

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the General Council

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**August 01 - 03, 2008
Puri, Orissa**

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the General Council

Puri (Orissa)

August 1- 3, 2008

AGENDA

1. Condolence Resolution;
2. Confirmation of minutes of the meeting of the CITU Working Committee held at Delhi on October 6 - 8, 2007;
3. Presidential Address;
4. Report of the General Secretary;
5. Resolutions
7. Any other subject with the permission of the Chair

PROGRAMME

01.08.2008	10.30 a.m	Flag hoisting Garlanding the Martyrs Column
	10.45 a.m to 12.00 noon	Presidential address Resolution
	12.15 p.m. to 01.30 p.m.	Condolence resolution Presentation of General Secretary's report Resolutions Debate on General Secretary's report
	01:30 p.m to 04:00 p.m 04.00 p.m. to 05.30 p.m. 06.00 p.m. to 07.30 p.m.	Lunch break Debate on General Secretary's report Debate on General Secretary's report
02.08.2008	09.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.	Debate on General Secretary's report
	12.00 noon to 01.00 p.m.	- - -
	01.00 p.m. to 03.30 p.m.	Lunch break
	03.30 p.m. to 05.00 p.m. 05.30 p.m. to 07.00 p.m. 07.00 p.m.	Debate on General Secretary's report Debate on General Secretary's report CITU Secretariat meeting
03.08.2008	09.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.	Debate on General Secretary's report
	11.00 a.m. to 01.30 p.m.	Discussion on ESI
	01.30 a.m. to 04.00 p.m.	Lunch break
	04.00 a.m. to 05.30 p.m.	Reply by the General Secretary Adoption of reports Concluding address by the President
04.08.2008		MASS RALLY

N.B: Tea Breaks: 01.08.2008 - 12:00 noon to 12:15 p.m and 5:30 p.m to 06.00 p.m
02.08.2008 - 11:30 a.m to 12 noon and 5:00 p.m to 05.30 p.m
03.08.2008 - 10:30 a.m to 11:00 a.m and 05.30 p.m to 06.00 p.m
Dinner will be served at 08:00 p.m daily

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dear Comrades,

Since we held our Working Committee Meeting last time in New Delhi on October 6-8, 2007, significant developments have taken place in the international and national situation. This General Council has to review these developments dispassionately, so that we can decide our policies and plan our activities in the forthcoming period in a suitable manner.

The General Secretary in his Report has dealt at length on the national developments and its implication on our working class and the people. I will, therefore, mainly deal with the international developments and briefly touch on some of the aspects of national situation that affect our movement and the condition of the toiling masses.

GRIP OF FINANCE CAPITAL OVER WORLD ECONOMY

Globalization has immensely strengthened the grip of Finance Capital over the world economy. Transnational corporations from developed capitalist countries control 84 per cent of the Foreign Direct Investment in the world.

According to World Investment Report 2007 published by the United Nations global foreign direct investment inflows increased during 2006 by 38 per cent reaching \$ 1,306 billion (Rs.56.2 lakh crores).

Explaining this high rise of inflow the World Investment Report noted, "The rise in global FDI flows was partly driven by increasing corporate profits worldwide and resulting higher stock prices that raised the value of cross border mergers and acquisitions".

High rate of profits were earned by the capitalists by depriving the workers of their rightful wage earnings and social security benefits while charging a high price for the products due to monopolization of the market. To facilitate this process, concentration of capital is taking place all over the world through the process of merger and acquisition of industrial understandings at international level.

Much of the rise in foreign direct investment is taking place due to reinvestment of profits earned by the companies. This fact is clearly reflected in the observation of the Report itself. "As a result of higher corporate profits, reinvested earnings have become an important component of inward FDI: they accounted for an estimated 30% of total inflows worldwide in 2006 and for almost 50% in developing countries alone". Country wise breakup of FDI during 2005-2006 gives us the following picture.

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS BY MAJOR CAPITALIST COUNTRIES (2005-2006)

1) US	-	\$ 217 billion	(Rs. 9.3 lakh crores)
2) France	-	\$ 115 "	(Rs. 4.9 lakh crores)
3) Spain	-	\$ 90 "	(Rs. 3.9 lakh crores)
4) Switzerland	-	\$ 83 "	(Rs. 3.6 lakh crores)
5) U.K.	-	\$ 79 "	(Rs. 3.4 lakh crores)
6) Germany	-	\$ 79 "	(Rs. 3.4 lakh crores)
7) Belgium	-	\$ 63 "	(Rs. 2.7 lakh crores)
8) Japan	-	\$ 50 "	(Rs. 2.1 lakh crores)
9) Canada	-	\$ 46 "	(Rs. 2.0 lakh crores)
10) Italy	-	\$ 43 "	(Rs. 1.8 lakh crores)

The above investments have been made in one year alone, which explains how the grip of MNCs is increasing faster day by day. U.S.A. is still the largest foreign investor while along with European Union it constitutes the major exploiter of the people in the globe.

Concentration of capital through merger and acquisition takes place to reduce competition and garner more monopoly profits. During 2005-06 alone 6974 such transactions have taken place accounting for 14 per cent rise. The total amount involved is really fabulous amounting to \$880 billion (Rs. 6.2 lakh crores), a rise of 23 per cent over the previous year. As a result of globalization, many cases of merger and acquisitions are international in character. Another aspect to be noted is that a large part of these transactions are mega transactions amounting to more than \$ one billion (Rs. 4300 Crores). During 2006 alone 172 transactions were mega transactions which account for two third of the global transactions during the year. The trend is likely to be strengthened in the following year since higher profitability is closely linked with concentration of capital at a global level.

Globalization has helped MNC's to strengthen their grip in international production. According to a study, 78,000 MNC's and their 7,80,000 foreign subsidiaries have increased their sales in 2006 by 18 per cent, gross margin by 10 per cent and exports by 12 per cent. They accounted for 10 per cent of world GDP and one third of world exports. This underlines how the WTO has helped the MNCs all over the world to control more and more portion of the global exports.

Another feature of globalization is the increasing role of service sector in the FDI. In the year 1990, the service sector was responsible for 49 per cent of the total FDI which increased to 66 per cent during 2005. The role of the manufacturing sector declined from 41 per cent to 30 per cent during the same period while the share of primary sector continue to be lower at 10 per cent throughout the period.

The growth of foreign assets of MNC's is another indicator of their expanding hegemony over the global economy as whole. According to official data during 1982 total assets of foreign affiliates of MNC's stood at \$ 2,206 million (Rs. 9.5 thousand crores) which increased to \$6,036 billion in 1990. However later the growth became much faster and in the year 2006 the total assets of these companies reached a colossal figure of \$51,187 million (Rs. 2.2 lakh crores).

The grip of MNC's all over the world has thus increased at an unprecedented faster rate since the advent of globalization.

The growth of MNC's in developing countries was faster due to these companies prevailing upon the Government of those recipient countries to give them liberal concessions in the matter of taxation, exports of profits, infrastructure facilities and non-implementation of labour laws. However, some countries in the world due to their bitter experience of MNC's have started imposing restriction of MNCs with a view to protect their indigenous economy.

The World Investment Report 2007, while referring to India has made the following comments,

" FDI inflows in South Asia surged by 126% amounting to \$22 billion (Rs. 94.6 thousand crores), mainly due to investments in India. The country received more FDI than ever before (\$17 billion (Rs. 73.1 thousand crores) or 153% more than 2005), equivalent to the total inflows in the country during the period 2003-2005."

The Report further noted: "According to the Government of India the country's economy is expected

to grow by 9.2% in the 2006-07 fiscal year. The sustained growth in income has made the country increasingly attractive to market seeking FDI. Indeed foreign retailers such as Wal-Mart have started to enter the Indian market. At the same time, a number of United State TNC's such as General Motors and IBM are rapidly expanding their presence in the country, as are several large Japanese TNC's such as Toyota and Nissan – Private equity firms are also playing a role. For instance Kohlberg Kravis Roberts and Co (United States) acquired a controlling stake (85%) of Flextronics Software Sys. Ltd with an investment of \$900 million" (Rs. 3870 crores).

The Value of assets of FDI in India which stood at \$ 1.7 billion (Rs. 7310 crores) in 1990 went upto \$ 17.5 billion (Rs. 75 thousand crores) in 2000 and further reached \$50.7 billion (Rs. 2 lakh 18 thousand crore) in 2006. Despite reversionary trends in U.S. economy the march towards accumulating further assets has continued in India. The process of merger and acquisitions in the India has also grown up in this period. During 2004, 80 companies were taken over while in 2005 the number increased to 126 and in 2006 the take overs increased further to 163. The process still continues further which is gradually strengthening the grip of MNCs over the Indian economy.

According to Global Employment Trends published by the ILO recently the global unemployment is likely to increase by 5 million during 2008 reaching a figure of 19 crore. The assessment is based on the data supplied by Governments and is likely to be highly underestimated.

The Report further noted that 48.7 Crore workers or 16.4 per cent of all workers still do not earn enough to lift themselves and their families above 1 dollar per person per day poverty line, while 130 crore workers or 43.5 per cent of the workers in the world still live below the 2 dollar per day threshold.

In terms of vulnerable employment as a share of total employment ILO study points out that in South Asia 77.2 per cent of the workers fall in this category. These workers are totally unprotected, they do not have any social security benefits and have no trade union rights. The ILO Director General's idea of decent work is thus facing huge deficit to-day.

According to recent UNESCO Report, dairy prices rose nearly 80 per cent and grain 72 per cent during the last 5 years. The steep rise in these prices have evoked strong protest movements in several Asian and African countries. As pointed by the Report of International Food Policy Research Institution in Washington biofuel production accounts for a quarter to third of the recent increase in the global commodity prices. A fifth of Americas Corn Crop is now used for the production of ethanol while farmer rushing to produce corn has led to reduction in soyabeans and other crops. This led to rise in prices of these crops.

Sixty to eighty per cent of the consumer spending of the people in the developing countries is spent on food articles, as noted by the UNESCO Report.

FORMATION OF BRIC ALLIANCE

The meeting of Foreign Ministers of Russia, China, India and Brazil (BRIC) on May 14, 2008 at Yekaterinburg in Ural (Russia) was an important development in multilateral international relations. It is considered as a grouping of large emerging economies formed to play a leading role in reshaping the global political and economic order. These countries constitute more than 40 per cent of the world population while their combined GDP is half that of G8 countries and is expected to overtake G8 by 2020.

The Joint Communiqué pointed out that the four Foreign Ministers “confirm the aspirations of BRIC countries to work together with each other and other states in the interest of strengthening international security and stability.”

The communiqué further observed, “The Ministers noted that sustainable development of the global economy is the long term perspective, as well as finding solutions to the acute global problems of our time, such as poverty, hunger and diseases, are only possible if due account is taken of the interests of all nations and within a just global economic system”.

This alliance, along with Shanghai Co-operation Organization will be effective instruments to fight the U.S. imperialists designs to establish a unipolar world. Another positive development in this period is the desire expressed by India to become a full member of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization.

If India gives up Pro-U.S. tilt in her policies and strengthen the activities of these two formations it would strengthen the worldwide struggle for lasting peace.

BLOOD BATH IN SOMALIA

To control of oil resources of Somalia, the U.S. imperialists have been boosting the pro-U.S. army of Ethiopia to carry forward the blood-bath of the Somali people. 35 lakh people have already fled their residential places and are huddled in refugee camps. Shortage of food is forcing them to starve and many have died due to starvation. Over 7 lakh people from the capital city Mogadishu have been forced to leave their residences due to destruction of their homes by artillery fire of Ethiopian troops.

Violating UN resolution, US is supplying modern arms of Ethiopian army to carry out their game of killing innocent people like goats. The so called stooge Government of Somalia Transitional Federal Government is also attacking the people and making them destitute in their own land. All this attempt by the U.S. Government is being made to ensure control of oil available in Somalia. 30 per cent of the oil supply to U.S. comes from Africa.

RUSSIAN AND CHINESE VETO ON ZIMBABWE

U.S. Imperialists continue their intervention in Zimbabwe due to anti-globalisation stand of President Mugabe. In 2000 he distributed land owned by white settlers to African farmers. In the second round of elections held in the country in last week of June, due to the withdrawal of the opposition candidate M. Tsvangirai Mugabe was re-elected as President with 85 percent of the polled votes. The opposition however has not recognised the election and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has called for Western Intervention in Zimbabwe.

A crisis situation has created due to MDC winning majority seats in Parliament while President belonged to Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Forum (ZANU-PF). Mugabe announced that he was prepared to form Government of National Unity. However due to intervention of U.S. imperialists a national settlement is becoming difficult. World Bank and the IMF have been pressuring financial institutions to give any credit to Zimbabwe.

U.S. Government tried to bring a resolution in Security Council to impose sanctions against Zimbabwe but due to veto of Russia and China it could not be passed. The two countries have taken the stand that the differences in Zimbabwe should be settled by the people without any foreign intervention. However, U.S. imperialists continue their conspiracies in Zimbabwe with the support their yes-men in

that country.

U.S. intervention continue in Sudan on the question of Darfour. Arming of rebels in that country by U.S. despite U.N. resolution continues since U.S. wants to control the oil production in Sudan.

U.S. intervention continues in Angola and Mozambique while the dictatorial regimes in Cameron, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast and Rwanda continue to enjoy moral and material support from U.S. imperialists.

LEFT WIN IN PARAGUAY

In the Latin American country Paraguay the reactionary Govt. led by Colorado Party which ruled the country for 61 years was defeated in the electoral battle on April 20, 2008. The spectacular success achieved by Patriotic Alliance for Change consisting of 9 parties of 20 social movements has given a big setback to U.S. machinations in that continent. The alliance was led by former bishop Fernando Lugo, whose family members were persecuted and tortured by dictatorial regime of General Alfredo Stroessner.

The Patriotic Alliance for change promises to introduce land reforms and socio-economic measures to improve the living conditions of the people. The land reforms will affect 2.5 per cent of the population controlling 70 per cent of the land. The new addition to the Progressive Governments in Latin America will inspire the people of Latin America in the struggle against imperialist globalization.

ATTACKS ON PALESTINE

While India's military ties with Israel have been increasing rapidly, the attacks of the Israeli army on the people in Gaza strip are continuously mounting. By imposing sanctions against Hamas who rule 15 lakh people living in Gaza, virtual starvation and inhuman brutalities have been imposed on the Palestinian people while innocent men, women and children were being killed owing to Israeli brutal action. U.S. imperialists are openly backing Israel.

Despite exposure of corruption in Barak Missile deals, the Government of India continues to purchase arms from Israel, which has become the second largest supplier of arms to India.

The Government of Israel has openly announced their game plan to annex 50 per cent of the West Bank territory of Israel and convert Jewish populated areas within the territory. Eleven such entities are being created where Palestinians cannot enter in their own homeland. Instead of accepting the claim of the people of Palestine to make East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine Homeland, a wedge would be created by dividing West Bank in the name of creation of greater Jerusalem and creating two discreet regions with no land connection for the people of Palestine.

Several small ghettos house people of Palestine in West Bank which are just like prisons and people do not enjoy any freedom at all. Walls are being constructed to separate Israeli and Palestinian populations. Some roads are being constructed in Palestine territory, which can be used only by the Jews.

Such shocking conditions of apartheid are prevailing in the 21st century with full backing of U.S. imperialism. U.N. does not yet feel the need to intervene in such a situation of perpetuating inhuman miseries for the people in Palestine. However, the heroic people of Palestine are not succumbing to the pressure tactics of Zionist rulers and resisting the Israeli attacks with firm determination.

The recent military exercises in the Mediterranean Sea by Israel was clearly aimed at attacking Iran's nuclear installation. Over 100 aeroplanes were involved in the exercises, which clearly shows the aggressive designs of the rulers of Israel with tacit backing of U.S. imperialist.

SETBACK TO U.S. IN IRAQ

The real objective of war in Iraq is being unfolded by a report in New York times on June 30, 2008. Four major U.S. British and French oil companies viz Exxon-Mobil, Shell, British Petroleum and Total will lay their hands on oil in Iraq which is estimated to be having capacity of 115 billion barrels. A no-bid contract will be reached with U.S. stooge regime in Baghdad. As the New York Times reported, "The deals expected to be announced on June 30, will lay the foundation for the first commercial work for the major companies in Iraq since the American invasion, and open a new and potentially lucrative country for their operations".

The death of 4000 U.S. soldiers and injuries to over 30,000 was ultimately for the profit making designs of the international oil cartels. Lakhs of Iraqi citizens were killed just for the sake of control of Iraqi oil, the second largest source of oil in the world. The real face of imperialist aggression stands exposed by the most cruel war in the Middle East.

The sufferings of the people of Iraq have been noted by the journal Hardnews thus: "The average Iraqi household has fewer than three hours of electricity a day, at least 40 per cent of people have no access to safe drinking water and unemployment is between 40 per cent to 70 per cent.

The recent visit of Md. Ahmedinejad President of Iran to Iraq and the warm reception he received showed the improvement in the ties of friendship between the people of these two countries. The recent demand made by Prime Minister of Iraq regarding withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq is another development, which creates setbacks for U.S. If different sections of people of Iraq come together to form a new alliance then the U.S. will face serious difficulties in continuation of its occupation in Iraq for a long time.

The visit of President of Iran Md. Ahmadinejad to India in the last week of April has helped to reduce the strains created in Indo-Iran relationship due to India's voting with U.S. to impose sanctions against Iran, allowing Israeli spy satellite to be launched from Indian soil, her resorting to dilatory tactics during discussion on Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline and succumbing to the U.S. pressure for stopping of financial dealings with Iranian companies etc.

On eve of Iranian President's visit to India several U.S., spokesmen criticized. Iran and tried to pressurize India not to go ahead with the oil pipeline deal. However, acute energy shortage in India prevailed upon India to go ahead with the talks and develop ties of friendship with Iran.

Despite U.S. pressure, the Govt. of Pakistan went ahead to sign the oil pipe line deal. Under these circumstance if India fails to sign the deal the gas would go to China through Pakistan. This factor also played on India taking a decision to go ahead with the deal. With skyrocketing the price of crude oil in International market the supply of gas through the pipeline would be of great advantage to India. Therefore national interest weighed more for India than U.S. pressure.

The visit of Iranian President also resulted in other joint venture projects re: oil production, port and road development in Iran. Therefore, it is in India's interest not to fall a prey to U.S. pressure against any deal with Iran and develop bilateral trade relations with this traditional neighbour of India.

SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Despite involvement of nearly 75,000 U.S. and NATO troops to occupy Afghanistan, the situation in that country continued to deteriorate day by day. Nearly 250 U.S. and NATO troops were killed in Afghanistan during the year 2007. The suicide attacks by Taliban forces have increased recently. Between the two forces the common people of Afghanistan are facing acute sufferings.

A massive suicide attack on Kandahar jail on June 13, this year led to release of over one thousand Taliban fighters arrested by NATO forces and handed over to Afghan authorities. Though the NATO allies decided to spend \$201 billion to rebuild Afghanistan this attack proved to be a setback to NATO efforts.

The attack on the life of Afghan President Karzai was another attempt by the Taliban forces to destabilize the situation in the country. Though the assassination attempt failed it reflected the insecure conditions in Afghanistan. Karzai openly blamed Pakistan for its complicity in such attacks. He pointed out the operation of Taliban forces from Pakistan territory. Spokesmen of Pakistan Government denied its role and warned against any interference in their internal affairs.

The attack by the U.S. troops on Pakistan military unit resulted in killing of 11 Pakistan soldiers. Pakistan Government condemned this attack as an act of aggression. This development has added a new dimension to the problem in Pakistan.

Another U.S. air strike near the Afghan-Pakistan border area in first week of July killed 64 persons, most of them were women and children of a marriage party such attacks on civilians are creating strong reactions in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Over one thousand strong Indo-Tibetan Border Police playing the role of offering protection to Indian personnel working on developmental projects are also facing attacks by the Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Some Indian workers and engineers have been kidnapped during the last 6 months.

The recent murderous bomb attack on Indian Mission in Kabul in which one senior Indian diplomat was killed highlights the growing sense of insecurity in that country.

Narcotics traffic in Afghanistan has been a major source of funding for the Taliban forces. According to a report, Afghanistan produced 8200 tonnes of opium in 2007, which forms the bulk of the opium produced all over the world during the year. Some Senior Government officials of Karzai Govt. are also involved in drug traffic, which is preventing any firm action against the illegal drug operators. Even the U.S. and British firms are involved in the drug traffic in Afghanistan which has exposed the hollowness of the NATO claim in Afghanistan.

IMPROVEMENT IN CHINA – JAPAN RELATIONS

The Summit of May 7 between Chinese President Hu Jintao and Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda resulted in a consensus on joint exploration and development of old blocks in East China sea. The consensus was formalized in a joint statement on June 18 which gave it a concrete shape,

which stressed the need to “work together to make the East China sea of peace, co-operation and friendship”. Though the delimitation of the maritime boundary between China and Japan is yet to be settled the summit pave the way for further co-operation between the two countries in the field of energy resources. Though several differences exist between China and Japan arising out colonial rule of Japan over China and the Second World War, this understanding will facilitate further dialogue on the contentious issues between the two countries.

The defeat of the Pro-independence candidate in Taiwan elections and visit of its senior official representative to China mainland has further opened up the possibilities of improvement of relations between mainland and Taiwan province of China. Though the process of unification of the country is still a distant objective, the discussion between the representative of Taiwan and the leadership of China has strengthened the mutual relationship. The commencement of flights between mainland cities of China and Taiwan have improved the possibilities of people to people contacts and economic co-operation.

China needs peace with neighbors to further advance its economy and improve the standard living of the people. These developments will certainly enable China to continue to achieve faster economic growth in the near future.

OBSTRUCTIONS TO BEIJING OLYMPICS

With Beijing Olympics approaching nearer and an Olympic torch had to reach Beijing passing through several countries, reactionary forces and supporters of Dalai Lama tried to obstruct the path of the Olympic torch in some countries. Attempts were made to create disturbances in Tibet also.

Dalai Lama openly appealed to Western powers to pressurize China and U.S., Germany, France and U.K. openly supported the claim of Dalai Lama.

However, the Olympic Torch programme was successfully organized. The Government of China had two round of talks with Dalai Lama but could not achieve any fruitful result. Attempts by Dalai Lama's supporters in India to enter Tibet from Indian territory could not succeed since Govt. of India prevented such attempts.

The remarkable economic developments in Tibet have changed the face of that backward and feudal territory. The breathtaking Beijing Lhasa train and several projects of industrial development have considerably improved the standard of living of the people.

Beijing Olympic Games in August will be a remarkable event and will be held as scheduled without any hurdle.

NEPAL BECOMES A REPUBLIC

The most significant development in Nepal has been the abolition of monarchy and declaration of Nepal as a Republic on may 28, 2008 by the Constitution Assembly. This created new wave of enthusiasm among the people, which was seen by big demonstrations organized all over the country.

In the election of the Constitution Assembly held on April 10, Maoists got 240 seats out of 605 after indirect party wise proportional votes were counted. The Nepali Congress got 107 seats while CPN(UML) got 105 seats. Maoists and CPN (UML) together got majority of seats. Madhesi, a regional party, got

sizable number of seats.

The King Gyanendra was asked to vacate the palace by July 15 and the place would be converted into a museum.

The differences among different political parties about sharing of power continued while Maoist demanded resignation of Koirala since his party lost the majority support. The Reported understanding between the Maoist and CPN (UML) the question of sharing of power was expected be eased. However this could not materialise and uncertain relations still prevail in Nepal.

FRATRICIDAL WAR IN SRILANKA

The situation in Sri Lanka continues to be complex, with fratricidal war causing a several loss of life of innocent persons. The decision to wind up Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission after Sri Lankan Government's decision to abrogate the Norwegian initiated cease fire agreement has led to starting of new hostilities between Mahindra Rajapaksa Government and the LTTE.

The International Independent Group of Eminent persons headed by former Chief Justice of India Bhagwati and other 10 persons from different countries decided to close their operation from March 31, 2008 due to "lack of political will" of the Sri Lankan Government. The Sri Lankan Government in return charged the mission of interfering in internal affairs of Sri Lanka at the behest of foreign powers.

The policy of Sri Lankan Government to find a military solution to the problem and stand of the LTTE to fight for a separate independent state of Tamil Elam presented any political solution to the problem. The killing of Sri Lankan Minister Jeyaraj Fernando Palle by LTTE suicide bomber on April 6 has further aggravated the situation.

The recently held elections of local self Govt. in Batticola District on March 10, 2008 were boycotted by pro LTTE Tamil National Alliance, the main opposition party in Sri Lanka, United National Party (UNP) and Janatha Vimukti Perumuna (JVP) citing reason of Law and order situation and failure of the Govt. to disarm Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP). Govt. of Sri Lanka claimed that 60 per cent of the people voted and the election has peaceful. As noted by Frontline, "However, the peaceful conduct of elections is no cause for the government to feel ecstatic". Thousands of Tamils in Sri Lanka have fled to Tamilnadu as refugees and their settlement has become a big problem. Lasting peace is possible only if parties agreed for unified Sri Lanka with full autonomy to the Tamil dominated areas, through dialogue and not through war.

RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN

Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee's visit to Pakistan and his meeting new Foreign Minister of Pakistan Shah Mahmood Qureshi has reopened the dialogue between the two countries. Though the talks did not progress much except agreement on increasing trade ties and more people to people contacts, the talks paved the way for further progress.

Though both sides expressed different views on Kashmir issue, it was agreed to resolve the issue through dialogue. On terrorism both sides expressed their commitment to "fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestation and reemphasized the need for effective steps for the complete elimination of this menace."

It is necessary that both countries should settle the disputes through discussion and do not allow U.S. to meddle with differences between the two countries.

STRENGTHENING OUR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Worldwide struggle of the working class against globalisation is advancing rapidly in the recent past. Trade Union movement in Latin American countries is at the forefront of the struggles. In Asian and African continent new wave of struggles is emerging and the World Bank dictates are being opposed in greater sweep. The movement against U.S. aggression in Iraq is developing and demand for withdrawal of U.S. troops is being raised everywhere. During my recent visit to U.S. I found that even in U.S.A a big campaign is unleashed to demand recalling of U.S. troops from Iraq.

The response CITU received in the International Conference of Coal Unions in Kolkata in December last year and Congress of Southern Initiative on Globalisation and T.U. Rights held at Kochi in third week of April clearly reflected the growing urge for unity among the working class, irrespective of international affiliations in the struggle against globalisation.

When I visited Puerto Rico to attend the conference of 2 million strong Service Employees International Union on June 2-4, 2008 I found the U.S. workers also fight U.S. monopoly capital, struggle to protect rights of migrant workers, demand full fledged social security to all workers and oppose Bush's war efforts in Iraq.

When I visited the Transport Workers Office at New York I found the union was fined one million dollars for paralyzing the traffic in New York. The union is still fighting with determination to protect the T.U. rights of the workers. The President of union has expressed desire to visit India at the invitation of CITU. My visit to Chicago Martyr's Memorial was encouraging and I found the spirit of Chicago Martyrs' is still prevailing in U.S.A.

The recognition of the role of CITU in International struggle is seen by the election of Com. S. Dev Roye Secretary CITU as President of TUI Energy in a conference held at Mexico. Similarly A. Dakshi Secretary CITU was also elected as President TUI metal in a recent conference held in Spain. Our comrades have been included in Administrative Committees of Construction and Transport (TUIs). Without raising more resources for International activities we will not be able to discharge the responsibilities bestowed on our shoulders.

There has been spurt in WFTU activities and we are being invited to attend the Presidential Council Meetings. These meetings indicate the strengthening of the united movement of the working class in all the continents. WFTU's image in Latin America and Africa has increased considerably and CITU welcomes these developments in a positive manner.

All China Federation of Trade Unions is also taking more interest in international relations and we hope to develop more coordination in Asian and Oceanic trade union movement in co-operation with ACFTU.

There is urgent need to properly develop International Department of CITU so that we can plan and co-ordinate our activities more effectively. Globalisation can be fought with more determination only with International activities of the working class.

THE NUCLEAR SURRENDER

When the U.S. imperialists all over the world are facing a serious set back to their policies of hegemonism, Manmohan Singh Government has decided to go ahead with the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal – This has created a political crisis in the country and the left parties were left with no other choice but to withdraw support to the UPA Government.

In September 2007 when the Government of India wanted to approach International Atomic Energy Commission (IAEA) to sign a safeguards agreement, the left parties strongly objected to it and even threatened to withdraw the support to the UPA Govt. if they approach the IAEA. Once the draft is approved by the IAEA then India had no role to play. The U.S. would take up the issue with the Nuclear Supply Group and later the U.S. Congress would approve the 123 agreements providing for nuclear fuel supply to India.

The Left Parties pointed out that the 123 agreement would be overshadowed by the Hyde Act passed by U.S. Congress which provided several humiliating clauses for India. U.S. President would issue a certificate every year about India's compliance to the Act. It also visualizes India's foreign policies should be subservient to U.S. imperialism. If the U.S. Govt. feels that India's was not implementing policies to the liking of U.S. Government, it had powers to withdraw the atomic plant and fuel supplied by the U.S. Even issue relating to Iran is mentioned in the Hyde Act. Though India had extremely bad experience of U.S. sanctions after India's atomic tests. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh turned a blind eye towards that reality.

Left parties also saw the agreement as a part of the U.S. India strategic partnership and military exercises jointly done with U.S. imperialists. India would be subservient to U.S. design for a unipolar world.

Despite that the Left Parties agreed to Govt.'s going to IAEA for preparing a draft of the safeguard agreement provided that no further step would be taken by the Government of India without finalizing the conclusion of the dialogue between the left parties and the Govt. of India.

However, the Govt. of India went back from the commitment. The Left Parties were not shown the draft of the Safeguard agreement and even before concluding the discussion with the Left Parties the Prime Minister announced on July 7 on his way to Japan to attend G8 meeting about the Govt. of India's decision to go their with IAEA safeguard agreement. The Left Parties decided to withdraw the support to the UPA Govt. on hearing the statement of the Prime Minister.

In spite of Union External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee's announcement that India would not approach the IAEA without taking a vote of confidence in Parliament. The Govt. had approached IAEA for finalizing the safeguard agreement even before taking the opinion of Parliament into account.

On July 9, the IAEA circulated the draft to all the members and the draft was officially published which was falsely called a classified document by the Govt. of India.

The betrayal of the UPA Govt. of the solemn commitment given to the Left Parties has exposed the indecent hurry made by UPA Govt. to please President Bush even at the cost of throwing the country in a deep political crisis.

The UPA Government resorted to all dubious methods to win support of M.Ps. Samajwadi Party came

handy to get a support to the Government in an opportunistic manner. On July 22 the vote of confidence will be taken in Parliament, which will decide the course of events in the country.

The CITU unions must launch a powerful campaign all over India to educate the working class about the dangerous consequences of the notorious nuclear deal for the country. Along with our problems of taking other issues facing the working class and the common people this issue also should be given due importance so that working class is mobilized to oppose the deal in a forthright manner.

A false propaganda is being launched in the country that the Indo-nuclear deal with help in solving the energy crisis in the country. They completely hide the fact that the fuel for the nuclear power will be imported and the cost of power would be twice the cost of thermal power and three times that of hydel power. We have to highlight this aspect in our campaign and we should advocate a policy of self-reliance in the matter of development of nuclear power in India.

MAKE 20 AUGUST 2008 STRIKE A GRAND SUCCESS

Preparations for the 20th August 2008 strike are going on well all over the country. Response of the workers to various conventions at State and industry level only reflects the growing discontent among the working class. However, we have to strive our best to continue massive preparations for the strike so that it should reflect the united voice of the working class against the policies of globalization.

Sky rocketing prices of essential commodities are making the life of ordinary worker extremely difficult. Particularly conditions of the unorganized workers are indeed harrowing and their standard of living is declining rapidly due to absence of any dearness allowance to them to compensate for the rise in prices. The situation for the agricultural workers is extremely bad but the Manmohan Singh Government is totally unconcerned with the situation. Instead of taking steps to mitigate the conditions of the vast masses, the Government is more concerned with signing the nuclear deal with U.S. imperialists.

Disinvestments and privatization of the public sector undertakings are going ahead with full speed despite better performance of these undertakings. The promise of assistance to overcome the sickness of the ailing undertakings is not forthcoming with uncertainly booming large over lakhs of public sector workers employed in these undertakings.

The Central and the State Govt. employees are fighting hard against the contributory pension scheme. While the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations have done a great injustice to the low paid employees, which compels them to come forward in a united movement.

Banks and insurance employees, defence employees are also in the thick of struggle against privatization and entry of MNCs in domestic sector. Over 4 crore workers are fighting for higher rate of interests for the PF and pension funds since Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram is refusing to give adequate rate of return for their investments.

The collapse of labour laws is resulting in withdrawal of all legal protection with regard to working and living conditions. Twelve hours a day work is extracted non-chalantly from the workers throwing overboard all legal provisions. Hire and fire policies are implemented even without legal provisions while regular jobs are illegally passed on to contract and outsourced workers. Women workers are made a special target of attack and sexual harassment of them at the workplace continue unabated, despite lip sympathy expressed by the official spokesmen. The unorganized workers Bill have made a mockery of the Labour legislation itself.

All these policies of the Government of India are helping BJP to use the discontent of the people to divert their attention towards their communal agenda. What is dismaying is that there is no realization in UPA Government about the grievous situation. They have become blind to the realities due to their firm commitment to globalization dictated by the World Bank and the IMF.

We have more than two weeks at our disposals to make effective preparations for strike. Let every union, every cadre of CITU prepare with all strength we have to campaign among the workers so that largest ever mobilization can be organized on 20th August 2008.

The emerging political situation demands redoubling of our activities, so that more and more workers are involved in direct actions to oppose the retrograde policies of the UPA Government.

Let us rise to the occasion so that we can strengthen our self for the forthcoming class battles in all corners of the country.

2.1 The developments in the intervening period also brought to the fore another basic feature of the policy of the ruling opposition in its economic, political and military hegemony and its increasing isolation. The US has become desperate to consolidate its influence. It has now focused its attention on Asia and the Indian sub-continent. While continuing its arrogant designs on Palestine, the cruel and illegal sanctions against Cuba and the offensive against Iran, the US leaves no stone unturned to tighten its grip over the ruling policy in the developing countries in the eastern hemisphere including the Indian sub-continent. The strategic military cooperation and the Indo-US nuclear deal are expressions of this intent. US imperialism has redoubled its conspiratorial attempts to weaken the opposition to its manoeuvres by the Left and other progressive forces in the developing countries. Including India, US interference in the internal affairs related to economic, political, social, ethnic and other issues is bound to further increase in the days to come.

The new dimension of imperialist designs have to be appreciated while examining the national situation and coming to a proper understanding in order to develop appropriate strategies to address the challenges unfolding before us.

2. NATIONAL POLITICAL SCENARIO

2.1 The left working committee noted with concern that there have been a further rightward shift in the foreign policy of the UPA government, which had serious ramifications on the domestic situation as well. During the intervening period since then, the situation has aggravated further. The UPA government continued more vigorously to push through the Indo-US nuclear deal despite opposition of the Left parties and in brazen violation to the commitment given in UPA-Left meeting in November 2007. The Left parties have consistently opposed the brazen attempts to subordinate our sovereignty to US imperialism. The Jans and mass organisations have played an important role in mobilising people against the Indo-US nuclear deal, which has resulted in widening the opposition with several non-Left parties too opposing the deal. CITU played an important role in exposing awareness on the dangerous economic, political, and military implications of the deal among the working class and the people. Finally, in the face of the UPA Govt going ahead with finalising safeguard agreement with IAEA as a part of operationalisation process of the deal, the Left Parties have withdrawn the support from the UPA Govt. The changed political situation has now witnessed the exhibition of noble opposition on the part of the leadership of Samyukta Party which had earlier opposed vociferously the Indo-US nuclear deal as anti-national. The floor of Parliament is now a hotbed and a centre for heated

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Comrades,

The Presidential address has dealt in detail the international developments after the working committee meeting in Delhi in October 2007. During this period, the imperialist forces have continued with their machinations to subject the developing countries to economic and political subjugation. At the same time, resistance to the hegemonic designs of the imperialist powers has also been increasing all over the world. The latest in a series of protests have been the wide spread massive demonstrations against the fuel price rise throughout Europe – in Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy etc. Thousands of workers and other toiling people have been in the forefront in these militant struggles. The demonstrators demanded strong government intervention in containing the petroleum and energy prices through various measures like increasing subsidies, tax restructuring and firm action against the transnational petro business cartels.

1.1 The developments in the intervening period also brought to the fore another basic feature. In the face of the rising opposition to its economic political and military hegemony and its increasing isolation, the US has become desperate to consolidate its influence. It has now focussed its attention on Asia and the Indian sub continent. While continuing its arrogant designs on Palestine, the cruel and illegal sanctions against Cuba and the offensive against Iran, the US leaves no stone unturned to tighten its grip over the ruling polity in the developing countries in the eastern hemisphere including the Indian sub continent. The strategic military cooperation and the Indo US nuclear deal are expressions of this intent. US imperialism has redoubled its conspiratorial attempts to weaken the opposition to its manoeuvres by the Left and other progressive forces in the developing countries, including India. US interference in the internal affairs related to economic, political, social, ethnic and other issues is bound to further increase in the days to come.

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game plan of advancing the interests of US hegemonism. Till going to press, uncertainty over the future of the Govt and desperate bid to procure support by all means for the Govt or in that matter for the nuclear deal on the part of by the ruling combine marred the political scenario.

2.2 INDO-US NUCLEAR DEAL

2.2.1 In this context, the real face of the Indo-US Nuclear deal needs to be exposed. The scurrilous and malicious campaign against the Left and progressive forces by the ruling classes through the print and electronic media for their opposition to the deal is quite natural for the Indian ruling class seeking to forge a junior partnership with the US imperialism for their narrow illusory gains.

2.2.2 The Indo-US nuclear Deal is not a stand-alone agreement like a train compartment standing separately on a platform. It is a part of comprehensive strategic alliance to make India the outpost of US imperialist interest in the entire subcontinent. Other agreements have also been reached by the Govt on military cooperation, joint exercises and other defence-supply and production aspects, besides on host of economy-related matters such as agriculture, industry, infrastructure etc. Obviously, the foreign policy of India have to be congruent with the USA, as mandated in the Hyde Act, which is rooted in the Indo-US Nuclear Deal. But much before the deal is operationalised, exercise for congruence in foreign and other policy matters with the US interests has started or made to be started on the part of Govt of India. One of the major steps was signing of the 10 years Defence Pact –“New Framework for India-US Defence Relationship” in Washington on June 2005 which was an extension of “Next step in strategic Partnership” signed earlier by BJP led NDA Govt. The 2005 Agreement states “ US India defence relationship derived from a common belief in freedom, democracy and the rule of law and seeks to advance shared security interests”. Obviously, sharing of US perception of ‘rule of law’ to be pursued through aggression for ‘change of regime’ to US choice or its security interests vis-à-vis attack on Iran may be acceptable either to UPA combine or BJP but cannot be acceptable to any patriotic Indian.

2.2.3 Thus, the 123 agreement on nuclear cooperation entered into between the Govts of India and United States is only one part of the wide-ranging alliance that the UPA government has forged with the United States. To put it more comprehensively, it is an integral part of, rather a follow up of the overall neoliberal politico-economic policy architecture the US administration seeks to put India in, with the Indian rulers playing an obliging role. Joining such Strategic Alliance with United States is tantamount to violation of the commitment of pursuit of an independent foreign policy made by the UPA in its National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). A close scrutiny of the Indo-US nuclear deal would reveal that so called benefit for India on nuclear fuel supply promised by the deal will be wholly dependent on US Govt’s sweet will, which in turn will be regulated by The Hyde Act passed by US Congress. In the background of the Hyde Act, the US can terminate nuclear deal any time and deny nuclear fuel supply but India would continue to be bound by the provisions of IAEA safeguards and restrictions in respect of its nuclear sector in perpetuity. In totality, the nuclear deal in its present form in the context of Hyde Act may subject India to become easy victim of US blackmail not only in the matter of nuclear projects but also in wider area of US hegemonistic design. Falling into such imperialist trap will have serious ramifications on our economic independence and political sovereignty, which the working class movement can ignore only at its peril.

2.2.4 The major pitch being made for the nuclear cooperation agreement is that it will help India meet its energy needs. This ignores the very limited contribution that nuclear power makes to our overall energy generation which is just 3 per cent and which cannot exceed 7 per cent by 2020. To make India’s foreign policy and strategic autonomy hostage to this meagre potential of nuclear energy does

not make sense except for the American imperative to bind India to its strategic global designs.

2.2.5 The debates on this issue in Parliament in 2007 clearly showed that the majority view was against the deal. In the UPA-Left Committee meeting held in November 2007 it was clearly stipulated that the Govt would not go ahead with the deal till the outcome of the talks with international Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is presented to the committee. But the outcome of the talks with IAEA in the form of a draft was not at all shared with the Committee inspite of repeated follow up by the Left Parties. And instead, Govt decided to rush through with IAEA keeping the Left in the dark on actual outcome of talks with IAEA and the related draft. In fact, tremendous pressure was mounted by US Govt Senators and the Corporate lobby to clear the deal through IAEA Board to suit the time of its placement in American Congress and the strengthen the hands of President Bush before the forthcoming US election. The country noticed with horror how the Prime Minister of this great country succumbed to that pressure and in order to fulfil his commitment to President Bush, ignored the majority opinion of Parliament, also the commitment made to UPA-Left Committee and went to the extent of destabilising the Govt in unilaterally deciding to go ahead with the nuclear deal just before meeting President Bush in G-8 meeting. And such unseemingly haste and concern to satisfy the notorious nuclear deal with USA, which hits at the very root of national interest, sovereignty and self reliance, putting everything in stake at a time when the country's people are reeling with backbreaking relentless price rise is a matter of shame for the entire country which he heads as Prime Minister.

2.2.6 The working class movement cannot be a mute spectator to the designs of the UPA government to subdue the country's independent foreign policy and sovereignty to the interests of US imperialism. It must intensify the campaign to expose the real face of the nuclear deal in the context of the desperate bid of the imperialist powers to subjugate the developing countries under its command; it must build up powerful organised opposition among the working class against such anti-national move of the UPA Govt. This has become the most crucial task before us in the background of growing political uncertainties arising out of going ahead with the nuclear deal by the UPA Govt despite opposition to the same by the Left and also the patriotic forces in the country.

2.3 AFTERMATH OF LEFT PARTIES' WITHDRAWAL OF SUPPORT

2.3.1 The changed political correlation following Left parties' withdrawal of support from the UPA Govt, may open up possibility of various retrograde measures in economic, social and political fronts, to which Left Parties acted as deterrent, to be brought back for execution. Particularly, many measures of neoliberal economic agenda like disinvestment in PSUs, pro-employer changes in labour laws to introduce 'hire & fire' and curb trade union rights, PFRDA Bill, corporatisation of various Central Govt departments and sectors, anti-PSU changes in the regulations of banking, insurance and telecom sector allowing bigger dominance of foreign and corporate players, unhindered entry of FDI in and full fledged corporatisation of retail trade sector etc, which could so long be stalled by Left Parties in the background of active trade union intervention, may be attempted again with renewed vigour by the ruling polity. Whatever pro-people measures in economic, social, educational and other people related matters those could be forced upon during last four years period owing to Left's intervention are also fraught with the prospect of serious dilution, if not rolled back fully. The zealous comments and advisories to the Govt by several chambers of industry and commerce, employers organisations and the print and electronic media barons to speed up the so called "unfinished agenda of economic reforms" following the Left's withdrawal as being noticed in various press/media reports are indications of such disastrous prospects. Country's trade union movement must remain prepared for determined resistance to such retrograde possibilities through united countrywide struggles, both at national and sectoral levels.

2.4 BJP' S DUBIOUS ROLE

2.4.1 In this context, the dubious role of the BJP has to be taken into serious account. They are making a show of opposing the deal but that is only one side of a nefarious game plan. Because, at the same time they are also stating openly that they are for a strategic alliance with USA and they will renegotiate the deal with the US on the issue of capping of nuclear tests, if they come back to power. So far as joining the US imperialist's game plan of enlisting India as its junior partner through strategic alliance in advancing the US hegemony in this part of the globe, thereby subjugating India's interests, BJP is on the same stance with our present Prime Minister and his party.

2.4.2 Moreover as the principal opposition party, the BJP and its allies in the NDA have failed to firmly oppose any of the anti people economic policy measures of the UPA government, except making occasional noises on the issue of price rise. In fact, on almost all the anti people policy issues like liberalisation of the financial sector, airport privatisation, closure of the Hyderabad and Bangalore airports of the Airport Authority of India etc, the BJP practically sided with the UPA government. It is also to be noted that most of these policies were initiated during the NDA regime. This is but natural given the class character of the BJP, which is not different from the Congress. It is only the Left parties that have opposed these moves both inside and outside Parliament and supported the agitations against these measures.

2.4.3 At the same time, the BJP seeks to take advantage of the disenchantment of the people against the UPA government because of the price rise, increasing unemployment and poverty, which are the results of the very same anti people economic policies, which the BJP led NDA pursued while in power. It is also bringing forward its communal agenda camouflaged in different garbs and talking of terrorism, national security etc. Because of our weakness in effectively explaining this dubious game of the BJP to the people, it has been successful in benefiting from the people's resentment towards the UPA government. In the elections to several state assemblies, the BJP has been able to defeat the Congress and come to power, the latest case being Karnataka, where for the first time it has been able to come to power in a Southern state. Encouraged by these results, the BJP now dreams of retaining power in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh and gain Delhi, where elections are due later this year. It also hopes to come back to power at the centre in the 2009 general elections.

2.4.4 This situation has ominous portents for the democratic movement in the country and the working class movement in particular. We must create awareness among the working class about the dangerous agenda of the communal forces and their attempts to further aggravate disruption and division as a response to every event engineered by the terrorists and other disruptive forces. In the face of the bomb blasts in Maharashtra, Hubli, and Jaipur the BJP lost no time in raising the demand to bring back POTA. The BJP government in Rajasthan started harassing the Muslim minorities on the pretext of purging the so called Bangladeshis. The BJP will certainly try to whip up communal tensions in the coming period as the country heads towards the general elections. We must expose its dubious game plans and try our best to protect the unity of the working class and the people.

2.5 PAROCHIAL CONFLICTS

2.5.1 Another disturbing feature during this period has been the parochial conflicts created by the divisive forces of various brands in different parts of the country. Incidents of attacks on the Hindi speaking migrants in Assam, the north Indian workers in Maharashtra by the Shiv Sena and its breakaway group, the Gorkhaland agitation in West Bengal are examples of some such trends. The alarming unemployment and increasing poverty are being utilised by these forces for their own narrow

political gains. In Maharashtra and Rajasthan, Bengali speaking workers are subjected to witch-hunting on the pretext of containing infiltration by Bangladeshis or combating terrorism. While the BJP government in Rajasthan directly patronises such attacks, the Congress NCP Maharashtra government in Maharashtra has been taking an opportunistic stand of indulgence towards these divisive forces. The working class movement must be alive to the dangers posed by these trends to the working class unity and national integration and effectively combat them.

2.5.2 The BJP's promise of reservations to the Gujjars before the last assembly elections in Rajasthan and its non implementation led to the agitation, which spread to the neighbouring states as well. In an effort to ensure polarisation of the non Gujjars in favour of the BJP, the Vasundhara Raje government dealt brutally with the agitation killing forty people before coming to an understanding with the Gujjars. It is to be remembered that the BJP led Rajasthan government killed more than 80 people in police firing on agitations of the people, in the last four and half years.

2.5.3 The revival of violent Gorkhaland agitation in West Bengal demanding a separate state is the reflection of such divisive and parochial politics, which seeks to disrupt the unity of the working class in that area, particularly in the tea gardens, tourism, and trade besides creating disruption and disorder in the Left ruled state with an ulterior political motive. The overt and covert support to the agitation extended by some bourgeois parties only exposes their opportunism. The CITU must be in the forefront to combat these divisive forces and protect the unity of the working class and the people.

2.6 ONSLAUGHT AGAINST THE LEFT FORCES

2.6.1 At the same time, it should also be noted that an well orchestrated anti-Left tirade by the reactionary forces and the bourgeois media have been visibly active for quite a long period during the recent times as we have already noted and analysed at the time of our last Working Committee meeting held in October 2007. The working class movement is the lifeline of the Left politics and the Left forces had been consistently opposing and blockading, wherever possible, the pursuit of the anti people neoliberal policies and this deterrent role of the Left has come to surface more prominently in view of dependence of the UPA combine in power on the support of the Left parties. Secondly Left's forthright opposition to Indo-US nuclear deal and the grand plan of the imperialist forces to enlist active participation of India in its design to strengthen its political and militarist hegemony in the Asian continent as a whole has also been a source of irritation to the imperialists and their Indian cohorts. In such a situation, it is but natural that the all anti-Left forces would be up in arms in its malicious campaign against the Left. The imperialist forces also are not expected to sit idle in such vigorous anti-Left tirade. Rather such tirade is expected to gain vicious momentum in the face of Left parties withdrawing support from the UPA Govt and much broader gang-up against the Left forces is supposed to be in the offing. The Working class movement has to combat the ever increasing malicious campaign against the Left forces by the bourgeois media and the ruling class, meticulously designed to push the present correlation of forces towards more rightward direction.

2.6.2 The real import of aggressive campaign-onslaught against the Left Front and Left led Govts has to be analysed and understood in this context. And it need to be further understood that, of late, the recent attacks against the Left Front Govts are mainly being built up in the veil of so called left wing slogans which need to be exposed while combating such attacks. We must note that such onslaught on the Left forces by its right wing and 'extremist' adversaries, in the veil of left-wing slogan have been able to create some confusion and misgiving within a section of the common people which got, to some extent, reflected in the results of last panchayet election in West Bengal. Such confusions need to be patiently addressed with proper explanation and intensive mass contacts and campaign.

We should not therefore, fail to equip ourselves more effectively, both politically and ideologically, and patiently explain to the common people, as many of them are confused and entertain genuine doubts as well.

3. ECONOMIC SCENARIO

3.1.1 The Union Budget 2008 – 09 reflects the intent of the government to continue with the same policies of globalisation, though some sops have been included with an eye on the ensuing elections to the parliament. The meagre increase in the allocations to some existing schemes does not even neutralise the inflationary impact owing to the continuous price rise. While only Rs 1,000 crores were increased in the allocation for the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), which is too meagre to fulfil the UPA commitment of its universalisation, more than Rs 8,000 crores were doled out to the exporters as relief due to increase in the value of the rupee. The rise in the remuneration to the anganwadi employees, after their long drawn struggles, does not guarantee them minimum wages. The basic thrust of privatisation, driving the public sector undertakings to the share market remains the guiding principles for resource mobilisation in the budget. The allocation for the Social Security Scheme for the unorganised sector workers is too paltry to even touch the fringe of the requirement. The Rs 7,000 crores increase to the Public Distribution System is not for its expansion but only to cover the extra expenditure incurred in importing food grains.

3.1.2 Allocations for agriculture have been totally inadequate. It does not match the massive government investment for irrigation that was urgently needed. The loan waiver scheme for the farmers is limited to only banks and financial institutions, while the loans from private money lenders constitute around two thirds of the total farm loans. This also indicates the lack of access of the poor farmers to institutional credit. The budget has not acted upon the recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee Report to ensure radically enhanced credit facility to farmers at not more than 4% interest.

3.2 APPRECIATION OF RUPEE AND RELATED ISSUES

3.2.1 Aggressive promotion of exports in the entire manufacturing and service sectors is integral to the neo liberal regime. Now, the export sector is facing serious problems due to the so called appreciation of the value of the rupee. In stead of addressing the root cause of the problems, our policy makers are trying to grope with its impact with a biased approach. The value of the US dollar is fast depreciating not only in relation to the rupee but to all the major currencies in the world, following the financial turbulence in the US due to the sub prime lending crisis. Besides, there has been a slow down in the US economy in the last couple of years. The IMF has reported that the share of the US dollar in global foreign exchange reserves has come down from 71.1% in March 1999 to a record low of 63.8% in September 2007. The dollar is further getting weakened by the sharp cuts in the interest rates in the US in order to deal with the recession in the country. Arresting the fall in the value of the US dollar being beyond the bounds of our policy makers, what is required to be done is to regulate, or restrict the huge inflow of liquid money into the Indian economy in the form of portfolio investments, FII's, and other speculative routes. But the government did not heed to the advice of the Left parties to exercise such restrictions through imposition of Long Term Capital Gains tax, increasing the rate of tax on short term capital gains, banning the investment through participatory notes and reviewing the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Mauritius etc, which do not in any way contribute to the Indian economy in terms of productive investment or employment generation.

3.2.2 The moot point is to regulate and restrict the inflow of unproductive speculative finance in the Indian economy, in order to protect the productive and employment generating activity in the Indian

economy from the fluctuation and volatility infused by such speculative forces. Even if the rupee starts depreciating, the signals of which is being noticed very recently, continuity of such downward trend will also create serious problem for the economy. Hence the Govt must regulate and restrict the speculative inflows with a strong hand.

3.2.3 Unfortunately, the government is not inclined to take these measures, as it does not want to displease US imperialism and the multinational corporations. Instead, it has been showering huge concessions from the exchequer in the form of various relief packages for the industrial houses and traders, which ran to more than Rs 8,000 crores within one year. But this has failed to address the problem and already around 40 lakhs workers lost their jobs in the textile sector alone during the span of last one year or so. The IT sector also started being adversely affected.

3.3 PRICE RISE

3.3.1 Another most alarming feature is the unabated rise in the prices of the essential commodities and the high inflation, which has reached 11.05%, the highest in 13 years. The government does not exhibit any political will to control the prices and provide relief to the common people. It has taken a few monetary and fiscal measures to regulate money supply and imposed some restrictions on the export of a few commodities and claims to have taken steps to contain inflation, which apparently, have not yielded any results. It is quite natural that such kind of indirect measures fall flat when speculative forces dominate both financial and commodities markets. The government does not want to impose any restrictions on the speculators who are playing havoc in the commodity market. In 2007, due to the inaction of the government, there was a large shortfall in the procurement of food grains by the FCI while the private agencies including MNCs cornered huge stocks. The government has banned forward trading in rice and wheat only a few months back and included six more commodities under the ban very recently. It has not conceded the demand of the Left parties to ban future and forward trading in 25 agricultural commodities.

3.3.2 The government is trying to evade its responsibility of taking effective measures to control the prices citing rising prices of food articles as a global phenomenon. It is true that food prices have been rising globally. This itself is an outcome of the neo liberal policies, where business and corporate profits get priority over food security for the common people. Food grain crisis have assumed alarming proportions worldwide. One of the major causes is the massive shift in agricultural production from food crops to commercial crops. In India 8 million hectares of food crops land has been diverted to export crops. Another important reason is the large-scale use of cereals and vegetable oils to produce bio fuels, mostly in the Western advanced capitalist countries. As per an estimate made by Oxfam, biofuels are responsible for 30 per cent increase in global food price, pushing further 30 million people worldwide into abject poverty and USA accounts for more than half of the biofuel production. The shortage thus created by such diversions has become an excuse for the multinational agri traders and speculators to mint money at the cost of the hungry billions.

3.3.3 For example, in 2007 the US business giant Cargil, which has already invaded our grain markets by sidelining FCI, increased its profits by 52% to USD 2.34 billion over the previous year; in 2008, its profit further jumped by 86% in the first quarter itself. Similarly, another leading agri trader, Archer Daniels Midlands (USA) increased its profits by 65%, Bunge Limited (EU) by 50%, Noble Group (Hong Kong) by 95%. Multinational seed merchants have also made huge profits. The US based Monsanto, which was in a loss of USD 23 million in 2003 posted a profit of over USD 1 billion in 2007. Fertiliser giants Potash Corp of Canada and Yara of Norway minted profits of USD 1 billion each while Mosaic and Arigum of USA and ICL of Israel made a profit of over half billion USD each.

3.3.4 While man-made food grain shortages brought fortunes to the grain and fertiliser traders, speculative margins in the commodity markets increased phenomenally worldwide. According to available estimates, the speculative investments in commodities markets zoomed from around USD 5 billions in 2000 to USD 175 billions in 2007. The report of the world's largest commodity exchange, Chicago Board of Trade shows that during Jan – April 2008, the average notional value of a day's trading was around USD 2.8 billion for wheat, USD 8.9 billion for corn and USD 11.2 billion for soya bean. The total trade in commodity markets globally is USD 513 trillion, which is 10 times the size of global GDP and 5 times larger than the total trade in stock markets. These startling revelations in gambling in commodities markets, when prices of basic food grains rose by more than 50% in 2007 – 08 and billions of poor starved, demonstrate the extent of dehumanisation under globalisation.

3.3.5 But this does not mean that it is not possible to contain the food prices and protect the people from the impact of inflation. What is needed is the political will to address the root cause of the steep rise in the prices. No amount of indirect monetary and fiscal measures to influence the market forces can tame inflation. The Left parties have demanded universalisation of the Public Distribution System and its expansion to include 15 essential commodities under PDS, reduction in the taxes of crude oil and petroleum products and complete ban on speculative trading in commodities markets, but the government has not conceded these demands. We must build up a massive countrywide movement on these demands to pressurise the government to take these measures to control price-rise.

3.3.6 Proponents of free market philosophy argue that forward and future trading in commodity markets ensure remunerative prices for the peasantry. Extending the same theory, they also advocate large scale private trading in agricultural markets and withdrawal of the government from procurement on the basis of 'minimum support price'. The government has essentially been following this line since the last around three years, bringing down government procurement and announcing inadequate minimum support price thereby driving the farmers into the grip of private procurement agencies. But that has not brought any benefits to the farmers. The agrarian economy is in crisis; agriculture has become a non-remunerative occupation for the overwhelming majority of the country's farmers. Agricultural production, particularly food grain production has consistently falling. The wide spread distress is reflected in the spate of suicides by farmers.

3.3.7 The neo liberal approach of marginalising peasant agriculture, promoting corporate agriculture and cutting down public investment in agricultural infrastructure in real terms has resulted in the slow down in agricultural production since the early 1990s. The Govt allowed number of Fertiliser producing units in public sector to turn sick and close down, while liberally importing fertilisers from abroad. Owing to high international prices of fertilisers, the fertiliser subsidy bill is increasing which is also inspiring cut-down of public investment in other areas in agricultural sector. Almost all input cost for agriculture is increasing to unmanageable level making agriculture un-remunerative, thanks to liberalisation and privatisation important public utilities like electricity, water etc and liberal entry of MNCs in seed and pesticide market.

3.3.8 This crisis has now reached an alarming situation threatening the food security of the country. In India the food grains growth rate was 2.8 percent per year in the pre-reform decade of the 1980s, well ahead of the population growth rate of about 2 percent. It fell to 1.7 percent over the decade of the 1990s and in the first 6 years of the present century, it has come down to an abysmal 0.34 percent. Per head of population, for the first time since Independence for any length of time, food grain output declined over the 1990s and has been falling even faster in the last few years. The entire process has fuelled the spiral of terminal inflation or income deflation for the mass of the toiling people. Between 2001 and 2008 the growth in food crop production remained less than 5% whereas

the population increased by more than 10%. This has created a paradoxical situation where the real agricultural producers – the majority of Indian peasant population fail to earn a human living while the common consumers are forced to pay through their noses for the same products in the markets controlled by the traders and speculators.

3.3.9 Hence fighting for immediate measures for containing price rise as demanded by the Left parties is our immediate task. At the same time the working class movement must also expose the atrocious phase of the capitalist order under neoliberalism which seeks to multiply fortunes for the speculating finance capital on the destruction of peasant agriculture and small producers both in agriculture and its surroundings, leading to deeper impoverishment of majority of our populace who survive on agriculture and small scale production and also fuelling price rise all around, widening urban poverty as well to a critical level. Consistent decline in public investment in agriculture, destruction of indigenous production capacity in fertilisers and zooming import of fertilisers, pesticide and seeds, entry of corporate houses, both domestic and foreign, in agricultural production procurement and trade, liberal import of foodgrains at higher prices than the minimum support price etc are all integral part of neoliberal strategy of Indian ruling class to catch up to the global trends at the cost of impoverishment and hunger of the mass of the populace. Combined struggle of the rural and urban proletariat, workers-peasants joint mobilisation in the fight for decisive reversal of the inhuman ploy of neoliberalism has become the urgent need of the hour.

3.4 FDI AND CORPORATES' ENTRY IN RETAIL TRADE SECTOR

3.4.1 Despite increasing opposition against allowing FDI in retail trade sector being voiced by trade unions, small traders, social activists etc throughout the country, and the popular demand for effective regulation and control on the fast-corporatisation taking place in the retail trade sector, the Govt of the day has been playing the role of active patron to such disastrous process to favour big monopoly houses seeking to make fortunes over daily necessities of the common people. We must take note of various incidents of protest actions against corporate sector's entry in retail trade on daily necessities in Orissa, UP, Maharashtra etc and gauge the depth of discontent over the issue. The Govt appointed ICRIER to study the impact of entry of corporate (organised) sector in retail business which has recently submitted its report. The ICRIER report totally undermined the grievous impact of the entry of corporate houses in the retail business and echoed the neoliberal format of patronizing the retail corporates which indicates that the Govt will make this doctored report of ICRIER a plea for ignoring the popular demand of instituting effective regulation to contain mass scale corporatisation of retail trade in the country.

3.5 BANKRUPT POLICIES

3.5.1 The bankruptcy of the neo liberal economic policies is getting increasingly exposed by the day with increasing poverty even as the GDP continues to be high. Unemployment is increasing. Employment in the organised sector is declining. This along with a marginal increase in low paid low quality employment in the unorganised sector has reduced labour cost indicating a decline in the average wage level in real terms. The share of wages in the net value created in the industrial sector has consistently dipped from 30.28% in 1981 – 82 to 12.94% in 2004 – 05. The downward trend has been continuing as admitted in the Eleventh Plan document. This means that the value created by the working class, which is reflected in the growing GDP, is being largely appropriated by the capitalist class, both domestic and foreign.

3.5.2 This trend will be further aggravated given the policy options announced by the government in

its Economic Survey (2007- 2008), which are basically designed to accelerate the pace of transfer of the gains of economic activities to the employers. The Economic Survey made the following recommendations:

“Policy Reforms Options (box 2.2)

- Coal mining – Amend the Coal Mines Nationalisation Act to allow regulated private entry into coal mining. Privatised old coal mines to improve recovery of ‘in place’ reserves by 5-10%, subject to a professional independent regulator for safety and environment issues
- PSUs – Complete the process of selling 5-10% equity in previously identified profit making non navratnas. List all unlisted public sector enterprises and sell a minimum of 10% of equity to the public. Auction all loss making PSUs that cannot be revived. For those in which net worth is zero, allow negative bidding in the form of debt write off
- Industrial decontrol – Phase out control on sugar, fertiliser, drugs
- Oil – Sell old oil fields to private sector for application of improved/enhanced oil recovery techniques
- Retail FDI – Allow a share for foreign equity in retail trade. Allow 100% foreign equity in foreign branded, specialised retail chains (e.g. Luxury brands, consumer durables, semi durables)
- Insurance – Raise foreign equity share in insurance to 40%. Allow 51% foreign equity in a special category of insurance companies that provide all types of insurance (e.g. health, weather) to rural residents and for all agricultural related activities including agro processing
- Banking – Allow 100% FDI in Greenfield Private Rural Agricultural Banks. Such a bank would be free to set up any number of branches in any rural or semi rural areas. It would be free to lend to agriculture and allied sectors, agro processing and agro input industries anywhere in the country and to any industry located in non urban areas (negative list). Such a bank would be free to take over (buy out) other private sector banks. As an incentive, such a bank could be allowed expansion into small towns when the general FDI policy on banks will be liberalised
- Factories Act – Increase work week to 60 hours (from 48) and daily limit to 12 hours to meet seasonal demand through overtime
- Power – State electricity Regulatory Commissions should notify rational, credible, cross subsidy for open access so that it can become a reality. Open access should include access to the electricity pillars to string a wire. Accountability for T & D (Transmission & Distribution) losses on this wire will be with the wire owner and not on the distribution company that owns the towers. Permit private corporate investment in nuclear power, subject to regulation by AERB (Atomic Energy Regulation Board) and AEC (Atomic Energy Commission)
- Railways – Freight Corridor: Public sector Rail Tract Company to own new tracks and signals. Free entry of private and public private partnership rail freight companies
- Urban public transport – Public transport (bus) system in metros and large cities must be run by organised private companies that can use modern logistics and back office systems for planning routes and timings acquiring and analysing data on usage densities and running an integrated people movement system. A comprehensive system of road parking fees must be devised and introduced in metros and large congested cities”

3.5.3 The above passages from the Economic Survey are the policy direction of neo liberal reforms and the agenda of the ruling classes. The working class movement must continue to build united resistance and fight these policies tooth and nail.

3.6 PETROLEUM PRODUCTS PRICE HIKE

3.6.1 The manner, in which the government has been tackling the issue of petroleum prices and

increased the prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas, reflects the utter bankruptcy of its policy. The price of crude oil has increased by six times since 2002 to more than USD 130-140 per barrel. This is mainly due to the cartelisation of the major oil producers controlled by the giant MNCs in the background of Arab oil embargo imposed by the imperialist powers. The demand supply shortage vis a vis world oil production remains a very minor factor with demand growing at an estimated annual rate of 2%, which can in no way justify such anarchic price rise.

3.6.2 The policy of the government is designed to allow the private oil companies including those oil MNCs a free and profitable run in the country's oil and gas exploration sectors. A substantial segment of the country's oil and gas fields has already gone under the control of the major private players, both domestic and foreign. The introduction of import parity pricing regime for petroleum products and doing away with the administered pricing regime exposed the complete surrender of the government to the profit hungry sharks in the oil sector facilitating their entry in this vital sector of the economy. Now, in the face of the steep rise in international price of crude oil, the government is justifying the rise in the petroleum prices in tune with the international price, which benefits these private players. While doing so, they shamelessly take shelter under the plea that petroleum prices needed to be raised to save the PSU oil companies from losses. Despite opposition from the trade unions and the Left parties the government has increased the price of petrol by Rs 5/ per litre, diesel by Rs 3/ a litre and LPG by Rs 50/ per cylinder. However, because of the consistent pressure from the Left parties the government was also compelled to reduce customs duty on crude oil to nil and the excise duty by Re 1/ only. The hike in prices would have been more if this was not done.

3.6.3 But, what is the reality? The government and a section of the media have launched a misinformation campaign that the public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) were incurring a huge loss of Rs 2.2 lakh crores. These are under-recoveries or notional losses based on international price and not actual loss computed in the balance sheet. For example, the IOC has incurred a loss of Rs 400 crores in the last quarter of 2007 – 08 owing to the then oil price but in total the company finally recorded a profit of Rs 6,400 crores in the year as a whole. But its claim of under recovery during the same period is being projected in terms of several thousand crores calculated on the notional difference between the international price and the domestic selling price. This is not actual loss but a notional figure of shortfall in their expected gains in terms of international price. The fact is that the government and the private oil companies are minting huge money through the petroleum pricing policy of the government riding on the wave of international price. Between 2002 and 2007–08, the tax revenue earned from the oil sector has increased by 122% from Rs 73,800 crores to Rs 1,64,000 crores. Every year the government earned more revenue from the oil sector than it was estimated in the annual budgets. Presently, as much as 49% of the retail price of petrol is tax and duty and for diesel, the tax component is as high as 26%.

3.6.4 There are ways and means to tackle the problem of international rise in oil prices without affecting the people. Rs 7,500 crores collected every year from the ONGC and Oil India Ltd under the Oil Industry Development (OID) Act, 1974, which is not being used for development of the petroleum sector should be diverted to the public sector oil marketing companies as price stabilisation fund. Further, a reduction of Rs 3/ per litre in the excise duty instead of Re 1/ at present would ensure a relief of Rs 12,000 crores; windfall tax can be imposed on the super profits of the private sector refineries operating on Indian soil but not catering to the domestic market. This would be enough to take care of the losses of the public sector oil marketing companies (not notional under recoveries) without raising the prices. The Left parties put forward the above alternatives to the government so that the petro price hike can be avoided. The Left led governments in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura as well some other state governments have substantially slashed down the states' sales tax

on petrol and diesel. But the central government ignored most of these suggestions and refused to restructure the duties on petro products.

3.6.5 While the public sector oil companies are made to shoulder the responsibility of catering to the domestic need at controlled prices, the private sector oil companies are minting huge profits by exporting almost their entire product at high international price. They get exemptions from sales tax and import duty as they are not applicable on exports, besides various other tax relief. According to a recent estimate, the major private sector oil refining company in the country could double its profit within two years from Rs 5,900 crores in 2005 – 06 to Rs 10,312 crores in 2007 -08. This doubling of profit is not the result of their operational efficiency but due to the abnormal rise in the international oil prices, courtesy the manipulations and machinations of the international speculators and imperialist forces. There is every reason for imposing the windfall tax on such windfall profits, which idea is accepted even in the US. CITU has already raised this demand through its letter addressed to Prime Minister.

3.6.6 The example of a country successfully levying such windfall tax is Mongolia. It has started levying windfall tax since 2006 according to the decision taken by its parliament to reap a part of the rent from the sharply rising international prices of copper and gold. It has fixed the reference price for copper and gold and the mining companies are required to pay tax at the rate of 68% on the price increase above the reference price. The government of Mongolia has garnered significant resources (above 7% of GDP in 2007) from this tax. Similarly, the private oil companies in India can be made to share a part of their profits they get due to the increase in the international price of crude oil.

3.6.7 In view of the high volatility in the international oil prices, the only sustainable solution would be to restructure the taxes and duties on petro products. A transparent domestic pricing policy linked to the actual cost of production and refining and not on import parity should be pursued.

3.6.8 But Govt of the day is not in a mood to tax their most favoured players in the private sector, both domestic and foreign, nor are they ready to restructure the tax regime and reverse the import-parity regime on pricing, no matter howsoever the people suffer from petrol price hike. Instead, their design is to make domestic petroleum price attractive enough to facilitate private oil companies mint profit from the domestic market as well besides the international market.

3.7 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WTO

3.7.1 A recent development in the WTO is a matter of added concern to us. It is reported that the new negotiating texts on agriculture and industrial products, released by the WTO for further discussions in the forthcoming meeting, reveal the intention of the developed countries, specially the US and the European Union, to impose their terms on the developing countries in a slightly different form. On agriculture, while insisting on continuing with the present level of subsidies to their agriculture, the developed countries have offered some options/ mechanisms for the developing countries to protect their domestic producers. But these are confined to a very few items and are practically insignificant because of the conditions attached to them. In return they demand further opening of our market and lowering of tariffs in other areas.

3.7.2 The new WTO text on Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) insisted that the flexibility granted to the developing countries to fix tariff on industrial products be made conditional and linked to the ratio between the tariff cuts the developing countries would make and those made by the developed countries. Both the texts are so dubiously worded and designed to create rifts and conflict of interests

within the G 20 group of developing countries, particularly countries like South Africa, China, Venezuela, Brazil and India, which have been taking a common stand within the WTO. Quoting an official engaged in the exercise, the Times of India reported that 'American pressure seems to have played a role on the revised proposals. Pressure seems to be mounting on bigger developing countries like India, China, Brazil and South Africa to yield their markets while developed countries do not appear prepared for sacrifice'. This clearly indicates further onslaught by the imperialist powers on the trade front. The government of India's stand criticising the attempts of the developed countries to 'divide and rule' the developing countries and declaring that 'there will be no deal if our core national interests are not protected' are welcome. We must continue our pressure on the government not to succumb to the pressure of the developed countries and continue with the same stand.

4. CONDITIONS OF LABOUR

4.1 Attack on Labour Rights

4.1.1 The conditions of the working class have been worsening during this period, despite the high GDP figures. The rate of unemployment and underemployment has been increasing to alarming proportions. Organised sector employment is shrinking and whatever new employment is generated in the extremely low paid jobs with extremely fragile working conditions. All labour laws, specially pertaining to the working hours, minimum wages, maintenance of employment registers, PF, ESI, deployment of contract labour etc are blatantly violated. In fact, around 90% of the conflicts and industrial disputes in the country are related to the implementation of basic labour laws. The labour law implementation machinery has become totally ineffective in most of the states as well as at the central level.

4.1.2 And when the workers attempt to collectively raise their voice through their unions, demanding nothing more than implementation of basic labour laws, they are tackled with brutal attacks on their life and livelihood and in this game, the employers and state administration move together in collusion. It has become a general phenomenon throughout the country, in almost all the states that the employers in most of the private sector establishments, particularly those emerged during the 1990s onward, resist tooth and nail the formation of unions at workplaces through repression and victimization with the direct patronage of state administration. There are several examples of mass scale dismissal and victimization immediately following formation of the trade union in the workplaces. Only in the state of Tamilnadu, around 360 workers including leading functionaries of the unions have been dismissed on fabricated charges in ten major companies including both the MNCs like Hyundai Motors and Indian Corporates like Godrej or CRI Pumps, immediately following the formation of trade unions in those places within a span of last one year or so besides there being indiscriminate pay-cuts, suspensions and other vindictive measures; around 109 workers have been implicated in criminal cases there including under section 307 (attempt to murder) of Cr Pc. Such brutality by employers-administration combine has been a daily phenomenon in the states like Haryana, Punjab, UP, Rajasthan and other places. In Delhi, even a central public sector company like Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) dismissed the President of the union on flimsy ground immediately after formation of the union there and other office bearers have been subjected to major-penalty charge-sheets on false pretext. In fine a kind of barbarism is ruling the industrial relations scenario in the country with active patronage of the law-enforcement machinery and the trade union movement has to survive and advance by combating such state-sponsored brutality of the employers almost everywhere.

4.1.3 In majority of the private sector units, fake employment registers are maintained in which not even thirty percent of the total workers on roll are recorded. This clearly indicates that the majority of

the workers are deprived of statutory minimum wages and social security benefits. In such a situation, the government of India has introduced a bill in Parliament, which seeks to exempt the employers of all establishments employing up to 40 workers from their obligation to submit regular returns to the labour department and maintain employment registers with all the details required as per the existing law. This means that the employers in more than 60% of manufacturing and service establishments will be allowed to blatantly ignore all labour laws. The bill could not be taken up for discussion because of the resistance by the Left MPs. But it is still alive and pending for being considered at an opportune time. The fact is that, under the neo liberal regime, the government itself is promoting labour law violations and then seeks to legalise them.

4.2 CONTRACTORISATION AND OUTSOURCING

4.2.1 Another significant feature is that the profile of the workers is changing fast. The mass scale contractorisation and outsourcing has created a situation even in the public sector units where the contract/ casual/ outsourced workers account for around 50% of the total workforce. In some sectors or industries, contract workers already outnumber the regular workers. In the private sector, regular workers are already in extremely small numbers compared to the contract workers. Contract employment is taking various forms like job contract, commercial contract, and outsourcing of different types just to evade the provisions under the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act.

4.2.2 Above situation warrants a radical change in our organizational and movemental strategy if trade union movement is to remain effective or even survive. Fact remains that majority of the contract workers are yet to be organised under trade unions. In public sector units, contract workers could be organised under unions at least partially but even wherever organised, their unions are yet to get effective cooperation of the unions of the regular workers who are better placed than the contract workers. In many places, the regular workers' unions in public sector have become a victim of rabid opportunism to remain indifferent on contract workers' basic demands. They are failing to realize that in the face of rapid decline in the number of regular workers in all the PSUs and increase in the number of contract workers, if the contract workers movement are not integrated with the regular workers' movement and if the regular workers' union fail to take up their cause seriously and visibly, their union itself will turn irrelevant. Our ground level experience in various public sector units revealed that in the industries wherever we could organize the contract workers in trade unions and the regular workers' union and contract workers' union acted in close cooperation to each other, the over all trade union movement became stronger and contract workers also could substantially improve their conditions. There are cases of success in steel, in oil sector, in certain BHEL units where through this exercise the contract workers' could be organised in unions and improve their wages and service conditions at least to some extent. We must draw lesson from this experience and as the 12th Conference of CITU directed, the regular workers' movement in public sector has to take initiative to organize and integrate the contract workers in PSU trade union movement.

4.2.3 Under the present circumstances, in addition to the workplace initiatives, national level initiatives are necessary to fight the rampant contractorisation in various forms and defend the rights of the workers. According to the direction of the 12th conference of CITU, we have taken initiative to include this issue into the agenda of the united platform of public sector workers' movement. An all India convention of contract workers was organised under the banner of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions, where a charter of demands similar to the one adopted by the Commission on contract workers in the 12th conference, was adopted. The CPSTU too adopted a resolution demanding simultaneous wage revision for contract workers along with the regular workers and ensuring payment of industry level minimum wages to the contract workers instead of the minimum wages in the

respective states. The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions has also included the demand of simultaneous wage revision for the contract workers in the PSUs in the demands on the basis of which the August 20th all India general strike will take place. Our unions should carry out intensive campaign at the unit level and popularise this demand among the contract workers.

4.2.4 The campaign should be utilised to organise the contract workers into the joint movement so that pressure can be mounted on the public sector managements as well as the government on this issue. In the industry level negotiating forums as well, our representatives must take a forthright stand to force serious deliberations on the contract workers' issues even in the face of stiff opposition from the managements. We must make serious efforts to get the other unions involved in the process to try to make the issue a part of the overall settlement. This is the most crucial task before us in the public sector workers' movement, which will pave the way for a qualitative change in the composition of trade union movement in the organised sector. The General Council should take a view on this issue and set the direction for our comrades working both at the enterprise level and our representatives in the various apex negotiating forums.

4.3 ATTEMPT TO DEREGULATE AND PRIVATISE ICDS

4.3.1 As part of the neo liberal policy of withdrawal of the state from welfare measures, the government has decided to restructure the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) according to the dictates of the World Bank. It has decided to go for Public Private Partnership in ICDS, involvement of NGOs and privatisation of the pre school education component of the ICDS and hand over supply and distribution of supplementary nutrition to the Self Help Groups, NGOs etc. This will ultimately lead to dismantling of ICDS, which will have serious implication not only on the conditions of the anganwadi employees but also on the nutrition and health of children and women, particularly from the poor, SC, ST and other socially backward sections. We have to strongly oppose this restructuring and take initiative to build a strong joint movement along with the other organisations of women, kisans and agricultural workers who benefit from ICDS.

5. UNORGANISED SECTOR WORKERS' SOCIAL SECURITY BILL 2007

5.1 In the last working committee meeting, we have discussed at length the need to intensify united campaigns and mobilisations to force the government to improve upon the Unorganised Sector Workers' Social Security Bill 2007, which was then under the consideration of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour. We took initiative to involve the other trade unions also in this matter and finally all the trade unions took a united position in demanding the government to modify the Bill in line with the recommendations of the National Commission on Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS)

5.2 The presentation made by all the central trade unions before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour reflected the united voice of the trade union movement on the issue. The Standing Committee made unanimous recommendation to incorporate many of the formulations made by the NCEUS in the Bill. It has recommended that there should be national minimum social security measures which should have universal coverage of all the unorganised sector workers. The summary of the recommendations of the Standing Committee have already been circulated to all the state committees.

5.3 But the government has totally ignored the unanimous recommendations of the Standing Committee while taking up the Bill for discussion in the Rajya Sabha during the last Budget session of the Parliament. A set of amendments were moved by the CPI (M), based on the unanimous recommendations of the Standing Committee. But the Bill could not be taken up for discussion in that

session.

5.4 In its present form and structure, the Bill is far away from its stated objectives and delivers almost nothing to the intended beneficiaries. It contains neither a compelling provision on the floor level social security benefits that provides for universal coverage to all the unorganised sector workers nor a defined funding obligation and a time frame. Without these basic ingredients of an enactment, the Bill will not be of any worth.

5.5 Moreover, the general welfare schemes like the Old Age Pension scheme, the Aam Admi Bima Yojana, Rasthriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, and Janashree Bima Yojana etc are all meant for people below the poverty line – the BPL category. Given the parameter of the monthly per capita consumption expenditure of Rs 356.30 in rural areas and Rs 538.60 in the urban areas for the BPL category, no section of the unorganised sector workers, be it brick kiln workers or rickshaw pullers or the self employed street vendors would qualify for the benefits under the schemes listed in the schedule of the Bill.

5.6 In essence, the Bill in its present form practically eliminates an overwhelming section of unorganised sector workers who create value for the society in manufacturing and service sectors, from the purview of any social security benefits. If passed in the present form, it will be the biggest fraud on the unorganised sector workers who contribute around 65% to the GDP. We have to unleash an intensive campaign among the grass root level workers on this issue and develop a united movement to mount pressure on the government to force it to accept the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour and place the revised Bill in the next session of the Parliament. The general council has to take a view in this regard.

6. EROSION OF WORKERS' SAVINGS IN PROVIDENT FUND

6.1 Owing to continuing inflation there has been drastic erosion in the net worth of workers' savings in Provident Fund over the years. Despite repeated demand and persuasion by the workers representatives in the Central Board of Trustees of EPFO, the increase the interest rate on PF to arrest such erosion of the hard earned life time savings of the workers, the Govt is refusing to pay heed to same. The rate of interest on PF was decided at 8.5% ignoring the opinion of the workers. At 11.5% inflation, the value of the PF deposit has already got eroded by 3%. And the rate of inflation has been increasing relentlessly. For the first time after independence the net worth of PF deposits is becoming negative. Even for a status-quo and retention of the same value of the money, at least 12% interest has to be paid. This is a simple arithmetical calculation even if we want to keep the real value of the deposits stable without declining. On the latest meeting of Central Board of Trustees held on 5th July 2008, CITU demanded that the interest rate on PF for the year 2008-09 should at least be made 12% to arrest such erosion of real value of the deposits. The INTUC representative did not support the demand of CITU representative. Representatives of AITUC and HMS supported our demand. CITU and other 2 union representatives demanded a meeting with the Prime Minister and to take up this serious matter to him. So, the interest matter for 2008-09 remains still undecided.

6.2 Meanwhile the Tri-partite Committee constituted by the Prime Minister to go into labour matters gave a unanimous recommendation to enroll workers as members of PF even if the number of workers in the establishment is only 10 or above. Present number is 20 or above. On the basis of the Report submitted on 12th May, 2008, the government has agreed to implement it. The proposal in CBT to make the threshold number to 10 for PF enrolment has been agreed unanimously.

7. WORKING WOMEN

7.1 The 12th conference of CITU has reiterated the decision to form state level coordination committees of working women in all the states and allot proper cadres for the work among working women. It has also reiterated the decision to form working women's sub committees in all the affiliated unions and industrial federations with large number of women members. The progress in this matter has been very tardy.

The 12th conference also noted the importance of developing a common understanding among our members on the role and functioning of the coordination committees of working women at different levels. The CITU centre made some efforts, which however, need to be continued further.

7.2 Utilising the serious unemployment situation among women and their need to earn something to feed their families, the government is exploiting them by offering them work without any decent, regular or guaranteed income. Lakhs of women are selected, trained and recruited as Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) under the National Rural Health Mission, which is now being implemented in 18 states in the country. These women are educated and most of them belong to the socially oppressed sections of the society. They are not paid any remuneration but only an incentive. Even that is not paid regularly. In several states, the ASHAs are being organised by our state committees. Some agitations have also been held on their demands.

7.3 Similarly lakhs of women are engaged as midday meal workers under the government of India's mid day meal scheme. While they are paid meagre wages in some states, in others, the work is given to self help groups who are not provided with proper infrastructure. Neither the wages nor the bills are paid regularly. The midday meal workers are also being organised in several states by our state committees.

7.4 The CITU secretariat discussed the issues of the ASHAs and Midday Meal workers and has noted the importance of developing a country wide movement on the demands of these sections of working women. The state committees of CITU should make efforts to organise the ASHAs and Midday Meal workers wherever possible. The activists of the anganwadi unions can be of help in organising these sections. Along with the anganwadi employees, ASHAs and Midday meal workers can form a nucleus for the activities of CITU at the village level.

8. EMERGING STRUGGLES

8.1.1 The most notable events during the intervening period had been the spontaneous upsurge of protest actions against Govt's decision on price hike of petrol, diesel and cooking gas. The price hike was announced on 4th June 2008 and the very next day, June 5 witnessed upsurge of spontaneous protest by way of massive demonstration, road-blockade, rail-roko, dharna and various other forms in all the states in the country, from Srinagar to Kanyakumari, where the working class were in the frontline of action. West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura observed complete bandh on 5th June itself. This was followed by chain of general strikes called by the Left Parties in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa on 6th June, Tamilnadu on 7th, Assam on 9th, Bihar and Jharkhand on 10th which were magnificently responded by the toiling people from all walks of life.

8.1.2 The Intervening period also witnessed emergence of many sectoral struggles and also many state level initiatives of trade union action. Notable of them had been the campaign for the appropriate legislation for the Unorganised sector which culminated in countrywide observance of Demands Day

through demonstration rallies etc on 19th February 2008. There has also been joint campaign and observance of All India Demands Day by the contract workers all over the country on 7th January 2008 as decided by the All India Convention of Contract Workers held on 19th December 2007.

8.1.3 Anganwadi Workers staged massive demonstration before Parliament on 18th February 2008 to submit mass petition containing two crore signatures in support of their demands at the call of All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers & Helpers(CITU). In pursuit of their demands for regularization, minimum wages and superannuation benefits etc, the Federation is planning for further campaign and struggle.

8.1.4 Bank Employees also staged joint countrywide demonstrations at the call of United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) carried on vigorous campaign for two days' strike to be observed in March 2008. The Strike programme was finally deferred following assurance of Indian Banks Association for a negotiated settlement on the demands.

8.1.5 Central Govt Employees have also been preparing for struggle against the negative and discriminatory aspects of the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission, the report of which has recently been submitted to Government. Already countrywide protests have taken place and in many places state govt employees also joined. The recommendation of the Commission is severely discriminatory in so far as it recommended a meager pay-rise for the workers and employees compared to a huge pay rise for the top level bureaucrats. The Commission also recommended abolition of Group D posts to pave the way for contractorisation and outsourcing in the concerned jobs. Going beyond its terms of reference, it has recommended corporatisation of ordinance factories and railways to pave the way for their privatization. CGHS scheme is being sought to be phased out. There are many other negative points in the recommendations which are to be fought back by the Govt employees movement through countrywide struggle. The issues are of serious importance since they do not only involve the central govt employees but also have a bearing on the wages and service conditions of state govt employees, teachers and employees of various state undertakings as well.

8.1.6 Coal workers carried on industrywide agitations and struggle against contractorisation and outsourcing and most notable has been the successful strike action in Western Coalfields which compelled the management at least to make a partial retreat.

8.1.7 The Telecom employees also took initiative for united strike action to in opposition to the Govt move for disinvestment of shares of BSNL and compelled the Govt to retreat. In the month of June Telecom employees again bounced back to countrywide demonstration when the Govt again announced their decision to enlist BSNL in the stock exchange.

8.1.8 The Employees of Airport Authority of India staged two days strike action in all the airports in the country to protest against closure of AAI airports at Bangalore and Hyderabad to facilitate opening of private sector airports in those two cities. Hundred per cent employees took part in the strike. CITU leadership played active role in this struggle and taking up the issue with the Govt and the management although closure of airports could not be finally stopped.

8.1.9 Two day industrial strike in Delhi, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Noida on 24th and 25th April 2008, demanding enhancement of minimum wages and implementation of labour laws at the initiative of Delhi State Committee of CITU had been another notable action programme during the intervening period. Around 7 lakh workers took part in the strike action which created good impact in the entire industrial areas of Delhi and adjoining areas.

8.1.10 Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU carried on three months long intensive campaign along with other mass organizations against the economic policy from February onwards to culminate in a massive march in Hyderabad on 19th March 2008 which was participated by more than 25000 workers besides people from other mass fronts. This programme was followed by mass picketing before district collectorate in all the districts on 26th March 2008. Similar three months long campaign was also organised by Haryana state Committee of CITU which culminated in a massive state level rally at Hissar on 6th April 2008. In the same state, during February-April, the Brick kiln workers staged action in various forms including two/three days strike in fourteen districts which led to successful conclusion of agreement in finalizing the wages between the union and the Brick-kiln owners and their association. At Panipat, massive strike by 30000 spinning mill workers in April 2008 compelled the employers and the administration to come to terms in respect of payment of statutory minimum wages, 8 hour working, PF, ESI etc. In Chhattisgarh also two months long campaign focusing on the demand of upward revision of minimum wage and implementation of labour laws culminated on a massive state level rally at Raipur on 12th June 2008.

8.1.11 Reports of trade union actions including strikes at CITU's initiative have also been received from Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Orissa and some other states. Activity –report is being circulated separately.

8.1.12 The significant feature in all these campaigns is the response of the workers to the initiative of the CITU. Wherever we have approached the workers in an effort to address their specific problems and raised their demands, they have responded in a massive manner. The campaigns on implementation of minimum wages and other labour laws met with huge response, be it the two day industrial strike in Delhi including Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Noida or the strike in Panipat and the rally in Hisar in Haryana. We must take up the burning issues of the working class and plan statewide campaign and struggle programmes on the common demands of the workers in different sectors along with state wide sectoral struggles on specific industries. We will be able to put pressure on the government through such state wide struggles, which will also give confidence to the workers, particularly in the unorganised sector. That has been our experience in different sectors and states during this period.

8.2 PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS' JOINT MOVEMENT

8.2.1 The united movement of the public sector workers under CPSTU's call has entered a new phase after the deferment of 7th May countrywide strike following the meeting with the Prime Minister on 28th April 2008.

8.2.2 As has already reported in previous meetings, in the context of the seventh round wage negotiation for the employees of central PSUs, the Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU), the united platform of movement of the PSU workers has been observing various programmes of propaganda and agitation during the entire 2007 on the basis of the following core demands: 1) Tenure of the agreement not more than five years at any cost, 2) Improving the logical relativity between the pay and benefits of the workers and the executives which had turned widely adverse during last round of wage negotiations, 3) Annual increment system as percentage of basic pay to be calculated cumulatively every year, 4) Wage revision for the employees of sick PSUs and financial and policy support for their revival, 5) Wage rise for the contract workers in PSUs ensuring at least the minimum wage and benefits available to the permanent workers in respective PSUs, 6) Merger of DA equal to 50% of the existing basic pay with effect from 1.4.2004, 7) Filling up of all vacancies in PSUs through fresh recruitment.

8.2.3 During the span of last one year or so, three national level extended sessions of public sector unions were held on 11th March 2007, 16th September 2007 and 17-18 February 2008 at Delhi, Nasik and Hyderabad respectively. The PSU meet at Hyderabad in February 2008 was attended by the leaders of unions of regular workers as well as contract workers. From the Hyderabad Convention a call for countrywide strike in PSUs on 7th May 2008 was given along with series of campaign and agitation programmes preparatory to the strike action. Following the deferment of the strike of 7th May after the CPSTU delegation's meeting with Prime Minister, the Govt has ultimately issued guidelines allowing five year's tenure of wage agreement. This is no doubt a notable success of the united movement of public sector workers. But there are other issues as well and the central to which is the wage revision of the contract workers deployed in PSUs along with the regular workers. CITU has to take the frontline initiative to push this most vital demand in the process of forthcoming wage negotiations in various PSUs and develop joint agitations of regular and contract workers at the industry/enterprise level on a priority basis.

8.3 INITIATIVE FOR COUNTRY-WIDE UNITED MOVEMENT

8.3.1 During the intervening period, joint struggles have been conducted in many sectors of the economy against the impact of neoliberal policies on those sectors as well as for defending workers' rights. Notable of them has been the joint struggle and mobilisation against outsourcing in coal industry in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and coal-mining areas. Similar joint initiative for struggle were also taken in Banks, Insurance, Telecom, Ports, Transports and other areas. Efforts are also being made by CITU and our Anganwadi Federation to develop united struggle against the move of so called deregulation, restructuring and privatisation of ICDS.

8.3.2 Along with the sectoral struggles that took place in different parts of the country, we have continued our efforts to carry forward the joint campaigns and agitation against the anti people economic policies. The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions gave a call for mass satyagraha on 4-5 December 2007 after a two month campaign through state and industry level conventions and other programmes. Massive processions, dharnas, road blocks, and courting of arrest programmes were held as part of the campaign on the basis of the 20 point demands directed against the anti people economic policies.

8.3.3 The Sponsoring Committee took a common view on the issues to be placed before the government in the pre budget discussions. It has also decided to extend solidarity to the joint struggle of the public sector workers, including their strike.

8.3.4 A national convention of trade unions was held on 13th May in New Delhi and charted out the next course of action. The convention decided to observe an all India strike on 20th August, preceded by state level conventions and state level massive demonstrations on 30th July. The demands are: 1) Take urgent steps to contain price rise through (a) universalising the public distribution system throughout the country to cater all essential commodities at controlled prices; (b) ban futures and forward trading in all essential commodities; (c) reduction of taxes on petrol and diesel; (d) stringent action against hoarding and black marketing; 2) Strict implementation of all labour laws, particularly related to minimum wages, working hours, social security and safety nets; stringent action against all violations; stop contractorisation and outsourcing; 3) The scope of the Unorganised Sector Workers' Bill pending in the Parliament should be expanded to cover all the unorganised sector workers irrespective of their BPL or APL status and to ensure a national minimum social security benefit for them as per the unanimous recommendations of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, with central funding; 4) Farmers' loan waiver scheme should be extended to loans from private money lenders;

nationalised banks should extend easy credit to peasants at lower interest rates; 5) Lift ban on recruitment in government services; remove the negative and discriminatory features in the recommendations of the 6th Pay Commission and finalise the same for implementation in consultation with the employees' organisations; 6) Expedite wage negotiations for the employees of the Central PSUs including the contract workers without any conditionalities.

8.3.5 All the CITU state committees, industrial federations and affiliated unions must take urgent initiative to chalk out intensive and independent campaign at the grass root level to create the conditions for massive participation in the state level joint conventions and subsequent joint campaign for the country wide strike. We must also ensure widest participation of the workers in the state level demonstrations on 30th July in all the states and major industrial centres, which is crucial for a massive and effective strike.

9. TWO INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MEETS

9.1 CITU was actively associated with two important international trade union meets held in the country during this period. In both the meets, CITU shouldered the major organisational responsibility as urged upon by the international trade union fraternity in the concerned sector/ area and we were able to discharge that responsibility effectively. We have also made important contributions in shaping the conclusions of these international meets.

9.2 The International Conference of Coalminers was held in Kolkata on 14 – 16 December 2007. More than hundred delegates from 14 countries across the globe, irrespective of their affiliations either to ICTU or WFTU, participated in the conference. It dealt with the various challenges before the industry and the miners in the context of globalisation. The countries represented were Australia, Belgium, Canada, Columbia, France, Germany, Mongolia, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine, United Kingdom and India.

9.3 The 8th Congress of the Southern Initiative against Globalisation and for Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR) was held in Kochi on 19 – 23 April 2008. 181 delegates attended the conference from 19 countries including India. Many of the unions are affiliated to ITUC (dominated by the western economies), WFTU (the class based organisation of the Left trade unions) and many others are independent. They have taken a common stand against imperialist globalisation. This is the strength of the SIGTUR movement. This highlights the fact that the anti globalisation movement is gaining strength every day in all the continents of the world.

10. CITU JOURNALS

10.1 We are bringing out four journals – The Working Class, The Voice of the Working Woman (both English), CITU Mazdoor, and Patrika (Hindi quarterly) from the CITU centre. The journals are being published regularly and the CITU centre has been making efforts to improve their quality. Efforts are being made to make them more informative, attractive and educative. However, the circulation of the journals remains a matter of great concern. Some state committees like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Tripura are publishing monthly journals in local languages. However, no journal are being published by the state committees in the Hindi speaking region. Still very little efforts are being made in these states to increase the circulation of CITU journals. Most notable is that the circulation of our Hindi journal CITU Mazdoor is highest in West Bengal followed by a comparatively smaller state Himachal Pradesh and other big Hindi speaking states are lagging far behind. The profile and quantity of subscribed circulation (other than the copy circulated

for the affiliated union) reveals that even many of our state/industry level leaders and committee members do not subscribe CITU Mazdoor/Working Class. And such shortcomings have serious bearing on the quality of our campaigns on various crucial issues of our movement and also on our organisations. This chronic shortcoming in the circulation of our journals demonstrates the serious lack of our understanding on the crucial role the journals can play in our organisation and movement. This weakness is also reflected in the serious default by most of our states in sending reports of activities, movements and other programmes for publication in CITU Journals.

10.2 The issue of journals was discussed in the CITU secretariat and also in the meeting held on 7th July 2008 with the editors/comrades in charge of all the state level CITU journals which was attended by representatives from five states viz., Kerala, Tamilnadu, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The discussions highlighted the above issues in a more detailed manner. Combined circulation of all the CITU journals published from the centre and from the respective state committees is estimated to be around one lakh which is not at all encouraging. There is urgent need for organised drive for increasing circulation of our journals among the mass of the workers and ensuring within a time frame that at least our union-level literate committee members subscribe any of the CITU journals. The serious weakness on proper and regular editorial planning to decide the content of each issue and maintain a proper mix and balance of reports on activities, relevant informations and developments and articles in the content has been pointed out by all the comrades both at the centre and the states. It was decided to make a serious drive at all levels to overcome these weaknesses so that CITU journals published from both centre and the states can be made more attractive as well as educative to our comrades and the workers. At the same time serious organisational drive is to be initiated at all levels so that reports are sent regularly from the unit levels to state centre and all India centre for circulation through our journals.

11. MEMBERSHIP

11.1 It is a matter of serious concern that although it is time for the Centre to receive annual returns and affiliation fees for the year 2007, the Centre is yet to receive in full, the returns of 2006 membership and substantial part of 2006 is still due (As compared to 2005). Again a substantial number of returns for 2006, already received are submitted without the affiliation fees.

11.2 It may be noted that submitting annual returns of membership every calendar year to the respective state Labour Department within April of the next year is a statutory requirement and such huge backlog in receipt of copies of annual returns for 2006 by the end of June 2008 raises doubt whether at all many of our unions have submitted their annual returns for 2006 to the concerned authority in due time. This is a serious matter since CITU has lost a huge membership of around 8 lakh membership in the recently published membership verification result and one of the main reasons for such loss is the failure on the part of our unions to produce records of returns, membership registers etc and also to timely respond to the notices of physical verification. It is unfortunate such a shock of the verification results could not yet sensitise our leadership at the union level to overcome this chronic weakness.

11.3 As per returns received for 2006 at the centre till 30th June 2008, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Tripura, Andaman, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Jharkhand submitted returns for 2006 revealing a membership almost equal to or more than 2005 membership. Returns for 2006 submitted by Himachal Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, covered more than 75% of their 2005 membership, whereas in Kerala for around 30% of their old membership, annual returns for 2006 have not yet been received by centre. For Haryana, affiliation and annual returns for 2006 is due for around 75% of their (2005) membership. For states like UP, MP, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, situation is even more precarious.

11.4 For the year 2007, we have received the annual returns for around 50 per cent of our total membership that too only from Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra and Karnataka. West Bengal has almost fully cleared returns of its 2007 membership.

11.5 Above situation reveals serious shortcomings in our functioning at the unit level and also in regular monitoring observance of this basic unavoidable trade union tasks by the higher committees at all levels including the centre. We remain preoccupied with this weakness and the real task of expansion of membership does not get the due attention. Let us recall, from our 12th Conference, we have decided to take the CITU membership above 50 lakhs and in the last working committee meeting of CITU, the commitment made by various state committees confirmed that we can well cross the limit. The weakness in timely submission of annual returns and maintenance of proper membership records at union level has to be overcome to make our drive for expansion of membership effective and sustainable. General Council needs to take serious view in this matter.

12. TASKS AHEAD

12.1 The changed political situation, as of now, signals a further rightward shift in the ruling combine married with imperialist sponsored neoliberal philosophy, which is going to be more aggressively and visibly demonstrated with their fangs and claws in the economic, social and political governance of the country in the days to come. In economic front the assault of privatisation and other neoliberal measures of loot on the people both by Indian and foreign corporate and speculators lobby would mount with greater aggressiveness, and the working class which has been already at the centre point of attack will have to combat greater repression and onslaught. The rightward shift in polity would inevitably be accompanied with a greater bias against the people at large. This is how capitalism operates.

12.2 At the same time, the Left forces will also be at the centre of attack by the imperialist agencies as well as corporate interests and their cohorts in the political and media front. Because, it is the Left forces, supported by working class mobilisations, which champion and defend the peoples' interests against loots and repression of neoliberalism and its operators in the governance, both at policy level and at the grass roots, while in opposition as well as in governance in certain states. And again it is the Left forces which offers a committed resistance to imperialists manouvers on the developing countries, in all fronts.

12.3 This is the last year in office for the UPA government with general elections round the corner. The ruling classes will leave no stone unturned to push the correlation of forces in a more rightward direction. The campaign against the Left forces, of which the working class movement is the lifeline, will be more aggressive and malicious. The domestic bourgeois as well as the imperialist forces will lead this campaign. While targeting the Left, the communal and divisive forces will seek to fish in troubled waters and take advantage of the rising resentment among the people against the price rise, unemployment and other fall outs of the faulty policies. They will also try and utilise every occasion to whip up communal tensions.

12.4 The working class movement must discharge its political responsibilities by gearing itself up to effectively resist the political offensive from the rightwing forces and steadfastly fight the communal and divisive forces. At the same time it must intensify its struggles against every aspect of the neo liberal policy regime by ensuring the widest mobilisation of workers and people. This would help us to clearly vindicate the Leftwing position and combat the attack against the Left forces.

12.5 In order to discharge this crucial task more effectively to combat the offensive of the ruling class

against the Left and the working class, the working class movement must have to widen its sphere of activities and intervention to develop a peoples' struggle against onslaught and depredation of capitalist order under close imperialist supervision. All in united Peoples mobilisation against capitalism, neoliberalism and imperialism has become crucial historic responsibility thrust upon the working class at this present juncture. Every action of ours must have to be linked with exposure of imperialism and divisive/communal forces. CITU have to more effectively equip itself politically, ideologically and organisationally towards this goal.

12.6 While enumerating the tasks before CITU, the CITU working committee meeting held in October 2007 already noted, "The main point is to make the working class movement the rallying point of the people from all walks of life in the struggle against the grievous fall out of the anti people economic policy regime. Many sectoral struggles are emerging all around. CITU has to coordinate these sectoral struggles to ensure widest mobilisation in the country wide united actions by the toiling people. CITU must also continue its initiative with greater vigour to develop joint platforms of campaign and agitation with the peasantry and the agricultural workers on common demands of the people". This direction is still quite relevant and we reiterate it again.

12.7 In this context, CITU must renew its initiative to have joint programmes of country wide campaigns and mobilisations with the peasant and agricultural workers' organisations. These joint campaigns must embrace the economic policy related issues and also the issues of social concern. The workers – peasants' joint rallies must focus on the issues of price rice, the demand of universalisation of PDS, universalisation and strengthening of the ICDS, increased public investment in agriculture and comprehensive social security legislation for the agricultural workers, marginal farmers and the unorganised sector workers. The issues can be further fine tuned through joint consultation with AIKS and AIAWU.

12.8 The countrywide general strike of August 20th is the immediate task before us. The call of general strike on 20th August assumed a crucial dimension in the changed political circumstances. We must intensify our independent campaign on the issue and create conditions for effective mobilisation in the joint conventions and state level mobilisation culminating in the strike. Along with the joint actions, our independent initiative must reach widest sections of the working class and toiling people in every segment of the society. We must also try to enlist the support of our fraternal mass organisations in the preparatory campaign for the strike.

12.9 CITU must prepare and consolidate itself organisationally country wide to take the foremost initiative to rally the mainstream working class movement in this direction. We must recall here the direction set forth by the 12th conference of CITU, which says 'The initiative should be unleashed at the grass root level as well. Our state committees, district committees and enterprise level unions have to make conscious efforts to rally the other sections of the people and their mass organisations in the struggles ahead. Our experience is that wherever serious efforts are made, the trade union movement could effectively enlist active support of the peasantry, students, youth etc in the common struggle.

12.10 We must strengthen and equip ourselves at all levels, to be able to rally others. Without a strong CITU, there cannot be an effective united trade union struggle, nor is a broader peoples' action possible. We must realise this potential of ours in unleashing powerful mass actions and make

serious drive to take the CITU organisation to further heights in order to meet the forthcoming challenges.'

We are confident we will succeed and advance.

Greetings to you all

Mohammed Amin
General Secretary

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

The Kolkata general council in July as well as the Working Committee meeting held in Delhi in October 2007 called for intensifying the struggles against neo liberal globalisation involving increasing number of workers. It was also decided to take up the problems of the mass of the people and involve wider sections of the society in the struggles against the anti people policies of the government.

During the period after the working committee meeting, the CITU made efforts to implement this call and mobilise the different sections of the working class against the anti worker policies of the UPA government and to protect their rights. We have made efforts to organise the contract workers and develop joint movements on their demands. We have also made efforts to involve the peasants and agricultural workers into the struggles to reverse the anti people policies of the UPA government. The CITU state committees and affiliated unions in several states also actively participated in the campaigns and agitations affecting wider sections of the people like price rise and to some extent the residential area problems, though it differed from state to state. In the coming period we must further intensify our campaigns and struggles against the neo liberal policies and mobilise still wider sections of the working class and other sections of the toiling masses against the neo liberal policies of the government playing havoc with their lives. We must also prepare the working class to be vigilant against the dangers of the communal forces which are seeking to come to power, utilising the discontent among the people against the neo liberal policies of the UPA government.

During this period, efforts were also made by some state committees to focus on trade union education and development of cadres, but on the whole this aspect has not been given enough attention. As the general secretary's report pointed out, the ruling classes will seek to intensify not only their economic exploitation but also the ideological attacks on the working class and its ideology, by concentrating their ire on the Left in the country. They will seek to bring a more rightward shift to the economic policy. The communal and divisive forces have already intensified their activities to utilise the discontent among the people in their favour. We must concentrate our efforts to prepare the working class to successfully face these challenges and repulse the attempts of the ruling classes to confuse and divide the working class and divert its attention from the real issues. We must pay proper attention to develop and train cadres who can not only mobilise the working class in struggles on their demands but also raise their consciousness. Our programmes of struggles, education and cadre development should be intertwined to enable us to effectively face the challenges ahead.

CITU centre made efforts to collect the reports of activities from the state committees and industrial federations, with limited success. In spite of the circular asking for the reports, well in advance, reports have not been received from many state committees, including the stronger ones. However, efforts have been made to compile whatever information that was available to give a picture of our activities in the country during this period.

JOINT ACTIONS

CITU has played an important role in ensuring that the issues of the contract workers get more prominence in the joint trade union campaigns including those of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions. An all India convention of contract workers was held under the banner of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions on 19th November 2007 at VP House Lawns in New Delhi, in which around 2,000 representatives of contract workers as well as the leadership of regular workers' unions in major public sector units participated. The convention adopted a charter of demands and decided to

hold state and industry level joint conventions on the issues of contract workers and observe all India Demands' Day on 8th January 2008 through rallies, dharnas, demonstrations etc and submission of memorandum to the principal employers. It has also decided to prepare for a country wide strike action and called upon the regular workers' unions to take up the responsibility of organising contract workers and forge unity with them

COUNTRYWIDE SATYAGRAHA ON 4- 5 DECEMBER 2007

State and district level conventions were organised in almost all the states on the basis of the 18 point charter of demands adopted by the Sponsoring Committee. In general most of the state committees of CITU made preparations for the effective implementation of the satyagraha and played an active role in the programmes on 4- 5 December 2007.

Lakhs of workers from both the organised and unorganised sectors, peasants and agricultural workers all over the country responded magnificently to the call. Massive meetings, demonstrations, rasta roko, rail roko, dharnas etc were held and thousands of workers, peasants and agricultural workers courted arrest on these days. It is estimated that around 10 lakhs workers courted arrest in different parts of the country. In West Bengal, a joint rally of all the central trade unions was held in stead of Satyagraha.

ALL INDIA DEMANDS' DAY OF CONTRACTOR'S WORKERS

As per the decision of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions, 8th January was observed as the all India contract workers' Demands' Day. In many states rallies, meetings and dharnas were held on the day. A mammoth gathering was organised in Kolkata, which was addressed by leaders of CITU and contract workers from transport, power, construction and coal industries. In Punjab thousands of workers including brick kiln workers, anganwadi employees, and industrial workers joined the protest demonstrations held all over the state. In Haryana processions and rallies were organised in Sonapat and Karnal which were addressed by the leaders of CITU, Sarvakarmachari Sangh and Kisan Sabha. A dharna was organised in Jamshedpur in Jharkhand. In Assam, leaflets were distributed and meetings and demonstrations were held in front of the refineries in Bongaigaon and Digboi, fertiliser factory at Namrup, paper mills in Cachar and Nowgaon and the NHPC project site in Gerukamukh. The unions submitted memorandum to the local authorities. Only CITU observed the programme in the state. Our experience shows that a lot more has to be done to organise contractors workers and persuade the regular workers union leaders to organise the contractors workers and fight for their cause.

CPSTU

The Nasik meeting of the CPSTU decided to observe 7th November 2007 as a National Demands' Day to focus the demands of both the regular and contract workers. Though the details of the observance of this particular programme by the CITU committees at different levels have not been received, in general, CITU unions are taking more initiative for joint activities of regular and contract workers.

The extended session of the CPSTU held on 17 –18 February 2008 in Hyderabad decided a campaign programme including sending fax to the PM and Minister of Public Enterprises on 1st March, gate meeting, general body meetings, leaflet distribution, circulation of the CPSTU declaration in local languages, joint state, region and industry level conventions, solidarity day on contract workers' demands on 10th April, etc culminating in a country wide strike on 7th May 2008. However, the strike

was deferred on the assurance given by the Prime Minister. The government issued the notification on the five year wage settlement.

AGAINST PRICE RISE

The CITU state committees and the affiliated unions made efforts to mobilise the working class in the demonstrations against price rise. In West Bengal, all the CITU affiliated unions took the initiative to mobilise workers against the petroleum price hike by the government of India refusing to take the alternative measures suggested by the Left parties. The strike on 5th June got immense response from people from all walks of life including the working class.

In Kerala, CITU played an active role in the success of the strike on 5th June. In addition, state wide campaign and mass satyagraha was organised in front of the central government offices in all the 14 districts in the state on 8th May 2008. As part of the campaign, gate meetings were held in front of the industrial units and offices on 27th April 2008. Protest demonstrations were held in all the districts in front of the Post Offices, Telephone Exchanges, AG's offices and other central government offices. More than 28,000 workers participated in these demonstrations.

The protests were against steep price rise of essential commodities and the increase of prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas and also against the cut in food grain allotment to the State.

In Punjab, the CITU members participated in a big way in the protest demonstrations against the steep hike in petrol, diesel and cooking gas held on 5 – 11 June 2008. Gate meetings and processions were held all over the state; in some places effigies of the union finance and petroleum ministers were burnt. On 8th June, thousands of CITU members, from cycle, brick kiln and other industries and anganwadi employees, FCI, NREGA, transport, forest, construction workers etc participated in the rail roko and chakka jam programmes programme all over the state. On 11th June the anganwadi employees held protest rallies and burnt the effigies of the Union finance and petroleum ministers.

MAY DAY

May Day was observed in many states through joint rallies and demonstrations. The CITU committees took initiative for the joint activities and in mobilising the working class in large numbers.

In Assam, May Day was observed throughout the state in a befitting manner. In several places, it was observed jointly with the other trade unions. A significant feature of this year was that the participation of the workers, particularly of the unorganised sector workers, in these rallies was more than the earlier years.

In West Bengal May Day was celebrated in a jubilant manner, decorating the union offices, factory gates and prominent places in public places with the red flags of CITU, red lamps, banners and slogans. CITU flags were hoisted and martyrs' columns were garlanded all over the state. Workers' meetings were organised by all the major unions to explain the importance of May Day in the present context. A joint rally was organised in Kolkata. Blood donation camps as well as other social activities were also organised in many places.

In Kerala, the CITU observed May Day in a big way. Independent and joint rallies along with the other trade unions were organised in the district headquarters as well as several industrial and working class centres. Thousands of workers participated in these rallies. In some districts Jathas,

demonstrations, meetings, trade union classes and sports competitions were also organised on the occasion.

In Mumbai, the joint action committee consisting of CITU, AITUC, HMS, HMKP, Sarva Sramik Sangh, Trade Union Solidarity Committee, Kamgar Aghadi etc celebrated May Day by holding a procession, which passed through the city. A large number of unorganised sector workers and contract workers, many of them women, participated in the procession.

In Raipur, a procession was organised by the CITU along with the unions in insurance, pharmaceuticals, banks, BSNL and other industries. The procession culminated in a rally addressed by MK Pandhe, president of CITU.

In Orissa, CITU observed May Day by organising rallies different parts of the state. A joint procession was held in Bhubaneswar along with AITUC, and the other fraternal organisations in insurance, banks, postal, state and central government employees etc. The procession culminated in a rally.

CITU'S FOUNDATION DAY

In West Bengal the CITU Foundation Day was observed by hoisting the CITU flag and paying homage to the martyrs in all the offices of CITU, from the office of the state committee at Shramik Bhawan in Kolkata to the lowest unit of the CITU affiliated unions. CITU flags were also hoisted in all the wards and localities of the cities, particularly the working class localities. Blood donation camps and health check up were organised at Shramik Bhawan, the state headquarters of CITU in Kolkata, as well as in several district committee offices. Several district committees and the state level unions organised meetings to highlight the policies and programmes of CITU. The state committee also chalked out a week long programme of organising general body meetings to explain the tasks and operative parts of the resolutions adopted in the 9th state conference of CITU, particularly on the burning issue of the attacks of the divisive forces trying to split the state.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Several state committees of CITU and its affiliated unions and the coordination committees of working women took initiative to observe the International Women's Day this year.

Meetings, dharnas etc were held in several places. In Punjab rallies and processions were organised in several districts with the anganwadi employees taking active role in organising these along with the brick kiln and NREGA workers. A public meeting was organised in Dhamtari in Chattisgarh in which around 170 women beedi and mandi workers participated. In Uttarakhand hundreds of working women including anganwadi employees, midday meal workers, ASHAs, etc participated in a dharna organised by the CITU in Dehradun. They then marched to the residence of the chief minister but were stopped by the police. The women workers sat in dharna on the road and held a meeting condemning the attitude of the government. The Delhi state committee of CITU organised a convention in Gautam Buddha Nagar (Noida) in which a large number of working women participated. In Orissa processions and rallies were held in several places.

SOLIDARITY ACTIONS

In many states, the CITU state committees extended full support to the all India strike of the central and state government employees and teachers on 30th October 2007. In many states solidarity

demonstrations were organised and CITU leadership participated in the demonstrations of the government employees and teachers and addressed their meetings.

FEDERATIONS

All India Coal Workers' Federation

7th conference of the All India coal workers federation (AICWF) was held on 23 – 25 November 2007 in Chandrapur, Maharashtra. 363 delegates representing 9 coal companies and allied offices participated in the conference. A huge rally was held on 23rd November, which was addressed by M K Pandhe, S K Bakshi, President and Working President respectively of the AICWF, and others. Com Pandhe hoisted the flag and inaugurated the conference. The conference elected M.K. Pandhe, Jibon Roy and P K Banerjee as President, General Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

Around 15 thousand coal workers representing all the coal companies under Coal India held a massive demonstration in front of the headquarters of Coal India in Kolkata on 20th December 2007 demanding immediate wage settlement with interim relief payment and 5 year wage settlement. They also demanded withdrawal of the Coal Denationalisation Bill introduced in the parliament. The call was given by the joint convention organised by CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS and BMS in Kolkata.

Steel Workers' Federation of India

Steel workers in plants, mines and offices organised demonstrations, dharnas and processions to highlight their 6-point charter of demands, as part of all India Demands' Day on 7th November 2007

On 19th December 2007, steel workers in steel plants in Durgapur, Vizag, Salem, Bolani and Rajhara etc and in the Kolkata offices held demonstrations and handed over memorandum to the management demanding equal wages to contract workers and withdrawal of the plan to disinvestment in Vizag steel plant etc.

The Steel Workers' Federation of India organised a workshop for working women in Durgapur on 7-8 June 2008; More than 100 working women, mostly from the steel plants and administrative offices in West Bengal and Bokaro steel plant participated in the workshop. It was decided to form women's sub committees at different levels of the federation and organise similar workshops at the lower levels also.

All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers (AIFAWH)

AIFAWH continued the struggles on the demand of universalisation of ICDS and making it a permanent service, increasing the remuneration of the anganwadi employees and improving their working conditions. Around 2 crores signatures were collected on a memorandum to the Prime Minister and a colourful procession in red and white uniform was organised on 18th April 2008 in Delhi, in which around ten thousand anganwadi employees participated from all over the country.

A workshop was held on the government's decision to restructure ICDS according to the dictates of the World Bank, which will in effect result in its dismantling. It has been decided to conduct a wide campaign by involving the beneficiaries and the common people opposing the World Bank dictated model. Efforts are being made by the Federation to enlist the support of our fraternal mass organisations. July 10th was observed all over the country as 'Save ICDS' Day through demonstrations,

dharnas and meetings at the project level. Thousands of anganwadi employees participated in these programmes.

The AIFAWH working committee decided to participate in the all India strike on 29th August and called upon all its state committees to mobilise the anganwadi employees on massive scale in the demonstrations and other programmes on that day.

A 5 day trade union class was held on 14 – 18 June 2008 in Delhi, for the activists from the Hindi speaking states. 66 activists from 10 states attended. It is regretful that some states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, and J& K did not send any representatives to the class.

All India Fishers and Fisheries Workers' Federation (AIFFWF)

Efforts to expand our work among fishers and fisheries workers have started after the first conference of AIFFWF last year. At present, the Federation has affiliated organisations in West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Orissa. A district level organisation from Assam participated in the first conference. Some of the organisations are guided by the Kisan Sabha and some are affiliated to CITU while some others are part of the artisans' organisations in the states.

After the first conference, efforts to organise the fishers have started in some states. Himachal Pradesh has registered union of fishers in the Nangal area. Efforts are being made in Bihar and Jharkhand also. It has been reported that contacts with fishers have been established in Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and some other states. CITU state committees should make serious efforts to organise these sections, which are among the most economically exploited and socially oppressed in the society.

The national committee of the All India Fishers and Fisheries Workers' Federation met in New Delhi on – November 2007. A signature campaign was conducted on a memorandum that was submitted to the Union Minister of Agriculture on the demands of the fishers and fisheries workers. A workshop will be held on 11- 12 August in New Delhi to discuss the concrete affects of the neo liberal policies on the fishers and fisheries workers, plan campaign programmes and decide measures to strengthen the organisation.

A workshop on organisation was held by the Paschim Banga Rajya Matsyajeebi Samiti in Ukhra in Bardhaman district on 4-5 March 2008. It was attended by around 100 state committee members and invitees from – districts. The workshop discussed the functioning of the fishers cooperative societies and the problems of the marine fishers. It was decided to address the local problems and strengthen the organisation from the grass root level. A massive rally was held on 3rd March in Kolkata in which thousands of fishers participated from all over the state.

Construction Workers' Federation of India (CWFI)

The working committee of the CWFI met on 1-3 June in Calicut. It has decided to support the all India strike on 20th August, hold joint conventions by 15th July, participate in the dharnas on 30th July and serve strike notice on 4th August 2008. It has also decided to hold a march to Parliament on 22nd September 2008 on the demands of the construction workers. The demands included are implementation of Building and Construction Workers Act, 1996, reduction of Steel and Cement prices, housing for construction workers and solving the migrant workers and women workers.

The meeting of the women's sub committee of the CWFI, which was held on 2nd June, was attended

by representatives from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. It was decided to form state level women's sub committees in all the state within a time frame of 3 months and conduct a nationwide campaign on the 9 point charter of demands adopted by the women's sub committee of CWFI. The demands included equal wage, maternity benefit, housing with rights, pension and welfare measures to working women in construction industry.

BSNL Employees' Union

Joint Forum of Unions and Associations of employees and officers of BSNL observed country wide massive dharnas on 11th October 2007 in all state capitals on the demands of immediate purchase of 2G and 3G equipment to overcome the capacity crunch in providing mobile connections, grant of Navaratna status, viability, pension contributions, opposition to VRS and better services to the consumers etc.

A convention of BSNL contract labour was organised in Bhopal by the BSNL Contract Workers' Union, MP circle.

BSNL workers went on a hunger strike on 18th March 2008, in which more than 20,000 workers participated. As there was no positive response from the government on their demand for a fair promotion policy, the BSNL EU decided to organise a 'walk out' for one hour on 26th March. A fast was organised all over the country by the union on the same issue from 21st May 2008.

Massive dharnas participated by thousands of BSNL employees were held on 5th July, 2008 in front of more than 500 offices of the BSNL, including the offices of the general managers, all over the country demanding immediate issue of orders granting merger of 50% DA with pay as per the decision of the government. The call was given by the Joint Forum of BSNL Unions/ Associations of Non Executives and Executives. BSNL Employees' Union played an important role in the struggle. About one lakh workers and officers all over the country participated in the programme.

Electricity workers demand pro-people policy on electricity

On 7th December, 2007 workers and officers in the electricity industry under the banner of National Co-ordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers organised demonstrations, dharnas and rallies all over the country. They opposed privatisation and unbundling of the SEBs, outsourcing, and franchisee system and demanded scrapping of the Electricity Act 2003 adequate power to agriculture and better working conditions to the employees.

A wide campaign was conducted among the people explaining the dangerous consequences of the government policies and the ill effects of the Electricity Act, 2003.

Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Associations of India (FMRAI)

On 5th December 2007, Federation of Medical & Sales Representatives Association of India (FMRAI), along with Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA), All India Drug Action Network (AIDAN) and National Co-ordination Committee on Drug Policy organised a campaign against the government policy on privatisation of pharmaceutical industry and the free play of multi-national drug companies.

The serious consequences of this policy which included skyrocketing prices of medicines, pressure on the doctors to prescribe unnecessary medicines in larger quantities, irrational use of medicines

and the pervading problem of spurious medicines were highlighted during the campaign.

All India Road Transport Workers Federation

Transport corporation workers in Kashmir along with their family members staged a dharna in Srinagar on 21st March 2008 demanding payment of their long pending wages. The government resorted to brutal lathi charge by the police and arrested the leaders and sent them to jail. The government employees in the state went on strike on 22nd March in support of the transport workers, which created a bandh like situation in the entire Kashmir valley. The Congress led state government again resorted to brutal lathi charge injuring many workers.

The Federation observed Jammu & Kashmir Day on 27th June 2008 throughout India. The J & K State Road Transport Corporation workers were denied salary for the last four months. They were also denied COLA (DA) 42 slabs pending from 1999 onwards. The enhanced wages of temporary workers are not paid. After the indefinite strike, the State Government and management agreed to pay pending salary, DA, enhanced wages of temporary workers and to withdraw police cases charged against workers. But still the Government violating the agreement. To protest dharna, gate meetings and fund collection were organised in Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. In Delhi, a big dharna was organised by motor transport workers of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttaranchal. Mohammed Amin, Tapan Sen, Sujan Chakraborty, M R G Pillai, Ram Asray Yadav addressed the gathering and met the Union Home Minister demanding immediate payment of salary to the workers.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

■ Central and state government employees and teachers went on an all India strike on 30th October 2007. In many states, CITU has extended solidarity and actively supported the strike. After the submission of the Report of 6th Pay Commission a continuous campaign is going on against the negative and discriminatory aspects of the recommendations and outsourcing of Group-D posts.

■ NRMU organised a big procession and rally in Manmad on 12th February 2008 on the eve of its biennial general council meeting. Two separate sessions on women and contract workers were also organised on the occasion. 300 women attended the women's session. 600 delegates from all over the central railway attended the session on the contract workers. The delegate session unanimously amended the constitution of NRMU to create one vice president in each division and one vice chairperson in each branch for women.

■ The Employees of Airport Authority of India staged two days strike action in all the airports in the country to protest against closure of AAI airports at Bangalore and Hyderabad to facilitate opening of private sector airports in those two cities. Hundred per cent employees took part in the strike. CITU leadership played active role in this struggle and taking up the issue with the Govt and the management although closure of airports could not be finally stopped.

■ The western regional committee of the Air Corporation Employees' Union made efforts to organise all the casual workers under the banner of Nacil Casual Employees' Coordination Committee. A general body meeting of casual employees in the western region was held on 1st November 2007 in which around 400 casual employees participated. As per the decision of this meeting an all India convention of casual employees was held on 14th February 2008 in Mumbai, which adopted a declaration and future course of action.

■ More than 1 lakh Defence Civil employees under the leadership of the All India Defence Employees' Federation took mass leave and staged massive demonstrations in front of the Defence establishments all over the country on 30th May 2008 against the adverse recommendations of the

Sixth Pay Commission and demanding the incorporations of the various modifications proposed by the Federation.

■ Representatives of CITU and INTUC of Security Employees Unions met with the members of Group 4 management, a MNC in security business, on 22nd January 2008 to discuss the problems of the security workers. The company agreed to form Grievance committees to resolve the day to day problems at the local level and assured that it would not oppose unionisation of the workers. A meeting was fixed with the CLC on other issues related to wages etc on 21st February.

■ Calcutta Electric Supply Workers' Union was declared 'sole bargaining agent' for 2 years from 1st March 2008 by the Registrar of Trade Unions, West Bengal. The union secured 66.51% votes in the secret ballot. This is the third consecutive victory for the union with the percentage of votes consistently going up from 54.08% in 2003.

■ Bank Employees also staged joint countrywide demonstrations at the call of United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) carried on vigorous campaign for two days' strike to be observed in March 2008. The Strike programme was finally deferred following assurance of Indian Banks Association for a negotiated settlement on the demands.

■ All the 5 Federations of the Port & Dock Workers have called for an all India indefinite strike in all the ports and dockyards with effect from 16th July 2008. The demands are to fill up vacant posts and to stop outsourcing of jobs. Large number of posts are lying vacant for years and now even the most vital and sophisticated jobs are being outsourced. The new wage agreement is also pending from 1st January 2007 but negotiation has not started yet. The promised medical benefits to retired employees also remain unfulfilled; Recommendations on the service conditions of degree and diploma engineers are yet to be implemented. The All India Ports Association has completely ignored the demands so far, which forced all the 5 Federations to serve strike notice on 1st July 2008.

ACTIVITIES IN STATES

Andhra Pradesh

Vizag steel workers protested against the move of the board of directors of the Vizag steel plant, under pressure from the government of India, to disinvest 25% of its shares to meet the cost of the expansion programme. The CITU affiliated union took the lead to mobilise the workers against this move at creeping privatisation.

More than 15,000 anganwadi employees from all over the state participated in a dharna organised by the Andhra Pradesh Anganwadi Workers and Helpers' Union demanding fulfilment of the commitments made by the Congress before the elections to the state assembly in 2004 and stop attempts to privatise the anganwadi centres. They refused to disperse without concrete assurance, ate and slept in the open all the night and next day tried to rush towards the assembly. The police resorted to lathi charge and arrested thousands of them. Protest demonstrations, rasta roko, burning of effigies etc were held all over the state by the union against the attitude of the government. Members of other fraternal mass organisations joined the protests. The government was forced to announce enhancement of their remuneration from its budget within a few days.

The state committee of CITU along with the state committees of other fraternal mass organisations formed a United Forum of Mass Organisations and spearheaded a movement on the demands of the various sections of the people and demanding due share in the state budget. CITU mobilised around 25,000 of the more than 1 lakh people in the rally on 19th March in Hyderabad. As a part of the campaign, CITU organised 4 different jathas covering all the mandal headquarters, cycle jathas in the village of selected mandals, cycle or auto rickshaw jathas in clusters of villages and padayatras in all

the wards and municipalities. The beedi workers' union organised a separate jatha covering all the beedi producing districts and held a dharna on the 16th March in Hyderabad. Dharnas were also held along with the other mass organisations at the district level in the first week of March. On this occasion, the CITU state committee published 2 lakhs booklets for the unorganised sector workers and 1 lakh booklets for the workers in the organised sector. Around 20 lakhs leaflets addressing different sections of the workers were distributed; 70,000 posters were pasted. As a continuation of this struggle, the district collectors' offices in all the districts were picketed on 26th March.

The fifth state convention of the coordination committee of working women was held in Khammam on 26 – 27 April 2008. 210 delegates from 121 mandals in 21 districts working in 31 different sectors participated in the convention. A 39 member state coordination committee was formed with S Punyavati, vice president of the state committee of CITU, as the convenor and six co convenors.

Andaman

The A & N Islands state committee of CITU organised a two month long campaign against price rise and demanding implementation of minimum wages and PF, filling up of vacant posts etc, which culminated in a trade union convention at Port Blair on 28th October 2007. Around 200 workers including a large number of women from various parts of South Andaman and Port Blair participated in the convention.

The state committee mobilised the workers in support of the strike by the government employees on 30th October 2007.

Assam

On 17th May, for the first time a state level rally was organised on the demands of the unorganised sector workers. More than 7,000 workers participated in the rally, which was addressed by Anadi Sahu, the West Bengal state labour minister.

State Council meeting – The state council meeting held on 3-4 May reviewed the implementation of the decisions of the last state conference and decided to take up a state wide campaign on the 10 point charter of demands from June to September

A demonstration of tea garden workers was organised near the state Assembly on 5th March demanding recognition of the Tea tribes and adivasis as ST, minimum wage of Rs 84/, rest day wage, recruitment of permanent workers etc. A memorandum was submitted to the Chief Minister.

Around 3,000 anganwadi employees participated in a demonstration in front of the state Assembly on 25th March demanding additional remuneration, which was announced by the Chief Minister in a public meeting in November 2007.

Bihar

Thousands of ASHAs participated in a rally in Patna on 30th November 2007 under the leadership of the Public Health Employees' Union and held a massive rasta roko resenting the apathetic attitude of the government towards their genuine demands. The police resorted to brutal lathi charge, which was strongly condemned by the state committee of CITU.

The contract workers in the construction work phase II in the Kahalgaon unit of NTPC in Bihar struck

work for thirteen days from 4 – 17 April 2008 under the leadership of the NTPC Kamgar union affiliated to CITU. They demanded implementation of the basic rights like minimum wages, weekly holidays etc. The NTPC management and the construction company bosses initially refused to negotiate with the union because of their prejudice against the CITU. But, the determination of the workers along with the intervention of the CITU centre ultimately led to a negotiated settlement in which the management conceded the major demands of the workers.

Auto rickshaw drivers in Patna led by the CITU affiliated union went on a strike against police atrocities on 24th December 2007, which went on for 3 days. A massive dharna was staged on 26th December. The strike ended on 27th December after the transport minister held discussions with the union and agreed to consider them favourably.

Chattisgarh

A massive rally of workers in the organised and unorganised sectors was held by the CITU state committee in Raipur on 12th June 2008. Women workers including anganwadi employees, beedi workers, mandi workers and steel plant contractor workers constituted a large part of the around 5,000 workers who participated in the rally. This was culmination of 2 month old campaign demanding upward revision of minimum wage and implementation of labour laws.

Delhi

Massive strike in the Mayapuri industrial area on 20th December 2007 in support of the struggle against vindictiveness and unlawful closure of 4 garment factories operating under Chalsea Mills. In spite of earning huge profits, workers are not paid minimum wages, PF or ESI despite working for the last 18 – 20 years. CITU compelled the labour department to issue notice whereupon the employers resorted to illegal shutdown of the factories and transfer of 1500 workers. After campaign CITU called for strike in the industrial area. Though CITU has a limited number of affiliated unions in the area there was tremendous response. On 20th morning a few hundred jobless workers of Chalsea started a procession from the factory gate which soon turned into a huge procession of 20,000 workers within a few hours as workers from other factories joined the strike and the procession. Police arrested women workers from the bus stand on charges of rioting. Police also arrested workers including women workers in the night from their houses.

The two day strike called by the Delhi state committee of CITU received massive response from the working class in the state. The major demands included minimum wages, equal wages for women workers, 8 hour working day, and implementation of all the other labour laws. A massive campaign was conducted through gate meetings, meetings in the residential areas of the workers in the NOIDA SEZ, distribution of leaflets, posterings etc.

More than 10 lakhs workers in the National Capital Region of Delhi, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Noida struck work on 24 – 25 April 2008, which is the biggest strike since 1988. Around 2 lakhs workers participated in the processions in different parts of the region. Street and footpath vendors, head load workers, medical representatives, hotel workers in addition to the workers in many industrial areas across the region joined the strike. The participation of the unorganised sector workers, especially the street vendors, rickshaw pullers and the head load workers and the solidarity programmes by the security workers were a new feature of the strike in Delhi.

The employers attempted to terrorise the workers. False cases were filed against the workers and

their leaders and a large number of them including women were arrested and sent to jail. The entire industrial area was converted into a police camp. The owners and their agents took out a procession and threatened the workers of dire consequences if they went ahead with the strike. The SHO threatened to kill the secretary of the West Delhi committee of CITU

However, the successful strike forced the Labour Minister of Delhi to assure that a tripartite committee would be constituted to revise the minimum wages, which were not revised in the last nearly 20 years and to monitor the implementation of the labour laws. The minister also assured to make the ESI board functional.

A convention was organised by the Hotel workers' union on 29th January 2008. The Railway Vendors under the leadership of the CITU union registered a victory by successfully thwarting the attempts to evict them from the Old Delhi railway platform, after an 11 day struggle.

The CITU has also organised several demonstrations against illegal closures of factories, against the irresponsible attitude of the ESI administration etc.

Gujarat

Called by the CITU State Committee, State level TU leaders met in Ahmedabad on 6th June, 2008 to chalk-out a campaign programme in preparation of 20th August, 2008 strike. It was decided to lead an intense campaign and issue publicity material to support the strike preparation.

On 13th July a State level Convention was held in Mehendinavab Jung Hall, Ahmedabad. It was a broad based conference where workers and employees from all sections of industries and organisations like government employees, P&T, FMRAI, etc attended in good numbers.

Haryana

The BSNL contract workers' union held dharnas all over the state on 15th November 2007; a massive dharna of construction workers was held by the Construction Workers' Union, in front of the Labour Commissioner's office in Chandigarh on 25th November 2007.

CITU state committee has decided to campaign and hold rallies on the issues of employment, food and housing, for three days from 10th March 2008. Accordingly a rally was held in Panipat in which anganwadi employees, forest workers, part time workers, class IV employees and non teaching staff from SD educational institution etc participated in large numbers and presented a memorandum to the deputy commissioner of labour. More than 1,200 workers participated in a demonstration in Karnal against the non-implementation of the assurances given by the Liberty Shoes management after the struggle in 2006.

Thirty thousand registered workers in 450 spinning mills in Panipat in Haryana won a significant battle when owners of the mills were forced to concede to their demands in a tripartite meeting held on 3rd April 2008, after a long battle. The employers agreed to pay minimum wages, include the names of all the workers in the attendance registers, provide wage slips one day before the pay day, implement eight hour working day, pay equal wages to women workers and provide PF and ESI facilities. A victory rally was organised by the CITU on 4th April 2008.

The workers in Automax Industries in Gurgaon launched a struggle on their right to organisation. The

management transferred the leadership when the workers wanted to form a union. On 15th April 2008, the workers were stopped from entering the factory and brutally lathi charged in the presence of the sub divisional magistrate.

A massive rally of workers and agricultural workers, the largest mobilisation of workers in the recent period, was held on 6th April 2008 in Hisar, under the leadership of the state committees of the CITU and AIAWU. As part of the preparations for the rally, the state committee of CITU conducted a state wide campaign focussing the non implementation of minimum wages and other statutory benefits of the workers and against the attacks on the rights of the workers including the right to organisation and collective bargaining.

Himachal Pradesh

Workers of Rampur Hydel Project under the leadership of the CITU went on a continuous strike from 14th May demanding implementation of minimum wages and other issues. The Patel Construction and Gammon India refused to negotiate, but on 25th May they were forced to come to a settlement as the employers could not break the strike.

Anganwadi workers and helpers organized statewide protest demonstrations from 1st to 16th July against the government's apathetic attitude towards their just demands and refusal to make them regular employees.

Against unbundling of the State Electricity Board the electricity workers all over the state went on a series of programmes.

From 22nd May to 29th May workers and employees were wearing Black Badges across the state. As a part of week long campaign from 22nd June to 29th June, tool down strike on 27th June by the workers and on 29th June there was mass casual leave by thousands of workers. The BJP -led government has relented but the HPSEB Employees union is continuing the campaign from 2nd July for a month in every corner of the state.

It has been decided that on 6th August there will be a DHARNA before the Parliament by HPSEB workers and also from other SEBs, already unbundled demanding rehabilitation.

Mid-day meal workers are working without any appointment letters and with a paltry wage of Rs 200 to Rs 400 per month. On 16th June they demonstrated in 7 districts demanding pay increase and appointment letters.

Workers of Sabra Kudu hydel project went on strike from 20th to 25th June demanding implementation of minimum wages and residential accommodation. The Kirloskar Construction Company finally had to sign a satisfactory agreement.

Employers of Super Max Company in Shogi in Himachal Pradesh are continuously ignoring the State Government's order to increase the wages of workers from 1st January 2008. The workers were peacefully demonstrating before the factory gate on 30th June 2008 when, without provocation the security guards opened fire on them. One worker was hit by the head and died on the spot, 5 others were injured. The employers have already suspended 9 leaders for their activities in organising the workers for realisation of the higher wages as per government order.

Jammu & Kashmir

On 18th October 2007, the CITU affiliated Salal NHPC Workers' and Staff Union held a militant demonstration in front of the MD's office protesting the non implementation of the settlement made by the management with the union in March. This was followed by a massive demonstration and dharna in front of the Managing Director's office in Jyoti Puram on 2nd November 2007.

A state level workshop on organisation was held by the Jammu and Kashmir Anganwadi Workers' Association on 24th May 2007. In spite of the state wide bandh by the Hurriyat, 80 anganwadi employees from 5 districts participated in the workshop.

The ASHAs in the state are being organised by the CITU and several campaigns and struggles have been held on their demands. A regional convention of the ASHAs was held in Anantanag on 25th May 2008 in which around 200 ASHAs from 5 districts participated. An organising committee was formed and it was decided to organise the ASHAs all over the state.

Jharkhand

In Bokaro steel plant, huge processions under the banner of the CITU were organised in support of the demands of the contract workers' strike on 31st January 2008. Though the strike was not called by the CITU, our union has ensured that the strike was total and with our support the workers could wrest a big gain for themselves.

As per the decision of the Sponsoring Committee, rail roko/rasta roko was successfully organised jointly in Jharkhand on 5th December, 2008. NH and State Highways were blocked at Ramgarh in Hazaribagh district, Bokaro, Dhanbad, Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Pakur and Adityapur in Saraikela district. Rail roko was organised in Nirsa, Gomia, Patratu and Sahebganj.

Independent campaign by CITU against Indo-US Nuclear deal and price rise was conducted in the State by issuing leaflets, holding gate meeting, pit meeting, district level demonstrations, holding seminars in almost all the districts and industrial centres.

CITU actively participated in the general strike on 11 June, 2008 against price rise of petroleum products.

A state level militant demonstration of contractor workers was held in front of Regional PF commissioner's office, Ranchi on 11th April, 2008 and memorandum was submitted to the Commissioner.

On 25th April 2008, CITU organised rally and public meeting of unorganised workers demanding revision of minimum wages, timely notification of DA and social security. The meeting was attended by more than 5000 workers. M.K. Pandhe and Jibon Roy addressed the meeting held in front of Labour ministry.

3 days TU class from 23-25 May was organised at Kiriburu for state committee members and important functionaries of affiliated unions. M.K. Pandhe, Kali Ghosh and Jibon Roy attended as teachers.

More than 1000 strong Anganbadi workers from 4 Santhal Pargana districts demonstrated before the Commissioners office on 23rd June which was addressed by Neelima Moitra. The demonstration was followed by 2 days massive dharna on 24th and 25th June.

Joint state convention was held on 27th July at Ranchi. Leaflets and Posters are being issued by the state centre in preparation of 20th August strike.

8. Due to CITU's intervention in the state following are achieved - Rules for welfare board for construction workers has been framed by the government - Updating of minimum wages adding VDA is taking place and timely notification is issued by the government - The State government issued notification under NI Act declaring May Day as a public holiday. This year agitation was launched and representations were made and government had to issue the notification.

Madhya Pradesh

The MP state committee of CITU conducted a campaign on the issues of the daily wageworkers and gangmen demanding minimum wages and regularisation. Local level meetings were organised between 27th January and 7th February. 5 jathas travelled through the state in February and covered more than 35% districts in the state. From 17th to 26th February meetings were organised in the district headquarters. The campaign culminated in the Dera Dalo Ghera Dalo programme on 27 – 28 February in which thousands of daily wage workers from 28 districts in the state participated. This has created enthusiasm among the daily wageworkers. In the next phase 24 hours hunger strike was held in different districts on 17 – 21 March. More than 5,000 workers participated in the hunger strike which was held in more than 27 districts. Effigies of the state government were burnt on 1st April all over the state.

A workers' parliament was held by the Gwalior district committee of CITU on 8th February 2008 to highlight the problems of the different sections of workers. Hundreds of daily wageworkers, work charged employees, construction workers, beedi workers and municipal workers etc participated. An indefinite dharna was organised by the CITU against outsourcing in the Northern Coalfields, in which hundreds of workers participated.

Maharashtra

All the 8,300 workers in the Chandrapur area of Western Coal fields went on strike against outsourcing, which completely stopped production. The strike was fully supported by the family members of the workers and the local people and their organisations. After six days the management came to an agreement and assured that there would be no outsourcing, after which the strike was withdrawn.

Orissa

A joint convention was held in Bhubaneshwar on 17th January 2008 at the initiative of CITU, AITUC, HMS, AICCTU, AIIEA and other trade unions demanding firm action against those perpetrating communal violence and attacking Christians in the state. The convention was followed by a state wide campaign against communal violence.

The Orissa state committee of CITU has taken new initiative to intensify the struggles of the contract workers. Regular campaigns, demonstrations, dharnas and strikes are being organised in the Orissa Mineral Development Corporation, Kalta mines, Orissa Industries Limited, Orissa Sponge Iron and Power, IDL Gulf Oil Corporation, IFFCO, NALCO, NTPC and Paradeep based industries. In several industries, the regular and contract workers are organising joint activities in support of their demands. 4,000 contract workers in JK Paper mills in Orissa went on an indefinite strike from 2nd January 2008

demanding wage rise and implementation of labour laws. The strike was total. During the period of the strike the family members including the wives and children of the striking workers sat on dharna in front of the mill gate. The Labour Commissioner was forced to start conciliation proceedings. The strike was withdrawn on 9th January.

Punjab

On 24th December 2007 night, the Punjab police arrested around 500 leaders of the anganwadi union from their homes all over the state, including the general secretary and other office bearers of the union on the eve of a meeting with the chief minister arranged by the Social Security Minister of the state. The CITU state committee organised protest demonstrations all over the state on 7th January 2008 against police repression. Anganwadi employees, brick kiln workers, and other industrial workers participated in these demonstrations.

State electricity board employees in Punjab under the leadership of the joint forum went on strike on 7th February 2008 against privatisation. 55,000 SEB employees joined the strike and barring 2-3 centres, participation varied from 70- 96%. As preparation for the strike mass campaign was organised throughout the state, which created a big impact among the people and other organisations also. On 5th January, a big rally of SEB workers was organised in Chandigarh in which around 5,000 workers participated.

Hundreds of NREGA workers demonstrated before the deputy commissioner's office in Hoshiarpur demanding proper implementation of the programme and payment of wages equal to the agricultural workers in the state. A large number of women workers participated in the demonstration.

The Punjab state committee of CITU called for the observance of a protest week on 10 – 16 February demanding revision of minimum wages with effect from 1st January 2006, implementation of the existing labour laws, abolition of the contract labour system and outsourcing, regularisation of the anganwadi employees, withdrawal of false cases against the CITU and other labour union leaders. Rallies, demonstrations, meetings and jatha marches took place all over the state. A big rally was held in Chandigarh on 10th February

On 14th March thousands of industrial and other workers organised a massive rally in Hoshiarpur against the government's refusal to increase the minimum wages in the unorganised sector in Punjab. Brick kiln, FCI, NREGA, Forest, road transport workers, anganwadi employees and others participated in the rally in large numbers. 'Prabhat Pheri' programmes consisting of processions and meetings have been organised from 23rd March to put pressure on the government on the issue of minimum wages.

The Anganwadi Mulajam Union held a massive rally in front of the office of the state social welfare and child development department in Chandigarh on 10th April in which around 7,000 anganwadi employees participated. As they marched peacefully to submit a memorandum to the chief minister, the police resorted to lathi charge and used water cannons without any warning. Many anganwadi employees including some office bearers of the union were injured. Protesting the highhanded attitude of the police, the anganwadi employees sat on a dharna forcing the chief minister to agree to meet the union leaders and discuss their problems

On 2nd July a big joint Convention was organised in Chandigarh by CITU of head load workers. The leaders demanded that all the head load workers in the remaining 49 FCI depots and elsewhere must

be regular immediately and all the 841 workers who were terminate from service following the regularisation of workers 1995 by the orders of the Supreme Court.

The leaders demanded that FCI and Public Distribution System should strengthened by all means to stop market manipulation of prices of food grains and large scale contractorisation by big private traders. They are looting the kisans as well as the common people.

They demanded that all the head load workers be covered by the Labour Act of 1970.

Ashim Bala, Raghunath Singh and others addressed the Convention.

Rajasthan

Thousands of brick kiln workers in Jaipur and Sikar districts of Rajasthan conducted a massive campaign under the leadership of the CITU affiliated union and increased their wages to Rs 176 per thousand bricks in Jaipur and Rs 168 in Sikar.

Sikkim

The Sikkim state committee of CITU has extended support to the hunger strike by the Affected Citizens of Teesta, an organisation of the people displaced by the hydro power projects coming up the Teesta river in Sikkim.

On 9th January the services of three women workers of Yuksom Breweries were terminated on verbal orders without assigning any reason. The CITU has protested against non applicability of labour laws of the country in Sikkim even after more than thirty years of its accession to India.

Tamil Nadu

In November 2007, contract workers of Salem steel plant went on strike on the issue of bonus and other demands. There was a big demonstration on the day, in which regular workers also participated. The strike has created enthusiasm among the contract workers as the CITU affiliated regular workers' union took the lead.

The CITU affiliated Head Load Workers' Union in Erode took up the issues of the Chikkayya Naicker College in the city, which was taken over by the government in 1998 but was not being run as a government college. Many teachers' posts continued to be vacant causing a lot of difficulties to the students. The union mobilised the support of the other head load workers' unions and started a powerful campaign through leaflets, posters, street corner meetings, van jathas etc. The Joint Action Committee of the seven head load workers' unions called for a token strike on 9th June, in which all the 6,000 head load workers in the city participated.

385 anganwadi workers and helpers took part in Delhi hunger strike. More than 20,000 post cards containing the demands were sent to the prime minister. 32000 workers took part in Dharnas all over Tamilnadu with the cooperation of CITU District Committees.

After the strike action by the thousands of beedi workers, Tamilnadu Govt, notified minimum wages as per the agreement.

A demonstration was conducted in Chennai on 15th Dec 2007. The demands raised were as follows:: Ethanol, Spirit and power production units must be started in all the state and cooperative sugar mills. Government shall take over the closed private sugar mills, and intervene to stop the repressive measures by the management of Tharani Sugars. Government, shall also allot Rs. 1000 crores towards protection of state and cooperative sugar mills.

Transport workers conducted a 36 hours hunger strike from 4.10.2007 demanding, commencement of wage-negotiation. Ultimately a settlement was arrived at after intervention of State transport minister.

On 22.10.2007, water board employees conducted a demonstration, demanding 20 % bonus on per with transport and electricity workers. Struggles took place in civil supplies, Aavin, Rubber corporation, Tasmac, cooperative and state sugar mills, Tamilnadu Minerals etc.,.

As per the decision of CITU All India secretariat, on 31th Oct 2007 huge demonstrations took place all over Tamilnadu. Thouands of unorganised workers took part in these.

Hungerstrike took place on 23rd Oct, 2007 all over India against anti-labour policy of FTC and Luccard establishments. A sustained campaign for 8 hours work was launched. Talks were held with associations of Doctors and Medical distributors. In Vellore, Salem and Erode districts 8 hours work is being implemented for medical representatives.

Hyundai Motor Employees' Union was started in 2007 at Chennai Hyundai Car Unit. The management refused to recognise the union, and resorted to victimisation of leadership and activists and dismissed President, General Secretary and leading office bearers. 97 were suspended and hundreds were implicated in false cases putting 31 workers in jail. State administration was in league with the employers in carrying on repression on the workers just for crushing the union. Struggle is continuing and solidarity action has been organised all over the state. A 6 members delegation from KCTU, South Korea Came over to Chennai and held discussions with the union leaders, and with management also. A human Chain for protecting TU & workers rights was formed in Chennai, in which more than 3000 workers of Chennai participated. South Korean team donated 1000 US dollars in solidarity with Chennai Hyundai struggles.

In factories in and around Chennai, workers are victimised for forming trade unions. Leading cadres in Archid Chemicals, Bailey Hydro power, product Circuit, Kanchi Camphor, Tharani Sugar Mill. Hyundai Car Unit, CRI Pumps, etc, were facing disciplinary actions on flimsy grounds. On 17th August 2007 all over Tamilnadu demonstration for TU rights were conducted. Sustained campaign is going on for 8 hour duty, implementation of Minimum Wages Act, Contract Workers (R&A) Act, etc.

The call of the Sponsoring Committee of trade unions for picketing of govt, offices on 4th December 2007 on 18 point charter of demands, was carried out in Tamilnadu.

Secret Ballot was conducted in southern railway for granting recognition on 26, 27, 28th November, 2007. The two recognised unions SRMU and SRES with money and muscle power, disturbed DREU meetings and wanted to disturb election process. But they failed and after 58 years DREU came second in the ballot winning 3084 votes and thereby getting recognition along with SRMU.

Port and Dock union launched struggles for regularisation of apprentices and recruitment of dependents of those workers who died while in service. 2400 apprentices and dependants have to be absorbed as regular employees. On 14th May, workers demonstrated without wearing banians & shirts and

holding begging bowl before the collectorate.

Construction workers and 13 other unorganised. welfare boards are functioning under the labour department. Govt., of Tamilnadu, unilaterally issued an order 4.3.2008, transferring the control to revenue department. Anticipating such a move, CWFI launched Demonstrations all over tamilnadu on 20th February, in which 4800 construction workers took part. After the issue of G.O., on 13th March, a statewide picketing took place. More than 33000 unorganised workers including 18000 construction workers participated in the picketing. Due to persistent struggles by CITU and other TU's govt., gave up the move.

About 75 thousand helpers are working in village panchayats as overhead tank operators and scavengers. They are classified as part timers and a paltry monthly allowance of Rs.600 is paid. Demanding regularisation and free housing the workers under CITU went on a day's token strike on 9th June 2008. 7 thousand workers took part in picketing on that day.

Working Women's Day was observed by working women state coordination committee in many districts by demonstrations, seminar and meetings

May Day rallies in 40 centres, public meetings were addressed by both CITU & AITUC leaders.

For new cadres one-day TU class was conducted in two places. About 150 comrades took part.

For training of Teachers, 2 days TU Camp was conducted in both Trichy & Chennai. About 120 comrades took part.

Demonstrations by electricity workers were held on 6th September, 20th December, & 11th March, 2008 demanding commencement of wage negotiations, 50 % D.A merger with basic pay, filling up vacancies, regularisation of contract labour, etc.,

On 29-06-08, a march to Assembly rally was organised at Chennai.

COTEE (electricity workers) conducted a series of struggles for absorption of contract labourers. On 10-08-07, an agreement was signed by other unions. Due to some differences, CITU did not sign. 6000 were absorbed as Mazdoor, 6000 as daily labour. CITU took steps for P.F deductions for contract workers and got the requisite order. The board has filed an appeal against this in the Supreme Court, CITU is a party to the case to fight.

Noon Meal Workers: More than 5600 (Dalit) part timer women workers have to be paid Rs.2500 per month from 20-03-07, on par with the noon meal workers of Tamilnadu, as per the High Court order. On three occasions, demonstrations were conducted before Board Head office at Chennai mobilising these women. But the Board has filed an appeal against this in the Supreme Court and is paying only Rs.850 per month. COTEE is taking all efforts to get justice for this downtrodden section.

Uttar Pradesh

The road transport workers in UP organised a massive rally in front of the state assembly in Lucknow against the move by the state government to privatise the road transport corporation and hand over the 40 bus stations to the private parties. The workers in the rally were lathi charged and fired upon; many workers were injured, some critically

The workers engaged in the Noida Development Authority observed indefinite relay hunger strike from 10th October 2007 demanding regularisation, full pay and implementation of labour laws. The government resorted to brutal lathi charge on the workers including women on 29 – 30 January. Several workers were arrested and along with the shamiana and other furniture etc, were taken away to the police station. The police again lathi charged the workers who were protesting this police highhandedness on 30th January. A protest day was observed all over the state against the police atrocities on 7th February 2008. Processions, demonstrations, and dharnas were held and effigies were burnt in several places in the state.

Thousands of unorganised sector workers demonstrated in front of the Labour Commissioner's office in Kanpur on 19th February 2008, protesting against the non implementation of the labour laws. The bangle workers of Firozabad also joined these demonstrations. The Firozabad workers went on a three day strike on their demands from 18th February.

The first state level conference of ASHAs was held in Moradabad on 11th May 2008. Hundreds of ASHAs from different parts of the state participated. A state committee was elected in the conference.

Uttarakhand

Thousands of workers and employees including a large number of women gathered in the Gandhi chowk and held a dharna on 29th February 2008; they then marched to the state secretariat and gheraoed it. They broke barricades and clashed with the police. They were demanding minimum wages, PF, 8 hours work, effective implementation of labour laws and stopping of corrupt practices in ESI etc.

Thousands of workers and employees, including the state government employees, anganwadi employees and the workers in different government department, participated in a dharna organised by the Uttarakhand state committee of CITU in front of the state assembly in Dehradun on 26th March 2008. Later a memorandum was submitted to the chief minister.

Hundreds of ASHAs under the leadership of the CITU affiliated Uttarakhand ASHA Karyakartri Union held a massive demonstration on 22nd April 2008 in front of the office of the Chief Medical Officer in Dehra Dun.

A trade union class was organised in Hardwar where activities from all over the State attended on 24 – 25 May, 2008. Many of them had attended any such class for the first time. Leaders from CITU Centre took the classes on different subjects.

West Bengal

After the last working committee meeting of CITU, a state level convention was held to highlight the 18 point charter of demands. A massive meeting was held on 8th January to observe the Demands' Day of contractors' workers. Contract workers from transport, power, construction and coal industries participated in the meeting.

The jute workers in the state went on a token strike, which was supported by the central trade unions. CITU extended full support to the nationwide strike by the government employees on 30th October 2007.

A week long campaign programme was launched on 22 – 29 October 2007 opposing the Indo US Nuclear Deal, FDI in retail trade and demanding expansion of the PDS, immediate enactment of a comprehensive legislation for the unorganised sector, implementation of the Setu Samudram project and review of the SEZ Act. Demonstrations, rallies and public meetings were held throughout the state on 7th November.

The CITU affiliated union of contract workers in IISCO steel plant conducted a campaign on the demands of the contract workers and took initiative to unite all the 5 central trade unions on the issue. A 3 day strike was planned from 17th March 2008. The strike was expected to be total, which forced the management to sign an agreement with the 5 unions in which the management agreed to increase the monthly wages to Rs 2,865, provide house rent allowance, PF, medical benefits and all the safety gear as available to the regular workers of SAIL etc.

The state committee of CITU organised a convention on 18th April against the attempts by the disruptive activities of the Gorkha Jana Mukti Parishad in the hill areas of North Bengal. Massive rallies were held against the price rise on 19th and 20th April. A state level convention was also held on this issue on 25th April. The convention demanded expansion of the PDS, supply of subsidised fertilisers, seeds and electricity to the needy peasants and to stop hoarding and forward trading in food grains. The CITU affiliated unions played an important role to make the 12 hour strike against the petroleum price hike on 5th June.

Almost all the CITU affiliated unions took the initiative to spread protest movement against the price hike of petroleum products by govt. of India defying all arguments and alternative proposals furnished by left parties. The 12 hour strike on 5th June 2008 was a total halt of the life in West Bengal against govt. of India's decision in the interest of private players in the oil industry. All over the state this lightning strike could get spontaneous and popular support from all walks of life. But the conscious people of West Bengal as well working class practically ignored and rejected their strike call given by Trinamul Congress, BJP and their allies next day.

The 9th West Bengal state conference of CITU was held on 1-5 March 2008 in Siliguri. 1,908 delegates and 38 observers participated in the conference representing 18.76 lakhs members. A notable feature of this conference was that all the unions got their accounts up to December 2007 audited, completed the formalities with the registrar and paid their affiliation fees to ensure the participation of their delegates in the conference. A commemorative book on the founder general secretary of CITU, Com P Ramamurthy, was published on the occasion of the conference, which was being held in his birth centenary year.

Thousands of workers from the districts in North Bengal including the tea garden workers and workers from the organised and unorganised sectors in Siliguri participated in the rally held on 1st March, defying the provocations by the disruptive forces. MK Pandhe and Md Amin, president and general secretary of CITU and Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, chief minister of the state addressed the rally along with the state leaders of CITU. Com Pandhe inaugurated the conference. In addition to the general secretary's report presented by Com Kali Ghosh, the conference discussed five subjects – Contract workers and contract system; Occupational health – safety, energy and environment; Approach to scientific and social responsibility, culture and public health; Organiser (Cadre) policy to build trade union organisation; and Labour laws and the problems of implementation and amendments in the interest of the working class - in five commissions. 162 delegates participated in the discussions in the commission. The draft reports of the commission papers were placed before the conference which

authorised the new working committee to finalise them.

CITU activists played an important role in campaigning for the Left candidates in the recently concluded Panchayet elections. There were some set backs to the Left front in these elections where all the anti Left forces including the communal forces of different hues joined together to defeat the Left. A section of the intellectuals and the bourgeois media too unleashed a vigorous malicious campaign against the Left. The CITU has to tune its organisation and further strengthen its relationship with the workers and the people, try to explain and convince them on the policies and programmes of the Left Front and win back their support.

Protest dharna was organised by all workers led by CITU along with youths, students, women, lawyers, traders and common people before the SDM, Asansol against the discriminatory attitude of the Central Government towards Burn Standard Company Limited. Two sick wagon building factories in Mokameh and Muzaffarpur are being taken over by the Railways for revival but not the Burn Standard Company in Burnpur and Howrah. This discriminatory attitude has been protested by all sections of population.

OUR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

At the initiative of the World Federation Of Trade Unions the re-foundation conference of Trade Union International of Energy Workers or TUI(ENERGY) was held in the city of Mexico on 26-28 September 2007. CITU, though not affiliated to WFTU was invited to attend the conference and Swadesh Devroye was nominated by to attend the conference. 225 delegates from a total of 61 countries attended the conference, the other delegate from India was Chakradhar Prasad Singh of AITUC which is affiliated to WFTU.

In the Conference Swadesh Dev Roye was elected the President of the TUI (ENERGY) with Martin Esparza Flores of Mexican Electricity Workers Union as the General Secretary. Chakradhar Singh was elected one of the five Vice Presidents. This is a clear recognition of the role of CITU in the international trade union movement.

In a similar development, the TUI (Transport) Conference was held in Belo-Horizonta in Brazil on 10th to 12th December 2007 and K K Divakaran , Secretary, CITU and General Secretary , All India Road Transport Workers Federation attended the conference. Divakaran was elected a member of the Finance Control Commission with Hogo Bosco of Uruguay as the Chairman. This conference was held after nearly 12 years.

In order to revive the defunct TUI (Metalworkers) at the initiative of WFTU a preparatory committee was constituted in Spain in 2007. Ardhendu dakshi attending from CITU was made the Chairman of the committee. The Conference was held on 19-20 May, 2008 in the city of San Sebastian in northern Spain. The CITU delegation consisted of Ardhendu Dakshi, P K Das, General Secretary, Steel Workers Federation Of India, Bishnu Mohanty, General Secretary, Orissa State Committee(CITU) and B D Prasad ,GS, Bokaro Steel Plant union. More than 130 delegates from 31 countries attended the Conference.

In the Conference Ardhendu Dakshi was elected the President of the TUI(METAL) and P.K.Das was elected the Secretary(Metallurgy). Jesus Maria Gete O'Larra of LAB, SPAIN was elected the General Secretary and Arturo Rodriguez of Cuba became the Deputy General Secretary.

The significant trend can be noticed from the three conferences is the upsurge in TU movement in

Latin America based on class struggle. African trade unions have also made their presence felt by greater participation and militancy. CITU commands an unmatched respect among the class based organizations which makes it a natural ally and the leader in the global struggle against globalization.

P R Krishnan, Secretary, Maharashtra State Committee of CITU attended the "IV Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of Solidarity with Cuba" in Colombo on 14 – 15 June 2008. Delegates from 18 countries in this region had assembled against the blockade of Cuba by US imperialists and the arrest of 5 Cuban heroes who are in US jail after a mockery of trial. Also messages were sent to the Conference by M K Pandhe and Mohammed Amin. The Indian delegation was a big contingent of 40 members.

Most section of workers engaged in unorganised and semi-organised or seasonal industries are not able to cover this section under the scheme. At present approximately 334 lakh of workers are covered in 155 industrial centres in 22 states.

2. This is a Contributory Scheme. Workers contribute 1.75% of their wage and 4.75% by the employer. State Govt's contribution is 1/5th of the expenditure on medical care. It is to be noted that Govt. of India who has overall control in running the Scheme do not contribute a single paise.

4. The Scheme principally provides the following benefits:

a) Free medical care to employees (PE) and dependent family members of the insured Persons including indoor and outpatient treatments.

b) Sick Leave Benefit i.e. Cash Benefit on an average 60% of the wage including enhanced sickness benefit and Extended Sickness Benefit of 24 specified long term disease in the event of loss of wages due to absence from work.

c) Temporary Disability Benefit due to employment injury and occupational disease and Permanent Disability Benefit arising out of Employment injury and also Death Benefit due to employment injury to the Dependents.

d) Maternity Benefit for Government employees, PE & Industrial workers and complications both medical and cash benefit.

e) Medical Benefit to Retired Persons and spouse on Payment of Rs. 120/- per annum.

5. To run the Scheme two different set up is working:

The ESI Corporation administer the scheme through Regional and Local offices. Their main functions are: i) Collection of Contribution, ii) to take legal action for recovery of arrears, iii) to pay Cash Benefits including employment injury benefits.

6. The responsibility of administration of the medical care rests with the State Govt. subject to ceiling on medical expenditure fixed by the ESI Corporation.

Presently per month expenditure per annum is fixed at Rs. 1000/- out of which Rs.400/- is earmarked for drugs and diagnosis and for maintenance and repair of equipments. Balance amount is spent for administration including payment of salaries, payment of capitation fees to the medical practitioners (MP), diet of the indoor patients etc.

While the State Govts. run the medical scheme in states exceptorally ESI Corporation directly run the medical scheme in Delhi and Noida.

7. Many of the State Govts. are not keen in implementing the scheme. A complete chaotic condition is prevailing in medical arrangement in many states. Because of negligence by some of the State Govt.

A NOTE ON EMPLOYEES STATE INSURANCE SCHEME

1. The Employees State Insurance Scheme is one of the Social Security Scheme for organised sector workers which is introduced in India since 1952.

2. Presently the scheme is introduced in selected areas that too only in non-seasonal factories employing 10/20 workers or more and in some states in some industrial and commercial establishments. Vast section of workers engaged in unorganised and self employed sector or seasonal factories there is no provision to cover this section under the scheme. At present approximately 334 lakhs of beneficiaries are covered in 655 industrial centres in 22 states.

3. This is a Contributory Scheme. Workers contribute 1.75% of their wage and 4.75% by the employer. State Govt.'s contribution is 1/8th of the expenditure on medical care. It is to be noted that Govt. of India who has overall control in running the Scheme do not contribute a single paise.

4. The Scheme principally provides the following benefits :-

- a) Free medical care to employees (IP) and dependent family members of the Insured Persons including indoor and specialist treatments.
- b) Sickness Benefit i.e. Cash Benefit on an average 50% of the wage including enhanced sickness benefit and Extended Sickness in case of 34 specified long term disease in the event of loss of wages due to absence from work.
- c) Temporary Disablement Benefit due to employment injury and occupational disease and Permanent Disablement Benefit arising out of Employment Injury and also Death Benefit due to employment injury to the Dependents.
- d) Maternity Benefit for Confinement, miscarriage pre & postnatal sickness and complications both medical and cash benefit.
- e) Medical Benefit to Retired Persons and spouse on Payment of Rs. 120/- per annum.

5. To run the Scheme two different set up is working –

The ESI Corporation administer the scheme through Regional and Local offices. Their main functions are – i) Coverage, ii) Collection of Contribution, iii) to take legal action for recovery of arrears, iv) to pay Cash Benefits including employment injury benefits.

6. The responsibility of administration of the medical care rests with the State Govt. subject to a ceiling on medical expenditure fixed by the ESI Corporation.

Presently per IP expenditure per annum is fixed at Rs. 1000/- out of which Rs.400/- is earmarked for drugs and dressings and for maintenance and repair of equipments. Balance amount is spent for administration including payment of salaries, payment of capitation fees to the medical practitioners (IMP), diet of the indoor patients etc.

While the State Govts. run the medical scheme in states exceptionally ESI Corporation directly run the medical scheme in Delhi and Noida.

7. Many of the State Govts. are not keen in implementing the scheme, a complete chaotic condition is prevailing in medical arrangement in many states. Because of negligence by some of the State Govt.,

Govt. of India and a section of Trade Unions demanding medical services to be handed over to the ESI Corporation being fed up with ESIC some of the State Govt. also offered taking over the scheme by ESIC.

8. However, there are states who sincerely try to implement the scheme. But the main impediments are shortage of fund or undue delay in sanctioning the fund by ESIC. While the states expenditure is based on ceiling limits, in Delhi and Noida where the ESI Corporation running the medical scheme, their expenditure is very much higher than the ceiling limit fixed for the state governments.

9. The scheme has some good features. The salient features are:-

- i) Contribution as per wage rates but benefits as per requirement.
- ii) All kinds of employees are covered i.e. casual, contract labour, badli and daily wage worker.
- iii) It is not like a commercial insurance scheme.
- iv) No pre-entry medical test for coverage.
- v) Right from the date of entry medical care, and disablement benefit / death benefit are available.
- vi) Funeral Expenses @ Rs 3000.00.
- vii) Workers whose daily rate is Rs. 70.00 or below they are exempted from making any contribution but they are entitled to all benefits.
- viii) Free Ambulance Services are also provided. Sick worker is entitled to get travelling expenses of his companion also.
- ix) Medical Care includes both Indoor & Outdoor treatment including Specialist Treatment, Medicine, pathological and other allied tests are available free of cost.
- x) Medical Benefit is available if an IP resides in other state (if ESIC Scheme is available).

10. But various Rules, Regulations and restrictive office orders superseding ESI Rules and Regulations, red-tapism of the bureaucracy are the main hurdles in proper implementation of the scheme. A sick or injured IP is unnecessarily harassed and forced to move from the pillar to post to avail of medical and cash benefit. Even issuance of medical certificate by the Doctor (IMP) is controlled by administrative order, IP's are denied medical treatment and asked to produce form 37 from the employer, because of the failure of the employer to submit return or deposit contribution.

11. For the last few years the ESIC authority in a very arrogant and authoritarian way distorting the provisions of ESI Act and Rules and issued orders to restrict various medical and cash benefit which the IP's and their dependants are legally entitled to.

12. a) In the Act or the Scheme there is no definition of "Super Speciality" treatment. The ESIC has arbitrarily imposed that for entitlement of so-called "Super Speciality" treatment an IP is to contribute continuous 156 days contribution.

b) Dependent parents are required to stay with the IP and their monthly income should not exceed Rs. 1500/- which is against the provision of the Act.

c) Bureaucracy on their own introduced a system of preparation of "Live List" based on which an IP will be entitled to Benefits. This "Live List" is prepared on the basis of Return of contribution submitted by the employer. By introducing this system not only the IP's are harassed and deprived of the benefit because of failure of employer to timely submit return of contribution. Clandestinely a condition of advance payment of contribution has been introduced. It is also to be mentioned that no name of IP is included if he has not paid 78 days contribution.

d) It is the responsibility of the ESIC authority to bring the factories and establishment within the coverage of ESI Scheme, but they are not discharging their responsibility. As a result when the ESIC

is refusing to pay compensation in the case of death due to employment injury in utter disregard of the provisions of the Act.

e) Similarly it is the responsibility of the ESIC to enroll all workers including contract, casual, badli and daily wage workers and also to check whether contributions were paid on actual wages or not. But they are deliberately avoiding their responsibility. As a result lakhs of workers are denied of their legal benefits.

f) There is no standard and methodology to determine the 'approved member' of I.P. and employee as a result States are deprived of their proper share of expenditure.

g) Payment of Sickness Benefit during the period of Lock-out has been arbitrarily stopped. Though admittedly sickness benefit is not considered as a part of wages or sick leave. "By assistance in cash during sickness it tries to sustain the worker when the income is interrupted with a better and facile health protection, greater vitality and assurance of income maintenance in times of need. It makes you every inch a better, healthier, secure worker and therefore happier man. The assistance comes to the worker not as an act of benevolence but in virtue of an acquired right." (Quotation from a Booklet published by ESIC).

13. Some provision of the ESI Act

(a) Sec 2(13A) – "Insurable Employment" means an employment in a factory or establishment to which this Act applies.

(b) Sec. 2(14) – "Insured Person" means a person who is or was an employee in respect of whom Contributions are or were PAYABLE under this Act and who is by reason thereof, entitled to any of the benefits provided by this Act.

(c) Sec. 2(11) Family means all or any of the following relatives of an insured person namely –

i) A spouse

ii) A minor legitimate or adopted child dependent upon the IP.

iii) A child wholly dependent on the earning of the IP and who is – a) receiving education till he or she attends the age of twenty one years, b) an unmarried daughter

iv) Child who is infirm by reason of any physical and mental abnormality or injury and is wholly dependent on earning of the insured person so long as the infirmity continues.

v) Dependent parents.

(d) Sec. 56(3) – A person shall be entitled to medical benefit during any period for which contributions are PAYABLE in respect of him or in which he is qualified to claim Sickness Benefit or maternity benefit (or is in respect of such disablement benefit as does not disentitle to medical benefit under the regulation).

14. ESIC authority also admitted – "It is pertinent to mention that the benefits are provided only on the condition that the Contribution is payable and not necessarily paid in advance. The ESIC takes care to collect the contribution from the employer and the employees who are not subjected to any difficulties in getting Medical Care or Cash Benefit whether or not Contribution is actually paid. Another feature of the scheme is that an employee and his family members are entitled to Medical Care from the moment the employees enter in the Insurable Employment. Further an employee is also insured for the risk of Employment Injury from the moment he steps into Insurable Employment and there is no condition for payment of Contribution at all." In spite of the above various distortions have been made.

It is the responsibility of the ESIC to cover an unit within the purview of the ESI Act and enroll the workers engaged. If any unit fails deliberately or ignorantly to comply with the provisions of the Act it is the responsibility of ESIC to realise the contribution from the employer. A worker can not be or should not be denied the benefit for any fault on the part of the employer.

15. After the introduction of policies of liberalisation and privatisation both in Govt. and Private sector many workers were compelled to take premature retirement or whose services have been terminated. It was persistently demanded that Rule 60/61 be so amended to extend the medical benefit to these workers and their spouse, but that is denied.

16. There is no denying the fact the employers are in default of huge amount of contributions.

17. In the name of "down with Inspector Raj", ESIC has already introduced "self certification" for employers and amended the ESI Regulation. Despite the fact a similar bill is pending with Parliament.

18. ESIC has amassed a huge Reserve Fund on different heads to the tune of Rs. 14188.66 (Rupees Fourteen thousand one hundred eighty eight) crore, which clearly indicates that is the result of restricting and denying benefits to the workers for whom principally the Employees State Insurance Scheme was enacted.

Role of Trade Union Movement

This is the way how the ESI Scheme is administered our major weakness of the trade union movement is we criticise the scheme but do not make the workers aware of the Basic Scheme and develop a movement against mal administration and arbitrary curtailment of various benefits.

Comrade B.T.R. said - "The Trade Unions should now raise the demand for ensuring the benefits accepted under the scheme and demand their expansion. They must protest against the current farcical performance under the scheme and support the demands raised in the CITU memorandum. In particular they should ask for adequate representation of Trade Unions in the directive and supervisory and policy making bodies of the Corporation, end to monetary limitation in medical aid for workers, a time bound programme to cover the entire working class and the unorganised sector, use of accumulated funds to immediately expand hospital and other facilities, abolition of the waiting period, opposition to all plans to stop ESI aid during the strikes, punishment for supply of substandard medicines and provisions of drastic punishment for defaulting employers who withhold their or their workers contributions. The Trade Union besides should announce that they stand for non contribution social insurance and should mobilise all sections of labours to support the demands.

It is the primary duty of Trade Unions to protect the health and physical well being of the workers and their families and they should no longer neglect it."

Demands

- i) The Govt. of India should also contribute to run the Scheme.
- ii) Workers contributions are to be reduced to 1% and non-contributory limit be raised to Rs. 100/- per day.
- iii) No worker should be deprived of the benefit of the scheme for default in payment of contribution on the part of the employers.
- iv) In administering the scheme there should be a human approach. Whatever little benefits are there it should be ensured that it reaches to beneficiaries in appropriate time and without any harassment. Red-tapism and bureaucratic control to be eliminated making necessary changes in the rules and regulations and it should be IP/patient friendly.
- v) No indoor patient be debarred from medical care on the ground of non-eligibility. Every patient

should continue to get medical treatment till recovery.

vi) Rule 60/61 should be amended so that persons who were prematurely retired and retrenched can avail of the medical benefit.

vii) Medical Care should not be restricted in the name of "Super Speciality" treatment.

viii) The medical care ceiling be enhanced.

ix) Long pending ESB Cases be disposed of without delay.

x) Maintenance of Hospitals and SD Buildings should be taken up on top priority basis.

xi) Service ODCs and Model Hospitals be improved.

xii) The scheme be extended to cover workers engaged in unorganised sector and self employed persons.

xiii) A separate scheme for workers engaged in plantation, mines, transport industry and other service sector be introduced.

xiv) Section 63 of ESI Act, which disentitles a sick IP to receive benefits if he is on strike be repealed.

xv) There is an attempt to hand over many of the service even hospitals to private sector. This should be stopped. No doubt because of closures, lockouts, retrenchment and forced retirements no. of IPs have gone down. In some cases the infrastructure created remain unutilised. For utilisation of these infrastructure a tie-up arrangement with the state govts. may be made.

***Prepared by Com Kali Ghosh, Secretary, CITU and the CITU nominee
in the tripartite committee of ESIC***

Annexure:1

STATEMENT SHOWING STATEWISE MEMBERSHIP AS PER ANNUAL RETURNS RECEIVED TILL-18/7/2008

Name of the State	Unions Submitting Returns			Position of membership according to Annual Returns					
	2005	2006	2007	2005	Female	2006	Female	2007	Female
Andaman & Nicobar	8	8		2727		3078			
Andhra Pradesh	734	554	1	307687	72839	207183	21366	264	3
Assam	78	78	2	59616	28325	53120	22559	3861	1750
Bihar	12	2	2	22415	9871	3815	18	4291	26
Delhi	77	68	6	29511	1333	29139	1301	1563	74
Goa	7	6		551	7	318	17		
Gujrat	22	22		12588	1413	13135	1457		
Himachal Pradesh	32	25		16996	7378	13448	7274		
Haryana	18	20	15	48483	17543	13516	4267	42698	13707
Jammu & Kashmir	2	1	1	6376	42	276	35	348	38
Karnataka	113	93	29	120073	67828	95733	52828	34865	20083
Kerala	879	587	115	1070420	312928	856664	263129	163197	35581
Madhya Pradesh	67	38		24005	4673	11817	1305		
Maharashtra	76	76	5	81950	17823	84226	37237	10040	1932
Orissa	74	53		82885	23069	45046	9306		
Punjab	87	76	45	79971	13740	71541	14185	52742	13186
Rajasthan	87	32	3	32921	336	5036		213	
Tamilnadu	484	486		330875	70667	358729	73770		
Tripura	35	34	1	134215	41959	139461	45007	8350	4930
Uttar Pradesh	90	47	25	25791	780	6004	197	5278	106
West Bengal	977	968	1079	1417513	197032	1398964	172086	1806548	284446
Uttaranchal	41	31	1	15657	2703	11066	3071	97	1
Chhathishgarh	18	14	1	17496	1651	17768	1716	11107	210
Jharkhand	26	29	1	43634	4198	73019	13386	1218	
Meghalaya									
Arunachal Pradesh									
Sikkim	1			370					
Total	4045	3348	1332	3984726	898138	3512102	745517	2146680	376073

Year	No. of Unions	Membership
1983	1854	1890993
1984	2005	1575655
1985	1717	1716457(132536)
1986	2412	1844273(209348)
1987	2350	1680884(206482)
1988	2618	1919280(264507)
1989	3114	2425000(247388)
1990	2934	2095550(245060)
1991	2783	2088218(291228)
1992	3343	2381012(321620)
1993	3156	2371405(306344)
1994	3198	2470131(261980)
1995	3523	2784050(358188)
1996	3645	2805127(435285)
1997	3804	2917200(506097)
1998	3502	2881478(483373)
1999	3929	3296808(550583)
2000	3754	3124996(646618)
2001	3777	3148920(600703)
2002	4107	3455055(679548)
2003	3894	3330902(636642)
2004	3967	3541294(728820)

COM. P.RAMAMOORTI T.U. SCHOOL FUND as on 18.07.2008

CITU, Goa State Committee	Rs.1,206.00
CITU, U.P. State Committee	Rs.32,460.00
CITU, A.P. State Committee	Rs.245,399.00
CITU, Chhatishgarh State Committee	Rs.4,151.00
CITU, Tripura State Committee	Rs.10,000.00
CITU, M.P. State Committee	Rs.14,274.00
CITU, Karnataka State Committee	Rs.53,317.00
CITU, Kerala State Committee	Rs.1,022,143.00
CITU, Punjab State Committee	Rs.76,247.00
CITU, Tamilnadu State committee	Rs.718,400.00
CITU, J & K State Committee	Rs.1,240.00
CITU, Orissa State Committee	Rs.14,491.00
CITU, Haryana State Committee	Rs.35,040.00
CITU, Assam State Committee	Rs.15,000.00
CITU, West Bengal State Committee	Rs.500,000.00
CITU, Jharkhand State Committee	Rs.6,500.00
CITU, Gujrat State Committee	Rs.1,000.00
CITU, Maharashtra State Committee	Rs.20,000.00
CITU, Delhi State Committee	Rs.16,687.00
Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India, W.B.	Rs.100,000.00
Association of SAIL Employees, Kolkata, W.B.	Rs.20,000.00
2nd World Conference of Oil, Gas, Refinery Trade Union	Rs.700,000.00
Central Zone Insurance Employees Association, Chhatishgarh	Rs.10,000.00
Com. E.Balanandan	Rs.11,111.00
TOTAL	Rs.3,628,666.00

ON CONDOLENCE

This meeting of the General Council of CITU being held in Puri (Orissa) on 1-3 August 2008 records its deep sorrow at the passing away of Com. J Hemachandran, a veteran trade union leader and President of Tamilnadu State Committee of CITU. He was a member of CITU Working Committee and Vice-President of the All India Plantation Federation. The meeting pays its respectful homage to Com. Hemachandran.

The meeting also expresses its deep sorrow at the death of Com. Subhash Chakraborty leader of the Port Workers and Com. K.K. Bakshi veteran leader of J&K. The meeting pays homage to both the General Council members.

This General Council expresses deep grief at the passing away of Com. P. Ramachandran, veteran communist leader and former member of the Polit Bureau of CPI(M). PRC as he was popularly known, always sought to imbibe new ideas adhering strictly to the ideals of Marxism-Leninism. In his death the Communist movement has lost a valuable leader. The General Council pays respectful homage to the departed leader.

Meeting also condoles the death of veteran TU leader and former President of AITUC, Com. J. Chittranjan, Com. Ajoy Bhowmik frontline leader and President of the Co-ordination Committee of Central Govt. Employees union in West Bengal and Com. N.S. Bhangoo former General Secretary of All India Railway Employees Federation. The meeting pays its respectful homage to the departed leaders.

On Homage to martyrs

The General Council Meeting of CITU being held in Puri (Orissa) on August 1-3, 2008, respectfully remembers the courageous sacrifice of those leaders, cadres and activists of the trade unions, peasants, agricultural labour, youth, students and women who left a permanent impression on the democratic movement as a whole and continue to be a constant source of inspiration to the working class in their struggle against exploitation as well as against separatist, divisive and communal forces safeguarding the unity of the people and integrity of the nation.

The General Council meeting severely condemns the heinous murders of trade union leaders and activists of democratic movement by Trinamool Congress, Congress and Maoist antisocial goons in West Bengal and by RSS in Kerala.

This General Council meeting severely condemns the firing by the armed security men of the Supermax management at Shoghi (Solan) in HP, on the peaceful demonstration at the gate by CITU workers killing Com. Amarjit a factory worker. Similar incident of firing by the armed security men of the management of a diamond merchant in Bhavnagar, Gujrat killing 2 workers on the spot and injuring 30. The meeting demands stern action against all those responsible for this cowardly attack on the workers and demands adequate compensation for all the dead and injured.

The General Council strongly condemns the heinous attacks perpetrated by the terrorist and divisive forces in Rajasthan and other parts of the country killing innocent people. The meeting while expressing heartfelt condolences demands stringent punishment to those responsible.

ON INDIA-US NUCLEAR DEAL

CITU General Council strongly condemns the UPA Government's decision to go ahead with Indo-US Nuclear Deal, even when the people are reeling under relentless price hike. A callous government has chosen to devote all its energy in pushing the nuclear deal in a tearing hurry to fulfill the agenda of President Bush and in the process has brought political instability in the country. The same government had in July 2007 signed 123 Agreement with United States of America behind the back of Parliament and the people of India. Under the pressure of the Left Parties, the government was forced to form a UPA-Left Committee and it was agreed in November 2007 that government would not go ahead with the nuclear deal without finalization of the finding of the Committee.

In total violation of the solemn assurance the government went ahead without even sharing the text of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguard agreement to the UPA-Left Committee. This secrecy and hurry with which the government was proceeding is all under the explicit pressure of the Bush Government in USA as Indo-US nuclear deal is aimed at serving the interest of US companies in selling nuclear power equipment, technology and fuel worth billions of dollars, apart from its intention to bind India as a junior ally in its strategic objective. Under the pretext of nuclear power, which will meet only 8 per cent of our electricity demands in the next forty years, more than double the cost of power produced with indigenously available coal and water. The UPA Government through this deal is making India a part of wider strategic alliance to suit American interests in the world.

CITU General Council asserts that India's sovereign right to reprocess nuclear fuel, whether enriched or natural uranium imported from any country, should not be compromised at any cost. By making the India's nuclear energy programme dependent on imported uranium and reactor, a threat to India's self reliance will be created while the growing dependence of imported uranium will further escalate cost of power generation, as the global price of uranium is already rising. Besides, the US legislation "Hyde Act" undermines our independent foreign policy and nuclear research and development. There are already moves to dilute the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 to facilitate entry of the American multinational companies as well as Indian private corporates in nuclear power and R&D in India.

The CITU will resolutely oppose any move to dilute the Atomic Energy Act 1962, which specifically stipulates the sensitive strategic sector of nuclear energy to be under the domain of Government only. The CITU General Council calls upon the working class and the people of this country to mobilise public opinion against the Indo-US Nuclear Deal and resist this move, which is undermine our sovereignty and self-reliance at the behest of American imperialism.

ON GENERAL STRIKE ON 20TH AUGUST

CITU calls upon the working class and toiling masses to actively participate and join the general strike on 20th August, 2008 called by Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions in May 2008 to press the six points demands viz skyrocketing price rise, violation of labour laws, legislation for social security for all unorganised workers, stoppage of outsourcing and contractorisation, extension of farmers' loan waiver scheme, lifting ban on government recruitment, finalisation of 6th pay commission after removal of its negative and discriminatory features and expeditious wage negotiation of employees of central PSUs, including contract workers.

This General Council strongly expresses its resentment that the UPA Government, instead of addressing these burning issues, caused by its anti-people economic policies in tune with imperialist globalisation, is going ahead with the nuclear deal. The General Council warns the working class and people of this country that the Indo-US Nuclear Deal is a part of overall economic architecture designed by USA and the Transnationals to make India subservient to US imperialist concept of globalisation. The UPA Government is totally unconcerned with the present distress of working class, peasants and unemployed. This can not be accepted by any patriotic Indian.

General Council appeals to all mass organisations of agricultural workers, peasants, women, youths, students, teachers, scientists, engineers and professionals, etc to express solidarity with the strike on 20th August so that the general strike becomes the focal point for mass actions against UPA Government's anti-people economic policy and against its effort to mortgage India's sovereignty to United states.