciousness of their role, class-consciousness along with trade union loyalties and organisation.

We have advanced well in industrial solidarity. Whole trades and industries go into action on a nationwide scale on an issue embracing all the workers of the industry. There have been even successful general strikes in whole

towns and regions in sympathy with some partial demands. Industrial and trade union solidarity has advanced to such an extent, that workers are paying money and dues to the unions as never before.

But, all this has one weakness. There is as yet not that deep general class consciousness which can move the workers as a class on a general issue affecting the whole class. Class consciousness and solidarity on a national and international level is a prime necessity, if we have to move still further. The road to that solidarity is shown by the World Federation of Trade Unions, the mighty organisation of the international working class. Our trade unions, State Committees and the AITUC centre has to take steps to move our workers on a class basis, on issues which are beyond trade, industry, wages and the like. Can we not demonstrate for Hands Off Congo or Cuba or Algeria? Can we call a powerful action on a countrywide scale against a reactionary law, a bill to ban strikes? Can we move whole factories and trades in defence of democratic rights, against manifestations of dictatorships or any obvious atrocity on the people? We have been speaking of such things. But we must educate the worker better in class-consciousness, in national and international class solidarity, in defence of the interests of the country and the class. We must consciously fight caste and communal prejudices and division. The way to do that is to take the worker to a higher level of class consciousness. While keeping legitimate linguistic and cultural pride of his language or State, the worker must fight the narrow anti-national, anti-class developments. Trade unity must not be disrupted by non-class attitudes. It is a hard battle. It has to be fought with skill and care and not with mechanical positions or mere statement of abstract principles. Only experience in action will teach us to take the right road.

The AITUC has grown in strength and influence during these years. It is proud to have been in the forefront of the workers' struggles. It has some very fine collective agreements and achievements to its credit. It has build up

strong, functioning, fighting unions and federations in various industries and trades. It has helped to advance unity in the TU movement and working class solidarity. Though not free from errors, the AITUC has followed a correct policy in relation to the international working class, in relation to our country's interests and in relation to the interests of our class.

Guided by the best sons of the working class, the AITUC will always be in the vanguard of the struggles of the working class for peace, freedom, democracy and socialism!

(The Report of the General Secretary was adopted by the 26th Session of the AITUC on January 12, 1961.)

Appendix 1

AITUC STATEMENT ON MURDER OF PATRICE LUMUMBA

S. A. Dange, M. P., General Secretary, AITUC, issued the following statement on February 14, 1961, in connection with the murder of Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo :

“The cold-blooded and premeditated murder of Premier Patrice Lumumba and his colleagues by the agents of imperialism in Congo has roused strong indignation among the Indian people and the working class.

“The All-India Trade Union Congress pays its respectful homage to the brave Lumumba, Premier of Congo, Joseph Okito, former Vice-President of the Congolese Senate and Maurice Mpolo, former Minister of Youth and Sports, whose lives have been laid in the cause of national independence and fight against the imperialists and their agents.

“The United Nations failed to intervene in Congo on the side of its people, its legal Parliament and Government. Under the mask of non-intervention in the so-called internal affairs, UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, with the backing of the American imperialists encouraged the Belgian fascists and the secessionists to recapture Congo and put her under the heel of neo-colonialism. Private armies armed by the Belgian and American imperialists and financed by the reactionary mine-owners and financiers of Katanga were allowed to arrest and dismiss the Parliament and ultimately arrest Lumumba and his friends. The UN forces failed in their duty to give protection to Lumumba which ultimately led to his cold-blooded murder.

“The democratic people of Congo and the progressive forces in the world will avenge the murder of Lumumba, bring the criminals to book and make them pay for their crimes. The AITUC assures its support in the struggle of the people of Congo for asserting their sovereignty and independence against the Belgian imperialists, their supporters in USA and UNO and their agent, the Mobutu clique and the Katanga traitors.

“We call upon the trade unions and workers all over the country to hold demonstrations and rallies to pay homage to the departed, protest against imperialist machinations and plots against the freedom movement of the African countries and assure them of our continued support.”

Appendix 2

EXTRACTS FROM LOK SABHA DEBATES,

February 20, 1961

S. A. Dange : The modifications in the industrial policy that are being tried by some people, taking away certain strategic industries from the Industrial Policy Resolution and handing them over to the private sector is a suicidal step. Therefore the country in the Plan we support; the class in the Plan we do not support. We criticise them.

The Plan is being grabbed by some people for their private interests, for their class interests and not for the country's interests. Therefore, we have got an attitude of support to the Plan on one side as well as criticism of the Plan on the other.

For example, take the State sector in industry. We have heard in the question hour even today that when we have developed certain units of industry on the basis of taxes we imposed on the people, from the money we took from the people, these gentlemen come up and say: now that you have developed it, you sell it to us.

There are some people who are ready to sell it. We tax the people for building these industries, later on you sell it to these gentlemen for making profits out of it. What is this policy? Is that a correct line?

Then they say: “The report is still private”. It has leaked out in the Press. One newspaper in Bombay complained, when it was leaked out to one paper, why not to us and they expressed satisfaction that at least Government is thinking of denationalisation of the State sector—privatisation of the State sector. From the House there ought to be condemnation of any such policy; the House should unite and tell the Government, “For God's sake do not take a step in that direction.”

A beautiful plant like the Hindustan Machine Tools....

A Member : It is only a rumour.

S. A. Dange : There are rumours. That is why I am asking you.

K. T. K. Tangamani : The Mazumdar Committee's Report is there.

S. A. Dange : A committee was appointed with an official as Secretary. Why was a committee appointed to think of such a thing. Whether you sell later on or not is another thing; that you should appoint a committee to think of such a proposition means there is something black in it.

Morarji Desai : No such committee has been appointed.

K. T. K. Tangamani : The details of the report have already appeared in the Press.

S. A. Dange : I will take it for granted that no such committee was appointed, no such decision was taken and that there is no danger of any unit in the State sector being sold out to any private concern. I take that assurance.

Morarji Desai : No assurance is necessary where nothing is happening. It is only his imagination.

Mr. Speaker : He refers to a committee—Mazumdar Committee—which was appointed. Was a committee appointed?

Lal Bahadur Shastri : There is a committee, but the point which they have considered is this. He says we propose to sell out our public concerns to private people.

K. T. K. Tangamani : Shares.

Lal Bahadur Shastri : It is only being theoretically considered if in case a new venture is set up in the public sector whether we could raise a certain percentage—10 or 15 per cent—of shares from the public, whether public shares could be raised and they can participate in that public venture. That is the basic idea. It can never be a public sector project unless Government own 51 per cent of shares.

S. A. Dange : I am basing myself on the reports from very responsible business journals.

Lal Bahadur Shastri : The question of HMT was raised this morning also. It is a fantastic idea. HMT is one of our best projects, we can never conceive of selling out even a single share to anybody.

S. A. Dange: I am very glad about that pronouncement and that clarification that there is no danger of these best things which we are creating with people's money being sold either completely or even partly to the extent of 5 or 10 per cent of shares to anybody in the private sector. I am glad to have got at least some clarification on this matter.

So far as the State sector is concerned, Government should certainly be warned about this. Even though they may not themselves think about it, the private interests are going to try it. They have an eye on the LIC, an eye on the HMT, an eye on the Sindri factory.

Business journals belonging to the monopolistic sector are discussing these propositions and it is certainly a good thing that these propositions are buried once and for ever, that there would be no danger of halting the development of the State sector and its extension, but that there would be concerted attempts to extend State sector in bigger and bigger spheres of industry, which is very vital for the development of the country....

Appendix 3

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

The following table is part of a study made by an eminent economist on the question of ownership and control in inter-
corporate investments in our country. Of the 540 companies studied, share-holders' lists and balance sheets could be secured only for 496 companies. In or about 1958, the net worth, i.e., paid up capital plus free reserves of these companies amounted to Rs. 317 crores, and their total assets to Rs. 821 crores.

The table will give an idea as to how only five business houses in our country decisively control a great number of companies and thereby exert a stranglehold on the national economy.

	Sole Control
TATAS :	
No. of Companies	48
Net Worth (Rs. lakhs)	1,05,53
Total Assets (Rs. lakhs)	2,90,09

BIRLAS :

No. of Companies	331
Net Worth (Rs. lakhs)	1,00,40
Total Assets (Rs. lakhs)	2,91,53

MAFATLALS :

No. of companies	15
Net Worth (Rs. lakhs)	10,07
Total Assets (Rs. lakhs)	22,57

WALCHANDS :

No. of Companies	16
Net Worth (Rs. lakhs)	9,57
Total Assets (Rs. lakhs)	19,81

MAHINDRAS :

No. of Companies	4
Net Worth (Rs. lakhs)	2,02
Total Assets (Rs. lakhs)	13,86

(Source: R. K. Hazari, Ownership and Control, **Economic Weekly**, Bombay, Vol. XII, No. 48, November 26, 1960.)