

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

17-20 July, 2004

Nasik, Maharashtra

DOCUMENTS

- * Presidential Address**
- * Message from the General Secretary**
- * Report of the General Secretary**
- * Note for Special Discussion**
- * Condolence Resolution**

AGENDA

1. Presidential Address
2. Report of the General Secretary
3. Special discussion on BTR Centenary and PR TU School
4. Membership Verification
5. Resolutions
6. Miscellaneous.

Time Table

17 July, 2004

10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m - OPEN SESSION

Flag Hoisting & Homage to Martyrs

Welcome Address, Condolence Resolution

Presidential Address

12.00 noon to 01.30 p.m.

Report of the General Secretary

04.00p.m. to 05.00 p.m. - Treasurer's Report, Fraternal Greetings

05.00 p.m. to 07.30 p.m. - Hall Meeting

18 July, 2004

9.30 a.m. to 01.30 p.m. & 04.00 p.m. to 08.00 p.m.

Debate on General Secretary's Report

19 July, 2004

9.30 a.m. to 11.30 p.m.

Debate on General Secretary's Report

12.00 noon to 01.30 p.m. - Discussion on Membership Verification

04.00 p.m. to 07.00 p.m.

Special discussion on BTR Centenary and PR TU School

20 July, 2004

9.30 a.m. to 01.30 p.m. - Report of the Credential Committee,

Reply to Debate, Adoption of Reports, Resolutions, Concluding Remarks.

(Tea Breaks: 11.30pm - 12 noon & 5.00 pm - 5.30 pm)

(Lunch Break: 01.30 pm to 04.00 pm)

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

17-20 July, 2004

Nasik, Maharashtra

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dear Comrades,

We are meeting for the first time in a General Council since the 11th conference of the CITU held at Chennai in December 2003. Much water has flown in national and international developments in a brief period of seven months.

1. At a global level the aggressive policies of Anglo-US imperialist combine faced growing isolation all over the world. The developments in Iraq have clearly exposed the real face of the vile machinations. A worldwide campaign against globalisation and US aggression in Iraq by popular masses has received powerful impetus during this period. The World Social Forum held in January this year in Mumbai reflected the growing anti-imperialist sentiments in all the continents with a popular slogan "another world is possible." These developments will certainly inspire us in our forthcoming activities.

2. In India the resounding defeat of the BJP and NDA alliance in the parliamentary elections clearly indicated that the popular sentiments in India are against policies of communalism and globalisation. The sizable strength achieved by the left is a positive development, which has policy implication for the country as a whole. Since the newly formed Congress led government is dependent on the left support the government cannot ignore the views of the left on all economic and political policies facing the country. The situation can be favourably utilized to strengthen the mass movements to oppose the policies of globalisation and liberalisation in all spheres of economic activities.

3. This General Council has to carefully examine the opportunity provided by the newly emerging situation in national and international arena so that we can play an important role in protecting the interests of the toiling masses and strive to build up an independent self-reliant economy in a country free from the dictates of the World Bank IMF and the WTO.

WORLD ECONOMY TODAY

4. The world economic output was increasing at the rate of 3 per cent per annum during the last decade of the 20th century. However, during 2001 the global output increased by only 1.3 per cent while during 2002 it rose to only 1.7 per cent. The rise of 2.5 percent growth in world output during 2003 is being considered as a sign of recovery while in 2004 it is expected to increase by 3.5 percent. The World Economic situation and Prospects 2004, published by the United Nations recently has pointed out, "Despite the improved global economic prospects, large imbalances remain in the world economy. The imbalances are epitomized by the United States' current account deficit of more than \$500 billion in 2003, about 5 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP)".

5. The report further notes, "The forecast indicates that the recovery in global growth will not narrow the imbalances in the near future; on the contrary, most are expected to widen further in 2004." (Page4)

6. Though the output in Northern America increased by only 0.6 per cent in 2001, it rose by 2.3 percent in 2002 while in 2003 it indicated a growth of 2.9 percent. Thus on an average the output increased by less than 2 percent. The situation in Western Europe shows continuous deterioration in a 3 year period. The western European output increased by only 1.5 per cent in 2001, it reduced the rate of growth to only 1.0 per cent in 2002 while it further declined to 0.8 per cent in 2003. The output of Australia, Japan and New Zealand increased in 2001 only by 0.6 per cent, during 2002 the output actually declined by 0.1 per cent while during 2003 it rose to 2.5 per cent. On an average in the three major Asian and Oceanic countries the output increased only by one per cent.

The world economic indicators show that during 2003, 6 developed countries and 27 developing countries experienced decline in per capita GDP. This clearly points out to the utter failure of the World Bank prescription of structural adjustment imposed on the world. Despite substantial rise in technological development the world capitalism is unable to utilise for enhancement of production and meeting the human needs of the world population.

7. The World Bank report has admitted that the net capital flow from the World Bank to the developing countries has been declining from year to year and now there is net inflow of capital from the developing countries to the World Bank. According to World Bank during 1997 the net capital outflow from the World Bank stood at 9.2 billion dollars which was reduced to 8.7 billion dollars in 1999. During 2002, however, the net capital outflow from the World Bank became negative and 0.2 billion dollars went to the coffers of the World Bank from the developing countries. During 2003 it further rose to 1.9 billion dollars. This shows how the developing countries are paying more to the World Bank than what it gives to the developing countries. The growing indebtedness of these developing countries is forcing them to repay loans which is affecting their economic development. As the report of the World Bank on Global Development Finance 2004 notes, "since 2000, the developed world has been a net exporter of capital to the advanced economies."

8. The World Development Report 2004 published by International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) noted that economic growth alone is not enough to reach the goal of eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve material health, combat HIV/AIDS and ensure environmental sustainability which are considered to be Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015. It is a well-known fact that a large part of the GDP is pocketed by MNCs who thrive on the exploitation of the poor people. Only 256 families in the world have wealth equivalent to the 40 per cent of the world population. However, the efforts in the direction of reducing global inequality are lacking with the result that the poverty in the world continues to increase unabated.

9. The international conference held in Marakesh (Morocco) on 19th to 21st June 2004 on Right to Energy has noted, "In fact, if current trends continue a significant proportion of states will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development objectives, including the most important one: to reduce extreme poverty by 2015. Many countries are now poorer than 10, 20, 30 years ago."

10. With rising unemployment at a global level the talk of reducing poverty is becoming meaningless. Downsizing of manpower has become a key slogan of the capitalist class all over the world on the plea of reducing cost and remain competitive in the world market.

11. According to UN Report on an average the unemployment in the world has increased by 7 per cent during 2003 and the estimates indicate that the rate of increase is likely to remain the same during 2004. Major capitalist countries in the world report the following percent growth in unemployment

during 2003: United States (6%) Canada (7.7%), Japan (5.2%), Australia (6%), New Zealand (4.9%).

12. In European countries the growth of unemployment has been more serious. The data shows the average rise in unemployment during 2003 is 8.9% while the countrywide data shows the following picture: Austria (4.4%); Belgium (8.2%); Finland (9.3%); France (9.4%); Germany (9.6%); Greece (9.5%); Italy (8.7%); Spain (10.8%); UK (5.1%).

13. The high growth rate of unemployment is resulting in serious deterioration in living conditions of the working class.

14. In some of the developing countries the unemployment is growing at a much higher space. During 2002 the unemployment increased by 15.6 per cent in Argentina, while in Brazil it was 12.9 per cent higher in 2003. In Colombia during the same year the unemployment went up by 14.3 per cent. The rise in unemployment in other developing countries during 2003 stood at 14.3 percent in Colombia, 12.7% in Philippines, 16.1% in Uruguay and 9.3% in Chile. Though the data is not strictly comparable due to different methods of collection of data it does show how the unemployment situation has growing from bad to worse all over the world.

15. The study conducted by the ILO points out that the unemployment situation is likely to deteriorate further for quite some time and there is no possibility of reducing its alarming nature. The capitalist economy is only interested in profits and it is bound to create more and more unemployment and pauperization of the people. Hence, the talk of reducing poverty and unemployment within the framework of capitalism is just moonshine.

16. The employers in European countries have been trying to hit the interest of the working class to maintain their profitability in a shrinking market. In Germany for instance as a result of several struggles in the past the workers could achieve 35 hours of work per week. The workers also get two weekly off. Now in certain units they have been able to impose 40 hours of work per week without any extra remuneration. The employers threaten to shift the factories to Export Processing Zones where cheap labour is available and no labour laws are made applicable. The trade unions have been fighting in France for 35 hours of work per week but employers are insisting on working for 40 hours or they would shift factories to EPZS.

17. Similar situation is prevailing in UK and other countries in which working conditions of workers are under severe attack. The attack on social security benefits is already increasing and the working class in Europe has lost these benefits partially. Outsourcing of jobs to other countries also is being threatened by the employers to browbeat the workers to force them to accept humiliating working conditions.

18. With deteriorating working conditions in most of the advanced capitalist countries, the working class is coming forward to resist the onslaught of the capital. Spontaneous resistance struggles including strike actions are emerging all over Europe and America. France, Germany and Italy have witnessed big working class demonstrations against the harrowing working conditions imposed them by the capitalist.

19. Attack on trade union rights is a prominent feature all over the world. Bill to curtail the TU rights of the workers is in the offing in many countries and workers are heroically resisting these attacks. Though at time the local leadership of trade unions capitulate and agree to humiliating conditions the workers defy the surrender of the leadership and go in for action against the attack of the capitalist class. The growing militancy of the workers in these countries has become an importance aspect of the resistance

of the working class to the onslaught of capital.

IMPERIALIST CONSPIRACIES IN IRAQ

20. The true colour of President Bush's "liberation" of Iraq has come to light in a crystal clear manner due to the recent development in the second largest oil producer in the world. More than 30,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed in the recent war of aggression in Iraq while 8000 civilians have died and 20,000 injured so far during the US war and occupation period.

21. The inhuman 12 years of sanctions by US imperialism around 15 lakh Iraqis died including 5 lakh children due to malnutrition. The entire economy of Iraq has collapsed imposing acute sufferings for the common people of the country. All this is done in the name of teaching Iraqi people how to live under western civilization.

22. The Bush administration attacked Iraq on the plea that Saddam Hussain was in league with Al Qaeda. The US investigators have noted that there was no evidence of such a link. Then the bogey of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction was raised but despite occupation of the country with the help of 40,000 lakh US soldiers and 20,000 allied troops on the soil of Iraq they could not find any trace of such weapons. The chief of UN investigation team also made a clear cut statement that he could not find any trace of weapons of mass destruction but he was changed to please the US imperialists.

23. Now the US investigators have admitted that CIA had knowledge that Iraq did not possess any weapons of mass destruction. Yet Bush administration attacked the country with a view to control rich supply of Iraq oil. It is now clear that Bush had a plan to attack Iraq even before the attack on US trade center on 11th September 2002.

24. The shocking details of the inhuman and sadistic treatment given to the Iraqi prisoners in the name of interrogation has created strong revulsion among decent people all over the world. The gory pictures of Iraqi prisoners' torture depicted the cruelty of the US prison authorities in Iraq. The world was told that Paul Bremer, US dictator in Iraq was having full knowledge of this. People world over condemned this atrocities against the Iraqi prisoners.

25. The drama of prosecuting some joint officials could not save the prestige of US imperialists. Bush's ratings in US opinion polls drastically came down and his defeat in the next presidential elections has become certain. The killing of over 500 US soldiers in the occupation of Iraq has created strong popular reactions all over US.

26. In UK also people increasingly opposed Tony Blair's policies on Iraq and the humiliating defeat of the labour party in the bye election showed the people's anger against his gov't policies.

27. The Anglo-US resolution in Security Council to handover power to the stooge govt in Iraq by 30th June 2004 was unanimously approved. However, the so-called transfer of power was arranged by a secret function to avoid popular resistance by the people of Iraq. The new chief of the interim government, Ayad Allawi shamelessly admitted that he was a CIA agent in the past. The real control of the country in spite of the so-called transfer of power still remains in the hands of Anglo-US army. The puppet regime is not getting any support in Iraq and the Arab world.

28. With growing resistance of the people of Iraq to the unjust US imperialist occupation will not allow

the puppet government to rule Iraq to serve the US masters. The withdrawal of Spanish army from Iraq has weakened the US imperialist strength and many countries are not prepared to send the troops. A big popular campaign has been built up South Korea opposing the government's decision to send additional troops to Iraq. The UPA Foreign Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh's statement that due to the changed situation in Iraq India would reconsider sending troops to that country. However, due to strong opposition expressed by the left the government had to change the stand and decided not to send any troops to Iraq.

People of Palestine are being mercilessly attacked by Israel's armed forces killing large number of innocent men, women and children. Sharon's plan of vacating the occupied territory of Gaza Strip keep large tract of Palestine territory under control of Israel. He is also blatantly refusing to agree to make East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. These aggressive actions of Israeli Government are being encouraged by US imperialists who are openly asking for change in the leadership of Palestine liberation Organisation.

Lakhs of Palestine people are forced to live in West Asian countries in extremely miserable conditions. Israel and the USA are openly violating the UN resolution on Palestine but UN is just a silent spectator. This is depriving the people of Palestine from having their own homeland.

29. The US conspiracies in Venezuela against the democratically elected government of Hugo Chavez continue unabated. The reactionary opposition with open help of US imperialists have demanded referendum to recall Chavez and they collected 2.54 million signatures.

30. Chavez used the rich oil resources to improve the standard of living of the poor people, which has annoyed oil cartels, and they with the help of US government are attempting to oust Chavez Government. The ties of friendship developed by Chavez with Cuba have further annoyed US imperialists. Facing the reactionary challenge boldly Chavez firmly said that he would "re...the opportunity to once again with the people's mandate." Democratic minded people all over the world are eagerly watching the outcome of the referendum in Venezuela with a population of 24 million.

EUROPEAN UNION IN DOLDRUMS

31. The elections to European Parliament held on 13th June have been shocking to most of the ruling parties in Europe. Only 45 per cent of the voters turned out to cast their votes, which is lowest in recent elections. Though 25 countries have now joined European Union. In almost every country ruling parties were defeated. In France the non-ruling socialist party got the largest number of seats while in Germany the ruling Social Democratic Party received only 22 per cent of the votes. The ruling party in England, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Poland, Austria, Portugal and Finland has lost heavily in these elections.

32. What is shocking is that in some countries the rightist parties have won the elections. In countries where right wing parties were ruling they have also lost the elections. This reflected the working of the anti-incumbency factor. All this shows that European Parliament will be heterogeneous in character and taking any decision becomes difficult in such a situation.

33. After two years of protracted talks for over two years on 18th June 2004 the constitution of Europe was adopted at Brussels but serious differences arose over the elections of a new President for European Union. Several names were proposed but it was difficult to reach agreement on the choice of a new president. Ultimately, Prime Minister of Portugal was elected as the president for a term of two and a

half years.

34. The EU could not come to any common understanding on the question of war in Iraq. There were several differences on foreign policy issues facing the world. Some European countries have been taking pro-US stand, which also is an area of dispute among European countries. Though it was agreed to have a common Foreign Minister for EU, unless there is unanimity of views the foreign minister would not be able to take a stand on any issue. There are differences among the European countries on the question of NATO also.

35. Despite unity the European Union is still unable to emerge as a bulwark against USA in international affairs.

IMPROVEMENT IN INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

36. Since our last conference, the relationship between India and Pakistan has shown considerable improvement. The visit of the Indian cricket team to Pakistan was well received in Pakistan. Despite attempt made by BJP to politically utilize the visit for its electoral advantage it could not cut much ice. However, common people of both the countries desire peace and want good friendly relations. The visit of our delegation to Pakistan also reflected common bonds of friendly feelings between the working class of the two countries.

37. The restarting of bus service, strengthening of embassy staff in India and Pakistan, dialogue on the question of bus service between Rajasthan and Sind as well as between Kashmir and Pak occupied Kashmir are all indication of growing fraternal relations.

38. With the formation of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) at the Centre, India-Pakistan relations showed further improvements. After senior level discussions on 19-20 June some confidence building measures have been taken from both sides. Progress has been made on the question of nuclear weapons. Both countries have formally agreed to renew a moratorium on nuclear testing. A hotline between foreign secretaries and Director General of Military Operations has been established "to prevent misunderstanding" and reduce risks relevant to nuclear issues.

39. However, the continued terrorist attacks in J&K created some difficulties in relations between two countries. India is taking step to put a fence on the border to prevent infiltration of extremists in India.

40. The foreign ministers of India and Pakistan when met in China discussed the question of J&K along with other questions. These developments are helpful for both the countries and we must strive to strengthen them further.

41. The US Government is trying to mediate between the two countries. The NDA Government due to servility towards US imperialism was trying to be subservient to the US Government. It also tried to build up strategic ties with US imperialists.

42. The UPA Government should adopt a policy of direct talks between India and Pakistan to settle all outstanding issues without any foreign intervention. This would prevent US machinations to impose its own solutions of the Kashmir problem on India and Pakistan. This must be prevented by the democratic movement in India.

NEW SITUATION IN INDIA

43. Report of the General Secretary has covered the national situation at length and hence I do not want to go into details of it. However, a new situation has emerged in the country after defeat of the NDA and formation of the United Progressive Alliance government at the center. Since the UPA has no majority of its own it is dependent on the support of the Left, which has strengthened its position to win 64 seats in Lok Sabha.

44. We are all aware that it was the Congress Party which accepted World Bank package of economic reforms and signed GATT agreement. Even when NDA was in power Congress Party supported the Patent Bill, privatization of insurance industry and adoption of the Electricity Bill. Yet keeping BJP out of power was an important political necessity and hence supporting the formation of UPA government was the only way to do so.

45. Left decided not to join the government and support it from outside. Joining the government would have been suicidal because on many issues the views of the Congress Party were diametrically opposite to the views of the left. It would not be possible for the left to defend all actions of the Congress. The left joining the government would have given an opportunity to the BJP and its allies to utilize the discontent of the policies of the Congress and try to come back to power. The left after joining the government cannot openly fight against the government's wrong policies. Therefore, not joining the government by the Left parties was a correct step. It helps the trade union movement to carry forward the struggle against the policies of globalisation.

46. The National Common Minimum Programme contains several clauses, which will enable the trade union movement to go forward. For instance, the commitment re: giving jobs for 100 days per family in the rural areas, no privatization of profit making public sector undertakings, strengthening of the public distribution system, bill for reservation of 33% seats for women in Parliament, prior consultation with trade unions while bringing labour law amendments in Parliament, provision of funds for revival of sick industrial units, bringing a legislation on agricultural workers, etc. However, there are retrograde clauses as such as carrying forward the economic reforms, encouraging FDI, selective disinvestments and privatisation, involving private sector in infrastructure development as well as in the core sector which we cannot support.

47. The Left parties did not agree to sign the National Common Minimum Programme since they did not agree with the retrograde clauses and they will have to oppose them through programme of mass movement in the country.

48. The NCMP has positive and negative aspects and the trade unions will have to launch a countrywide movement to get them implemented in full in their true spirit. It will also be necessary to launch a similar movement not to allow the government the retrograde provisions contained in the NCMP, which are detrimental to the interests of the country and its people.

49. An illusion is created in the minds of a section of our comrades that by representing the matter to the government the issue of the workers would be solved quickly. Since we are supporting the government from outside the representatives of the government would positively react to our proposals, those comrades feel. This wrong understanding must be corrected and every one should take note of the fact that none of our demands would be met without creating sufficient pressure from below. We must take note of the class character of the present government and adopt a policy of joint struggle to get the demands achieved.

50. We must also keep in mind that our struggles and movements should not allow the BJP and its allies take advantage of the situation. The communal forces will always try to destabilize the government and use every failure of the government for their ulterior motives.

51. We should prepare alternate proposal to every retrograde policies of the UPA Government so that working class and the people can understand the correctness of our policies. This will enable us to prevail upon the government to change its erroneous policies through mass struggles.

RAILWAY AND GENERAL BUDGETS

52. The UPA government presented its first Railway Budget on 6th July, which did not provide any rise in railway fare or freight charges. This created general satisfaction among the people despite boycott by the NDA partners on the plea that it was presented by a tainted minister. Laloo Yadav proposed many populist measures and announced 31 new trains. However, the implementation of the budget much depends on the resources the railway would raise and improve its efficiency. Moreover, more attention has to be paid on the safety of the railway passenger and there is urgent need for the railways to pay more attention to this aspect.

53. P Chidamabaram, Finance Minister, presented the General Budget for 2004-05 on 8th July. It looked like another interim budget and final proposal would be brought out when full-fledged budget would be presented in February next year.

54. The emphasis given by the Budget on the provision of job for 100 days to each family in rural household and an Employment Guarantee Bill would be brought in Parliament in the next session. Meanwhile the government would introduce food for work programme. Some more concessions have been given to rural poor, which created good impression among the people. However, the budget does not mention land reforms without which the benefits proposed may not reach the poor peasant families. It can be used by the rural rich as seen by the practical experience of the past budget.

55. Every body generally welcomes the proposal for 2 per cent education cess on all taxes. The proposal to levy 1.5 per cent tax on turnover of transactions also is a good method of raising revenue for the schemes proposed by the government. Increasing the coverage of the tax net on additional service sector occupations would also augment the revenue of the government.

56. The Finance Minister expected to raise a good amount by realizing the undisputed tax arrears but we have to see how far he can succeed in his venture. The proposal to provide over Rs 14000 crore for revival of the public sector undertakings will provide relief for some of the sick public sector undertakings.

57. However, the Budget contains some retrograde proposals, which cannot be accepted by the trade union movement. The rate of interest on the PF deposits has been brought down from 9 percent to 8 per cent which can caused strong resentment among the workers who wanted to raise it to 12 per cent.

58. The increase in the Income Tax exemption limit to Rs 1 lakh was welcome but there was expectation that the fringe benefits would be excluded from the tax net. Chidambaram, as a lawyer appeared before the Supreme Court, to argue the case of employees how the tax was justified. However, on becoming Finance Minister he seems to have forgotten his own arguments.

59. The Union Budget will hit hard the small scale industry due to deservatin of 85 items from this

sector. It will open floodgate of entry of obig business houses, both Indian and foreign with large scale manufacturing capacity and the small scale industry will not be able to face compensation and ultimate closure. It will further reduce employment.

60. The trade union movement opposed the increase in the FDI to 74 per cent to telecom sector and 49 per cent to insurance and civil aviation sectors. The Government announcement to privatize profit making Airport Authority of India and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, Navi Mumbai, was a clear violation of the commitment given by the UPA government in the NCMP. The provision to allow foreign and Indian private sector in infrastructure industry is also a measure that would be opposed by the trade union movement. In a similar manner 5 per cent shares of NTPC amounting to Rs 4000 would be disinvested by the government, which also cannot be supported by the trade union movement. NTPC is a Navaratna company and earning good profits every year.

61. The reduction of custom duty on steel and imposing additional excise duty on Indian steel will also be opposed by the trade unions since it would make foreign steel cheaper and Indian steel costlier in Indian market. In a similar manner reduction in custom duty on asbestos will only help MNCs to dump this caner-causing chemical in India while it was banned in all European countries.

62. The budget is a mixed bag. Trade union movement will have to welcome good proposals and ensure that they are fully implemented while they have to oppose the retrograde proposals, which cause damage to the national economy and help MNCs to gain control over Indian market.

CARRY FORWARD THE UNITED STRUGGLE AGAINST GLOBALISATION

163. n spite of number of positive commitments given in the NCMP the UPA government is determined to carry forward the policies of globalisation. It will also likely to make an attempt to modify the labour laws to suit the requirements of the World Bank, and the IMF. Repeated statements made by the spokesman of the government have stressed this aspect in unequivocal terms.

64. Trade union movement will have to strengthen its unity so that working class will have to be prepared to resist all attempts to impose the policy of globalisation on the country. The CITU unions must take initiative in the mater so that working class is mobilized for powerful struggle to resist every offensive against their living standards.

65. We have to take steps to strengthen the Sponsoring Committee, NPMO and CPSTU so that all round struggles can be initiated in a phased manner to protect the interest of a self-reliant economy.

66. Let this General Council meeting consider the present situation in depth and build a powerful unity of the working class so that India will say a firm NO to the depredations of the World Bank, IMF and WTO!

67. Before concluding, let me congratulate our General Secretary Com. Chittabrata Majumdar, on his election as a Member of the Rajya Sabha. He is entering the Parliament as a nominee of the Left Front from West Bengal. With his presence, we are confident that the views and concerns of the working people in general and of the CITU in particular will find better articulation inside the Parliament as well. Though he is unable to join us here in this meeting because of the surgery he had to undergo owing to an accident, we look forward to his early recovery and resuming his functions at the earliest.

M K Pandhe
President

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

17-20 July, 2004

Nasik, Maharashtra

MESSAGE FROM GENERAL SECRETARY

Comrade President & the Members of the CITU General Council

Dear Comrades,

With deep regret, I am to say that I am not able to join you at this All India General Council Meeting at Nasik, due to an accident. I would like to recall the 11th All India Conference at Chennai, which I attended despite of my limitation that caused due to another accident. But this time, as I had to go under a critical surgery very recently, neither the doctors have allowed me nor the circumstances permit me to be present in this occasion to participate in the important discussions for three days. I hope that considering my inability, you will consider my leave of absence from this All India General Council Meeting.

I would like to call your attention to the complexity of the contemporary phase, which we are passing through.

This Council meeting will be discussing for these three days a couple of important issues in the time when a new government has been installed at the Centre, removing the most reactionary force i.e. BJP led NDA from the helm of power. During the tenure of six years of BJP lead NDA Government; the country has been put to an unprecedented situation, where the people have miserably suffered in every aspect of their lives. BJP the political face of Sangh Parivar, along with the other members of Parivar namely VHP, Bajrang Dal etc has done every thing to saffronise the entire society during this years. Saffronisation of education, art and culture as well as the administration, all the government and autonomous bodies, social institutions and the entire society has been their common agenda.

The genocide in Gujarat, brutal murder of Christian Missionary along with his two minor sons in Orissa and numerous attacks on the religious minorities, tribal, women and other weaker sections of the society in different parts of the country are a couple of glare instances of their fascist intolerance and communal character. Growing attacks on democracy and secularism by the communal fascist, which has jeopardised the secular fabric of the nation has angered the secular India.

In the economic front too the NDA government has persuaded the total anti-people path at the instance of Fund-Bank. Opening of indigenous market to the foreign capital, import liberalisation to destroy the domestic industry and agriculture, withdrawal of utmost needed subsidies on the bare necessities, agricultural inputs, mindless privatisation of public sector undertakings, mounting attacks on the labour rights, all to please the rich and capitalists has been sought for, which were ruining the country. The vast population of the country has become determined to resist these anti-people actions of the corrupted government.

The regime of NDA Government has also been marked with the unprecedented departure from the long practiced independent foreign policy of our country and condemnable hobnobbing with the

imperialist US military power, which is the greatest threat in the contemporary world. The democratic and patriotic mass of the country has risen with determination to defeat the force, which has been undermining the national interest. So, the country wide agitation, the resistance, the movement and the fight, the toiling mass have waged against the anti people BJP led NDA Government have succeeded to defeat the most fascist, undemocratic and reactionary force.

We must cheer this victory of the people since during each of these fights, the CITU has been always in forefront to raise the voice, to organise the toiling mass, to agitate against anti-people moves and to defend the democracy and secularism. It may also be noted that not only at Centre, the State Governments, who have pursued the neo-liberal policies in their respective states have also conceded the decisive defeat in the recent election, due to the devastating impact of the policies on the common people. This has proved once again that Fund-Bank dictated Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation path, which is anti people and an out and out imperialist-capitalist path of exploitation has been and will be resisted by the toiling mass.

The defeat of the BJP lead NDA, the formation of UPA Government lead by Congress has given a new dimension to the national polity. This time the left parties, with their ever-enhanced strength in the parliament as a group will have a dominant role so far the government at the Centre is concerned. The Common Minimum Programme (CMP) declared by UPA Government contains some declarations, the implementation of which will at least heal the wounds that the decades long economic liberalisation has given to the people of this country. These in normal course have been acting to fuel the expectation of the people for relief from the suffering to some extent and a better future.

In this situation, we must be clear that the class character of the present government has not been changed. So, the global scenario is. The world has also not shown slightest sign of departure from the path of imperialist and neo-liberal onslaught. The ruling class never let their means of exploitation down on their own. Only the long drawn class struggle can put an end to the menace of exploitive capitalist system. The vested interests are already to do their best to ensure that the government only acts to foster their interest, suppressing the interests of common people, undermining its declaration and commitments given to the people of the country.

Therefore, the era we are passing through is a difficult one, where we have to be much more cautious to build our movement. We must be vigil to see that the Government is sincere to implement the policies, which have been committed in the CMP and shall put effective pressure in organised manner to force the government to keep its promises for the benefit of working class, as well as for the welfare of the peasantry and the common people in general. We have to be extensively judicious to build up the working class movement for transformation of the society. To make our mission successful, we must strengthen the working class unity, which is the primary and basic task to succeed. We have to work to bring the broader mass beside the working class in this struggle. Here lies the importance of strengthening the unity within the working class and trade unions, as well as the solidarity with the other mass organisations. We also have to put greater emphasis on cementing the workers-peasantry solidarity. NPMO has to be strengthened to make the same more effective in building the unity to wage the struggle. The working class movement must be directed to intertwine the class struggle and the democratic movement together.

We have to put all pressures through working class movement organising broad based struggle to ensure that the privatisation of public sectors is being stopped and the workers rights are protected. During the era of de-industrialisation, disintegration of operations in production process by using the means of outsourcing and home based industries as well as in an era of dominance of finance capital

the workers in the unorganised sector are growing by leaps and bounds. The exploitation of this growing work force by capital has been intensifying day by day. Emphasis shall be put to organise the workers in the unorganised sector to strengthen the working class movement on priority basis.

I am sure, that this meeting will discuss at length on the report of General Secretary, the issues that are crucial in the present context, keeping in view the critical objective realities of the country and global scenario. The meeting will also formulate a tactical guideline on the trade union movement for the coming days to build the unity of the working class and the struggle to be persuaded to uphold the right of the working class together with the task of building the broad based unity, to ensure the democratic right of the common people, to ensure that the economic and political sovereignty is upheld and the secular character of the nation is guaranteed.

With revolutionary greetings,

Chittabrata Majumdar

General Secretary

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

17-20 July, 2004

Nasik, Maharashtra

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Comrades,

We are meeting here in the CITU General council, for the first time, after the 11th conference of CITU held in Chennai in December 2003. There have been several important developments, since our 11th conference, both in the international and national arena, which have crucial significance for the working class movement.

1. INTRODUCTORY

1.1 The Presidential address has dealt exhaustively on the international developments and their implications on the working class movement and hence this report will avoid repetition. However, I wish to record here that the world capitalist order persists with stagnation and crisis, despite all self-compliments and loud proclamations by the Brettonwood Institutions, of recovery from perhaps the longest spell of recession since the Second World War.

1.2 Never before, the utter failure of the economic model of neoliberal globalisation in addressing the problems of fast spreading poverty, widening disparities, rising unemployment and accompanying social unrest of various forms and expressions got exposed so nakedly thereby putting the protagonists of the Fund/Bank model in the defensive. This is reflected in the increasing pace of onslaughts on the fundamental democratic rights, decent livelihood and social security of the working people, both in the developed and developing countries.

1.3 It is not without reason that the Report of the World Commission on Social Dimension of Globalisation appointed by ILO, co-chaired by the Presidents of Finland and Tanzania, opens up with this: "The current path of globalisation must change.... fundamental problems of poverty, exclusion and inequality persist... There are deep seated imbalances in the current working of the global economy which are ethically unacceptable and politically unsustainable."

1.4 The striking feature and source of great inspiration for the trade union movement is that in the face of deepening capitalist crisis and increasing onslaughts, the resistance to neoliberal globalisation by the workers and toiling people has been growing worldwide.

2. NATIONAL SITUATION

*not many developments
but momentous development*

2.1 The period since the 11th Conference of CITU, had witnessed important developments in the political scenario in the country. The recently concluded parliamentary elections undoubtedly are the most important event of the period. Getting a boost from the favourable results of the assembly elections in MP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, the BJP pitched for premature dissolution of the 13th Lok Sabha and holding the general elections. We may recall the vehemence with which the BJP had

Run up to elections

argued in favour of "fixed five-year tenure for 'Lok Sabha' and State legislatures and the NDA regime had even embarked on a constitution review exercise. But all that had been given a go by and the country was plunged into general elections; simultaneously elections to State legislatures in AP, Karnataka and Orissa also took place.

2.2 The election results on the whole reflected a decisive mandate against the NDA government and its policies, despite the fact that there had been no all in unity throughout the country among the anti-NDA political parties contesting the elections. Had it been there, the BJP would have been routed in the elections.

2.3 Further this general election has elected highest number of (64) M.Ps from the Left parties to Lok Sabha. In the left bastions of West Bengal and Kerala the tally for the left had considerably improved and the CPI(M) retained both the seats in Tripura; in Kerala the Congress could not win even a single seat. Except in the states of MP, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Punjab, BJP and its allies could not retain their position in any of the other States. In MP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, they have been able to improve their position owing to the low morale of the Congress, due to their humiliating defeat in the Assembly polls.

Result has been exasperating

2.4 Following the dissolution of the 13th Lok Sabha, the Vajpayee government resorted to an intensive electronic and print media campaign on the false slogans of 'India shining' and 'feel good factor'. The BJP also launched a 'Bharat Uday Yatra'. They also forced the public sector enterprises industries to squander large sums of money on this campaign. In the interim budget, they lavished largesse to advance their political fortunes. They did not relent from such unethical abuse of public fund for its politically motivated campaign, despite indictment by Election Commission. Never before in the political history of the country such unalloyed falsehood was propagated with such a massive spending of taxpayers' money.

Stand of the left

2.5 The Left Parties worked out an election tactics to ensure the defeat of the NDA; they took on the NDA on their own in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura; while striving to strengthen the presence of the Left in the Lok Sabha, they also asked the secular parties to work for one to one against the BJP and its allies, to avoid division of secular votes. But in majority of States, this could not materialise. As a result, BJP could not be contained further and it emerged as the second largest party, after the Congress, in the Lok Sabha. The Left parties were clear that the Congress policies offered no real alternative to that of the NDA but yet they pledged to cooperate in installing a secular government at the Centre after the elections to the 14th Lok Sabha. Congress emerged as the single largest party in the Lok Sabha and a government at the Centre could be formed only with their participation.

CITU's

2.6 Just after the 24th February strike, CITU gave a call to defeat and trounce the BJP led combine, We also appealed to the voters to strengthen Left and in absence of left candidates, support the most effective secular candidates. In the elections, the NDA combine got defeated, paving the way for formation of a Congress led Government at the centre with the support of the left from outside.

2.7 The election results reflected the wrath of the mass of the populace against the grievous impact of the policies of neo-liberal globalisation vigorously pursued by the NDA Government. The essence of the poll outcome, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka, was a profound rejection by the people of the Fund/Bank model of economic policies, which made the rich richer and led to joblessness, impoverishment and destitution of masses. It also manifested the growing opposition among the people to the communal forces.

Result was exasperating

while parties and organisations played their role

Role of the PEOPLE greatest

1.8 The countrywide general strike of 24TH February in defence of Right to Strike also played a significant role in fomenting the anti-NDA opinion throughout the country particularly among the organised trade union movement who also played an important role in the election campaign. This report later on contains a review of the 24th February strike and its preparatory campaign.

2.9 Now, in the given post election scenario, we have to make an objective assessment of the situation and decide our future course of actions. In the Common Minimum Programme drawn up by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), since adopted by the new government, the basic direction of the economic policy regime remains unchanged, although there has been some apparently positive and pious statements like 'protection to agricultural workers', 'employment guarantee for rural households for 100 days in a year', 'comprehensive protective legislation for all agricultural workers and fullest implementation of the minimum wage laws for them', 'enhancement in public investment in agriculture', 'rejection of the idea of automatic hire and fire' of labour, 'consideration of privatisation on a case to case basis' and 'retention of profit making CPSUs in public sector' etc.

Positive

CMP

2.10 We must also note that immediately after the declaration of election result, the country has witnessed showering of obsessed statements by many of the Congress leaders and even some from other parties as well expressing their commitment to continuity of the so called "reform process". It needs to be kept in mind that all the constituents of the UPA are reforms savvy parties. We must also not lose sight of the ongoing move for privatisation of Delhi and Mumbai Airports reneging the commitments made in the CMP. In such a situation, in the event of continuity of the liberalised policy regime, positive statements in the CMP are likely to remain mostly unimplemented, unless people are massively mobilised in favour of change in the direction of the economic policies.

2.11 The market manipulators, backed by the corporate lobby and foreign investors, engineered a pre-planned share market slide on 17th May, during the very process of new government formation. The print and visual media blew up the issue, targeting the Left parties. The purpose was and still remains to browbeat the government into ignoring the views of the Left Parties on economic policy formulation. An investigation into the share market scam on 17th May is sure to expose the nexus between the discredited NDA regimes, corporate lobby and bear cartel operators in the share market. We must fight such pressures from vested interests.

2.12 In the prevailing situation, the working class movement has to decide its future course of action, keeping in mind the need to further isolate the communal forces led by the BJP, while at the same time mobilising the working class in defence of the rights and livelihood of the common people.

2.13 The defeat of NDA government has generated high expectation among the mass of the working people, who fought bitterly against onslaughts on their rights and livelihood during its rule. These expectations must be articulated loudly, through vigorous campaign and mobilisation, demanding pro-people orientation of the economic policies and expansion of democratic rights; otherwise demoralization is likely to creep in, much to the advantage of the communal forces waiting in the wings. The working class movement has to shoulder the task of mobilising people in that direction, as an integral part of its political task to further isolate the communal forces and at the same time facilitate and strengthen interventions by the Left, to make the government at the centre work for the people. It is mobilisation by the working class at the ground level, which can make the intervention of the Left on the policy issues more effective; such intervention is crucial and essential to maintain the secular governance and isolate the communal forces. Side by side, we should carry on separate campaign against the communal forces and demanding concrete and corrective steps by the new Government for detoxification of the saffron virus that has infected the administration and various educational, social

and cultural institutions.

We have started the process.

2.14 A memorandum detailing the issues of the workers and common people from the new government was jointly presented to the Labour Minister by the constituent central trade unions in the Sponsoring Committee on 26th May, 2004. The eight-point charter of demands, which was drawn unanimously by all the trade unions in the country, including INTUC and BMS, had been frontloaded in the memorandum. In the memoranda presented by the CITU during the pre-budget consultations by the Finance Minister (on 5th June) and in the meeting with the Prime Minister (on 23rd June), our demands on the priority areas for action by the UPA Govt have been highlighted. We should carry on intensive campaign throughout the country to popularise the issues incorporated in the said memoranda, in preparation for a bigger mobilisation afterwards. This General Council meeting should deliberate on the issue in further detail, taking stock of the developments in the intervening period and decide our future strategy.

Working class played crucial role 3. ELECTION CAMPAIGN & CITU

3.1 The working class movement played a crucial role in the last general election in defeating the BJP combine. During last five years, the trade union movement, despite all limitations, has consistently carried on struggles and campaign against the reckless liberalisation drive by the NDA combine and also against its communal designs. During this period, there have been four countrywide general strikes and numerous sectoral strike actions and agitations of various forms - all directed against the policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation and their grievous impact on the national economy, society and workers. These struggles played a significant role in sensitising the people on the real causes of their distress. These working class actions also laid bare the heinous ploy of the BJP led combine to divert the attention of the people through aggressive pursuit of their communal and divisive agenda to retain themselves in power.

3.2 Following the announcement of elections, the CITU called upon the working class to defeat the BJP led combine in favour of a secular government at the Centre and also to ensure a decisive presence of the Left inside Parliament. It called upon the working class and people to vote for the left candidates wherever they are contesting and in other places vote for the most effective secular candidates. CITU published a booklet titled "Defeat the BJP Combine in Forthcoming Election" in English and Hindi, of which nine thousand copies were sold in different states. The State-committees, which have taken the booklets from centre are Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. Besides, in West Bengal and Orissa, the booklet was translated in local languages and circulated in good numbers. Further, some CITU State Committees like West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh brought out a number of pamphlets and other campaign literature and used them intensively in their States.

3.3 CITU leadership and activists all over the country, and particularly in the States where left candidates contested, were actively involved in the election campaign. Many CITU leaders contested the election and got elected in Parliament. Of the 44 CPI(M) MPs elected from West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu, many are associated with the trade unions. It is also notable that in Andhra Pradesh, former CITU Secretary M.A. Gafoor is among the nine CPI(M) MLAs elected to the State Assembly. In Orissa and Karnataka also, the CPI(M) got representation in the Legislatures.

4. 11TH CONFERENCE OF CITU: A REVIEW

4.1 The 11th Conference of CITU concluded on the 13th December in Chennai. The CITU secretariat made a detailed review of the conference and made certain recommendations for the future conferences.

The review report was circulated to all the state committees requesting comments/observations on the same. Unfortunately, CITU Centre has not yet received any feed-back from the states on the same. The general council should seriously consider the suggestions made in the review report in their deliberation.

4.2 The Tamil Nadu State Committee of CITU made commendable efforts to make the Conference a success. The venue for the Conference, the tents for holding the Commissions, accommodation for the delegates, transport arrangements from the camps to and from the venue and the food were all good. But, because of lack of space, many comrades had to sit outside the hall. This could not be avoided.

4.3 The number of foreign delegates in the 11th Conference was the highest ever in our Conferences and reflected the increasing prestige and contacts of the CITU in the international scene. The foreign delegates were very much impressed by the Conference and the rally. The messages of the foreign delegates were circulated and they were not required to speak in the Conference, which saved considerable time.

4.4 There was improvement in the preparations for the Conference by the all India Centre. This time, the Report could be finalised by the meeting of the full secretariat of CITU. The Centre made efforts to send the General Secretary's report and the Commission Papers to the States well in advance so that they could be translated into local languages and given to the delegates to enable them to come prepared for the discussions. The Hindi version of the General Secretary's report and the Commission Papers also were sent to the Hindi speaking States in advance.

4.5 The inaugural function was a little lengthy and could have been made shorter. The purpose of holding the inaugural session in open could not be served and due attention could not be paid to the Presidential address by the invitees and the delegates.

4.6 The reception to the jathas was well organised this time. However, the plan of the jathas could not be finalised by the Centre well in time, because the State Committees concerned in some cases failed to send necessary information in time and last minute changes also had to be made due to sudden alteration of the plan by the Punjab State Committee. The jathas in general created good impact among the people on the route that they have traversed. They could have been better utilised for our political campaign had the campaign material on etc, as envisaged earlier, was prepared in time and sent to the States to be translated and distributed along the route of the jathas. The Centre should pay more attention to this aspect next time.

Review of Conference

State & Fed

4.7 As pointed out by some delegates in the Conference, the review of the functioning of the State Committees and the Federations could not be incorporated in the report, as a detailed and systematic review of these could not be done by the Centre. It is necessary to incorporate these in the future. The CITU Secretariat felt that from the next Conference, the General Secretary's report should consist of two parts, one comprising of the political analysis of the prevailing situation and the other- the organisational part. A shorter and more focussed report emphasising the importance of strengthening the political struggles, will enthuse the delegates more.

4.8 A sad feature in this Conference is the glaring indiscipline displayed by some of the delegates. Many delegates kept moving in and out of the hall and many were seen queuing up at the door of the dining hall before lunch and dinner time, even while the session continued.

4.9 Representatives of the All India Federations and Coordination Committees could not be given time for participation in the discussion on the General Secretary's report due to paucity of time. It is necessary to give them opportunity to participate in the discussion on the General Secretary's report and time management should be done accordingly in the future. It is also necessary to allot more time for translation.

4.10 A strong State like Kerala did not submit the annual returns before the cut off date decided by the Cuttack General Council and insisted to bring their delegations as per their membership received till a few days prior to the Conference. Besides creating difficulties for the organisers, it is not proper to seek to override the decision of the General Council and it does not set a good example for the weaker States.

4.11 Though many States including some Hindi speaking States made sincere efforts to bring women as per the quota, women delegates were far less than the quota. Women's representation from stronger States like Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura was far less than their quota.

4.12 The proposal for the General Council and Working Committee could not be circulated among the delegates in time as envisaged, as several States did not give the lists of the names to be included, in time. As a result, the long list of names had to be read and this consumed considerable time. The State Committees should provide the names in time so that this could be avoided and time saved for discussion.

4.13 We were able to increase the representation of women in the Office Bearers of the CITU. But the number of women in the newly elected General Council and Working Committee has declined. As the total number of members in the General Council and the Working Committee has been reduced and the number of members from some States has come down, women were made the casualty. The number of women members in the General Council from Kerala has come down sharply. Similarly, the number of actual workers in the General Council and the Working Committee has also come down. The State Committees should ensure that adequate and due representation is given to women and workers in the General Council and the Working Committee in the future.

5. 24th FEBRUARY STRIKE

5.1 The 11th Conference of the CITU had set, inter-alia, the task to "Prepare for a nation wide strike against the attack on TU and democratic rights including right to strike". After concerted efforts, the major Central Trade Unions and Industrial Federations gave a call for general strike on 24th February 2004. The working class all over the country magnificently responded to the strike call, braving all efforts by the ruling class and the government to thwart or prohibit it. The strike call was a powerful assertion by the working people of their inalienable right to strike, in the context of the pernicious pronouncement by the Supreme Court; it was also a loud protest against the disastrous economic policies of the central government resulting in deepening poverty, growing unemployment, reckless privatisation and closures etc. The massive response to the strike action by the working class thoroughly exposed the much hyped "India Shining" and "feel good factor" by the NDA government.

5.2 The INTUC leadership, which initially committed to favourably consider joining the general strike, backed out subsequently. The BMS leadership stayed away from the general strike, despite their oft-repeated declarations of opposition to the economic policies of the government and the Supreme Court pronouncement against the right to strike. The HMS leadership also stayed away from endorsing the strike call.

5.3 We had to counter the vacillations among a section of the trade union leadership in giving the strike call, which resulted in the long delay in deciding the date of the strike. The Supreme Court pronouncement on right to strike came on 6th August 2003, in the midst of the terror regime let loose against the 13 lakh employees and teachers by the Government of Tamilnadu. Despite all round indignant protests against the judgement, the strike date could not be finalised even in the all India convention of 27th September 2003, owing to resistance of some trade unions, including the AITUC. Firm insistence by CITU ensured that a countrywide action including strike, to be decided later, was incorporated in the declaration adopted by the convention. The firm declaration by the 11th conference of CITU, to go for a countrywide general strike on the issue of right to strike, set the stage for moving towards deciding the strike date. The All India State Govt Employees Federation and the Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers also took the initiative by appealing to the central trade unions to decide an early date for the strike action.

5.4 The call for general strike of 24th February was given by all the major central trade union organisations, except the BMS, INTUC and HMS. The CITU State Committees, unions and federations, along with the independent federations of bank, insurance and government employees took the initiative in launching countrywide preparatory campaigns. In several states, joint campaigns and conventions were held. The AITUC, later joined by the INTUC and HMS, had also approached the Supreme Court with a review petition. The move on the part of the NDA government to seek dissolution of the Lok Sabha and go for a snap poll, preceded by a similar move by the TDP government in Andhra Pradesh also led to some sort of uncertainty about maturing of the strike. Even a section of our ranks were taken in by such confusing trends and the CITU centre received anxious enquiries from different state committees and organisations whether the strike will finally stand. This was indicative of the weaknesses and shortcomings in our preparatory campaign for the strike among such sections. Despite all these odds, the campaign for the strike picked up momentum and could generate a tempo and spontaneous response among the workers and employees in favour of the strike action. It should be noted that the strike action and the campaign preceding it had been instrumental for setting the tone of the electoral campaign against the disastrous policies of the NDA government and for ensuring its defeat at the hustings.

5.5 Around four crore workers took part in the countrywide general strike braving police-atrocities, lathi-charge and arrests in many places. Although INTUC, HMS and BMS did not endorse the strike action, many of their affiliates and followers at grass root level joined the strike action in a big way. The INTUC union at Bharat Electronics Ltd, Ghaziabad joined the strike along with others by serving strike notice. The State level INTUC leadership in Andaman along with their affiliates joined the daylong dharna of the striking workers and employees at Port Blair. The INTUC led union of the government employees in Kerala and the INTUC and BMS affiliates in the banking and insurance sectors had also joined the strike throughout the country by serving notices. Thus, the ninth countrywide general strike by the working class against the policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation and attack on labour rights was a reflection of much broader unity at the grass root level.

5.6 The government employees, against whom the Supreme Court pronouncement on the right to strike was directed, gave a befitting reply to such unmerited judicial intervention by massively responding to the strike call in a big way throughout the country, barring a few exceptions. The massive participation of the employees, of both the central and state governments, in this general strike constitutes a bold assertion of their right to strike and a brave defiance of the unjust prohibition thrust upon by the apex judiciary.

5.7 Notable features of the 24th February general strike are:

- * Participation of around 80 lakh employees and teachers in government service, state-PSUs, and local bodies, throughout the country barring one or two states.
- * Even in states like Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat etc employees joined the strike in a big way.
- * Overwhelming majority of employees in the central government in the telecom and postal sectors, income tax and audit offices joined the strike.
- * The general strike turned a BANDH in West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, and witnessed a BANDH like situation Assam, Haryana, Orissa and Jharkhand and certain districts of Karnataka.
- * The general strike has drawn participation of workers from all sectors - the entire financial sector covering the banks and the insurance; more than 70 per cent of the six-lakh coal-mining workers; near total strike in the non-coal mining belt spreading over Jharkhand, Orissa and chhattisgarh strike; the public sector workers throughout the country particularly in the public sector hubs in Bangalore and Hyderabad; massive, strike in Port & Dock, in Kolkata, Haldia, Kochi, Gujarat, Paradip, Tuticorin and JNPT (Mumbai), despite opposition by some of the major unions; in steel, total strike in Durgapur, Burnpur and 60% in Salem steel; electricity workers joined the strike enmasse in the states of Haryana, Punjab, Kerala, West Bengal, Jammu& Kashmir, and some others and a walk-out; in UP, Rajasthan, Himachal, Rajasthan etc; massive strike in the plantation sector throughout the country; big sections of unorganised sector workers in brick-kilns, head-load, beedi, and mandis; construction workers, both from the organised and unorganised sectors, including those in all the hydel-projects under construction in Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Jammu; anganwadi workers took part in the strike in a big way; total strike in the oil sector, in Tripura, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and in the southern states; in many cities air flights had to be rescheduled. Thus, the reach and extent of participation of working class in this strike was on an unprecedented scale.

5.8 After the severe blow to the ruling party in Tamil Nadu in the general elections, the State government had withdrawn many of the anti-people decisions taken earlier. Among them were the withdrawal of anti-religious conversion bill, revocation of victimisation of state Govt. employees, ensuring PDS to all the families, ensuring free power to the agriculturist, free bus passes to all students etc.

5.9 Yet, the issues of punitive actions taken prior to the strike, denial of bonus to state Public Sector Units, settlement of wage increase for State transport, electricity etc. which are pending for more than 3 years, curtailment of pension and other benefits, non functioning of the welfare boards of unorganised workers and also of various Tripartite committees are continuing.

5.10 ROLE OF AITUC: While reviewing the strike, we need to take note, with concern, the role of the AITUC. The central leadership of AITUC had all along been reluctant in working together with other left trade unions in giving a strike call. In 27th September convention, strike could not be finalised owing to non-cooperation of AITUC.

5.11 AITUC has all along been cold-shouldering efforts to activate the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions and also the NPMO. In some coal companies, the AITUC unions informed the management in writing that they would not join the strike and dissuaded the workers from joining the strike. Among the Central Government employees also, sections, which are under the influence of the AITUC leadership, did not join the strike action. Though the All India Defence Employees Federation earlier endorsed the strike call, the AITUC and HMS leadership later reneged on their commitment and few defence establishments did not join the strike. Wherever the Left movement is strong and general atmosphere for strike was in favour of the strike, the AITUC cadres joined the strike campaign; but wherever the general movement was weak their vacillation was visible. We have drawn the attention of the AITUC leadership to these aspects and hope they would take corrective measures in the interest of strengthening the united movement.

*Sponsoring Committee / Attempt to make them defunct. ATUC
NPMO*

5.12 Similarly, the staying away of the HMS from the February 24 strike call is a disquieting development. The HMS had been part of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions and an active participant in all the previous countrywide strike actions since 1991. But this time around the leadership of the HMS chose not to endorse the joint strike call; instead it left it to its State units to decide either way. Even in the matter of activating the Sponsoring Committee and the NPMO, the HMS has been exhibiting a lukewarm attitude. This is a matter of serious concern and we need to take it up with the leadership of the HMS to ensure that the preeminent role of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions as the core of the anti-globalisation struggle is reestablished.

6. PUBLIC SECTOR AND THE UPA GOVERNMENT

6.1 Given the disastrous track record of the NDA regime in dismantling the public, if it had been returned to power, the public sector would have been totally wiped out from the industrial map of the country.

1. Need not give a list of PSUs

6.2 However, we cannot forget that the Congress Party Government in 1991 initiated the process of disinvestment of public sector equity. The onslaught against public sector got heightened under the successive regimes since 1991. The United Front Government sought to continue the process by establishing the Disinvestments Commission. The BJP-led NDA set up a separate Disinvestments Ministry. The rabid privatisation programme of the NDA Government was marked by aggressive move to sell-off the blue chip profit making PSUs in the strategically important sectors of the industry. They even did not spare the top ten profit making PSUs including in the oil, power and telecom sectors. It may be recalled that the Vajpayee Government had declared their resolve to privatise the ONGC and IOC.

6.3 The Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of the UPA government indicated that "generally" the profit making PSUs will not be privatised. But the section dealing with the public sector in the CMP has room for interpretation in negative directions. There are "windows" and "ventilators" to pursue with the disastrous path of privatisation. To be precise, the patrons of privatisation do not have dearth of pleas to justify privatisation of public sector undertakings. Therefore, there is no room for complacency. Rather we must remain vigilant and active as during the previous regimes. The example of the move to privatise the Airport Authority of India's Delhi and Mumbai airports are before us. However, we must not undermine the fact that lot of pressure had been mounted by the CPI (M) and other left parties in amending the original draft of CMP presented by the Congress party and bring it to the present shape.

6.4 ON PUBLIC SECTOR THE CMP STATES: "The UPA Government is committed to a strong and effective public sector whose social objectives are met by its commercial functioning. But for this, there is need for selectivity and a strategic focus. The UPA is pledged to developing full managerial and commercial autonomy to successful, profit making companies operating in a competitive environment. Generally, profit making companies will not be privatised.

"All privatisation will be considered on a transparent and consultative case-by-case basis. The UPA will retain existing "navaratna" companies in the public sector, while these companies raise resources from the capital market. While every effort will be made to modernise and restructure sick public sector companies and revive sick industry, chronically loss-making companies will either be sold off or closed after all workers have got their legitimate dues and compensation. The UPA will induct private industry to turn around companies that have potential for revival.

"The UPA Government believes that privatisation should increase competition, not decrease it. It will not support the emergence of any monopoly that only restrict competition. It also believes that there

must be a direct link between privatisation and social needs – like, for example, the use of privatisation revenues for designated social sector schemes. Public sector companies and nationalised banks will be encouraged to enter the capital market to raise resources and offer new investment avenues to retail investors.”

6.5 It will be interesting to quote from the New Economic Policy statement on public sector signalling the policies of LPG in the country in 1991, the main architect of which was the then Finance Minister and present Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh.

6.6 “Government will strengthen those public enterprises which fall in the reserved areas of operation or are in high priority areas or are generating good or reasonable profits ... focus the public sector on strategic, high-tech and essential infrastructure. In order to raise resources and encourage wider public participation, a part of the government's shareholding in the public sector would be offered to mutual funds, financial institutions, general public and workers.”

6.7 The enemies of public sector have been carrying on a tirade against the public sector. In fact almost all the debates in Parliament on public sector during the BJP-led NDA rule witnessed a maligning campaign by the Ministers and government spokesmen against the performance of the public sector industries while justifying wholesale privatisation.

6.8 In carrying out the struggles against the slander campaign to malign and sinister design to dismantle the public sector, we must put forth the excellent results delivered by the CPSUs. Those who make noise that public sector have become irrelevant in the current political and economic context must be rebuffed with the facts that amongst many other socio-economic contributions, the public sector companies in their totality are REVENUE EARNING ASSETS of the country built with public money by our skilled workforce.

6.9 The profit making public sector units have achieved commendable success in various parameters of performances evaluation in 2002-03. The profit before tax, turnover, return on investment, return on equity share capital, foreign exchange earning and contribution to the national exchequer. The net profit earned by public sector undertakings in the 2002-03 is Rs.31,141 crore as against Rs.25,978 crore during 2001-02 thereby pushing up the net profit by 23.72 per cent. The profit before depreciation, interest and tax has raised to Rs.1,00,918 crore in 2002-03 from Rs.89,550 crore during 2001-02 thereby realising an increase of 19.69 per cent. The profit before tax (PBT) has gone up to Rs.45,571 crore in 2002-03 from Rs.38,233 crore in 2001-02 which constitutes an increase of 29.65 per cent. Actually the CPSUs as a whole have earned a return on investment (profit before interest and tax to capital employed) of 17.45 per cent in 2002-03. Such operating results have been accomplished from an increased turnover of Rs.5,44,390 crore from Rs.4,78,732 crore during the previous financial year. The CPSUs have played important role in earning foreign exchange for the country. During the year an amount of Rs.29,980 crore has been earned by exporting goods and rendering various services. The net worth has increased by 8.42 per cent and has gone up from Rs.2,32,196 crore in 2001-02 to Rs.2,51,750 crore in 2002-03.

6.10 The CPSUs had contributed significantly to the resources of the central government.. The amount of dividend declared by the CPSUs for the year 2002-023 is Rs.13,735 crore. The contribution to Central Exchequer by way of excise duty, customs duty, corporate tax, interest on central Government loans, dividend and other duties and taxes has gone up by Rs.19,060 crore from Rs.62,866 crore in 2001-02 to 81,926 crore in 2002-03. Thus the increase is to the tune of 30.32 per cent whereas the unpaid outstanding from their ‘most favoured’ private sector on account of corporate tax, income tax,

customs duty etc Rs 87,000 crore. (PE Survey 2002-03).

6.11 During the previous fiscal out of the top 10 corporate tax-payers, 8 were from the public sector. State Bank of India stood first with a tax payment of Rs.1234 crore with an increase of 18.54 per cent, followed by Indian Oil Corporation with a payment of Rs.1133 crore making an increase of 55.6 per cent. LIC with a tax payment of Rs.909 crore registered an increase of 5.61 per cent. The other prominent tax-payers in the public sector are: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation 623 crore (62 per cent), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Rs.479 crore (91 per cent), Bank of Boroda Rs.423 crore (120 per cent), Nabard Rs.325 crore. TISCO and Hindustan Lever are the only two private companies that figure among the top ten corporate taxpayers. (Economic Times 02.03.2004).

6.12 In the face of the orchestrated vilification campaign against public sector by the advocates of private sector, it is important to expose thoroughly their dirty game of terming the CPSUs 'inefficient' with the help of false formulations and twisted projections of facts and figures. We must carry forward the countrywide united struggles to defeat the anti-national move from any quarters to privatise public sector. The BJP-led NDA Government's rabid anti-public sector policy vigorously pursued during the Vajpayee regime has been totally rejected by the people in the recent parliamentary elections in the country. Therefore any attempt to go ahead with the policy of privatisation will tantamount to betrayal of the popular mandate.

6.13 On the other hand struggles to defend public sector constitute steps in conformity with the people's verdict, which has brought the UPA Government in power at the centre. But more than this objective understanding, considering the contributions of the public sector undertakings in the socio-economic matter as has been substantiated from the above noted figures and formulations, the continuity and strengthening of the CPSUs in public sector in its totality is an economic necessity and not benevolence.

During the whole period

6.14 The Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) has been playing very important role in defending the public sector in all respect. In fact CPSTU has attained the distinction of longest active and effective existence of an united platform of the trade unions. It has almost established its undisputed leadership amongst the central public sector workers. We must take immediate initiative to reactivate the CPSTU. Simultaneously our own Coordination Committee of CPSU trade unions should be also meet regularly and chalk out plans to strengthen our activities in the PSUs.

7. THE URGENT QUESTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT

7.1 The worldwide alarming rise in unemployment has its root in the severe crisis-ridden capitalist economic system. While new jobs are not generated in the era of 'jobless growth', existing workers are thrown out of employment in the name of cost cutting and restructuring of commercial activities for sustained viability of capitalist economic system under the draconian design of 'market economy'. Deepening unemployment problem is the consequence of imposing the burden of the capitalist crisis on the labour by capital in collusion with the capital friendly ruling regimes. *Jobless growth*

7.2 The Report of the Director General of ILO placed in the recently concluded session of ILC at Geneva has noted that, "Supporting the creation of decent employment opportunities for women and men is fundamental to the goals of the ILO. More than one billion people are under or unemployed ... Employment creation is now beginning to be recognized as a means of reducing poverty." To effectively fight the menace of poverty, hunger and starvation death, availability of food is not enough by itself. It is an opt repeated unquestionable fact that the suicidal deaths due to starvation in our country have been taking place not for want of availability of food grains but for lack of purchasing capacity. It has

been observed that, "despite its overflowing granaries, India has more hungry people than any country on earth, as many as 214 million according to United Nations estimates, or one-fifth of its population. ... The old development mantra – produce more food, feed more people – is giving way to a new call: Create more jobs, provide income to buy food."

It is to be noted that

7.3 Unemployment problem is continuously worsening in India because of the fact that on the one hand lakhs of employees are thrown out of job, while on the other hand cores of unemployed are unable to find job. Further, the employers class is engaged in deep conspiracy and instigating the unemployed people against the trade union movement by unleashing a vilification campaign that the trade unions are responsible for stagnation in employment generation by opposing to grant the employers class the right to 'hire and fire'. It is in this context too, the trade union movement will have to prioritise its policies on the question of unemployment.

7.4 The worldwide focusing dimension and serious implication of this issue must be understood from the fact that it has seized the concern of various international fora including the ILO. Such concern is mainly, perhaps, on account of the unrest-generating potential of unemployment problem than for addressing the problem itself. More over, the election manifestos and the election campaign trails all over the world, unemployment problem has been emerging as a major issue. Thus the jobless growth has become a key issue in the US presidential election campaign. In the recently concluded parliamentary election in our country too, the left political parties apart, the present constituents of the UPA too "made the issue of employment a major plank in their electoral campaigns and their manifestos. And the promise to do something about rural employment generation in particular was probably one of the most significant promises that actually resonated with the electorates." (Frontline July'04). Commenting on the mandate of the people, the Wall Street Journal Europe dated 25th June, 2004 has noted, "India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party had overseen a boom in the country's technology sector but was defeated in May elections largely by the votes of a rural population that felt left behind. The BJP's "India Shining" campaign, which highlighted the country's economic growth, was trumped by the victorious Congress Party, which ran on a platform of creating rural jobs and aiding farmers."

7.5 Although it is not a healthy phenomenon for any country, it is a fact that in our country 60 per cent of the employment comes from agriculture. As per the Economic Survey 2002-2003 "the decline in the overall growth rate in employment in 1994-2000 was largely attributable to a near stagnation of employment in agriculture. As a result the share of agriculture in total employment dropped substantially from 60 per cent in 1993-94 to 57 per cent in 1990-2000." Not only that, the non-agricultural employment in rural areas is also marking a declining trend owing to serious lack of investments in rural infrastructure and collapse of agro-based and related industries owing to reckless liberalization of imports. This explains the disturbing feature is "about 75 per cent of the unemployed are in rural areas and 60 per cent of these unemployed people are educated." (Economic Times: 23.01.03)

7.6 Huge Job losses in the public sector are contributing in a big way in aggravating the unemployment problem in the country. The state and central public sector constitutes about 69 per cent of the total employment in the organized sector.

7.7 As per a study report the total employment in the public sector as on March 31, 2001 was over 27.75 million, which came down to 27.33 million in March 31, 2002 (PTI May 16, 2003), job losses to the tune of 4.2 lakh.

7.8 It is worth mentioning that the Financial Express dated 14th April, 2004 editorially commented that, "Once the hype over the India Shining record is over, the incoming government will have to address

the employment issue as an urgent one. Notwithstanding euphoria over call centers and business process outsourcing, India's poverty and unemployment problems cannot be resolved until the rural sector thrives. "

7.9 On the question of employment generation the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government states that, "The UPA Government will immediately enact a National Employment Guarantee Act. This will provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment on asset creating public works programmes every year at minimum wage for every rural household." It will be too premature to be too much optimistic about the effective implementation of this commitment of the UPA Government.

7.10 The 11th conference of CITU dealt with the subject of unemployment in one of the commission exercise. A detailed paper was presented to the conference. It is incumbent upon us to implement the decision of the recommendation of the commission discussion and as adopted by the plenary session of the conference. The outcome from the deliberations of the commission inter alia noted: "The initiative unleashed by CITU with the association and cooperation of the Industrial Federations in organizing the 'Right to Work' convention in Durgapur in April 1990 created great enthusiasm and encouragement among the entire trade union movement in the country. But we could not push forward the initiative for various reasons. However, the current alarming situation of unemployment problem warrants urgent trade union initiative on the issue."

7.11 The recent meeting of the CITU Secretariat has deliberated on the matter and has decided to recommend to the General Council the proposal to organise another national convention at Durgapur, with the help of our industrial federations as was done in the previous convention, sometime during November or December this year. We have to take a final decision in this council meeting.

8. WORKING WOMEN

8.1 Mention has been made about the participation of women in the 11th Conference in the review of the Conference. On the whole women delegates were far less than envisaged as per the Cuttack General Council decision. While several States including some Hindi speaking States made sincere efforts to bring women as per the quota, it is unfortunate that women's representation from stronger States like Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura was far below the target. This needs to be corrected in the future.

8.2 While the number of women in the Office Bearers of the CITU has increased by one, the number of women in the newly elected General Council and Working Committee has declined. As the total number of members in the General Council and the Working Committee has been reduced and the number of members from some States has come down, as usual, women were made the casualty. The number of women members in the General Council from Kerala has come down sharply. While women have participated in large numbers in all the CITU programmes in the recent times, it is inexcusable that women continue to be denied due place in decision making bodies. The State Committees should ensure that adequate and due representation is given to women in the General Council and the Working Committee in the future.

8.3 Working Women from organised sector like Insurance, Banks, State and Central Government offices, Plantations etc and in the unorganised sector like anganwadi employees, beedi workers, traditional industries etc participated in large numbers in the 24th Feb strike. The Coordination Committees in some States organised conventions, seminars, round table discussions, lunch hour

CITU call for International Working Women's day

meetings and distributed leaflets appealing for massive participation in the Strike.

8.4 Since the Tenth Conference, CITU has been giving calls for observance of the International Working Women's day on March 8, by the CITU affiliated unions by mobilising not only women workers but all the workers. This year CITU Centre sent circulars to all the affiliated unions and State Committees asking them to take initiative to observe the International Working Women's Day by mobilising both men and women workers. For the first time a meeting was held in the CITU Centre, which was addressed by the President and General Secretary of the CITU. As per the reports received, several unions have taken initiative to organise meetings on the IWD.

8.5 The subject for this year's Vimal Ranadive Memorial Lecture was decided as 'Offensive of Communal and Fundamental Forces'. Prof Aijaz Ahmad delivered the lecture at the meeting organised at the CITU Centre in Delhi. No reports have been received on its observance from the States. The lecture notes could not be circulated to the States for use in the campaign against the BJP led Government during the elections, as we could not get them in spite of our best efforts.

8.6 The decision to conduct a wide campaign on the major issues of working women by the CITU remains yet to be implemented. Com BT Ranadive, who emphasised the importance of organising working women, gave a call to mobilise large number of working women in the capital to focus on their demands. This could not be achieved till now. We must fulfil it at least this year when we are observing his birth anniversary. Wide campaign should be taken up on the four major issues of working women – equal pay, maternity benefits, law against sexual harassment and comprehensive legislation for home based workers. Work place, district/ State level campaigns should be held to culminate in a mass convention of working women in Delhi in the month of October - November 2004. All the State Committees of CITU, should take this campaign with due seriousness and ensure that delegates from their States participate in the convention in good numbers. Particular efforts should also be made to study the conditions of home based workers in specific industries with a view to organise them.

8.7 The All India Coordination Committee of Working Women has met twice after the last Conference in Chennai, once immediately after the Conference and next a day before the General Council. Though the attendance has improved to some extent, still it is not satisfactory. Some State Committees who insist on increased representation during the Conferences do not take the same interest to ensure that their representatives attend the meetings regularly. It is the responsibility of the State Committees of CITU to ensure that the members from their States in the AICCWW (CITU) attend the meetings regularly. It is also necessary that the CITU State Committees discuss the decisions of the AICCWW (CITU) and take the necessary steps for their implementation.

9. UNORGANISED SECTOR WORKERS

9.1 Around 93% of the workforce in our country is in the informal sector. The unorganised sector workers bear the brunt of the adverse impact of the policies of globalisation and liberalisation. They have no job security, minimum wages fixed are very low and even these are not implemented. They get no social security benefits. Many face harassment from the administration, police etc. Though several legislations like Minimum Wages Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Beedi and Cigar (Conditions of Employment) Act, Building and Other Construction Workers' Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, and Contract Labour (Abolition and Regularisation) Act etc are fully or partially applicable to the workers in the unorganised sector, none of these is properly implemented. Most of the workers in the unorganised sector like the home based workers, daily waged workers, domestic workers, and vendors etc are not covered by any protective legislation.

9.2 One of the terms of reference to the Second National Commission on Labour was to suggest umbrella legislation for unorganised sector workers. But the bill proposed by the SNCL only consisted of formation of an elaborate structure of Boards from Central to the Panchayat level, registration of the unorganised sector workers, issuing identity cards to them etc. It contained nothing concrete for their job security, implementation of minimum wages, social security etc; nor was any responsibility fixed on the Government to contribute for their social security. The NDA government was not sincere in bringing any legislation for the unorganised sector workers. The Trade Unions unanimously suggested that the bill should provide initial funds and regular defined contributions from the State and Central Governments, that the entire cost of administration should be borne by the Government, the minimum basic welfare and pensionary benefits be defined, the Government should pay the employer's contribution wherever the employer was not identifiable, the boards should have equal representation of Government, workers and employers etc. But no efforts were made to incorporate these suggestions and bring the bill. Instead, on the eve of the elections to the Parliament, the Government of India announced a Pilot Scheme of Pension for the Unorganised Sector workers, which was nothing but a fraud. It is but natural that the working class has decisively rejected these gimmicks of the NDA Government and defeated the BJP led NDA.

membership among unorganised sector

9.3 Only a miniscule minority of the informal sector workers are organised into trade unions. Since 1991, CITU has been emphasising the issue of organising the unorganised sector workers. After the Panihati Convention, the issue has been repeatedly discussed in the meetings of the General Council and Working Committee and in our Conferences through special Commissions on the issue. It is true that because of all these efforts, today a considerable section of our membership comes from the unorganised sector workers. In some States, unorganised sector workers constitute the major part of our membership. The participation of unorganised sector workers in the activities of the CITU has increased many times in the recent period. They form a large part of our mobilisation in various programmes. Some States are also taking up the issues of unorganised sector workers and organising local and State wide activities. But seldom are reports sent to the Centre with the result that the Centre does not have a comprehensive understanding of our activities among the unorganised sector workers.

9.4 But on the whole, we cannot say that all our State Committees are paying the necessary attention to this issue. The informal sector has vastly expanded in the era of globalisation with even big multinational and national corporations outsourcing work and getting work done by home based workers. A variety of new types of activities involving information technology etc are taking place in the informal sector. The State Committees have to study the conditions of workers in different areas and decide priorities to organise them. We have also yet to pay proper attention to vast sections of unorganised sector workers like home based workers, particularly those engaged in manufacturing activities, fish workers, domestic servants etc.

9.5 The CITU Centre discussed our work among the unorganised sector workers and formed a small subcommittee comprising PK Ganguly, WR Varada Rajan, KHemalata and Ranjit Basu to discuss and prepare a note on the work of the 'unorganised sector coordination committee'. It was decided to reorganise the unorganised sector coordination committee and activate it. Letters were written to all the States requesting for nominations. State Committees with more than one representative in the Committee were asked to nominate at least one woman member. But unfortunately most of the State Committees have not even sent the names to the All India Centre. This can be seen as the reflection of the attention that is paid to the unorganised sector. The sub committee needs to prepare the note at the earliest, so that it can be discussed in the unorganised sector coordination committee and the CITU General Council. This is necessary to advance our movement among the unorganised sector workers.

10. A BRIEF REVIEW OF OUR ACTIVITIES

10.1 After the last conference there was a spate of activities and movements all over the country, which culminated in the historic strike on 24th February this year, which had been covered extensively, earlier in this report..

10.2 Proceeding the 24/2 strike a major and significant development took place in the oil sector. On 16th December the entire oil sector industries observed a complete strike against privatization. The significance of this strike is that it was spearheaded by national united forum against privatization of oil industries which included, apart from CITU, AITUC and INTUC, Shiv Sena affiliated union as well as several independent unions. Such an unprecedented unity could be achieved only by our initiative against all opposition and prevarication of the other central trade unions. Secondly, this was the first national industry wide strike action after the 6th August judgement by the Supreme Court against right to strike.

10.3 This strike in oil sector was a qualitatively different movement and its impact was tremendous to build public opinion against privatisation. Our sustained struggle against privatisation of national assets has been growing into a major political and ideological issue and this development, compounded with the issues of corruption associated with it, later on during the electoral battle, helped to shape the public opinion against the NDA regime.

10.4 The 11-day long complete strike in the entire jute industry involving two and half lakh workers in 59 jute mills in West Bengal from 29th December 2003 to 8th January 2004 is also a landmark struggle by the jute workers. All the 15 trade unions working in the industry came together and led the strike with complete success. On 8th January the jute mill owners had to sign an agreement with the unions, meeting most of the long pending demands as well as implementation of Payment of Gratuity Act.

10.5 Once again, the huge number of jute growers, ordinary peasants rallied in support of the jute workers. CITU's leading role in the jute workers movements was consolidated through this struggle and at the same time the issue of protecting the Jute Packaging Act, 1987 developed this strike into a social movement, which was reflected in the next general election.

10.6 ONGC can easily be termed as the "family diamond". The NDA Govt took several decisions to facilitate privatisation of oil industries. All curbs on FDI in oil sector, up and down the line, were removed and automatic route was opened to foreign investment bypassing the FIPB. In January this year, the government decided to sell to private sector 10% of equity of ONGC and GAIL. All the unions including CITU, AITUC, INTUC and BMS jointly organised protest demonstration, dharna etc against this slow but creeping process of privatisation all over the country to develop mass awareness.

10.7 In Haryana, there have been massive actions by workers of the unorganised sector. 4500 daily rated forest department workers, who were promised permanency by the Haryana government, were finally on the verge of retrenchment. The workers under the leadership of CITU were able to rouse mass consciousness and organise protest to thwart the move.

10.8 The militant Brick Kiln workers in Haryana went on an indefinite strike from 24th February onward in district after district. The owners and the administration initially took recourse to police action, private attacks and implicating the leaders in false police cases. But, undeterred, the workers went for total strike, which forced the State administration to intervene for negotiation and the Brick-kiln owners to

come to settlement on wages, dearness allowances.

10.9 In the intervening period, textile workers in Panipat, Haryana also went for indefinite strike from 24th February onward, which continued for about ten days and forced the mill owners to come to settlement with the CITU unions there. Brick Kiln workers in Punjab also organised militant struggles including strike for better wages and service conditions.

10.10 Railway workers in Eastern Railway went on action against privatisation of railway printing press. Daily rated workers in PWD department in Himachal Pradesh have successfully frustrated the state government decision to retrench thousands of daily rated workers through militant actions. Defying the leadership of the majority BMS union those PWD workers went for continuous demonstration, dharna, etc and finally the state govt had to yield and on 29th March a satisfactory agreement was signed.

10.11 Inspired by the achievements by Himachal Pradesh Hydel Project workers, workers in SEWA Hydel project in Kathua district of Jammu went on continuous strike from 14th March. The management and contractors did everything possible to terrorise the workers including dismissals, arrests by police. But all the repressive actions failed. They tried to utilize INTUC leaders' service to break the strike, but in vain. After 11 days strike the workers could force the employer, M/s Gammon India to come to agreement on most of their demands like appointment letter, identity cards, medical benefits and also a satisfactory wage rise. But the conspiracy to break the workers unity is still on. In June, the principal contractor Gammon India resorted to fresh repressions and the leader was arrested and tortured. Demonstrators against this arrest were lathi-charged and many villagers were arrested. The workers are successfully resisting the repressions and frustrating all the tactics of dividing the workers as locals and outsiders.

10.12 In Tamil Nadu, the CITU cadres had involved in election work in all the constituencies in the State. After the elections, various industrial federations and unions have taken decisions to strengthen the campaigns and struggles and also for joint actions on major issues. The State CITU had also decided upon programmes for cadre training and various other programmes in connection with the BTR Centenary celebrations the committee also decided to bring out publications in Tamil. The electricity employees have planned campaign and struggle on the issues of wage settlement pending for the last 3 years, non-compliance of settlements and court decisions, wages for contract workers and for part-time workers.

10.13 The CITU affiliated State Transport Employees Federation, held a successful state level convention at Dindigul, on 16th June, against denial of pension benefits, on regaining rights and benefits and against oppression. A signature campaign, undertaken on the demands of workers, from 22nd to 29th June, concluded with massive demonstrations and handing over of the memoranda, addressed to the Chief minister. Various other sections of workers like Textile mill workers, sugar workers local body employees have also decided upon programmes of action in the coming days.

10.14 In Andhra Pradesh, Village Panchayat workers have waged long drawn struggles in two districts for implementation of minimum wages and secured them. Employees working in primary agricultural coop credit societies held dharnas throughout the state on March 9 against a order of removal issued by TDP govt. Rice mill hamalies participated in dharnas at mandal and district collector offices demanding comprehensive legislation for their welfare. 5-day strike was held by autoworkers in the city of Hyderabad, demanding enhancement in meter charges. An agreement was reached with partial success. Design slate workers of Prakasam district numbering about 2250 went on strike for about 3

months demanding minimum wages. 11% increase over the previous wages was secured.

10.15 After our 11th conference, even in the midst of election campaign, there have been numerous actions by the workers in different parts of the country under the leadership of CITU and those actions also played important role in tempering the popular opinion against the anti-people NDA rule.

11. FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNALISM

11.1 The defeat of the BJP led NDA is a major victory for the secular forces and for the secular principle enshrined in Indian Constitution. From its very inception, the CITU considered the fight against communalism as also other divisive forces as important as the fight for just economic demands, demand for trade union and democratic rights, fight against anti-labour and anti-people policies. The CITU's contribution in the endeavour of getting all secular forces to move together for the defeat of the communal party with fascistic inclination is not insignificant. The CITU shares with all secular forces the satisfaction at the defeat of communal forces. However, to repeat the much-used phrase, the communal forces are down but not out. So, the fight against communalism remains as important as before.

11.2 CITU, however, does not consider the struggle against communalism apart from its economic and other struggles. CITU has, therefore, carried on its struggle against communalism along with the economic struggle. While the communal forces are essentially anti democratic and anti labour, communalism has its other specific features as well. Therefore to fight communalism, the trade unions need to take care of these specific features in deciding the overall strategy and tactics for struggles.

11.3 However, it must not be forgotten that in voting against the NDA all have not necessarily voted against their communal ideology, it has largely been a vote against their vigorous pursuit of the economic policy of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. But objectively it led to the defeat of communal forces. The struggles organised and led by the CITU, together with other trade unions, mobilising the working class and also other sections of society, against economic policies has certainly been an important factor in bringing down the communal forces. We should take the lesson that while fight against communalism has its own specifics, the struggle on economic issues has very important role in fighting communalism.

11.4 Apart from the resolutions adopted at different conferences and meetings of the General Council and the Working Committee, we have already carried on discussions around a number of papers which has dealt with the nature of communalism in our country, their pernicious activities affecting the people, particularly the working class, working class approach to the problem, and appropriate method for fighting it. Every time we carried out discussion and adopted a document, our understanding about the nature of communalism and communal project has deepened. Study of all those documents together by our functionaries will be useful.

11.5 The last of these documents, which was adopted at the General Council meeting held in Cuttack, is of particular importance. Com. BTR had on many occasions correctly reminded us that the working class, because of their class position, was potentially the foremost and the most effective force in the struggle against communalism. But we noted earlier as well as in the Cuttack resolution that a section of the working class – not a very insignificant number – is affected by communal virus. So long as a substantial number in the working class remain affected by communal influence, the potentiality of the class for playing the most effective role remains unrealised. Therefore, the priority task of the trade union, as far as fight against communalism is concerned, is to undertake appropriate programme to free the working class from communal influence.

11.6 For spreading communalism, communal forces constantly carry on vicious propaganda disseminating distorted facts and lies, some times openly, sometimes under various disguise, always with appeal to the religious sentiments, which their targets belong to. This is true for communal forces belonging to Hindu, Muslim as also the Sikh communities. In India religion has strong appeal. Unless a worker is engaged in prolonged class struggle his religious identity takes upper hand, he is a Hindu or Muslim or a Sikh first and then he is a worker. His consciousness about his religious identity gives communal forces easy access to their mind and sows the seeds of communalism. But even a worker with relatively stronger class identity does not become automatically free from communal influence. Therefore, trade union's major task is to eradicate communal ideas and feelings from the minds of the workers in all possible ways. The task is primarily educative. Class struggle prepares the mind for receiving secular education best.

11.7 In fighting communalism, the trade unions will have to launch intensive and widespread educative programme: Organising trade union classes, popular lectures, seminars, cultural and other events, and every other available form. Against every distorted fact, we have to give actual fact, in place of wrong interpretation we are to give correct interpretation, we have to expose all lies and put before the workers' secular ideas. So far, we cannot claim that we have done enough in this direction. We must not waste any more time. Obviously, for this educative campaign we shall have to go down to the union level. Higher committees such as district and State Committees are to ensure that every union launches programme targeting every member. In the case of smaller unions, district/State committees may pool several of them together and organise such programmes. We must target not only the workers but their families as well in this attempt.

11.8 Written materials constitute most important weapon to fight against communalism. There are several booklets published at political level. Many articles have appeared in political journals. We are to use those materials. We should think of publishing a small book from CITU Centre providing all the necessary material.

11.9 As stated above, as far as Hindu communal forces are concerned, they are down but not out. The sangh parivar is now in ferment, they have not yet been able to overcome the shock of defeat. Naturally they are in search of a way to recover their position. There is widespread talk in their circle of going back to the basics That is, they will tend more and more to the communal slogan of Hindutva, Hindu Rashtra, etc. for political mobilisation with a view to coming back to power. All sorts of vicious communal propaganda will be in the air. Not only that, communal riots are an effective method to create communal consciousness. Attempts are likely to be made to create communal tension wherever possible, leading to riots. The working class should, by all possible means, prepare to meet the challenge. The CITU Secretariat must draw up a detail plan for carrying forward the struggle against communal forces and ensure that the plan is implemented.

12. ON ORGANISATION

12.1 The brief review of the state of the organisation, presented in the General Secretary's report to the Eleventh Conference of CITU held seven months back, began with this candid admission that : "The state of organisation continues to be a major concern for us". "There has been some improvement", the review went on "but it is hardly more than marginal and uneven in coverage. It is anything but adequate to effectively meet the challenges thrown on the working class by the intensified attack of liberalisation and globalisation as well as the communal offensive."

12.2 It will be too much to expect any substantial change in the situation in so far as the implementation

of the organisational tasks is concerned, during the last seven months. In this period, two important and major tasks confronted us - the general strike on 24 February and the general election. That we had to work for the success of the general strike in a not so congenial environment has already been discussed. The CITU along with some fraternal organisations and federations had to shoulder the major responsibility in making the strike successful. The fact that the strike was a tremendous success, as universally recognised, goes undoubtedly to testify to the vitality of CITU organisation. Next came the general election, in which CITU called upon the working class to ensure defeat of the anti-working class, anti-people, communal and fascistic forces represented by the BJP and also those forces, which most opportunistically allied with it. To our knowledge at the centre, the CITU activists at different places discharged their responsibility fairly well. This also is an evidence of the vitality of our organisation.

12.3 While we may legitimately derive some satisfaction from our performance in these two major events, the question, however, remains: "How far have we made conscious efforts to expand and strengthen the CITU organisation during the course of the campaigns and also afterwards and with what result?" It is a serious weakness on our part that while engaging ourselves in struggles and campaigns, we tend to forget the question of expanding our organisation and strengthening it.

12.4 As regards the specific organisational task laid down in the Bhubaneswar document, as further elaborated in other subsequent documents on organisation adopted at the conferences or the meetings of the General Council and the Working Committee, we have from time to time self critically reviewed the progress of their implementation. As already mentioned, it may be reasonably assumed that there has not been any substantial change in the organisational position in the period since the 11th Conference. Therefore the organisational review presented to the 11th Conference will of necessity be the starting point of our exercise in the General Council. Salient points of the review is, therefore, reproduced below:

"While it is important to ruthlessly expose the areas of our failure, we should not ignore the success that we have achieved, however modest it may be. The review presented to the 11th Conference took note of the modest progress made by our organisation after the 10th Conference.

1. Most of the states held organisational workshops
2. The CITU Secretariat initiated review of united struggles and consolidation of trade union movement
3. Meetings of the leading comrades of Hindi belt are held from time to time
4. We have reached some new areas though to a limited extent
5. Functioning of some State Committees has registered some improvement
6. Some state committees organised trade union classes
7. CITU Centre has started discussion on the functioning of the federations, commencing with that in coal industry
8. Efforts are occasionally made to improve collective functioning at the Centre with some positive results.

12.5 The review then listed some of the major failures in respect of organisation:

1. We are still far from our membership target of 40 lakhs. Uneven development continuous as before
2. Most of the federations have not undertaken review of organisational activity seriously
3. Much remains to be done in developing collective functioning, in all its aspects, at the Centre
4. We are defaulting in preparation of a "well knit growth plan for the priority sector in the States
5. The Centre has not been able to make any systematic effort for TU education and to prepare syllabus as promised.

12.6 In elaborating some of these items, the review pointed out that in the past years we have effectively participated in national and State level trade union struggles and other programmes reflecting organisational initiative of our State Committees. Unfortunately, such successful actions did not lead to desired expansion of our organisational base. The root lies in our inability to handle these struggles with a proper organisational approach and other general organisational weaknesses. As for federations, conscious organisational effort to develop a team of all India leadership is seriously lacking in the case of most of them. The review has also pointed out the lack of coordination between all India leadership of the federations and the leadership of concerned States.

12.7 Taking note of the growing attack on the working class and the people at large the review stated: "we will be able to lead the working class in a proper direction, if we can make the necessary efforts by strengthening our organisation."

12.8 Indeed we have been, since early 1990s, continuously striving for revamping the organisation and gearing it up to squarely meet the challenge of growing attack on the working class and the people. The document adopted at the Bhubaneshwar session of the CITU General Council was a comprehensive and powerful instrument in our hands. We have, from time to time, reviewed the progress of its implementation besides discussing certain aspects of the problems of organisation. We have certainly succeeded in implementing the tasks laid down in the document in a small measure. But still, as stated in the General Secretary's report to the 11th Conference "the gap between what has been done and what remains to be done is still wide and the state of organisation still remains a matter of concern. Therefore, at the end of a decade long exercise, it was correctly felt that there needs to be an over-all review of the state of the organisation and the positioning in respect of implementation of the Bhubaneshwar document.

12.9 So it was concluded that a fresh review of the implementation of the Bhubaneshwar document and subsequent organisational documents with a view to revive the process of organisational improvement (which of late lost some of its momentum) brooks no delay. "Immediately after this conference, it is extremely important that the new CITU Secretariat undertakes such review as its priority task."

12.10 COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW: The most important and urgent organisational task is therefore to immediately act on the 11th Conference directive: "To undertake a serious review of the state of organisation, of implementation of the Bhubaneshwar document and to work out organisational tasks". It must not, however, be another repetition of a routine review. We are required to go deeper. Even after a full decade of its adoption we find that the record of implementation is unsatisfactory to say the least. We have to find out the cause. Is it the subjective factor, the mindset of our comrades or is there any objective factor? Unless we can find out the answer, repeated discussions and pious decisions will not take us far. The experience accumulated in the course of our decade-long exercise has to be thoroughly examined and the matter will have to be studied in sufficient depth in the course of the review.

12.11 It goes without saying that the task of preparing the review is primarily of the CITU Secretariat. But review cannot be carried out in vacuum. Only on the basis of objective report on the situation actually prevailing in respect of organisation in the States and the federations, as well as understanding of the functionaries and workers, that a meaningful review is possible. Within a specified date the State Committees as well as the Working Committees of the federations must submit their report on the state of organisation. The comprehensive review report, prepared with such input with appropriate tasks formulated afresh, may be presented at the next meeting of the CITU working committee.

12.12 FEDERATIONS: While preparing the review it needs to be particularly kept in mind that in the course of our exercise in the past, attention was primarily concentrated on the States. The industry wise federations were very much less in the focus. But these industry wise federations were conceived by our founder fathers as having an extremely important role to play in the trade union movement in the country. It is the federations that link together various units in major industry scattered throughout the country and give the movement an all India character. If they properly function they may very well serve as vehicle for spreading to weaker areas. But unfortunately except for a few the federations have not been functioning in the desired manner. Among other things the functioning of the federations should get due attention in our organizational review.

12.13 TU EDUCATION: The CITU Secretariat has rightly been criticised in every conference and the meetings of the General Council and the Working Committee for its failure to launch programme for trade union education. The Secretariat even failed to prepare notes for TU classes except for 3 subjects viz. History of Trade Union Movement, Political Economy and Socialism. Now the Secretariat has decided to launch intensive and extensive education plan as a part of B.T. Ranadive Birth Centenary programme. The plan includes publication of a number of booklets on the life and teachings of Com. BTR and organisation of TU classes at all levels. The latter will start with central level interactive TU classes to be held separately for 3 zones, South, East and Hindi speaking zones including Maharashtra and Gujarat. This round of classes will be attended by State leaders. Attendance of State President and Secretary is a must. South zone and Hindi speaking zone classes will be held at Thiruvananthapuram and Delhi respectively in the month of August. The East zone class will be held at Calcutta in early September. Classes at other levels will be organised by the State Committees with the help of the Centre, after the completion of this round of classes. Notes for the present round of classes are under preparation.

12.14 FUNCTIONING OF THE CENTRE: Drawing attention to some of the weakness, the 11th Conference report stated: "The fault line in this respect surely lies with the centre". The formulation is correct but a little bit of caution is certainly necessary. It is neither proper nor helpful to underestimate the part played by the Centre without which CITU would not have continued to be in the prominent position in the country's trade union movement. While the Centre has admittedly a large share of responsibility for persistence of many weaknesses, it will be equally improper and harmful to overemphasise the Centre's responsibility and to underestimate the responsibility of the States, federations and union leadership. If we are to overcome our weaknesses we must have a balanced and objective view and clearly realise that it is a collective responsibility in which each of the different levels of our organisation has a proportionate share.

12.15 While the preparatory process of the review will be going on, as a part of it the Centre will, as early as possible, review its own functioning. The Centre has already made some redistribution of jobs following the 11th Conference and joining of new office bearers.

12.16 ONGOING PROCESS: As was noted in course of an earlier discussion, the implementation of the Bhubaneswar document for improvement of the organisation would be an "on going process". In fact, occasional reviews are a part of this process. It should be kept in mind that when we find it necessary to undertake a major review that does not mean that the process would remain suspended till the review is over. The process, which is going on over the decades, must continue while the comprehensive review will be carried out.

12.17 Let us proceed with firm determination to bring a qualitative change, for the better, in our organisation through the review proposed to be undertaken.

13. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

13.1 The 11th Conference witnessed the presence of a large number of foreign delegates, which was a glowing manifestation of the increasing relations between the CITU and the international fraternity.

13.2 Since the 11th Conference, a number of CITU leaders had represented the CITU in international gatherings at the invitation of our fraternal organisations abroad. A.K.Lal attended the Conference of T.U. International of Workers in Agriculture, Food, Commerce and Textiles; P.R. Krishnan, Secretray, Maharashtra CITU, attended the 8th Congress of the Confederation of Spanish Trade Unions at Madrid on 21-24 April, 2004; M.K.Nandy visited Cuba on the occasion of May Day celebrations there; M.K.Pandhe, S. Dev Roye, Prashanta Nandi Chowdhury, Kumari Amma Murari Bose and Mrinal Banerjee participated in the International Energy and Mines Organisation event in Morocco; Kingsuk Dutta visited Seoul. A three-member delegation from Pakistan paid a good will visit to the CITU Centre.

13.3 J. Ballabh, who had been in-charge of the International Department at the CITU Centre for a very long period and contributed to maintaining regular and cordial relations with our international counterparts, had relinquished his responsibilities as he had joined his son in China, owing to health reasons. He was facilitated at a brief function held on the eve of his departure to Beijing by the comrades at the CITU Centre.

14. ON MEMBERSHIP

14.1 The state-wise membership of the CITU, given in 'Annexure 1', reveals that majority of our unions, in spite of repeated requests, have not submitted their Annual Returns and Affiliation fees for the year 2003. Though some States viz, Assam, Punjab, Tripura, Haryana, UP have sent few returns and money but the majority of the states are yet to send the same which they should have done by this time. Year 2002 being the CITU Conference year on the basis of which the delegation was finalized, the submission of Annual Returns and affiliation fees was almost total. This also facilitated the filing of claims of CITU membership for the ongoing verification exercise undertaken by the Govt. of India. Though we could not advance to expand our organisation towards reaching the target of 40 lakhs as reiterated during the last Conference but a fresh commitment was made towards that direction. Unfortunately we are unable to analyse our effort since Annual Returns are yet to be submitted. We are unable to say whether our State Committees have made efforts to reach out to new areas for enrolling new members. CITU Centre, thus, is unable to assert itself and play a pro-active role in the matter of assessing the reasons and addressing the problems of failures, non-compliance of decisions and tasks by various leading bodies and segments of the organisations. We have to remember that the situation offers much larger opportunities for expansion and demands strenuous efforts by us. Our State Committees, therefore, has to ensure that the Annual Returns along with affiliation fees of previous year must be deposited by June 30 of every year.

15. ON MEMBERSHIP VERIFICATION

15.1 You are aware that the Govt. of India has already initiated the process of fresh verification of membership of central trade union organizations based on the membership of 2002. The participating organisations, 12 in number, have submitted their claims (see table below). It has been interchanged amongst the participants for scrutiny and raising objections. This process is also complete and now the 3rd phase will start when verification of records and spot verifications will be undertaken by the Govt. before finally releasing the provisional results. Subsequently, after scrutiny and re-checking the final results will be declared.

1989 VERIFICATION

	Total Claim (1989)	Verified (1989)
INTUC	54 Lakhs (9.03 Lakhs)	27.06 (1.19 Lakhs) 50%
HMS	44 Lakhs (6.84 Lakhs)	14.76 (1.58 Lakhs) 33.5%
BMS	41 Lakhs (4.04 Lakhs)	31.17 (3.48 Lakhs) 77%
AITUC	30 Lakhs (7.96 Lakhs)	9.23 (.17 Lakhs) 30%
CITU	24 Lakhs (.93 Lakhs)	17.98(.30 Lakhs) 75%
UTUC (LS)	12 Lakhs (5.70 Lakhs)	8.02 (3.69 Lakhs) 66%
UTUC	8 Lakhs (3.14 Lakhs)	5.39 (3.10 Lakhs) 65%

CURRENT VERIFICATION ON 2002 MEMBERSHIP

	MEMBERSHIP CLAIM BY THE CTUOs	Increase (over 1989)
INTUC	78.7 Lakhs (14.31 Lakhs)	45%
HMS	53.5 Lakhs (10.3 Lakhs)	21.6%
BMS	83.18 Lakhs (15.8 Lakhs)	102%
AITUC	46.12 Lakhs (16.7 Lakhs)	53.7%
CITU	34.31 Lakhs (2.45 Lakhs)	42.9%
UTUC (LS)	16.03 Lakhs (8.18 Lakhs)	33.6%
UTUC	7.81 Lakhs (3.8 Lakhs)	2.37%

Observation

1. Total claim in 2002 is above 4 Crores as against 2.5 Crores made last time.
2. Membership claim for Agricultural Workers total is above 1 Crore as against 43 lakhs of 1989.

15.2 Comrades, before I inform you about the details of the 3rd phase, I am seriously drawing your attention towards non serious attitude of some of our State Committees towards one of the most important tasks.

15.3 This time the verification of membership has attained a new dimension because of abnormally inflated claims by other major Central TU's pushing CITU much behind in 5th position. This issue was discussed in details in an important meeting of the state committee leaders held on 9th March 2004 at CITU Centre. Certain decisions were taken particularly with regard to serious scrutiny of the claims made by the other 4 major trade union organizations and raising objections on the same in an exhaustive manner. States were sent the claims of all these Central TUs with a decision to return them to the centre within stipulated time with details of objections to be raised on the inflated claims of other central TUs.

15.4 Unfortunately, excepting a few, the majority of the State Committees failed to comply with the decision taken in the urgent meeting on 9th March. This in turn has put the centre in great difficulty in preparing and putting forward CITU's objection, which was so vital to expose the fictitious claims of others, thereby ensuring retaining our own position/rank as one of the 3 largest TU organisations of the country.

Now the third phase of verification is going to start. The affiliated unions will be asked to furnish their

Now the third phase of verification is going to start. The affiliated unions will be asked to furnish their records (membership register for 2002, related receipt books tallying with the register, registration certificate, affiliation certificate, annual return of 2002 along with the proof of submission to labour department etc). There will also be spot verification of membership in many cases. The State Committees must remain alert on the notices being issued by the labour department/verification office from time to time and have to ensure that during the 3rd phase at least they act seriously and respond to the requirements of verification process effectively to defend the claims ensure their acceptance by the verification-officers. The detail union-wise list of claims made by CITU has already been sent to the respective State Committees. We have to ensure that no CITU union membership claim should go by default. In other words all our unions must be ready with all relevant records and must respond to any directive given by the Registrar of TU's office in connection with the verification. You must realise that already claim-wise we are pushed to 5th position, it is, therefore, important that we should put all effort to ensure the claim made by us is established.

16. TASKS BEFORE US

16.1 The present situation enjoins a stupendous task on the CITU. The defeat of the BJP combine in the general election and its replacement by the UPA regime at the Centre, supported by the Left parties from outside, has created a high expectation among the working people. Given the class character and inclinations of the parties in the ruling combine headed by Congress to the continuity of the liberalised policy regime, it is unlikely that much of the expectations of the people, as reflected in the electoral mandate will get positive response, notwithstanding the dependence of the government on the Left parties for continuing in governance. We have to watch how the new government goes about implementation of several of the pro-people commitments made in the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). The budget 2004-05 recently placed by the Union Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, despite containing some positive measures, brought home this reality. In this background, the working class movement has to discharge the responsibility of articulating the expectations of the people through vigorous countrywide mobilisation, campaign and agitation demanding implementation of pro-people commitments, as well as reversing the direction of the thrust and direction of the economic policies.

16.2 The working class movement has also to shoulder the gigantic task of continuing the fight against the communal forces, the dimensions of which had earlier been deliberated and tasks outlined.

16.3 In this backdrop, the CITU has to ensure that the trade union movement remains alert and vigilant against attempts by communal forces to usurp the space of opposition to the pursuit of disastrous liberalised economic policy regime. Towards this end, the trade union movement has to take pioneering initiative with unflinching dedication and seriousness in voicing the concerns of the workers and people from all walks life, exercising all methods and means right from vigorous persuasion with the government to countrywide united campaigns and struggles. The conscious pro-active role by the working class movement, and not a defensive one, in voicing the concerns of the people can only ensure the twin task of fighting the communal forces and safeguarding the interests of the mass of the people and the working class.

16.4 In this context we have to effectively handle the vacillations of some of our allies in the trade union movement in the matter of taking a forthright position on struggle programmes. Through the nationwide strike on February 24, the unity of the working class movement got a new dimension and reiterated the time-tested truth: "unity of the working class is meant for action and built through action only" and "such urge for action and unity at the grass root level can ensure and sustain tangible unity in the trade

union movement" in the forthcoming struggle. It was a united working class action - but not an action of all-in-unity. In the trade union movement 'all-in-unity' is a strategic slogan with the purpose of uniting the entire working class. But in practice, the slogan can be materialised through different phases of struggles. While constantly striving for unifying our class as a whole, we can in no way compromise on struggles to uphold the credibility earned by the trade union movement all these years and play our destined role.

16.5 We have to prepare ourselves both ideologically and organisationally for this task. We have to ensure continuance of our firm opposition to neoliberal economic policies, from wherever it comes, in a credible and visible way. In this direction we have to prioritise on consolidating and reactivating the platforms of the anti-liberalisation struggle, the Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions and the National Platform of Mass Organisations (NPMO). We had earlier noted the indifference of some of our allies in this regard. We have to patiently resist such a trend and strive to centre-stage the Sponsoring Committee and NPMO as the nucleus of secular and united platform of struggle against policies of globalisation.

16.6 To this end, most important is to activate and ensure greater initiative and bigger mobilisation by the CITU unions and our fraternal trade unions and mass organisations with unified understanding of our task. All our state committees have to redouble their efforts in this direction.

16.7 In fine, we can outline our immediate tasks as under:

1. Countrywide independent campaign on the issues detailed in the joint memorandum of trade unions to labour minister and CITU memoranda to the Finance and the Prime Ministers.
2. Activating the NPMO and Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions to organise massive mobilisations throughout the country on a) pro-people economic policies and demanding implementation of the pro-people commitments in the CMP; b) against the move of privatisation of airports and allowing higher dose of foreign participation in telecom, civil aviation and insurance or in any other strategic sectors of the economy; c) against de-reservation of the items reserved for small scale units and d) unwarranted dilution of government stake in the PSUs and other issues.
3. Organise joint trade union campaign and struggle against reduction in rate of interest on provident fund and other savings and perpetuation of the new defined contribution pension scheme for new central government employees, besides imposition of tax on the terminal benefit under the scheme.
4. Organise independent campaign against communalism and other divisive trends at all levels of the organisation and equipping the cadres and activists for such campaign
5. Prepare for holding a massive all India convention on "Right to Work" by November/December 2004
6. Organising trade union schools in the States to cover up to the working committee members of the affiliated unions as per decision of the 11th conference.
7. Redouble initiative for reaching the target of 40-lakh membership at the earliest through consistent and vigorous membership drive.

Comrades,

16.8 Despite many weaknesses, the working class movement in the country could successfully play its role in bringing about a change in governance at the Centre and ensure the ouster of the communal forces from the power. The new situation does in no way undermine the need for vigorous pursuit of such anti-globalisation struggle; rather it only reiterates the urgency for intensification of united struggle. The present situation is pregnant with vast potential for the advancement of our struggle and building

the capacity of the working class movement for effective political intervention. We have to defend the gains of such advancement and advance the struggle further. CITU committees and units at all levels must prepare themselves organisationally and ideologically and take swift initiatives in that direction.

GREETINGS TO ALL OF YOU!

Chittabrata Majumdar
General Secretary

STATEMENT SHOWING STATEWISE MEMBERSHIP AS PER ANNUAL RETURNS RECEIVED TILL DATE

Name of the State	Unions Submitting Returns			Position of membership according to Annual Returns		
	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
Andaman & Nico	5	9	1	1807(-)	2417(-)	173(-)
Andra Pradesh	667	757	0	172303(30972)	243702(40902)	0
Assam	78	80	5	56531(21066)	58684(26083)	7899(3409)
Bihar	13	12	1	14720(623)	21687(5061)	36(6)
Delhi	75	73	1	32208(1461)	28308(1135)	45(-)
Goa	7	7	0	1168(183)	1147(162)	0
Gujrat	14	17	0	7784(1225)	7134(1046)	0
Haryana	22	24	15	20694(4928)	25063(9476)	2051(-)
Himachal Prades	25	24	1	12398(6032)	13119(6735)	0
Jammu & Kashmi	1	1	0	398(12)	500(-)	338(24)
Karnataka	111	114	0	91284(50213)	98894(52347)	0
Kerala	860	891	0	947045(268058)	1019507(296028)	0
Madhya Pradesh	26	64	0	10915(1738)	24943(3895)	0
Maharashtra	58	67	2	57410(6348)	63804(19386)	12546(-)
Orissa	53	64	1	25644(3167)	30816(5997)	400(-)
Punjab	72	80	23	64420(6700)	32790(1255)	40718(2087)
Rajasthan	78	70	5	31225(649)	28859(2453)	1880(-)
Tamilnadu	440	483	0	254553(35868)	278378(34380)	0
Tripura	32	36	22	68932(11290)	80363(16249)	84719(19615)
Uttar Pradesh	82	94	11	16316(190)	22578(357)	1384(27)
West Bengal	963	933	0	1195233(146103)	1275446(142633)	0
Uttaranchal	35	40	0	9049(425)	11594(516)	0
Chhatisgarh	13	17	2	16385(637)	17276(1096)	338(240)
Jharkhand	14	15	0	37702(2697)	37941(3789)	0
Total	3744	3972	91	3146124(600585)	3424950(670981)	152527(25408)

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)

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

17-20 July, 2004

Nasik, Maharashtra

NOTE FOR SPECIAL DISCUSSION

COMRADE BTR CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The 11th Conference of CITU decided to observe the centenary year of com B T Ranadive, the founder president of CITU in a befitting manner. It was decided, "A year long educational campaign at all levels of the organisation has to be taken up. We may conceive of organising seminars on various ideological, social, political and organisational issues confronting the working class movement besides trade union classes for our cadres at various levels to be planned and implemented by both the State committees and the centre. The year-long birth centenary celebrations of Com BTR will target all the working committee members of our affiliated unions throughout the country to be covered by trade union classes."

Many state committees have already taken initiatives to hold TU classes in the states. The CITU Secretariat has also finalized the schedule of holding three central TU School in three regions on 6-8 August in Kerala (southern states, medium- English), 11-13 August at New Delhi (Hindi region, medium-Hindi) and 1-3 September in Kolkata (Eastern States, medium-Bengali).

The CITU secretariat has also decided to publish a series of booklets on teachings of Com BTR, the first of which already been published titled, "Com B T Ranadive, Life and Teachings" written by Com Pandhe, in English and Hindi. It is important that the state committees must take serious initiative for wide circulation of these literatures. Unfortunately, for the first publication, despite sending circulars to all the states, we did not yet get any serious response by way of requisitions for copies nor did we yet receive any report regarding translation of the said publication in regional languages and their total circulation. Organised response from the state committees and federations is of crucial importance for viability and continuance of the publication drive from the CITU Centre. Comrades must seriously deliberate on this matter.

As per decision of the 11th Conference, the CITU Secretariat also discussed the issue of revamping countrywide campaign on "Right to work" and conceived the idea of holding a massive all India convention on "Right to Work" sometimes in November/December this year tentatively at Durgapur involving all CITU affiliated and friendly unions and Federations to launch the process. The General Council has to take a final decision in this regard from this meeting.

COMRADE P. RAMAMURTI SCHOOL FOR TU EDUCATION

The 11th conference has also discussed the idea of setting up a permanent TU school with residential facilities and also a research centre, named after Com. P Ramamurti, the founder General secretary of CITU.

The CITU Secretariat has discussed and conceived the idea of building the school at Ghaziabad.

There is yet another option to build such school in Delhi itself. The CITU had applied to the Government of India, seeking allotment of a plot, in lieu of the accommodation earlier allotted to us in 6, Talkatora Road, New Delhi. This application had been pending even during the earlier regime, which had made a public announcement even that the request of CITU, along with that of HMS, is under consideration. We have been pursuing this application vigorously with the new government as well. We are likely to get an allotment of land near the B.T. Ranadive Bhawan itself. The proposed TU School can be located in Delhi itself, if this arrangement materialises soon.

In either of these two options, we may need to raise financial resources of around Rs. 50 lakh for acquisition of plot/construction in Delhi or carrying out additions and alterations to the premises available in Ghaziabad, which will also leave a corpus to meet the regular expenditure for staff etc.

Our Tamilnadu State Committee has already donated Rs 5 lakh at the time of the 11th conference for the purpose. This meeting of the CITU General council has to take further decisions and plan for raising the requisite fund for the purpose, so that the work of building the school can be taken up in right earnest.

As per decision of the 11th Conference, the CITU Secretariat has also issued a circular on the issue of revamping countrywide campaign on 'Right to Work' and conceived the idea of holding a massive all India convention on 'Right to Work' sometime in November/December, the year following at Durgapur involving all CITU affiliated and friendly unions and Federations to launch the process. The General Council has to take a final decision in this regard from this meeting.

CORRAGE P. RAMAMURTI SCHOOL FOR TU EDUCATION

The 11th conference has also discussed the idea of setting up a permanent TU school with residential facilities and also a research centre, named after Com. P. Ramamurti, the former General Secretary of CITU.

The CITU Secretariat has discussed and conceived the idea of building the school at Ghaziabad.

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

17-20 July, 2004

Nasik, Maharashtra

ON CONDOLENCE

COM. E K NAYANAR

This meeting of the General Council being held at Nasik (Maharashtra) on 17-20 July, 2004 records with deep grief the passing away of Com. E K Nayanar, veteran communist leader and a dedicated revolutionary on 19th May 2004.

Coming from a family of freedom fighters, he joined the freedom struggle at a young age and in the course of anti-imperialist struggle he had spent long period in jail. As a true Marxist leader, Com. Nayanar would not compromise with any deviation and played an important role in the fight against revisionism. He was one of the most popular leaders of Kerala and served 3 terms as its chief minister.

In his death, the left and democratic movement has lost an experienced mass leader. The meeting pays respectful homage to Com. Nayanar and offers heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members.

CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION

This meeting of the General Council being held at Nasik (Maharashtra) on 17-20 July, 2004 deeply mourns the death of Com. Ajit Chowdhury, an outstanding TU organiser who played a stellar role in strengthening CITU in West Bengal and Com. Parmashwar Singh who was closely associated with the movement and CITU since its inception. CITU pays its respectful homage to both the Working Committee members and sends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members.

Meeting also condoles the death of Com. M Nanjappan, former working committee member and senior leader of the working class in Tamilnadu, Com. Ram Sumer Yadav, veteran leader of the working class and democratic movement of UP, Com. Bhan Singh Bhawra, a determined fighter for the cause of agricultural labour, Master Jagat Singh, leader of TU and peasant movement from Haryana, Com. Gorakh Mal, a leader of the Rajasthan Road Transport Workers, Com. Amba Prasad Dubey, a veteran working class movement leader from Raigarh (Chhattisgarh), Com. Jogendra Prasad Singh, popular kisan leader of Bhagalpur and Com. Sudhangsu Gupta a young DYFI activists. The General Council pays respectful homage to the departed leaders.

ON HOMAGE TO MARTYRS

This meeting of the General Council being held at Nasik (Maharashtra) on 17-20 July, 2004 respectfully remembers all those leaders, cadres and activists of trade union, peasant, agricultural labour, youth, student and women who has 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 and for the cause of the people and integrity of the country.

This conference recalls the towering determination with which innumerable comrades of the democratic movement who have embraced martyrdom confronting the heinous and ghastly attacks of the political gangsters, the police and the employer nexus.