

Centre Of Indian Trade Unions

GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

Cuttack (Orissa)

24 - 27 JULY, 2003

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UNITED STRUGGLES and ORGANISATIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF
TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

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PROGRAMME

24.07.2003	10:00 am	Working Committee Meeting
	11:00 am to 1:30 pm	Flag Hoisting Homage at Martyrs Column Inaugural Session Presidential Address
	3:30 pm to 6:00 pm	Introduction of Secretary's Report & Presentation of Accounts
	6:30 pm to 8:00 pm	Debate on General Secretary's Report
25.07.2003	10:00 am to 11:30 pm	Debate on General Secretary's Report
	12 noon to 1:30 pm	"
	3:30 pm to 6:00 pm 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm	Special Discussion on Combating the Offensive of Communalism
26.07.2003	10:00 am to 11:30 pm	Special Discussion on Combating the Offensive of Communalism
	12 noon to 1:30 pm	
	3:30 pm to 6:00 pm 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm	Discussion on Holding the 11th Conference of CITU
27.07.2003	10:00 am to 11:30 pm	Summing Up
	12 noon to 1:30 pm	Adoption of Reports/ Accounts Resolutions Credential Report
		Concluding Address by the President
	4:00 pm	Mass Rally

Tea Break
11:30 am to 12 noon
6:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Lunch Break
1:30 pm to 3:30 pm

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dear Comrades,

This meeting of the CITU General Council has to take stock of the developments during the period after our Working Committee held at Hissar, Haryana from 1st to 4th of December, 2002. The Iraq war, the 21st May general strike, the ensuing 11th Conference of the CITU, a special discussion on combating communalism, the review of our work and other regular items comprise our heavy agenda. Our General Secretary will deal with the developments during this period, together with the review of our work in detail. I shall mainly deal with the developments in the international arena.

THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ AND ITS AFTERMATH

While giving the details of US preparations for attacking Iraq, I had said the following in the last working committee: "It must also be noted that the hot pursuit of US War plan against Iraq is not the so-called possession of "mass destruction weapons" by Iraq which nobody believes. The fact is that the United states wants to bring Iraq, the second oil rich country in the world under its control." The subsequent events completely prove this point.

In spite of the unprecedented world wide opposition the US and its allies did not waiting for the United Nations clearance, and went to war against Iraq on 20th of March, 2003. Using the Mighty Military power of US and Britain they could take over Iraq within a short period of 20 days. They have made large scale use of Bunker busters, Cluster bombs, fuel air explosives etc, against Baghdad and other cities of Iraq causing serious destruction. Many thousands of citizens and military personnel have lost their lives in this war. The following features of this war need our attention.

1. There was unprecedented opposition and people's fury against the attack on Iraq.
2. The United States and their allies went to war against Iraq, ignoring the United Nations and against international law.
3. The allegation and the claim that Saddam Hussein was possessing "arms of mass destruction" has proved to be false.
4. This is the only war where reasons are sought after the war is over.
5. The intention of this war is quite clear that it was for capturing the oil wealth of Iraq and to impose US hegemony over the middle east.

END OF THE WAR

There was a world wide expectation that the Iraqi army would be able to put up stiff resistance against the attacking forces and carry on with the resistance for a longer period. However, it came to an end almost abruptly after 20 days, as noted above. It seems that the Iraqi army did not put up a stiff fight. As per reports they have surrendered. On June 15, the last day notified for the surrender of weapons, the Iraqis had handed over only 123 pistols, 76 semi-automatic rifles, 435 automatic rifles, 46 machine guns, 11 anti-aircraft weapons and 381 grenades and bombs - a very negligible portion of the weaponry they had - to the US military officials. It is assumed that they have shifted their sophisticated weaponry

to the hinter lands of Iraq, to be used against the occupying enemy forces. The American and British forces are facing Iraqi bullets and missiles in different parts of Iraq daily with increasing casualties. The American army commanders are crying for additional forces since they find that the present strength of the army of 1,46,000 are insufficient to cope up with the job.

The Iraqi people realised that the allegation that Saddam Hussein had a big store of arms of mass destruction was a fiction and it was only an *alibi* for taking over their country. Even those sections of the Iraqi people, who were critical of Saddam Hussein, joined in the opposition against the occupying forces. The observers world over are very much skeptical about whether the occupation forces will be able to suppress the developing resistance in Iraq or whether a Vietnam was in the making instead.

THE UN RESOLUTION

The United Nation Security Council has adopted a resolution 1483 on May 22nd legitimising the occupation of Iraq by the US and its allied forces. It was passed almost unanimously with 14 votes. Thus, the occupation of Iraq had got the stamp of legality. It is surprising that those countries who took a firm position against the war have now come around to accept this resolution. Perhaps, the expectation of obtaining a share in the oil wealth and of reconstruction projects had weighed with them. In the UN discussion, the US refused to give a decisive say for United Nations in the future governance of Iraq. It is apt to quote here an American official comment that "the UN too has become an effective instrument of US policy".

The Development Fund Board, constituted as per the resolution to disburse billions of dollars earned from oil will, consist of IMF, World Bank and WTO among others and in effect it will be completely under American control.

The occupation of Iraq will release the free flow of oil for exploitation of the Trans National Companies, which had lined up with the military objectives of US even before the war was begun. Thus, the US imperialism has captured a free country for exploiting their national wealth.

BLAIR AND BUSH IN THE DOCK

Public criticism is on the rise in Britain and the United States over the failure to discover the arms of mass destruction during the war or after in Iraq, though the authorities promised that they would unearth them without delay. However, a new situation has arisen since the veracity of the intelligence dossiers on which they have relied is under cloud. The White House officials themselves have now acknowledged that "President Bush was relying on incomplete and perhaps inaccurate information from American intelligence agencies" when he declared in his State of the Union address that Saddam Hussein has purchased Uranium from Africa. Thus, the main contention of Bush that this Uranium was being used by Saddam Hussein for making Nuclear weapons is now exploded. The American newspapers are full of criticism against Mr. Bush over this issue.

In Britain too the story is almost the same. The high power Cross Party Committee of MPs of Britain, which enquired into the accuracy of the intelligence report, based on which Mr Blair built a case for the war and put Mr. Blair in the dock for placing before the Parliament an intelligence report, which was inaccurate and 'misrepresenting'. This put the British Government in an embarrassing position. Many members of the Parliament and public at large are openly questioning Mr. Blair for the inaccurate facts placed before the parliament. The organised trade unions too are coming out openly against Mr. Blair.

One of the biggest trade unions – the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMT) which created the Labour Party and control the rail and transport workers threatened to disaffiliate from the Labour Party accusing the prime minister Tony Blair for cheating the workers. They declared that they would not support a political party which has gone further than "Tory Party". The secretary of the union called Mr. Blair and his colleagues as war criminals. Many other trade unions too are openly coming out against the British government's policy in Iraq war and demanding that British forces should be withdrawn. Sensing the mood of the British people a renowned press commentator noted "one of the saddest results of our war in Iraq is that it may finish off Tony Blair before Saddam Hussein" (New York Times, July 8, 2003)

THE FALL-OUT OF IRAQ WAR

The Iraq war brought to the fore the fact that the US is bent upon imposing its dictat over the world using its military and economic might in the name of protecting its so called "national interests" ignoring the collective opposition of other nations. This provoked a rethinking among European powers, Russia and China and others to prepare for multipolarism. Though the countries of the European Union have divergent views on many questions, they want the strengthening of Euro against US dollar. The dominant powers in European Union, France and Germany are for strengthening their military power. Steps are being taken in this direction. Russia and China are coming closer and trying to strengthen their defence ties. The Shanghai-7 which met recently have decided to set up a permanent secretariat in Beijing. Russia has also taken steps to unify its military commands with Kazhakistan, Belarus and Uzbekistan while keeping up its relations with France and Germany, which developed during the Iraq war. In short, American hegemonism is sought to be opposed by different formations and moving towards a multi polar setup. However the inter imperialist rivalry is in ascendancy in many ways which needs to be carefully taken note of.

THE CONTINUING OFFENSIVE

The US imperialists are now threatening Syria, Iran, Korea and intensifying attacks against Cuba based on many false and unsustainable allegations, the details of which I do not wish to go into now. However the double standards being practised by the US in the case of Israel and North Korea needs a reference. It is public knowledge that Israel, "the war horse" has been developed and maintained by US as its forward post for West Asian domination. As per the reports appearing in the journals they have a huge stock of nuclear war heads including about 300 to 400 neutron bombs. They have the fifth largest stockpiles of nuclear war heads, which is more than that of Britain. The US administration is "ignoring this huge stock of arms of mass destruction and finding fault with North Korea for attempting to make nuclear bombs" which shows the imperialist double standards.

The new proposals of US for Palestine peace is another ploy to impose a fake settlement on them with ifs and buts. As per the plan all the illegal Jewish settlements upto 31st March'01, will remain in the West Bank at Gaza till 2005. This means that the Palestinians will be given in the name of a State, three enclaves separated by Jewish settlements. However this proposal which has the approval of European Union and Russia might perhaps be sold to them. A free motherland for Palestinians will still remain as a question mark.

All these shows that the US imperialism is out to impose its hegemony over the world. Therefore I need not stress the need for the trade unions of the country to expose all these imperialist maneuvers and strengthen our fight against it.

The US DEMAND FOR INDIAN TROOPS TO IRAQ

The Bush administration wanted 17,000 of our army men to serve in Iraq to suppress the daily increasing people's resistance, with increasing causality for American forces. The Indian big business wanted to oblige US by sending Indian troops to Iraq, in order to get big reconstruction contract and they are pressurizing the government.

The Government of India was vascillating for long over taking a decision on sending troops to Iraq for "peace keeping" (suppressing patriotic resistance) to serve under US command. Inspite of the fact that the Parliament of India had unanimously passed a resolution before the end of the war that US troops should be withdrawn from Iraq, the Vajpayee Government was inclined to send the troops. But ultimately, it had to decide against sending our troops, because of mounting public pressure.

WORLD ECONOMY

The latest economic journals and authentic reports are projecting a gloomy scenario on world economy. The growth rates in advanced countries are at a low ebb with a declining trend. Growing Budget deficits, trade imbalances, debt burdens besides deflationary virus are haunting the developed economies. The United Nations Economic and Social Survey 2003 speaks of a persistence of a slow down in investment trade growth and rising unemployment. The Bank of International Settlements, in its annual report for 2003, observes that during the past year, "economic disappointments, interrelated developments in the geopolitical, economic and financial spheres held back growth and led to great uncertainty about the future." It also said that "the weakening of the dollar may set off fundamental changes in the global economy."

The US economic growth last year was 2.5% but in the first half of this year it has come down to 1.5%, though it has been predicted to improve in the second half. The US budget, which was in surplus of 1.4% in the year 2000 is now showing a deficit of 4.6% of the GDP this year and the current account deficit crossed 5 per cent, that is 86.4 trillion dollars. The US Federal Bank has slashed the interest rates by a quarter to one per cent on June 30th which is a highest interest reduction in the last 45 years to help the ailing US economy. The official rate of unemployment is about 6%.

The economic growth in Germany for the last three years on an average is below 1%. It is predicted that it will be negative by 0.1% for this year. The current account deficit is above 3%. The rate of unemployment is 10.7%.

French economic growth was 2.5% in the year 2002. For 2003 it was estimated to be 1.3 and is again reduced to be 0.8. The unemployment rate is 9.3%.

The Japanese growth was only just over 1% per year. They are taking many steps to ward off deflation. The Unemployment is high as per Japanese standards and it is 5.4%.

The above small description shows that the mighty US economy and the strong economies of the world are facing economic slow down and crisis. The US economic slow down force them to restrict imports and will have serious consequences in east Asia and other countries which are depending on export to US. Therefore the deceleration in US economy will have serious impact on world economy. This may lead to raising of import tariffs, creation of non-tariff barriers which will lead to increasing competition. However this will not open an escape route for the crisis which is built in the system.

The US will try to amass huge funds from the sale of Iraqi oil which will be used to get over the financial crisis and to keep up their economic hegemony.

In the name of meeting the crisis in economy and of improving efficiency an all round attack is being unleashed against the working class. The slashing down of employment, cutting down of wages and other privileges has become the order of the day. Working class resistance is developing everywhere against reforming pension schemes by raising the contribution, reducing the benefits, stopping overtime payments for night duty and Sunday work etc, dropping tax exemption.

THE DEVELOPING STRUGGLES OF THE WORKING CLASS

A full description about it is not possible here! Still I am attempting to invite your attention to the developing struggles in Europe and United states which unnerve the capitalist pandits in a big way. The increasing struggles, their persistency and developing scope and sweep has blown up the theory that the working class struggles are in the vane due to decreasing membership of the unions.

A nationwide strike by the French Working class almost paralysed the country on 3rd June,03. They were opposing the proposal for reforms in the pension system.

The strike paralysed the railways and 80 per cent of flights in and out of France. The Postal workers, ambulance drivers, port workers were among others on strike. The current wave of strikes is the biggest round of work stoppage since the transport workers strike which paralysed France for more than three weeks in 1995.

In Germany, the workers are fighting against the governments, attempts effort to raise pension contribution for their health care system. On May 24th thousands of workers marched in a series of rallies in Germany. The workers in Eastern Germany were protesting against lengthening of their working week.

Widespread strikes were organised in Austria on June 3rd following equally crippling stoppages on June 6th. The Austrian workers protests, in which more than a million workers participated were the biggest after the Second World War. In Britain firemen have been on strike demanding a huge pay increase while stoutly opposing the changes in their working condition.

In America the powerful unions have been holding back efforts to restructure ailing industrie to the detriment to the workers.

On June 30th American workers picketed labour department to protest against the new Bush administration, attempts to terminate overtime pay for 8 million workers. All the trade unions connected with AFL-CIO and others are in one voice in protesting against it. The American workers as per the existing law are eligible to get over time wages for the work over 40 hours a week. And they will get 1 ½ times wages for extra work. The trade unions claim that the American workers on average were work for about 50 hours a week and that is cut down. It will be a very huge reduction in workers income. Therefore, all the trade unions in USA are united in opposing it.

In other parts of the world too, the working class is moving for action against attacks on their rights and privileges in the name of economising production.

The bourgeois leaders are now complaining that labour militancy is coming back in a big way which

they were saying was in the declining process for a long time. As part of it, unity of the trade unions is also developing.

Comrades,

I cannot cover the other developments of international arena but a mention is to be made about the G-8 Summit held in Evian, France in the 1st week of June, 2003. It witnessed big protests by lakhs of people from France, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland demanding the cancellation of the debts of the poorer countries among other things. They have condemned the Iraq war. In spite of the big security arrangements, people who gathered demonstrated and sometimes clashed with the police unmindful of the consequences. The G-8 summit, in their communique, again promised aid, without any concrete plan for solving the problems of the third world countries.

The developments on the national scene will be covered by our General Secretary in detail in his report. However, I wish to touch upon a few points.

In spite of the nationwide strike on May 21, protesting against the policy of privatisation of public sector and other anti worker, anti-people policies of the Central Government, the BJP led NDA Government is adamantly pursuing the same path. Therefore, it is our duty to prepare for wider and stronger action for forcing the Government to change these policies, the details of which we have to discuss in this meeting.

The RSS and *sangh parivar* are trying to develop communal tensions and divisions throughout the country with an eye on the ensuing bye-elections to the State assemblies and the coming general election to the Parliament. We, the working class of the country, should intervene effectively to stop communal polarisation in the country, in the name of building Ram temple in Ayodhya by-passing the Supreme Court Verdict.

The working class is being divided on caste and communal lines by these forces and this is adversely affecting the workers unity and weakening our fighting strength. We should seriously take this point and steps should be taken to widen the vision of the working class above caste and communal affinity and to develop class consciousness among the working population. This task is of great importance.

Comrades, we must concentrate to strengthen CITU and trade union unity as part of the preparation for the battles ahead.

Thank you!

E. Balanandan

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Comrades,

After our meeting of the CITU Working Committee, held at Hissar on 1-4 December 2002, several important developments have taken place in the national and international situation, which have serious bearing on the trade union movement in India. We have to review them and decide our approach, so that we can play our role effectively in the new challenging situation.

1. RISE OF AGGRESSIVE COMMUNALISM

1.1 The burning of a railway coach of Sabarmati Express at Godhra, in which some *Kar Sevaks* were traveling, was utilised as an opportunity to let loose an aggressive communal carnage by the BJP and RSS outfits all over Gujarat. All of us know the heinous and merciless killings of Muslims in Gujarat including aged persons, women and children in Gujarat in a pre-planned manner, as if the *Hindutva* warriors were waiting for a signal to start burning of Muslim bustees all over Gujarat.

1.2 Exact number of Muslims killed is not calculated. Narendra Modi masterminded the genocidal operation, which was actively participated by the police and administration in the State. The NDA Government at the Centre openly connived at the carnage, while relief camps became a mockery. A trade union delegation, which visited Ahmedabad, saw police vans openly carrying inflammable materials, reaching them to the perpetrators of crime against minorities. Haren Pandya, Home Minister in the Modi government, publicly announced that Modi told the police to keep quiet when burning was taking place. He was later on murdered and his father charged Modi for his complicity in the murder.

1.3 *Hindutva* forces got a big boost, when they could rouse Hindu chauvinist feelings by glorifying post-Godhra massacres and win the Gujarat Assembly polls. BJP leaders felt that they lost elections in some States due to their giving precedence to the so-called NDA agenda over BJP's *Hindutva* agenda. Hence they have decided to give more importance to communal agenda, which alone will give them an upper-hand in the forthcoming elections.

1.4 Though BJP resorted to aggressive propaganda in Himachal and J&K elections but had to face humiliating defeat. Though Narendra Modi himself extensively campaigned in Himachal Pradesh, he could not save the BJP Government there from facing a humiliating defeat. In J&K, BJP lost heavily and even in Hindu dominated areas it could not get much support. The National Conference had to pay dearly for aligning with the BJP.

1.5 In UP, the BJP had to be at the mercy of Mayawati of BSP and had to accept several indefensible dealings of her as the only way to prevent opposition from staking a claim to form the Government. This political opportunism of the BJP leadership had exposed its ideological bankruptcy.

1.6 VHP, Bajrang Dal and other RSS outfits are rousing Hindu chauvinism all over India. The issue of *Ramjanmabhumi* and Kashi and Mathura are raised once again in these campaigns, *Trishul Diskha* was used by Togadia and others to rouse anti-muslim feelings among the Hindu populations, particularly in States like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, with a clear eye on the forthcoming assembly elections in these States.

1.7 In Madhya Pradesh, the Kamal Maula's Masjid was characterised as Bhojshala and Hindutva lobby claimed right to worship in the place. Madhya Pradesh Government allowed *puja* once a week in the place. However, this issue was also utilised for rousing communal passion in the State.

1.8 VHP and Bajrang Dal raised the demand for a legislation to construct Ram Temple to avoid any judicial decision in the matter. VHP leaders openly stated that it was a question of faith and judiciary cannot decide on their faith. They even threatened that they would unilaterally take a decision to start construction of temple, if the Government failed to bring in the required enactment.

1.9 On the basis of fictitious report of aerial survey conducted by Tojo International that some signs of pillars were found by them, the Allahabad High Court ordered excavation by Archeological Survey of India (ASI) to find out if the temple existed there. However, the ASI could not find any concrete proof of any temple so far. On the contrary some muslim relics were found in the place. Yet, the communal forces insist that the temple existed prior to construction of *Babri Masjid*.

1.10 The NDA Government, in its statement before Liberhan Commission, gave a clean chit to L K Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharati and others, who were directly involved in the destruction of *Babri Masjid*. Kalyan Singh, former Chief Minister of UP (at the time when *Babri Masjid* was demolished) made a public statement accusing them for their complicity in the destruction of *Babri Masjid*. The BJP also tried to handover the so-called undisputed land to VHP but could not get clearance from the Supreme Court. This stand of NDA Government was diametrically opposite to the so-called NDA agenda but the non-BJP parties in the NDA kept mum when such blatant communal stand was taken by the Vajpayee Government. This opportunism shown by them on petty consideration of some ill-gotten concessions from BJP has only strengthened the BJP for pursuing and implementing its hidden agenda. The BJP has started ignoring its own allies but these parties have lost all self-respect and gave up their secular character in return for some temporary crumbs.

1.11 Intervention by Jayendra Saraswati, the Shankaracharya of Kancheepuram, was encouraged by the Vajpayee government and his proposals were meant to indirectly give credence to the stand of the VHP and RSS. His proposal clearly meant that Muslims should give up their claim and accept the stand of Hindu chauvinists. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board naturally rejected the proposal and opted to await the judicial verdict. Attempts to induct former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar into the fray of negotiations was also nipped in the bud.

1.12 The VHP leader Ashok Singhal demanded resignation of Vajpayee, if he could not bring in a legislation facilitating construction of the Ram Temple at the disputed site. The BJP leaders, while supporting the need for construction of Mandir, stated that they could not bring a law since it did not have sufficient support in Parliament. They also noted that it was not on the NDA agenda. The BJP leaders want to secure a majority in Parliament on their own, to construct Ram temple. Outwardly, it appeared that there was a conflict between the VHP and BJP, but it was all their game to tackle the present NDA partners. Though both these outfits belong to RSS, their fight among themselves is only a division of labour. The controversies coming in public are cleverly monitored by the RSS top brass so that ultimately it helps the BJP.

1.13 When VHP leaders make provocative speeches against Muslims and other minorities and they incite Hindus to attack Muslims, Vajpayee Government does not take any action against them. This is creating scare among minority communities in India.

1.14 The shocking developments in the Best Bakery episode again exposed the heinous complicity of the State administration with the rioters and murderers. A large number of Muslims were mercilessly killed in Best Bakery in Gujarat but the witnesses, who had earlier deposed before the National Human Rights Commission, were threatened and compelled to give false evidence and contradict their own earlier statements in the court. And the judge promptly acquitted all the culprits, describing them as 'saviours'. The National Human Rights Commission took up the case and highlighted the role of communal forces in the Gujarat. Despite exposure of the heinous role of the *Hindutva* forces, the Narendra Modi government is conniving with those who threatened the witnesses. Some of the witnesses have admitted that the false evidence given by them was under duress.

1.15 The Best Bakery case has exposed the real face of the communal forces in the country before the people. It has demonstrated how they have lost all respect for rule of law and also undermine democracy.

1.16 Congress Party by adopting *soft Hindutva* policy is only helping the BJP in its communal agenda. Congress Government in MP banned cow slaughter and advocated bringing of a statue from London museum to be installed in Bhojshala. Chattisgarh Chief Minister has visited almost every temple in the State, with an eye on forthcoming elections. Such policies are creating illusions in the minds of the people and adversely affect secular credentials of the Congress Party, weakening the struggle against communal forces in the country. Such policies only embolden the BJP to carry forward its communal agenda.

1.17 Congress Party has supported several steps of BJP to privatise public sector. Its support to the Government on the Electricity Bill 2003 has helped it to go ahead with its anti-national programmes.

1.18 In this backdrop of aggressive depredations by the majority communalist forces in the country, minority communalism is also active and raising its heads in several parts of the country, as in Kerala.

1.19 The trade union movement in the country will, therefore, have to combat the communal offensive and protect the unity of the working class. We are planning a special discussion on this crucial task in this meeting.

1.20 The BMS is propagating communal ideas in the working class and sow seeds of hatred against minorities among the workers. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to ideologically explain to the working class the dangerous character of communal ideology, which hits at the very basis of unity and integrity of the country. It also tries to destroy our rich cultural heritage, which is based on tolerance of other religions and respect their faith. Without a determined struggle against communal and divisive forces, the united movement of the working class in the country cannot make any formidable advance.

2. FURTHER PRO-US TILT IN NDA GOVERNMENT

2.1 During the last 8 months the country witnessed further pro-US tilt in Government of India's policies. When President Bush and Tony Blair threatened to attack Iraq on the plea that it had weapons of mass destruction, the NDA Government refused to condemn and firmly oppose aggressive designs of U.S.-UK combine. And ultimately, bypassing the UN, when the Bush-Blair combine attacked Iraq and carried

on massive destruction on the Iraqi soil, the Vajpayee Government was forced to move a resolution opposing the attack on Iraq only after powerful democratic pressure inside and outside Parliament could be built up. But still then, the NDA continued to show friendly gestures towards U.S. imperialism.

2.2 The NDA Government was negotiating with US Government to get orders for reconstruction of Iraq by selling oil from Iraq. As a matter of fact the US Government should have paid the cost of reconstruction. Some Indian companies have already established their office at Iraq and US to get orders from US multinationals at a time when US army was ruling Iraq.

2.3 The US pressure on Government of India to send 15,000 Indian troops to Iraq to help US Administration to maintain their control over Iraq was never objected to by the NDA Government. In the name of clarifications India Government was whiling away the time. As these lines are being written, India Government has till not said clearly no to the US Government about sending troops to Iraq.

2.4 When resistance to US army was growing in Iraq and the entire world community unequivocally denounced continuance of US Occupation on Iraq, any move for sending troops to Iraq is a step towards servility to US imperialism. But the Government India's growing dependence on Anglo US imperialism has been responsible for such reactionary policies. The NDA Govt. totally ignored the world wide protests against US role in Iraq.

2.5 Brajesh Mishra, National Security advisor, Govt. of India shamelessly advocated an alliance of Israel, US and India to combat terrorism unmindful of the fact that both Israel and US have encouraged terrorists at a global level. The proposal has naturally been welcomed both by US and Israeli Governments which shows that Indian Govt is acting like a tool in the hands of US administration in their global hegemonistic designs.

2.6 Home Minister L.K. Advani's recent visit to US was a clear exercise of appeasement of US imperialism. Advani's statements both in USA and UK clearly showed NDA Government's servility towards these imperialist powers. In the name co-operating with US and UK in the so called fight against terrorism, Advani practically supported all the evil designs of these imperialist powers.

2.7 Both Indian and Pakistan Governments are vying with each other to show subservience to US imperialism. This was clearly reflected by the gestures and stance of both Advani and Mushraf during their recent visits to USA. Both the Govts are resorting to the policies of appeasement with the fond hope that US imperialism would support it on the question of Kashmir. However US imperialism is using the differences between these two countries to ultimately force US solutions on Kashmir on them and strengthen its control in the sub-continent. Frequent visits of US officials to India and Pakistan make the US designs amply clear. However the two Governments do not realize this stark reality and make efforts to resolve Kashmir question through mutual discussion without any third party intervention.

2.8 US Government is bringing pressure on Government of India to take a soft stand in the forthcoming WTO talks in Cancun (Mexico) and not to oppose the advanced capitalist countries' proposals relating to MAI and host of other issues in return for US giving facilities of outsourcing of IT jobs in India.

2.9 Indian Government's stand of succumbing to the pressure of US imperialism is a dangerous portent for our country. It would also weaken the co-operation between the developing countries. The trade union movement will have to campaign more vigorously against the dangerous pro-imperialist policies of the NDA Government.

3 LEFT FRONT'S VICTORY IN WEST BENGAL AND TRIPURA

3.1 West Bengal is the only state which held regular elections of the three-tier Panchayats and achieved spectacular victory for six consecutive times. Out of 58353 seats, two-third have been captured by the Left Front giving a humiliating defeat to the Congress, Trinamul and the BJP, though they combined clandestinely to defeat the Left Front.

3.2 The outcome of the Panchayat election gave a befitting reply to the false propaganda by the Trinamul and Congress that the Left Front was not allowing them to file nominations. Actually, they could not even get candidates to file nominations on their behalf in many places due to their declining influence among the rural masses. The results of the election also show the growing popularity of the Left Front.

3.3 In the elections of some Municipalities also, held during the intervening period, the left front achieved sizable victory. The snatching of Nabadwip Parliamentary seat from the Trinamool by the CPI(M) candidate also indicated the growing isolation of Trinamul Congress from the people of West Bengal due to their opportunist and unprincipled policies and alliances. The CITU activists in West Bengal campaigned for the left front candidates.

3.4 In Assembly election in Tripura held on 26th February 2003, the left front got once again two-third majority. This was for the fifth time that the people of Tripura have elected left front.

3.5 The victory had a special significance since Congress party had openly aligned with the elements who openly advocated divisive policies. It also joined hands with those who operate in collaboration with reactionary elements in Bangladesh. During the last 5 years, 500 comrades had to give their lives to fight these divisive elements. The left front victory indicated the support enjoyed by it from the people for its correct policies.

3.6 The people of Tripura even now are fighting a glorious battle against the extremists who want to destroy the unity of the people in the state.

4. DEVELOPMENTS IN INDO-PAK RELATIONS

4.1 The process of development of Indo-Pak Ties after the Prime Minister Vajpayee's speech at Srinagar on 18th April is a positive development both for India and Pakistan. Prime Minister of Pakistan Zafarullah Khan Jamali welcomed the move and called for a dialogue between the two countries.

4.2 The sharp contrast with the earlier approach of amassing troops on the borders by both India and Pakistan and jingoist statements made by spokesmen of both the countries, the development of normalization of relations from both sides have created a sense of relief among the people of both the countries. Indian fishermen who were imprisoned in Pakistan were released. The process of establishment of road, rail and air link has commenced while first bus left Delhi for Lahore on 11th July 2003.

4.3 The High Commissions in both the countries have started functioning though full complement of the staff has not yet been established. A delegation of Parliamentarians from Pakistan visited India to create a goodwill among the people of both the countries. A delegation from Pakistani industrialists visited India to develop economic ties and both sides expressed desire to take steps to strengthen the economic relations.

4.4 The meeting of SAARC countries has been planned in Pakistan and Indian Prime minister has agreed to participate in it.

4.5 However, the atmosphere of suspicion is still prevailing in both India and Pakistan and there is urgent need to create a favourable atmosphere for meaningful dialogue to settle all the outstanding issues including that of Kashmir.

4.6 Friendly ties between India and Pakistan would greatly contribute in progress in South Asia and hence leaders of both the countries must pay attention to resolve the differences through mutual discussion at bipartite level. This will prevent US imperialism from taking advantage from India-Pakistan tension.

4.7 A trade union delegation from India is going to Pakistan in the last week of August 2003 which will be an important step to develop people to people contact between the two countries. Friendship between the working class of two countries will contribute in further strengthening of fraternal ties between two important Asian neighbours. It would lead to social progress in both the countries and build atmosphere of peace in South Asia.

5. POSITIVE IMPROVEMENT IN INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

5.1 The visit of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to China from 21st to 26th June has resulted in improving the relations between the two major Asian countries. India and China accounts for one third of the world population. During the visit, several agreements relating to economic cooperation between the two countries have been signed. Perhaps his visit was accompanied by the largest delegation from several industries. The border trade agreement at Nathula Pass was an important component of the agreement which will help the economies of both the countries.

5.2 China was considered a rival to India in economic development. Some were hoping to utilize strained relations between US and China so that US imperialists will help India to become a bulwark against China. However Indian industrialists have realized that economic cooperation with China will be mutually beneficial to both the countries.

5.3 The tackling the question of border settlement through higher level discussion was an important political outcome of the talks. Government of India's reiteration of the stand that Autonomous Region of Tibet is an integral part of China has been adversely commented by several Tibetan refugee organisations. The Govt of India committed that the soil of India would not be allowed to be used by Tibetan refugees for anti-China propaganda. Several Tibetan outfits which are being financially helped by imperialist powers are carrying out anti-China activities in India. It is in India's interest to put an end to their anti-China activities in India.

5.4 India-China cooperation will help in strengthening the struggle of the developing countries against advanced capitalist countries in the WTO. There is urgent need for developing countries to come together so that the attempts of the advanced capitalist country to exploit the economies of the developing countries can be checked.

5.5 India can learn much from the fastest developing economy in the world. It should also take into account the fact that a severe recession is engulfing the capitalist world which is trying to restrict imports from the developing countries. Their trade blocks are serious impediments in exporting goods in their countries. Moreover, the share of the advanced capitalist countries in the world trade is increasing

while that of the developing countries is declining. Increasing cooperation between India and China can be a major factor for faster growth of Indian economy.

5.6 Anti-China elements in India are pressurizing the govt of India to be cautious about China and not to develop more cooperative outlook towards China. Despite these prophets of doom, the trade and economic relation between the two countries are likely to improve and the trade union movement in India should welcome them since it would also help the interest of the working class.

6. NDA OUT TO DESTROY NATIONAL VALUES

6.1 The NDA Government by its various steps is out to destroy rich heritage of the country. History is being repeatedly destroyed while safronisation of education is on the agenda. We have already seen how communalism is eating the vitals of our political fibre. The servility of Vajpayee towards U.S. imperialism is brining our national sovereignty at stake. Despite some positive developments on the China and the Pakistan front the country's policies are frustrating some vested interests. BJP is trying to stick to power by hook or crook and is prepared to go to any extent to keep its majority in Parliament in tact.

6.2 Dissention in BJP are bound to grow under these circumstances and naturally developmental aspects are bound to be ignored. The BJP is doing its best to divert the attention of the people from the real issues and indulging in raking up extraneous issues to hoodwink the masses. The situation is becoming more complicated because of the inability of the Congress party to poll alternative policy issues and mobilise masses to fight for such an alternative policies.

6.3 The Human Development Index prepared by the UNDP has pointed out that out of 175 countries studied by it India's rank has come down from 124 to 127. Though the World Bank and the IMF are praising the advance made by Indian nation and NDF Government claims that it is the second fastest growing economy in the world the above index clearly underlines the fact that India is among the poorest countries in the world.

6.4 Working class and the trade union movement in the country has therefore to assert itself on popular issues and launch vigorous movements on them to defeat the attempt to resort to diversionary tactics. On political issues the working class should be roused so that they will increasingly participate in political actions. Without effective political action by the working class and other toiling sections of the society the present deteriorating conditions in India cannot be improved. The CITU should pay proper attention to this aspect so that we can play an effective role to change the existing situation in favour of the people of India.

7. ECONOMIC SITUATION

7.1 We noted in the last meeting of the Working Committee held in December 2002 at Hissar the terminal trend of overall deceleration in the economy set in by the disastrous liberalized policy regime. The period since then also witnessed the continuation, rather aggravation of the same downward trend in the economy.

7.2 INDUSTRY

7.2.1 As per latest estimate published by Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the industry sector has recorded a growth of 6 per cent in 2002-03. But this is calculated over a abnormally low rate of

industrial growth last year, a measly 2.7 per cent and does in no way nullify the downtrend set in since 1995 onward. The downtrend has further been made profound by the consistent fall in gross domestic capital formation as a percentage of GDP every year since 1995 and in 2001-02, it has fallen below the gross domestic savings, for the first time during the post-liberalisation period. The Economic Times (06-02-2003) observed citing the latest data "that the capital formation rate has slowed down for two consecutive years from 27.7% of GDP at constant rate in 1999-00 to 25.6% in 2001-02. Some sectors have taken even bigger hit. In 2001-02, gross capital formation in manufacturing declined by 7.4%, in transport by 24% and in communication by 18.3% over the previous year." As the Economic Survey (2002-03) had to admit, "stagnation in industrial investment has been a major factor influencing the lower industrial growth in some of the years since mid-nineties." The National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) noted, "Growth remains elusive in most economic indicators and one factor that was yet to see significant improvement was investment activity... Declining interest rates, stable exchange rate, moderate inflation rate, liberalized foreign investment regime, quieter internal security environment or even better profit earnings of the Corporates failed to visibly induce new investments in industrial production capacity." (Business Standard, 1-01-2003)

7.2.2 The aggregate figures of such growth rates do not reflect the depth of the crisis and decline in the industrial economy which, in real term, is becoming even more severe in every passing day. Whatever new industrial ventures are coming in, are far below the alarming extent of erosion of both productive capacity and employment-potential due to increasing closures and consequent joblessness. A study made by ASSOCHAM noted that "In post economic liberalization era, industrial growth in most of the 'BIMARU' States (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) except Rajasthan has failed to pick up, witnessing a sharp decline in the number of industrial units..... While in Bihar, the number of industrial units declined by 57 per cent from 3,671 to 1,570 and Madhya Pradesh it dipped by 21 per cent from 4,163 to 3,269.... Among southern states, Andhra Pradesh witnessed a sizeable fall in the number of industrial units from 15,972 to 13,164." (Business Line, 6-01-2003). Even the Annual Report (2002-03) of the Union Labour Ministry had to record the increasing trend of lock-outs, lay-offs, closures and retrenchments in the industrial economy, in the face of a visible fall in the mandays lost owing to strikes.

7.3 AGRICULTURE

7.3.1 It is just not a case of decline in growth rate, the Agricultural sector is facing an absolute decline. During last six years ending in 2002-03, agricultural growth has been negative for three years and it remained almost stagnant in 1999-00. In 2002-03, it recorded a decline by 3.2 per cent and all blames are put on the drought situation. The decline in agriculture is explained further by the fact that the foodgrains production in 2002-03 has fallen much below the 1996 level by around 16 million tonne, and the major commercial crops, like oilseeds, cotton, sugarcane, tea, coffee also faced a similar decline in absolute terms while the remaining remained virtually stagnant.

7.3.2 The naïve protagonists of the liberalization policies may seek to justify the decline in food grain production on ground of overflowing godowns with foodgrain stock. But how would they justify the sharp dip in the production of commercial crops meant for market in a so called market driven economy. In fact the market as a whole is being sought to be taken away from the reach of Indian agriculture under the new policy regime. The complete liberalization of agricultural imports, coupled with reduction in input subsidies has been putting downward pressure in agricultural production. This is being further aggravated by drastic slowdown of procurement by Govt. Depressed prices of agri-production has acted in further depression in prospect of investment in agricultural economy. And worst sufferers are the landless agricultural workers and the marginal farmers who are facing widespread joblessness,

starvation and destitution in the background of bulging godowns with huge food-stocks. In the rural economy of our country starvation death is co-existing with surplus foodstocks.

7.3.3 Despite all liberalization measures and all concessions to big landlords, the gross capital formation in agriculture as percentage of GDP is consistently falling to reach merely 1.3% 2001-02. Annual growth rate in agricultural employment also has also gone down from 1.51% during 1983-93 to an absolute decline of -0.34% during 1993-2000 and during the current year it has fallen further below. Per capita availability of foodgrains has also been going down every year during the entire post liberalization decade.

7.3.4 The first phase of the Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation has blown the cover on the myth that growing liberalization of the Farm sector has benefited the farmers. It has concluded that "the poor and marginal farmers in particular, forming close to 80% of all the farmers in the country, received undependable, weak and indifferent institutional and policy support and... witnessed adverse changes in their income" (Economic Times, 06-02-2003). All these thoroughly expose the falsehood resorted to by the Official Survey figures claiming the reduction in rural poverty level in recent times.

7.4 AGGRAVATING UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

7.4.1 Unemployment situation has been aggravating and attaining complicated dimensions. Several factors have been contributing to such serious development. The persisting crisis in the capitalist economy all over the world and the onslaught of so called market economy under the regime of imperialist globalisation are the two major factors.

7.4.2 While new jobs are not generated in the regime of 'jobless growth', existing workers are thrown out of employment in the name of cost-cutting and restructuring of commercial activities. Deepening unemployment problem is the consequence of imposing the burden of the capitalist crisis on the labour.

7.4.3 On the one hand the young generation is affected by severe dearth of employment opportunity, on the other hand the existing workforce is becoming victim of closure and retrenchment. In such a situation the trade union movement will have to take up the issue of unemployment as one of the priority task and must provide leadership to the united fight against the menacing problem of unemployment.

7.4.4 Expressing serious concern at the galloping rise in unemployment the ILO has observed, "Economic slowdown have produced deterioration in the global employment situation. With uncertain prospects for economic recovery, a reversal of employment trends is unlikely in 2003." As per ILO estimates world unemployment reached to about 180 million at the end of 2002. In true reflection to the linkage between unemployment and poverty, according to ILO, "550 million workers living on US\$ 1 or less a day at the end of 2002.

7.4.5 As per the results of the 55th round (1999-2000) of National Sample Survey Organisation on Employment and Unemployment, the number of unemployed rose from 20.13 million in 1993-94 to 26.58 million in 1999-2000. The unemployment rate increased from 5.99 per cent to 7.32 per cent. So far the growth of employment in the country on current daily basis status is concerned; it declined from 2.7 per cent per annum in 1983-1994 to 1.07 per cent per annum in 1999-2000. The disturbing fact is that unemployment has increased despite relative growth in output and slower growth in labour force.

As per the 10th Five Plan document on Employment Perspective, "the decreased in employment intensity of output growth can be explained by either an increase in capital intensity or increase in labour productivity, releasing labour ... - capital substituted labour" calling for "strategies to look for labour intensive areas and technologies."

7.4.6 Although it is not a healthy phenomenon for any developing country, it is a fact that in our country still 60 per cent of the employment comes from agriculture. Now 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." Yet another disturbing feature is that "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)

7.4.7 Huge Job losses in the public sector are contributing in a big way in aggravating the unemployment problem in the country. The public sector constitutes about 69 per cent of the total employment in the organized sector. Now due to the downsizing onslaught the public sector has suffered job losses in a very big size. 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). Thus in absolute term 4,20,000 public sector employees have been thrown out of employment during the period noted above. But far more disturbing data springs from the report of the Special Group on Employment during tenth Plan period headed by Dr. S. P. Gupta which assessed that nearly four million excess labour is likely to be shed only in the public sector units and Govt sectors during the Tenth Plan itself.

7.4.8 Against the argument that the organized sector could be made more employment-friendly and employment generation in this sector can be improved if the right to 'hire and fire' is granted to the employers, the Special Group noted, "...in this sector (specially the public sector segment) ...the immediate effect will be more firing than hiring."

7.4.9 In this background, the Tenth Five Year Plan document has adopted a goal to generate ten million employment opportunities per year of the Plan period and fifty million during the entire plan period, which is totally absurd and more aimed at publicity. The Special Group, headed by a planning Commission member has contested the same and noted that, "an 8 per cent GDP growth per year with unchanged patterns and continuance of the increased capital intensity of production, especially in the organized sector, will generate only around six million jobs a year on an average, much below the targeted 10 million jobs annually," The absurdity of realizing the projected 8 per cent growth per annum over the Tenth Plan in the NDA Government's present policy dispensation has also been argued from many quarters. Therefore, even creating six million jobs a year is rather impossible. According to estimates, the number of jobs created over 1994-2000 was only around three million per annum. (Business Line 15.04.03)

7.4.11 Considering the aforementioned facts, figures and formulations coupled with the experience of the past one decade, it is clear that the BJP-led NDA Government is hoodwinking people of the country on the question of employment generation. This Government is rather pursuing policies which are bound to aggravate the unemployment problem in the coming period.

7.4.12 In our country the problem has attained new dimensions because of the fact that in one hand lakhs of employed are thrown out of job and on the other hand crores of unemployed are unable to find job. Further, the employer 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 the 'hire and fire' doctrine. It is the historic responsibility of the working class in providing leadership to united movement of the class and mass organizations against unemployment. The trade union movement must launch a massive and united offensive against the anti-employment policies pursued by the BJP-led Government.

7.5 OVERALL DISTORTION IN THE ECONOMY: FURTHER AGGRAVATED BY THE UNION BUDGET

7.5.1 In fact the liberalized policy regime has led to an overall distortion in the country's economy putting it in the track of terminal decline and erosion of its productive capacity, sectors alike along with aggravating unemployment and accompanying social tensions. That is how the NDA combine at the centre is serving their imperialist masters. It is the agenda of the economy of the developed nations being pursued by the Vajpayee Govt in the Indian soil. The Union budget, 2003-04 has also been designed to promote such distortion.

7.5.2 The consecutive Economic Surveys had admitted that the dampened growth scenario is basically the outcome of severe demands constraint in the economy, i.e., a situation arising out of low purchasing power of the people and squeezing market for the commodities. Investment perceptions are all time low and the capital formation rates are also dipping as a result.

7.5.3 Such a situation demands concrete steps to address the demands constraints on a priority basis through augmenting public investments and developmental expenditures and spending more on increasing the purchasing power of the people. But the Govt treaded the just opposite way. It has doled out huge concessions to capitalist-landlord lobby, both domestic and foreign, in the name of promoting investment and attracting foreign investments. The current Union budget also doled out a big concession of Rs 2950 crores through direct tax cuts, mostly benefiting the richer class while imposing an even bigger burden on the common people through increasing the indirect tax by Rs 3294 crores. In an already-recession stricken market, the indirect tax burden will make the recession deeper by way of making domestic products uncompetitive vis-à-vis imports on the one hand and further pushing down the purchasing power of the commoners on the other. The sting gets worse as an entire array of luxuries, frivolities and products (such as cars, ACs, aerated soft drinks, gold, precious stones, liquors, audio cassetts and passenger baggage) have been picked up for favourable treatment and some popular goods meant for the masses such as edible oil and vanaspati (with their prices already sky-high) buses, trucks, cement, diesels etc have been subjected to excise hike. The budget is full of misdirection of public expenditure at the cost of needy indigent millions. While Rs 507 crore have been provided for extension of cheap grains to the poorest 50 lakh families, Rs 27800 crore, a nearly 55 times larger provision has been made for holding unnecessary large food stocks. It is wrong to treat this Rs 27800 crore as consumer subsidy. Even free distribution of the excess stocks (including the cost of distribution) of cereals to the underfed would have been cheaper than storing them. Can distortion go further ?

7.5.4 In the background of liberalized imports of agriculture, the reduction in the subsidy on the agricultural inputs like fertilisers, electricity etc as declared in the budget would further make the agricultural economy less remunerative and only speed up the pace of decline that has already set in since last few years.

7.5.5 On the other hand the so called incentives for augmenting investment is destined to fall flat as is evident from the experience of previous years. Investment growth has been consistently dipping since

last half a decade and the concessions are being pocketed by the capitalists through manipulative route. The banks are flushed with funds without any takers for investment purposes, although the interest rates are being reduced in successive budgets and also through separate announcements. The significant increase in the profits earned by the Scheduled Commercial Banks in 2001-02 was mainly due to other incomes, particularly from Securities trading and not from usual banking activities, as noted by the Economic Survey (2002-03). This is enough to expose the gravity of the unhealthy distortion setting in, in the economy contributing only to speculative activities but not to production, creation of wealth or employment generation. The profit margins of the big corporates in the country also depicts the same trend earning more and more through other routes than employment generating productive activities.

7.5.6 As the eminent Economist Prabhat Patnaik has explained, "The claim that the budget is 'growth oriented' is based however, on invoking a myth, namely that doling out of concessions to the capitalists (including the foreign ones) ipso facto promotes growth. This self-serving proposition is utterly vacuous, both theoretically and empirically. Capitalists invest only when demand is sufficiently buoyant ; when this is not the case, no matter how large a transfer is made to them from the public exchequer, they would not invest. They would simply pocket the transfers, which is why this self-serving argument is put forward with particular vehemence precisely in periods of recession.

7.6 FORTHCOMING WTO MINISTERIAL MEET

7.6.1 Further distortion in the economy is in the offing as the forthcoming WTO ministerial meet to be held at Cancun (Mexico) on 10-14 September 2003 is coming nearer which is slated to discuss further liberalization of trade in agriculture, investment regime and a host of procedural and other issues aimed at further subjugating the interests of the developing nations in the interests of the few richer ones.

7.6.2 In the last WTO ministerial meet at Doha, the developing countries including India insisted on a thorough review of implementation and impact of the provisions of the first WTO agreement at Marakesh, before taking up any new agenda. But they could not stick to that position and had to concede to Doha declaration drafted basically on the agenda of the developed countries. As the eminent International Trade Analyst Helleiner observed, "Consensus achieved at Doha, as ever before, was through bilateral, behind the scene pressures, dealing and bullying." And the said Doha declaration was drafted in a manner that allows the richer countries in particular, to interpret as per their convenience to impose their agendas on the developing countries in subsequent WTO meet. As the Govt of India had also to admit, "Varying interpretation to the Doha mandate continue to be made, especially from the proponents like European Commission" (Economic Survey 2003-03).

7.6.3 In the forthcoming WTO Ministerial meet at Cancun, the powerful block of the developed countries are slated to impose many contentious new agendas, much to the detriment of the real interest of the developing countries and the latter's demand for objective review of the merits and implementation status of the already agreed decisions has been already sidelined.

7.6.4 The issue of Trade-facilitation supposed to be taken up in the Cancun meeting is aimed at so called "easing out" all provisions of procedural controls, checks and examinations of the merchandise—the foreign import in particular, before their entry and to practically replace the mechanism of physical checks and controls by so called system of "relying on self compliance." The proposed measures would involve huge cost for the developing countries, much more than the benefits gained from trade. Further, given the endemic corruption among the multinational corporate giants like Enron, World.Com

and many others, allowing the foreign imports to evade physical checks at entry points and reliance on self-compliance will be disastrous for the developing economies. Similarly, the agenda of Multilateral Agreement on Investment is also aimed at removing all controls and regulations, not only on investment but also on the FDI companies operating in Indian soil, both new and taken-over units in respect of their operations, imports and almost every other thing to take them out of the purview of the laws of the host countries. This would not only damage our economy but also weaken the national security. The issue of increasing market access for agricultural products is another area where pressure, both direct and indirect, will be mounted on the developing countries for more deregulation, lowering of tariff and reduction of subsidies, which would spell further disaster in our already ailing agricultural economy. The irony is that the developed countries who are giving sermons to us for reduction of agricultural subsidies are themselves allowing subsidies to their agriculture to such a high extent that for every dollar of profit earned by their agricultural business, the subsidy component is more than 3 dollars. Can hypocrisy go further?

7.6.5 Given the already visible bending postures of the NDA Govt before the imperialist powers on several political and economic issues, the Govt of India's role in the said ministerial meet cannot be relied upon unless people's pressure can be built up against the possibility of further surrender of national interests by this anti-national Govt. It is learnt that during the recent visit to USA, the Indian home minister has already given an understanding to US president to cooperate in the forthcoming WTO meet, with a request that the outsourcing of the IT jobs from USA to Indian market should be allowed to continue, which is being opposed by the American trade union movement.

7.6.6 We must make serious effort to mobilize all sections of people in the forthcoming days to build pressure on the Govt of India not to surrender to the pressure of the imperialist countries in the ensuing WTO meet. Some agitational programmes are being planned in the month of August by the WTO Birodhi Abhiyan Samity. We should organize massive mobilization along with other mass organizations on that occasion throughout the country.

8. ONSLAUGHT AGAINST PUBLIC SECTOR AT ITS PEAK

8.1.1 A scrutiny of the disastrous privatization policy continuously pursued by the central Government since 1991 would reveal that the attack on public sector has been intensified by the successive governments at the centre. The Congress government started the privatization game through the 1991 policy statement declaring, "a part of the government's shareholding in the public sector would be offered to mutual funds, financial institutions, general public and workers." While the UF government continued the process by establishing the Disinvestment Commission, the BJP-led government gave disastrous push to the policy by creating the Disinvestment Ministry. Up to 1999-2000, it was sale of minority shares of various PSUs in small lots.

8.1.2 The NDA regime has pushed the policy of disinvestments to conclusive privatization by outright sale of profitable PSUs. While delivering the 2000-01 budget speech in Parliament the Finance Minister declared, "Government have recently established a new Department for Disinvestments to establish a systematic policy approach to disinvestments and privatization which will emphasize increasingly on strategic sales of identified PSUs." In his address to the joint session of Parliament the President said, "the shift in the emphasis from disinvestment of minority shares to strategic sale has yielded excellent results."

8.1.3 Thus the rabid anti-public sector policies pursued by the BJP-led NDA Government is in its peak. The notable features of the current privatization onslaught is that the blue chip profit making PSUs

which were decorated with the classification of 'Nava Ratnas and Mini Ratnas' are the top targets. In the process blue chip profit making strategically important PSUs are being privatized one after another. It is a matter of serious concern that the strategic sectors like oil & petroleum, power, coal, telecom, rail, road and air transport, ports & docks, airports and of course the financial sector are top in the agenda of privatization of Government.

8.1.4 Since the establishment of the Ministry of Disinvestment, 34 public sector units have been privatised under strategic sale route. A sum of Rs.11,344.00 crore has been raked by the Government out of the said strategic disinvestments deals. (Public Enterprises Survey 2001-2002). Apart from the Hotels of ITDC and HCI, the PSUs which have been strategically disinvested include: MFIL, BALCO, CMC, HTL, IBP, VSNL, PPL, STC, MMTC, HZL, Maruti Udyog, IPCL

8.1.5 The strategically important profit making blue-chip PSUs which are being desperately pushed for privatization by the Ministry of Disinvestments include HPCL, BPCL, Shipping Corporation, NALCO, Ports & Docks, Airports Authority of India, CIL,

8.1.6 The Vajpayee Government has become so desperate to handover the entire public sector network to the private business houses and foreign MNCs that they are extending out-of-the-way concessions to attract private capital. Recently, the Government have announced a policy called 'infancy time' of three years to privatized PSUs with accumulated losses. Under this policy the private owner of the sold out PSUs shall be extended liberal loan by public sector banks and such loan shall be kept out of NPA norms for three years. It is reported that 24 PSUs under this category are marked for sell-off this fiscal. The entire move has been termed as, "commercial banks to increase their exposure to privatized government companies through higher working capital loans." (Economic Times:29.05.03)

8.2 EXCELLENT FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE BY PSUs

8.2.1 Amongst the serious fall out of the privatization of strategic public sector corporations, not only the nation shall lose assets worth hundreds of crores of rupees built with public money by our skilled employees but also the national exchequer shall incur recurring losses on account of dividend, tax and duties. We must remember that the public sector industries are way ahead of private sector in the matter of payment of tax and duties. These facts should constitute the focus of our campaign against privatization.

8.2.2 The net profit earned by public sector undertakings in the 2001-02 was Rs.26,045.00 crore against Rs.15,653.00 crore in 2000-01 recording a 66% increase. Profit, interest, depreciation and tax payment have increased by 29.34% to Rs.89,619 crore in 2001-02 from Rs.69,287 crore in 2000-01. The Return on equity share capital (net profit to paid-up capital ratio) was 24.58% for 2001-02. Net profit before tax (PBT) has increased to Rs.38,299 crore in the period from Rs.24,967 crore in the previous financial year registering an increase of 53.40%. PBT to net worth for 2001-02 was 16.49%. The net worth has increased by 31.47%. 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. 1,716 crore from Rs.61,037 crore in 2000-01 to Rs.62,753 crore in 2001-02. (Public Enterprises Survey 2001-02).

8.2.3 The two oil majors – BPCL and HPCL, now under the dark cloud of privatization are credited with an excellent financial performance. The turnover of BPCL over the past few years had been Rs.42,294 crore and the excise duty paid was Rs.10,513 crore. The turnover of HPCL had been Rs.45,286 crore, and the excise duty paid was Rs.11,246 crore. Thus the total turn over of and total excise duty paid by

both the oil PSUs are Rs.87,580 crore and 21,759 crore respectively.

8.2.4 As against this, just take an example from the private sector. The total turn over of Reliance, Grasim, Bajaj Auto, Tata Steel, Sterlite, Colgate-Pamolive, L&T, Raymonds and Glaxo for the corresponding period was Rs.88,157 crore and the total amount of excise duty paid by these companies against this amount of turn over was only Rs.6,840 crore. These figures clearly show the serious impact of privatisation of the profit making oil PSUs on the national exchequer.

8.2.5 The net profit of BPCL last year was Rs.850 crore and fixed assets worth Rs 9,722.00 crore and that of HPCL's fixed assets was worth Rs.10,224 crore. The cash reserves of BPCL were Rs.3,700 crore and that of HPCL were Rs.5,946.00 crore.

8.2.6 In 1991-92 the net profit of BPCL was Rs.148.46 crore and contribution to the Government on account of taxes was Rs.1,876.00 crore. In 2001-02 the company increased its profit to Rs.835.00 crore and contribution to Government towards taxes Rs.10,513 crore. (Source: Speech by Somnath Chatterjee, MP in Lok Sabha on 08.05.03).

8.3 STRUGGLES OF PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

8.3.1 During the period under review there have been widespread struggles of the public sector workers all over the country. The anti-privatisation struggles by the public sector workers in coal, electricity, telecom, fertilizers, ports & docks, banks and insurance are worth noting. But special mention must be made about the on going united struggles of the workers of NALCO, HPCL and BPCL.

8.3.2 The anti-privatization struggles by the workers and the officers of the blue-chip, highly profit making public sector company National Aluminum (NALCO) has been stepped up with the active support of the common people and the entire trade union movement. The fresh initiative for heightening the pitch of resistance has been taken in the face of fresh move by the Govt to expedite the sell-off process. Number of strikes had taken place and popular support to anti-privatisation struggle was reflected through a massive Bandh in Orissa last year. On January 8, the NALCO workers has again demonstrated their firm resolve through paralyzing the highways in all the three places where the NALCO plants are situated and on 21st May 2003 NALCO was on hundred percent strike. The NALCO workers also did successfully send back the prospective customers who went there for inspection from the entry point itself last year. In such a situation the Govt had to shelve their privatization move for the time being.

8.3.3 In the recent period the Disinvestment Ministry again started their effort to re-initiate the sell-off process of Nalco with a time frame of completing the sell-off by 29th September this year. The fresh drive for privatization of NALCO came at a time when the international price of Alumina has gone up to US \$300 per tonne from US \$ 150 last year and the price of Aluminium jumped to US \$ 1400 signifying an increase in 200 dollars. As a result pressure is mounted from the MNC lobby on the Govt for quick sell-off of NALCO and the hence there has been a restart of the move for sell-off.

8.3.4 The Disinvestment Ministry again scheduled a joint visit by the Ministry officials and the Consultants on 16th June but this had to be cancelled following a massive demonstration by the workers and the common people at the Bhubaneswar Airport. The visiting team had to go back from the Airport itself and subsequent programmes had to be cancelled. Following that a massive dharna participated by several thousands of workers and people from other walks of life was held before Nalco corporate

office at Bhubaneswar on 17th June declaring the firm resolve not to allow the sell-off of NALCO.

8.3.5 Massive conventions were also held at Damonjori and Angul, the locations of the NALCO plants to chalk out plan for local level resistance. The NALCO Coordination Committee comprising of all the trade unions and officers Associations at Nalco and the trade union movement in the State alongwith other mass organisations has also been planning for a massive action on 18th July 2003, the date scheduled by the Govt to conclude the MoU for the sell-off.

8.3.6 The magnificent success of the 3-day countrywide strike on 25-27 March, 2003 jointly called by the 26 trade unions functioning in BPCL, HPCL and KRL Refineries and the entire Marketing Network of the companies throughout the country under the banner of NATIONAL UNITED FORUM Against Privatisation of OIL PSUs. has added new dimension to the anti-privatisation movement in the country. The depth and sweep of the strike has clearly demonstrated the determination of the oil sector workers to fight the move to privatise the oil PSUs.

8.3.7 The participation of the oil sector workers both in the refining and the marketing segments in the 21st May strike has also been unprecedented. In fact, this is for the first time the workers of the oil refineries of all the major oil PSUs – IOC, BPCL, HPCL and their subsidiaries – NRL, KRL, BRPL have gone on strike together on policy issues. All the four unions in the Mumbai refinery of BPCL (there is no affiliated union in the refinery) joined the strike and therefore the strike was total. This is for the first time they have responded to the call of central trade unions and have gone on strike protesting the policies of the Government. ONGC workers also joined the strike in large number.

8.3.8 It is important to note that the unity of the overwhelming majority of the trade unions of the HPCL, BPCL, KRL, NRL etc. with various affiliations could be achieved through a long drawn process of preparation, persuasion and of course the collective initiative. The long process of joint consultations, all India convention, regional conventions, joint representation to Prime Minister etc, have ultimately led to the three-day strike action in HPCL, BPCL & KRL. In the process of struggles the 'NATIONAL UNITED FORUM Against Privatisation of Oil-PSUs' has attained more and more strength for struggles.

8.3.9 An all India convention of the public sector oil workers trade unions affiliated to AITUC, CITU, INTUC, Hind Kisan Kamgar Sena, Maharashtra General Kamgar Union and several independent recognized trade unions functioning in ONGC, IOC, BPCL, HPCL, Oil India, BRPL, Kochi Refinery, Numaligarh Refinery etc. was held in Kolkata on 1 June, 2003. The Kolkata convention has decided to carry forward the united anti-privatisation movement through out the country involving the workers of all the oil PSUs and general trade union movement and adopted inter alia the following decisions:

8.3.10 The convention resolved to undertake massive signature campaign all over the country by organizing 'Dharna', Street-Corner meetings, Door to Door campaign etc to collect several crores of signatures throughout the month of June and upto the 3rd week of July,03. The signatures so collected shall be submitted to the Speaker of Lok Sabha during the coming monsoon session of Parliament. Further regional level anti-privatisation campaign shall be carried out through different ways including regional conventions, particularly in Southern Region and North-Eastern Regions and bringing out posters, leaflets etc. With the aim to further strengthen the unity of the oil sector trade unions irrespective of affiliations and work the next course of action, the next extended meeting of the Forum shall be convened in New Delhi during the coming monsoon session of Parliament.

8.3.11 The all India meeting of the coal-mine unions convened by five federations working in coal industry and belonging to CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS and BMS, which was held in June in at Dhanbad,

condemned the Govt of India and the management of Coal India Ltd (CIL) for not implementing the agreement signed on 1st August 2002. The meeting decided to observe 'National Protest Day' on 1st August 2003 throughout the coal industry demanding full implementation of the commitments given by the Govt one year ago. All the five federations also condemned the Govt policy of arbitrary closure of mines, outsourcing the work coal-production to private contractors and mafias. It criticized the Govt for handing over the mine-blocks to State Govts for production of coal through contractors by paying paltry wages to coal workers. The meeting therefore demanded reversal of such policies of the NDA Govt including scrapping of the Bill to privatize and de-nationalise the coal mines. All the five federations also decided jointly to announce the details of further action programmes including strike in the first week of August 2003.

8.3.12 The Coal India management has not yet taken steps to evolve a joint revival package for ECL, BCCL, CCL, NEC and Dankuni Coal Complex. Hence the coal workers decided to carry forward determined struggle against these policies of Govt and the CIL towards outsourcing and privatization of coal industry. Although two years have passed since the expiry of the wage agreement, the joint negotiating committee, the JBCCI has not yet been reconstituted which is causing strong resentment among the workers who are demanding long-drawn united action programmes countrywide.

8.3.13 The Electricity Bill 2003 drafted as per the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank has been finally passed by in Parliament under the initiative of the BJP-led NDA Government. The main intention of the Government behind the enactment of the Bill is whole-sole privatisation of the power sector by way of transferring the huge wealth built by the State Electricity Boards and the Central power utilities at throw away prices. The SEBs which have contributed immensely in developing the power sector in the country shall be dismantled and abolished and the employees shall be thrown out of employment. The Bill has provided that in the process of dismantling the SEBs the employees shall be denied the protection under Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The Central Electricity Authority has been rendered totally ineffective.

8.3.14 The disastrous new law is full of anti-nation, anti-people and anti-labour proviso. There shall all round chaos in distribution and transmission under private sector. There shall be sky-rocketing rise in electricity tariff severely affecting the common people. The Maharashtra, Orissa and the current Delhi experience confirm our apprehension. The Bill provides that private power generators need not obtaining clearance from the Government authority. In short the legislation is an instrument providing for unfettered privatization of the total segments of electricity – generation, transmission, trading and distribution and complete domination of the private sector over the electricity industry.

8.3.15 The movement of the electricity workers and engineers in the industry have conducted long-drawn struggles including strike actions against the draft Bill. The heroic struggles in Andhra Pradesh against electricity reforms including tariff hike by the TDP Government is a shining instance of people's struggles. With the passing of the Electricity Bill, 2003 the adverse impact out of the implementation of the proviso is bound to surface. Therefore, a new phase of countrywide united struggles involving the affected section of the people must be initiated by us.

8.4 SHOCKING REVELATION BY PMO CONSTITUTED COMMITTEE

8.4.1 A very shocking fact have been revealed by none other than a Committee constituted by the all powerful Prime Minister's Office (PMO) last year which studied the post-privatisation situation in certain privatized units. The Committee undertook field visit to take stock of post-privatized situation in BALCO and Modern Food units. About BALCO, the Committee sources is reported to have said, "Sterlite

forced VRS on employees and decided to pay the amount in five installments... Those who refused are being troubled through transfers." So far Modern Food is concerned, "It is unbelievable that in just over two years, Hindustan Liver Ltd has cut off staff strength from 1,650 to 850 and is in the process of shifting its Delhi machinery to Jaipur while the Faridabad unit has already been closed" (TOI 27.05.03).

8.4.2 How privatization brings torture and miseries on the workers has clearly come out in the open from the experience of BALCO. The workers have been made target of all attacks. In the name of VRS actually compulsory retirement is being forced down. Multi-skilling means, to Sterlite, that workers should do all jobs including lower type of jobs. All facilities enjoyed through decades are being withdrawn. Medical facilities have practically been stopped. A newly built canteen hall for workers has been converted to office, because Sterlite feels such a canteen for workers is a luxury. All agreements, conventions and time-tested systems and practices, attained during the public sector period of BALCO have been thrown to winds. In violation to terms and conditions of the sale and the court orders, the Sterlite management have retrenched 1400 work-force.

8.4.3 Newspaper reports say that Sterlite Group has decided to merge BALCO and Hindustan Zinc Limited (also privatised by Arun Shourie at a very cheap price to the Sterlite Group) and go for a foreign loan or a foreign partner. It is feared that BALCO will soon go to foreign hands.

8.4.4 The IPCL experience also revealed the same episode where the Reliance management has decided to downsize the manpower in the privatized IPCL by 12% to start with complaining severe downslide in the total earning.

8.4.5 The aforementioned facts are clear testimony as to how Arun Shourie, the Disinvestments Minister has been speaking untruth that the BALCO and Modern Food workers and those in other privatized units are happy with the post privatization situation.

8.4.6 But that is not all. The entire privatisation process under the stewardship of the NDA Govt has already reveals a grave conspiracy against the national economy to destroy its industrial base and also against the working class. The buyers of almost all the profit-making PSUs, so far privatized, started complaining about loss over reduction of profit erosion of worth etc immediately after their takeover. This exposes the unscrupulous manner huge resources are being drained out from the newly privatized profit-earning PSUs by the private owners to their other business ventures turning the privatized public sector unit sick.

8.4.7 Modern Food, after being referred to BIFR just after one year of its privatization has already exposed such game plan. On the other hand, all noises about loss of profit and erosion of worth are being utilized to get more concession from the Govt under the scheme of "infancy time" as mentioned in the preceding paragraph or under provisions of post-closing adjustment provided in the sale-deed of privatization. At the same time, downsizing and onslaught on workers' rights are carried on simultaneously. Those in governance are actively conniving with the private players, both domestic and foreign, in this process of loot and plunder, both of the country and the workers, shamelessly.

9.1 ATTACKS ON SOCIAL SECURITY

9.1.1 While the trade union movement had been demanding comprehensive social security for all workers, the Government of India has been moving in the direction of making adverse changes to the detriment of the workers, even in respect of the existing social security schemes. The World Bank publication entitled "Averting the Old Age Crisis" carried a blueprint for such retrograde changes. The

Government of India has armed itself with two reports in the process of carrying out such attacks. The first one on Old Age Social and Income Security is by the Dave Committee appointed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Its recommendations had been rejected by the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the Employees Provident Fund (EPF). The second report is by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) on Pension Sector Reforms, which carries a prescription for private insurers floating social insurance schemes, with the premia collected for investment in the stock markets.

9.1.2 For the Government employees, the Finance Ministry had already come out with an announcement that those recruited from 1st October 2001 onwards would not be eligible for the existing pension scheme, where pension payments are effected on a 'Pay As You Go' (PAYG) basis from out of the budgetary allocations. They are also required to buy out their pension insurance schemes. The NDA Government is contemplating to extend such social insurance schemes floated by private insurers to the unorganised workers, which is a mockery of the 'social safety net'.

9.2 ARBITRARY RECONSTITUTION OF CBT

9.2.1 The Labour Ministry has also trampled underfoot the basic democratic principle that the selection of the representatives of workers/unions in any statutory committee should be the sole right of the concerned workers/trade unions. It has, in a most obstinate manner, sought to deprive the Central Trade Unions of their absolute right to decide their nominees in various statutory committees. It has demanded from all the Central Trade Unions a panel of three names for every seat in the Central Board of Trustees of EPF Organisation, for the Labour Minister to choose according to his own likes and eliminate whom he dislikes. Such a move is the aftermath of the failed attempts to misuse the accumulations in the Employees' Provident Fund owing to intervention of some of the workers' members in the Central Board of Trustees. This move is also for decreasing again the rate of interest on PF without any opposition from within the CBT.

9.2.2 The CITU refused to oblige the Labour Minister and mortgage its right to decide its own representative. It is unfortunate that the leadership of the BMS, HMS, INTUC and UTUC-LS succumbed to the pressures of the Labour Minister and abdicated their right to choose their nominees. In a brazen display of vindictiveness the CITU nominee had been kept out of the reconstituted CBT. The Minister was intolerant of the consistent intervention by the CITU representative (S.R. Varada Rajan), as a result of which the CBT unanimously opposed the moves to reduce the interest rate on PF last year and also blocked many attempts by the Minister to misuse the PF money for cheap political stunts and park the fund for stock-market speculation. The only other central trade union to be deprived of representation in the CBT is the AITUC since it also refused to nominate panel of three representatives for one seat.

9.2.3 The EPF Organisation is having a huge corpus of over Rs. 1 lakh crore. It is the only fund which is administered by a tripartite body, including the trade unions representatives. It is the only fund free, as yet, from any major scam, quite an exception to the general phenomenon noted under the BJP regime. Those in governance, in their desperation to have unfettered power over administration of this huge corpus of fund, have reconstituted the CBT with the handpicked nominees of the Labour Minister.

9.3 INTEREST RATE REDUCED

9.3.1 By April end, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) took an unprecedented step by stopping release of any interest-payment to members' account from the month of April 2003. It also

advised the offices to settle the PF claims of the outgoing members - owing to superannuation, death or otherwise - in part, without crediting any interest for the period from April 2003 onwards.

9.3.2 When the present Labour Minister reconstituted the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the EPF, without the representation of AITUC and CITU, it was amply clear that the grand design behind it was just to ensure 'smooth sail' of such anti-worker moves like reduction of interest. The Finance and Investment Committee of the truncated CBT had made the retrograde recommendations - first of stopping the interest and next (on 22nd May) to further reduce the interest rate on Employees Provident Fund (EPF), in the name of making various projections of surplus/deficit. It is regrettable that the Presidents of the BMS and INTUC, who are members of the Finance and Investment Committee, have acquiesced with the Government move.

9.3.3 With the successive doses of reduction in the interest rate from the earlier 12 per cent, the Government is only seeking to grab around 3600 crore of rupees every year from the workers and use it for fiscal management.

9.3.4 The Central Board of Trustees at its meeting on 31st May, decided to reduce the rate of interest but camouflaged it under the guise of declaring a Golden Jubilee bonus just to resort to a make believe exercise of maintaining the 9.5 per cent interest for the current year.

9.3.5 With the coupon rates (of interest) on the Central and State Government securities - in which a minimum of 40 per cent of PF accumulations must be invested as per the Government guidelines - being reduced to around 7 per cent, a long shadow is cast on the interest rate for the future years.

9.4 WHO BENEFITS FROM SOFT INTEREST RATE REGIME?

9.4.1 But, the issue is not just one relating to the social security fund. Even if one were to consider the question of interest rate on small savings, the attempt to bring the same down in the name of 'market determined rates' or 'ushering in a soft interest regime' lacks bonafides and is without merit. In the past five years, the average interest rates on most popular savings instruments, such as fixed deposits, National Savings Certificates and Public Provident Fund, have been reduced by 2.5 - 4 per cent. This erodes a good 20-30 per cent of the income of small investors.

9.4.2 The Government had been resorting to interest rate reduction on all fronts. The Bank Rate has been reduced by 500 basis points from 11 per cent to 6 per cent in the past five years, the sharpest reduction since Independence. The quantum of mandated investments in the banking sector itself (the statutory liquidity ratio) has been reduced to 25 per cent from a peak of 41 per cent in the late 80s.

9.4.3 Terming the interest rate cut as 'unproductive', The Hindu Business Line (in an editorial during 2002) observed: "Interest rates on savings were progressively reduced over the past five years in the hope that the rate cuts would attract increased investment, leading to more employment. But the cuts have not resulted in any dramatic improvement in the economy. Surprisingly, the RBI's bank rate cut — that would eventually force bankers to cut the interest rates on deposits — followed the Finance Minister's observation that the rate cut had not achieved any magic elsewhere, and that he did not expect otherwise in India !"

9.4.4 The review of macroeconomic and monetary developments says that there was a deceleration in the growth of bank credit from 17.3 per cent to 14.5 per cent in 2001-02. The Primary Lending Rate (PLR), which was 12.00 - 12.50 per cent in 1999-00, had only come down to 11.00 - 12.00 in 2000-01 & 2001-02 and had, even by Jan 2003, only been 10.75 - 11.50 (RBI Bulletin, March, 2003)

9.4.5 The Finance Minister answering questions in the Rajya Sabha on 17 July 2002 said there was a need to instead encourage savings in productive avenues to match the 32 per cent investment required for an 8 per cent rate of growth of gross domestic product annually. The gross savings rate in the country had slipped from a high of over 25.5 per cent of the GDP to just above 23 per cent in last fiscal. He also expressed concern about the huge diversion of savings into gold, which made India the largest importer of the yellow metal in the world. The minister said India's large import of gold was a "large unproductive investment" and said it needed to be changed without which the savings rate could not be improved. He said: "the fall in savings rate, particularly that of public savings is a matter of concern and government will come out with schemes for improving tax regime and the economic climate".

9.4.6 The Government has been unable to cope with the interest costs recording a 400 per cent increase between 1990-91 and 2000 -01. The reduction in the rate of interest has made Government the real beneficiary.

9.5 DETERIORATION IN ESI SERVICES

9.5.1 The working of the Employees State Insurance Corporation has deteriorated considerably and complaints of the workers have gone up substantially in the recent past. Outsourcing of the ESI services to private agencies is constantly on the agenda and employers representatives on the board of ESI Corporation have been pressing more for such outsourcing. The Govt is also contemplating to allow private insurance agencies to come forward with their own scheme and the proposal to make ESI scheme optional to new entrants is under consideration of the Union Labour Ministry.

9.5.2 Eighty lakh workers are covered by ESI Scheme today. However, their number is declining due to downsizing of manpower in both public and private sector undertaking. Closure of several units also reduced the number of insured persons under ESI Scheme. Despite that, new areas being brought under the coverage of ESI do not get proper facilities or services despite workers making regular contributions.

9.5.3 The Central Govt does not contribute anything to the whole scheme but it exercises all control on the organisation of ESI. Added to this is the threat posed by the recommendations of the Second Labour Commission which has envisaged discontinuance of some of the ESI services including off-loading of the Hospital-set-up under ESI.

9.5.4 The representative of CITU on the ESI Committee has been repeatedly putting forth various suggestions for improvement and expansion of the services under ESI BUT THE esi Administration is totally unconcerned over the issue of extending proper medical and health care for the workers.

9.5.5 The trade union movement and the working people should realise the immense harm being caused by these unscrupulous moves of the Government and must wage a sustained struggle not only to defend the existing social security benefits but also to secure a comprehensive social safety net for all sections of workers.

10.1 ATTACK ON LABOUR RIGHTS

10.1 The intervening period has witnessed mounting offensives on trade union and labour rights. In fact so called second generation reforms are based, inter alia, on the Govt's game plan to totally dismantle the labour laws and impose conditions of slavery on the working class, the blue print of

which has already been drawn in details by the Second National Commission on Labour (SNCL) as explained in the Report of the last Working Committee and also the CITU publication on the same. What is required to be noted is that the Govt has already been moving in the direction of translating the substantive recommendations of the SNCL into legislation by way of removing all the protective provisions of Industrial Disputes Act and the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act.

10.1.2 But, we also should note that even prior to bringing new legislations, the NDA Govt has started implementing the same by allowing blatant violation of the existing labour laws. Another route of curbing the labour rights is through invoking draconian provisions of ESMA as has been seen in the case of latest strike by the Govt employees and teachers of Tamilnadu.

10.1.3 The mounting onslaught on labour rights in the post liberalization period is also reflected by sharp increase in the numbers of and the mandays lost due to lock outs in the face of declining figures of mandays lost due to strikes every year during the last five year period. As noted by the Economic Survey (2002-03), as compared to the year 2000, in 2001, mandays lost due to lockouts increased by 14 lakhs whereas those because of strikes declined by 64 lakhs. The same trend continued in subsequent years also. As per latest figures available for the first half the year 2002, the total number of workers affected by lock-outs has already crossed the fifty percent of that of 2001 signifying the increasing trends of lockouts. Number of closures also marked a sharp increase as noted in the Annual Report of the Labour Ministry.

10.1.4 But all these are figures pertaining to lock-outs and closures which are officially reported. The Reported figures reflect only a tip of the iceberg and real figures are many times more which reveals as to how the employers in active connivance with the Govts are desperately violating the laws in respect of lockouts and closures in order to deny lakhs of affected workers their due compensations. Even the Report of ASSOCHAM regarding decline in the number of industrial units in various States over the years signifying widespread closures is at wide variance with the official figures.

10.1.5 Added to this is the Govt's announcement of establishing more numbers export processing zones and in particular 32 agri-export zones throughout the country. Besides other implications for the economy, for labourers these export processing zones which are now being converted into special economic zones mean a working environment absolutely at the mercy of the employers. Although 10.1.6 theoretically still now they are covered by country's labour laws, in practical terms, they remain completely unprotected. The Administrators of those EPZs or SEZs, the Development Commissioners are appointed by the Commerce Ministry and in most of the EPZs, they are given the concurrent responsibility to act as Labour Commissioners despite the fact that the Labour Ministry will not have any control or authority on them. The whole arrangement is so developed as to make non-implementation of labour laws for the workers in SEZs inbuilt in the system of governance. Moreover, restrictions in entry in the SEZ area has made formation of trade unions almost impossible in most of the cases. CITU could organize with great difficulties some unions in the EPZs in Chennai, Cochin and Visakhapatnam.

10.1.7 In fact, during the post liberalization period the labour departments and the enforcement machineries both at the centre and most of the States are tuned by the Govts to allow labour-law-violations by the employers with impunity by way of stopping inspection and not entertaining or discouraging complaints or deliberately delaying the conciliation/adjudication process. All these are being done in the name of encouraging investments. It is estimated that around 100 SEZs will be established all over the world in three years. Such a trend is in fact an international phenomenon in the era of globalisation and described as "the race to the bottom phenomenon in respect of labour standards

in order to woo investment" as noted in the ILO report."

10.1.8 So far as the changing the laws in line with SNCL recommendations is concerned the Govt has already made considerable advance. Only few months back, statement was made by the Labour Minister in the Press that the Group of Ministers (GoM) has finalized the draft amendments of the Industrial Disputes Act removing all embargo on retrenchment, lay-off and closure to ensure total liberty for the employers to install a 'hire & fire' regime.

10.1.9 And within few weeks thereafter, the same Group of Ministers hurriedly finalized the draft amendments to Contract Labour (R&A) Act to facilitate total contractorisation of the entire workforce. And both the amendment bills are going to be introduced in the ensuing session of Parliament, as announced by the Minister in the press. Already in the name of outsourcing, a large number of jobs are being passed on to contractors in several industries.

10.1.10 The Second National Commission's recommendation allowed deployment of contract labour in all non core jobs and also in the core jobs in case of exigencies. The GoM completed the unfinished task left by the Commission and finalized the definition of non core jobs to embrace more than eighty percent jobs and workforce in any industrial establishment. As decided by the Group of Ministers, the so called non core jobs which may entail deployment of contract labour include 1) maintenance, service and repair of equipments, machines and plants, 2) construction and maintenance of buildings, roads and bridges, 3) gardening, 4) loading and unloading of raw materials and finished goods, 5) running of hospital, education and training institutions, guest houses and clubs, 6) sweeping, cleaning, dusting and collection and disposal of wastes.

10.1.11 Once the above definitions get the legislative sanction, the first item itself, i.e., maintenance, service and repair of equipments, machines and plants will throw at least eighty percent work in any major manufacturing establishments open for deployment of contract labour. And the definition of the so called non-core jobs has been so enlarged that in the overwhelmingly major part of the manufacturing and service sector, deployment of contract workers in almost all jobs will be legitimized thereby casualising the entire workforce.

10.1.12 Secondly, the Group of Ministers has not left anything to chance. Their loyalty to the interests of the employers lobby, both domestic and foreign, is total. Hence even after providing for such all embracing coverage for deployability of workers with fragile service security to the benefit of the employers class, it did not miss to add a caveat as well. The draft cleared by the Group of Ministers have also laid down that besides the jobs covered by the definition of the non-core, in other areas also "companies can hire contract workers for any sudden time-bound incremental work".

10.1.13 The above caveat has got its satanic implication. It will allow the employers, to begin with, to get the same work done simultaneously under the same roof by two sets of workers with two different service conditions, the permanent workers and the workers under contract, thereby creating tremendous pressure on the rights and wages and other facilities of the permanent workers besides putting the bargaining capacity of the concerned union, if any, under severe strain.

10.1.14 As per existing statute, the Principal employers are required to ensure that the contract workers are treated as per the law of land in respect of minimum wages, timely payment, safety measures and other basic statutory requirements. One must note that whatever benefits the contract workers could so long achieve through organized effort, be it the regularity of payment of wages and other basic statutory amenities or their regularization in permanent work, it was through compelling the Principal

Employers to get involved either through judicial means or through organized struggle. Now, under the proposed amendments, such obligations for the principal employers have been given a complete go-bye, thereby throwing the contract workers under more vulnerable situation.

10.1.15 And the last but not the least, under the proposed amended dispensation, the contractors, small or big, will no more be required to obtain license. They will thus be liberated practically from all checks and regulations by enforcement authority. In this background, the proposal made by the GoM for payment of 45 days' retrenchment compensation to contract workers sounds nothing but a crude joke.

10.1.16 Hence under the deregulated regime, the contract work will reign with an in-built provision for "hire & fire". Those who are left out, the minority section of permanent workers, will be tackled by the provisions of "hire and fire" to be made specifically through amended Industrial Disputes Act in the deregulated and vulnerable working atmosphere. An ideal condition of slavery, that is being sought to be imposed on the working class of the country by the BJP led NDA regime.

10.1.17 In the present composition of Parliament, the Govt may get the pro-employer amendments in the labour laws passed. The working class movement must take note of that possibility when it will have to defend its rights, made illegal by amended legislation by asserting those rights much more forcefully than ever, without bothering about its legal status.

10.2 THE UNORGANISED SECTOR WORKERS' BILL

10.2.1 The unorganised sector in our country employs around 37 Crores workers and is fast expanding as a result of the liberalisation policies. A vast majority of them- 23.7 Crores- is engaged in agriculture. According to the data released by National Sample Survey, out of the rest, 4.1 Crores work in manufacturing, 3.7 Crores each in services and trade, and around 1.7 Crores work in construction. Though several legislations like the Minimum Wages Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, Building and Other Construction Workers (RE&CS) Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, and Contract Labour (R & A) Act etc are fully or partially applicable to the workers in the unorganised sector, none of these is being properly implemented. They do not have any job protection or social welfare benefits. Most of the workers in the unorganised sector, like home based workers, domestic workers, vendors etc are not covered by any protective legislation.

10.2.2 One of the Terms of Reference to the Second National Commission on Labour was to suggest Umbrella legislation for ensuring a minimum level of protection to the workers in the unorganised sector. In fact, suggesting umbrella legislation was publicised as the most important task of the SNCL and was used to counter the criticism against Commissions' moves to dismantle the labour laws meant to protect the interests of the so called well placed workers in the organised sector. But the draft bill proposed by the SNCL contained nothing more than an elaborate structure of Boards from the Central to the Panchayat level, registration of the unorganised sector workers and issue of identity cards. It contained nothing concrete to ensure job protection, minimum wages and social security. No responsibility was fixed on the Government to contribute for their social security.

10.2.3 In the 38th Indian Labour Conference held in September 2002, the Labour Ministry assured that a bill would be drafted and consultations would be held among the social partners. But the first draft prepared by the Ministry of Labour was mostly confined to providing a structure of welfare boards for administering contributory social security and welfare measures to be framed afterwards, without

any provision for employment protection, minimum wages etc. for the workers. In addition, the first draft enabled the Government to assume absolute authority to decide about the application, modification and alteration to the existing statutes, which are in force. There was also no provision for action against the employers who fail to contribute to the welfare fund. All the Central Trade Unions including CITU, AITUC, HMS, INTUC and BMS- discussed the bill and came to the common understanding that the bill required lot more modifications. On 22nd January 2003, they sent a joint letter to the Union Labour Ministry demanding redrafting of the bill by involving the trade unions in the process. On 5th March 2003, CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, UTUC (LS) and BMS jointly reiterated their demand raised in the 38th ILC that the bill should be taken up as an agenda in the 39th Standing Labour Committee and the 39th Indian Labour Conference.

10.2.4 The Labour Ministry called a meeting of the Central Trade Unions on the 24th of May 2003 to discuss the redrafted bill on unorganised sector workers and asked the Trade Unions to give suggestions within 15 days. The second draft bill was more retrograde than the first one. Though the second bill dropped the proposed section 54 authorising the Government to decide on the application, modification and alteration of the existing statutes, it has avoided defining several terms, including 'dispute', 'self employed worker', 'contractor', 'principal employer' etc, making it vague and prone to different interpretations, to the detriment of the interests of the unorganised sector workers. Even the Lok Shramik Panchayats or Labour Courts mentioned in the previous bill do not find any mention in the new bill. The entire section on Inspection, Penalties, and Procedures is omitted. There is no provision for ensuring that the provisions in the bill are complied with. Neither is there any provision for the resolution of any dispute regarding the application of the Schemes or the social security or welfare benefits applicable as per this bill. Most importantly, this bill too contains no provision whereby the employer employee relationship can be established, which is one of the most serious problems faced by the workers in the unorganised sector. There is no provision as usual to protect the job security of the unorganised sector workers.

10.2.5 The draft bill has not incorporated many of the unanimous suggestions of the tripartite workshop held subsequent to the meeting of the ILC. Though a brief chapter on employment related issues had been added in the new draft, the provisions therein do not contain anything concrete. For instance, there is a cursory mention of minimum wages. But neither in the present draft nor in the original Minimum Wages Act, there is any provision to give effect to the norms laid down by the 15th Indian Labour Conference and the Supreme Court judgment in the Raptakos Brett case for prescribing the minimum wages.

10.2.6 CITU, AITUC, AICCTU, TUCC, UTUC, UTUC (LS), HMS, BMS, and INTUC discussed the bill and sent sectionwise amendments to the bill in a joint letter to the Labour Ministry. They have also reiterated the demand that the bill be discussed in the ensuing SLC and ILC. The Trade Unions made the following general observations and suggestions to be taken into consideration before finalising the bill:

- a) There should be a separate bill for the agriculture workers. The separate bills on employment conditions, welfare, and social security aspects should be moved simultaneously with the bill on the unorganised sector workers.
- b) All these bills including the unorganised sector workers' bill should provide for initial funds and regular defined contributions from the Centre and the States.
- c) The entire cost of administration of the Act (s) should be borne by the Government at least for

the first five years and the position can be reviewed and revised commitment worked out after this specified period.

d) The minimum basic welfare and pensionary benefits to be included in the Schemes should be incorporated in the bill.

e) Wherever the employer is not identifiable and/ or the worker is compelled to change employment frequently, the contribution of the employer should be paid by the Government /Board.

f) The Board (s) constituted under this Act should be a body having statutory powers to administer the various functions and Schemes under this Act.

g) The Board should have equal representatives of the Government, workers and employers.

h) The Government should allocate funds for social security at an annual rate of 3% of GDP and it should progressively increase till a satisfactory level of social safety net is in place.

i) Area of coverage and time frame for commencement of the Act and authorities for implementation and enforcement should be specified.

10.2.7 The CITU Committees and the Unions, particularly those of the unorganised sector workers should campaign widely to bring pressure on the Government to incorporate the suggestions of the Trade Unions in the proposed bill for Unorganised Sector Workers.

10.2.8 The Government of India and the present Minister of Labour are reportedly very keen to introduce the Bill just to claim that they have showered mercies on the unorganised sector workers, who do not have any legal protection. But, the legislation, as contained in the draft, will only be on paper without any scope for implementation.

10.2.9 The meeting of the Standing Committee has been convened on 25th July 2003 during the CITU General Council meeting. Our representatives attending the meeting will express the views of CITU and the united trade union movement, forcefully and demand changes in the Bill as demanded by the Central Trade Unions.

11. MAJOR ACTIVITIES, AGITATIONS AND STRUGGLES

11.1 The 8th January Satyagraha and Courting arrest programme, 26th February 'March to Parliament' and the 21st May All India General Strike were the three major struggle programmes we have undertaken during the intervening period from the united platform. All the three generally evoked a good response from the workers. Besides these, a large number of State level and industrywise campaigns and struggles were conducted during this period which goes to prove that the working class is getting ready for militant struggles against the attacks on its rights and to protect and improve its living conditions.

11.2 COUNTRYWIDE SATYAGRAHA ON 8TH JANUARY

11.2.1 As per the call of the National Assembly of Workers, several lakhs of workers throughout the country courted arrest through militant demonstrations on the 8th January. This was one of the widely participated programmes, spread over all corners of the country in the recent period and reflected the resolve of the workers to confront imperialist globalisation through militant actions.

11.2.2 In West Bengal more than 2 lakhs workers participated in the demonstrations and dharnas and several thousands courted arrest. In Kolkata, more than 30,000 workers participated in the dharna and courting arrest programme. In Tripura, massive dharnas were organised on that day. In Andhra Pradesh, around 20,000 including a large number of women workers, participated in the picketing in 49 centres. In Karnataka around 15,000 workers courted arrest. In Tamil Nadu, picketing and demonstrations were organised in 100 centres of the State covering all districts and industrial areas. More than 22,000 workers including 2,259 women workers courted arrest. In Orissa, more than 20,000 courted arrest in different parts of the State. NALCO workers paralysed traffic on the National Highway for six hours. In Madhya Pradesh, workers resorted to road blockade and massive rallies in several places like Bhopal, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Nagda, Indore Guna Mandidwip, Nemach and all the major coalmining areas throughout the State. Chhattisgarh witnessed massive demonstration and dharna in Raipur, Dhamtari, Korba, Balco, Chirimiri, Rajnandgaon etc. In Rajasthan Road-blockades by several thousands of workers were reported from Sriganganagar, Ajmer, Kankrouli, Khetri, Chittorgarh and Jaipur. In Haryana, demonstrations and road blockades were held in most of the district headquarters. Police resorted to lathi charge in Hissar before arresting the workers. In Assam 3,000 were arrested while around 10,000 participated in the dharna. In Tinsukia, police lathi charged the demonstrators and also fired in the air to disperse the huge crowd. In Maharashtra around 50,000 workers participated in road blockade and demonstrations and thousands of workers including a large number of women were arrested. In Delhi, a demonstration was held and a large number of workers were arrested. Rail and road blockade in the face of lathi charge by police and mass arrests were also reported from Punjab. Even in Gujarat, huge processions were organised and hundreds courted arrest in Vadodara. In Uttar Pradesh road-blockade and rail roko were organised in several centres like Luckhnow, Kanpur, Varanasi, Meerut, Agra etc. In Himachal Pradesh thousands of workers held demonstrations, road blockade, picketing and courted arrest. In the hydel project areas thousands squatted on the road paralysing traffic for several hours. In Uttaranchal hundreds of workers participated in the demonstrations. In Andaman and Nicobar islands a large number of workers squatted before the Secretariat till evening culminating in a huge procession.

11.3 MARCH TO PARLIAMENT ON 26TH FEBRUARY

11.3.1 Lakhs of workers participated in the March to parliament on the 26th February 2003. Though it was decided that workers would march to Parliament, a march in the real sense could not be held because of the compromising stand taken by some trade unions. Only the CITU had organised a procession from the camp site, which was around 8 Km away from the Ranjit Singh Flyover where the public meeting took place. But on the whole the programme left many participants confused because there was no serious attempt to 'March' to the Parliament. One major weakness of ours was that the mobilisation from some of the adjoining/ near by States like Punjab, UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, were much less than expected thereby reflecting the lack of initiative in the concerned areas. In spite of the general call for an all India Strike, not declaring any date from the 'March' disappointed many participants.

11.4 21ST MAY GENERAL STRIKE

11.4.1 The 21st May All India General Strike evoked widespread response from the working class in general and from the Public Sector employees in particular. The response of the workers in the sectors which faced immediate threat of privatisation like electricity, oil and natural gas, coal was particularly massive. It was magnificently responded to by the workers of almost all the strategic sectors of the economy like Port & Dock, Financial sectors, Telecommunications, Defence-production, Postal Services etc. It is to be noted that workers in some important public sector industries, who were not participating

in the earlier strikes, participated in the strike against the Government's policies for the first time.

11.4.2 The Govt employees both under the Central and the State Govts including the municipal employees also participated in the strike in a big way. In certain States like UP, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh strike by the Govt employees reflected total unity of all the major organisations. Transport workers in several States joined the strike almost creating a bandh like situation.

11.4.3 The General strike of 21st May got converted into a BANDH in around six States like West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand owing to massive support from people from other walks of life in the struggle against the disastrous policies of the Govt. In AP the Congress Party supported the Bandh-call. In the State of Orissa also a BANDH like situation has emerged as mass of the people took on the street along with the striking workers. Owing to participation in strike by the Roadways and public transport workers in Haryana and massive demonstration by the striking workers on the main roads, bandh-like situation also emerged at various pockets of the State for the greater part of the day. In Karnataka also there has been BANDH in six districts like Bellary, Tumkur, Koppala, Gangavati, Uttarakannada, and Mysore.

11.4.4 The participation of women workers in the strike and the demonstrations, dharnas etc held on the day of strike was remarkable. Anganwadi employees in several States joined the strike en masse. In some places, they conducted mike propaganda in autos, and mobilised other sections of the workers for the demonstrations. In Haryana, the Anganwadi workers in good numbers gheared the police station along with other section of workers to force the police to release the striking road-transport workers.

11.4.5 The role of the unorganised sector workers in making the General strike successful had been never so prominent as has been demonstrated on 21st May. Reports have been received almost from all corners of the country regarding the active participation of the loading-unloading and hammal workers in various major market-places in the 21st May strike which left the business in various markets severely affected. More important is that it was mainly the mass of the unorganised sector workers in beedi, loading unloading, contract workers, brick kilns, construction, stone quarries, forest workers, sweeping and cleaning and various other miscellaneous occupations – a large number of them women, who have brought the countrywide action by the working class on the streets throughout the country. They not only joined the strike but also took the lead role in the road blockades, dharna, demonstrations etc on that day.

11.4.6 In almost all the States, CITU cadres played an active role to make the strike a success. Seminars and joint conventions were organised in several States to make the strike a success. The INTUC and BMS leadership who were signatories to the common eight point charter of demands for the strike, backtracked from joining the strike, calling it politically motivated. But in several States and industries their members joined the strike in large numbers. Gopeswar, former General Secretary of INTUC wrote a letter to the General Secretary of CITU supporting the strike. INTUC unions in Assam in the Oil sector and in BEL in Ghaziabad, in ONGC in Tripura and many other places served strike notices and participated in the strike. The near total strike in coal and port & dock sector where INTUC and BMS also are having followings established beyond doubt that the major section of their own ranks outrightly rejected such opportunist stance of not joining the united countrywide action. A section of INTUC leadership had their meeting in Mumbai to declare their support to 21st May Strike.

11.4.7 Thus 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.

11.4.8 The NPMO supported the strike and called for its constituents to organise concerted countrywide protest actions like, rasta roko and rail roko etc. The reports from all over the states reveals that the NPMO call has not been fully responded to everywhere. In some States like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam etc, leaders of Kisan Sabha, Agricultural Workers' Union, and some other mass organisations participated in demonstrations and road and rail blockades in certain places.

11.4.9 The General strike of 21st May 2003, despite being widespread than the previous seven countrywide strike actions against the policies of globalisation has yet left a substantial section of the working people out of its fold. As per a conservative approximation, around two and half crore workers joined the strike countrywide. But, we must admit our failure to rally still a substantial section of workers, both in the organised sector and unorganised sector in the struggle. We must note that in some of the major steel plants, BHEL installations and power projects etc strike was only partial and that reflects our organisational weakness at various levels.

11.5 OTHER PROGRAMMES OF AGITATION AND STRUGGLES

11.5.1 May Day: May Day this year was celebrated with the call to make the 21st strike a grand success. The May Day rallies this year were more impressive than previous many years. The processions and the mass meetings throughout the country were well attended. Massive rallies were held in West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, in the tea gardens of Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh etc.

11.5.2 Anganwadi Federation: After a prolonged struggle twelve lakhs anganwadi workers and helpers achieved a hike in their honorarium. Our Federation gave call for sustained campaign programme – collection of signatures of MPs, sending telegrams to the Finance Minister, Project level demonstrations, burning of effigies of the Government etc. This was carried out with a lot of enthusiasm by the anganwadi employees in almost all the States. Delegations of the Federation leadership along with the CITU leaders met the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister.

11.5.3 Efforts were also made for the implementation of the Government Order after it was released. The arrears have been given in many States. But in some States the increased honorarium is not yet implemented. In some States like Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu etc, the State Governments have withdrawn the additional remuneration they were paying for the additional work in the States. Several States where the arrears have not been paid have organised struggle programmes.

11.5.4 AIFAWH mobilised more than 2,000 anganwadi employees for the March to Parliament and in the dharna by Samyukta Sangharsh Samity at Jantar Mantar on the 27th February 2003 demanding regularisation and resolution of the other pending demands.

11.5.5 A Central Trade Union Class for the activists in the Hindi speaking States was held at Delhi on 24-28 May 2003. 53 activists from Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Punjab participated in the 5 day Class. The success of the Class indicates that women-activists, even from Hindi States, which are generally considered to be backward, were ready to learn and acquire skills necessary for the work in trade unions.

11.5.6 State Conferences were organised in Assam, Tamil Nadu and Chattisgarh. In Assam, an impressive rally was organised at Bongaigaon, in which tribal, non tribal, Assamese and Bengali

anganwadi employees all participated with great enthusiasm, in spite of the bandh calls given on both the days of the Conference. A State level convention of anganwadi employees was held in Khanabal in Anantnag district. Around 2,000 anganwadi workers and helpers participated in the Convention where a State level organising committee was formed. The first State Conference of the anganwadi union in Chattisgarh was held on the 20th of July 2003 at Korba and a State Committee was formed.

11.5.7 Several important State level struggles were also conducted during this period in several States and industries. More than 5,000 coal workers from 3 IISCO collieries in Ramnagar, Jitpur, and Chasnala under the IISCO management went on an indefinite strike from 12th November 2003 demanding implementation of the JBCCI agreement and payment of bonus to all the workers. Earlier the united movement of workers resorted to dharna, hunger strike and other forms of agitation as the workers were not paid any bonus this year. The strike continued for one week unitedly. Burnpur workers of IISCO expressed solidarity with the striking coal mining workers. It was settled after the management agreed to pay bonus to the workers.

11.5.8 Salem Steel: On 5th February 2003, the Save Salem Steel Committee staged a one day hunger strike in front of the plant to protest against the Government's bid to sell off the plant. All unions irrespective of affiliations participated in the hunger strike.

11.5.9 Workers of Bokaro Steel Plant observed near total strike on 3rd December 2002 on the demand of Bonus. Success of the strike spread all over the steel industry and resulted in Unions in two more steel plants, DSP and RSP alongwith Bokaro steel plant again served the strike notice on the bonus issues in January. The management had to come forward and settle the issues with the unions.

11.5.10 A large number of workers of the Chenab Hydro Project in Jammu and Kashmir held a massive demonstration on the 7th March 2003 against the illegal retrenchment by the contractor. More than 50 workers were injured in the brutal lathi charge and firing by the police. The workers started a continuous dharna along with their families demanding implementation of labour laws. Jibon Roy, Secretary, CITU met the workers and extended the support of CITU.

11.5.11 Kerala State CITU Protests: The Kerala State Committee of CITU organised a series of protest actions against the World Bank, Asian Development Bank dictated policies of the UDF Government. As a culmination of this campaign around 5 lakh workers laid siege to the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram and to the district collectorates in the other 13 districts of the State on the 28th of January 2003. In several districts women formed more than 50% of the participants; in some women outnumbered men. Workers from coir, cashew, handloom, beedi, construction, and other traditional industries, head load workers, and in those in small industries participated in large numbers. E Balanandan, M K Pandhe, K Ravindranath, P K Gurudasan inaugurated some district level dharnas.

11.5.12 In Tamil Nadu, our transport employees' federation organised a series of campaigns against the move of the Tamil Nadu State Government to privatise around 50% of the State transport and to remove around 32,000 out of the 1,00,000 workers in the first instalment. Other trade unions also opposed the move. All opposition political Parties except BJP opposed. Thousands of workers participated in the dharnas at divisional centres on the 26th November. Around 5,000 participated in the dharna at Chennai on the 27th November. Lakhs of handbills were distributed. Thousands of representations were given to the peoples' representatives at various levels. In the next phase, thousands of workers from various CITU affiliated unions along with fraternal organisations of Insurance, Bank, Telecom, Government Employees' Associations and students, youth and women participated in massive human chains opposing privatisation of transport. Transport Employees' Federation and other

unions filed petitions in the High Court. State Committees of CITU, SFI, DYFI, AIDWA and CPI (M) also filed writ petitions against the decision.

11.5.13 Nearly 100 jathas covering more than 4,000 Kms toured the State of Tamilnadu on the 18 – 20 December 2000. In addition many smaller jathas were also organised. Petitions with signatures of elected representatives of the people were submitted to the District Collectors on the 20th December. Depot level joint campaigns and meetings were held and a massive protest demonstration was organised on the 10th January 2003, in which thousands of transport workers marched to the State Secretariat. A massive procession of more than 20,000 transport workers was held in Chennai on the 25th March 2003 by the Joint Action Committee consisting of CITU, LPF, INTUC, AITUC and HMS affiliated unions, against privatisation, contractorisation and other long pending demands.

11.5.14 Electricity workers' unions at Tamilnadu have conducted joint struggles against privatisation, on the long pending wage revision and against curtailment of pensionary benefits. More than one lakh hosiery workers in Tiruppur went on a one day strike on the 15th of April demanding wage revision. A Joint Action Committee consisting of CITU, AITUC, LPF, INTUC, ATP, and MLF have been formed.

11.5.15 The workers in Purnapani iron ore mines in Orissa had a long drawn struggle against the closure of mines arbitrarily by the contractor which forced a large number of workers to starve with their family. After struggle, the union could obtain some relief for the workers and through protracted negotiation with the management of Raw Materials Division of SAIL and the contractor, settled the dispute and paved the way for reopening of the mine. During the intervening period, the workers of the iron-ore mines under SAIL launched several agitation programmes on the demands of both permanent and contract workers. The Coordination Committee of Mine workers met on 12th July 2003 and chalked out further course of actions.

11.5.16 The Joint Platform of the Electricity workers and engineers gave a call for countrywide strike on 7th April at a very short notice to protest against the Electricity Bill 2003 being taken up for consideration by Parliament. The call, though given at short notice received good response in many parts of the country.

11.5.17 The Andhra Pradesh SRTC Staff and Workers' Federation organised picketing of the Transport Commissioner's Office and all the Regional Transport Offices on the 21st of February 2003 to protest against the callous attitude of the State Government in curbing the illicit operations of private buses on the APSRTC routes. Hundreds of workers were lathi charged and arrested by the police.

11.5.18 Workers of the Singareni Collieries in AP went on an indefinite strike from 22nd January (for 17 days) against mass Contractorisation, and outsourcing of coal mining operations. All the seven unions in the mines affiliated to CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, BMS, IFTU and AIFTU called for the strike. The administration resorted to severe repressive measures and arrested more than 2,000 workers and leaders. But the AITUC and INTUC succumbed to the pressure of the Government and signed an agreement which allowed private participation in open cast mines, outsourcing of maintenance and various other jobs etc. This agreement caused a feeling of betrayal among the workers.

11.5.19 The Delhi State Committee of CITU conducted a month long campaign to press for a minimum wage of Rs. 5,000, end of outsourcing and contract system for permanent jobs, declaration of closures and lock outs as punishable offences, equal wages, halt to demolition of the dwellings in slums and pucca houses for slum dwellers. The campaign was followed by one day strike action on 27th March 2003 in Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida and Faridabad region and road blockade demonstrations in certain

important centres. In most of the industrial areas of Delhi, Ghaziabad, NOIDA and Faridabad, the call for strike received good response although the same was not total. Rallies were held by the workers along with their family members. In several places police resorted to lathi charge in which many workers, women and children were injured.

11.5.20 The Port and Dock Workers' Union, in Andaman and Nicobar islands had taken up the issue of the long pending demands of the workers like leave, leave salary, LTC advances, regularisation of temporary workers etc. Procession and rally were held in Port Blair on these issues.

11.5.21 The Forward Seamens' Union of India (FSUI) also carried on consistent struggle and substantially increased its influence among the coastal shipping seamen and became a majority union there. The management of the Shipping companies had to agree for holding secret ballot to decide on recognition but the HMS union obtained a stay order from court. The court also prohibited strike on the issue of recognition of union. In that event, the Union organised two-day hunger strike on 1st and 2nd April in the entire coastal shipping area from Mumbai to Lakshadweep island and conducted several agitations which compelled Indian National Ship-owners' Association (INSA) to organise verification of membership for the purpose of recognition by 7th August 2003.

11.5.22 The petty-officers of the coastal shipping companies also joined FSUI in a big way making it a majority union among those officers. Due to opposition of the management to grant recognition to the union, the petty-officers observed one-day strike on 5th March 2003 which was a complete success. Ultimately, INSA had to agree for holding verification of membership of unions by the end of July 2003. Both the successes have strengthened CITU's position among the workmen of coastal shipping and off-shore vessels and among the petty-officers.

11.5.23 Hydel Project workers of Himachal Pradesh also have been under agitation during the intervening period. In the process of struggle President of the CITU union at Parvati Project, Ashoke Kumar was murdered by gangsters deployed by the contractor/employer on 22nd June 2003. On 23rd June there have been complete strike in all the five Hydel projects in the state in protest of such murderous onslaught by the employers.

11.5.24 During the intervening period, the Brick-kiln workers, forest workers and also the construction workers of Haryana have been in the midst of statewide agitation. The State-level CITU unions in all the three sectors held a series of district level demonstrations during January-March and central demonstrations in the State capital at Chandigarh. In the process of such agitations, the Haryana Govt had to declare the minimum wage rate for the Brick-kiln workers. Now, the Brick-kiln workers in the state have been agitating over implementation of the said minimum wage rates by the Brick-kiln owners and got some success in some of the districts.

11.5.25 Another notable event of struggle during the intervening period is the indefinite strike action by the Govt employees and teachers in Tamilnadu against downsizing, and curtailment of allowances and social security benefits from 2nd July onward. The strike call was given jointly by all the organisations of Govt employees and teachers and officers at Tamilnadu. The employees and teachers went on strike braving mass scale arrests, dismissals and police actions. The Jayalalitha Govt surpassed all records of vindictiveness in confronting the striking employees and teachers. It has resorted to promulgation of Ordinance to tackle the strikers. ESMA was invoked, several thousands were arrested and more than lakhs of employees have been served dismissal orders. And side by side new recruitment has been started at much less salary, and atrocious conditions of services. New recruits will not be allowed to join any union, cannot challenge or oppose any orders even within the permissible legal

framework etc. In fine, conditions of slavery has been imposed on the new recruits who are being recruited to break the united strike action. The actions of the Jayalalitha Govt carries ominous portents for democracy as a whole must be confronted by the democratic movement in the country in all seriousness. CITU extended active support to the strike and condemned the unprecedented vindictive action of the Tamilnadu Govt. The CITU unions in the Tamilnadu have already started solidarity actions in support of the striking employees and teachers and on 7th July, state-wide demonstrations have been organised.

11.5.26 There have been also various agitations including strike actions by the public sector workers, mainly against the privatisation offensive which has been dealt separately.

11.5.27 The struggle against the disastrous policies of the NDA Govt to make it really effective, must now be elevated to the stage of all out concerted action not merely by working class but the entire section of people, the peasantry and agricultural workers in particular. We made an effort in that direction on 21st May, but did not get much success so far as mobilisation of the other section of people is concerned. It is the political task of the working class to mobilise and rally all other sections in the forthcoming struggles. It is also equally important to keep continuity of the tempo generated in the movement by the last General strike for taking the struggle to further militant height. Failure to discharge these tasks will lead to demoralisation with all its negative fall outs not only in the economy but also in social and political spheres, which we can ignore only at our peril. The General Council must discuss this aspect with all seriousness and give direction to our future course of movements.

11.6 CONFERENCES OF ALL INDIA FEDERATIONS

11.6.1 Plantation Workers' Conference: The eighth national conference of the All India Plantation Workers' Federation was held at Chikmagalur in Karnataka on the 26-28 December 2002. 204 delegates including 28 women attended the Conference from Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and Andhra Pradesh. MK Pandhe and Hemalata participated from the CITU Centre. The Conference elected a 42 member working committee with Hemalata as the President and Lalaji Babu as the General Secretary. The Conference discussed the conditions in the Tea Plantation industry and decided that the new working committee should hold an in depth discussion on the subject and come to a common understanding on the situation so that future programmes could be planned accordingly.

11.6.2 All India Conference of Construction Workers' Federation: The fifth All India Conference of the All India Construction Workers' Federation of India was held on the 30th January- 2nd February at Kanya Kumari in Tamil Nadu. 437 delegates and 14 observers including 19 women from 12 States participated in the Conference. MK Pandhe inaugurated the conference. Construction Workers' leaders from UCATT (UK), CFMEU (Australia), Jatio Shramik Federation (Bangladesh) and Iraq participated and greeted the Conference. A 77 member working committee with Singaravelu as President and Debanjan Chakraborty as General Secretary was elected. One woman was elected as Office Bearer.

11.6.3 All India Conference of Coal Workers: The 6th Conference of the All India Coal Workers' Federation was held on 29-31 March in Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh. 204 delegates and 10 observers participated in the Conference. The Conference decided to lay emphasis on building united movements, developing simultaneous independent activities, utilising the full potential to increase membership, and developing cadres. The Conference elected the working committee with MK Pandhe and Haradhan Roy as President and General Secretary.

11.7 ANDHRA PRADESH CITU CONFERENCE

11.7.1 The Ninth Andhra Pradesh State Conference of CITU was held on 16-18 February 2003 at Mahboobnagar. 630 delegates, including 84 women from 23 districts and 2 organisational areas representing 2, 42, 536 members participated in the Conference. The Conference decided to concentrate on raising the anti imperialist consciousness of the working class, to intensify the struggle against communal, casteist and other divisive forces, to increase solidarity with the agricultural workers, peasants, and artisans and to pay more attention to organisations in the key industries like transport, electricity, coal etc. A new General Council of 208 members with 31 women, State Committee of 103 with 16 women were elected. A 19 member Office Bearers with Ch. Narasinga Rao and S Veeraiah were elected as President and General Secretary. 2 women were elected as Office Bearers.

11.8 WORKING WOMEN

11.8.1 A meeting of the General Secretary/ President of CITU State Committees, the Secretariat member in charge of the CCWW, and the Convenors of the State CCWW was held in Delhi immediately after the CITU Working Committee meeting at Hisar. 37 leaders from 17 States participated in the meeting. MK Pandhe, Kanai Bannerjee, WR Varada Rajan and Hemalata attended from the CITU Centre. The meeting noted that the membership of women in CITU has increased to 19.89% as per the annual returns for the year 2000. In some States like Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh it has crossed 50%. In one district in Karnataka women constitute the entire membership of CITU. In several other States like Assam, Kerala, Tripura, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh etc it was around 20% or more. In this situation the meeting decided to pay special attention to develop women cadres and train them. It was decided to hold separate trade union classes for working women before July 2003. It was also decided that all the State Committees should hold such meetings in the State level to discuss the issue and plan implementation of the decisions of the meeting. Comrades should report what the State Committees have done in this regard.

11.8.2 The All India Coordination Committee of Working Women met in Chennai on 5-6 February 2003. Com Umanath and Kanai Bannerjee participated in the meeting. Representatives of only 8 States- Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal attended. It is unfortunate that even out of these, the State convenors of major States like West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka did not attend. The meeting decided to follow up on the implementation of the decisions of the 5th December meeting and also mobilise working women in large numbers for the March to Parliament and the strike.

11.8.3 Tamil Nadu State Conference of Working Women was held on 21-22 June 2003 at Madurai. 198 women workers attended out of which 154 were from CITU affiliated unions. Even those from middle class organisations were associated with the CITU in the districts. District level conventions in 26 districts preceded the State Conference. Another 4 district conventions were planned.

11.8.4 International Women's Day: The Bihar State Committee of CITU took initiative to observe the International Women's Day on March 8th. The Secretariat members of CITU State Committee participated in the meetings in 6 districts.

11.8.5 Vimal Ranadive Memorial Lecture: Vimal Ranadive Memorial Lecture this year was organised on the subject 'War, Globalisation and Working Women'. Prof. Nalini Taneja spoke on the subject at the Lecture organised at the CITU Centre. Memorial lectures were also organised in some States like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala etc

11.9 AGAINST US WAR ON IRAQ

11.9.1 During the period under review, the US Administration along with the British Govt launched brutal genocidal war on Iraq ignoring the UN and the world opinion. Well before the commencement of war, there had been series of protest programmes against US imperialist ploy to impose war on Iraq and the trade union movement joined those protest mobilisations actively. There had been massive mobilisations both before and after the commencement of war, organised by the political parties, trade unions and other mass organisations in certain parts of our country in which the CITU along with other trade unions took frontline role in organising the same. CITU also took initiative alongwith other left trade unions gave a call for united protest against the Iraq war through half-an-hour cease-work on 31st March and demonstration at workplaces throughout the country. The call received good response in many places in the country.

11.10 CITU-ILO CHILD LABOUR PROJECT

11.10.1 The 20 Non Formal Education Centres (NFEC) under the CITU- ILO programme on Child Labour have been functioning for around 2 years. Almost all of them have earned a good reputation among the parents of the child labourers who are also unorganised sector workers. In Sivakasi in Virudhnagar district of Tamil Nadu, the District Collector appreciated our efforts and asked us to run two more NFECs in the village. The people in the village now call their village 'CITU village'. In both Virudhnagar and Kancheepuram the insurance and bank employees' associations with the help of some NGOs have distributed new clothes, fire crackers and took the children for a picnic. In Jalna, medical check ups are being conducted. In Bhopal, self help groups of the women belonging to the families of the child labour were formed. The women were taught sewing, embroidery etc. In Darjeeling more than 80 child labourers attend the NFEC. In almost all the NFECs the number of children generally exceeds the prescribed 25.

11.10.2 While carrying on the education project among the child labourers, we have been able to establish contacts with the brick kiln workers in Sundernagar and Una in Himachal Pradesh, revive our union in the Suker area of Udaipur district in Rajasthan, and develop contacts with the beedi workers in Bhopal. Our prestige among the brick kiln workers in Jind and Narnound in Haryana has also increased because of this programme. But we have not been able to utilise this project to strengthen our organisation in all the NFEC areas.

11.10.3 Around 200 child labourers, including those attending the NFECs and those living in the area have been enrolled into regular schools. We could not achieve the target of enrolling 500 child labourers into regular schools because the parents were not willing to send their children to regular schools, because they would lose their income, which was essential for the survival of the family in many cases. We have to make serious efforts to enrol the maximum number of child labourers into regular schools this year, before the programme comes to an end in October 2003. Campaign material including posters have already been sent to the concerned States. These should be utilised for the campaign for enrolling into regular schools. The weakness in sending reports and timely accounts persists. This should be overcome.

11.10.4 Our experience has re-established our stand that child labour is the result of the prevalence of poverty and unemployment/ underemployment among the parents and it cannot be abolished as long as these persist. We must utilise these experiences to organise the workers in the unorganised sector.

12. WORLD SOCIAL FORUM 2004

12.1 The World Social Forum developed as a response of the growing international movement to neo-liberal economic policies being pursued in most countries and capitalist led globalisation. For decades, international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been making decisions that affect the lives of people all over the world, without being subject to any sort of democratic control. People in Third World countries, as well as the poor and excluded sectors of industrialised countries suffer the devastating effects of economic globalisation and the dictatorship of international institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO and the governments that serve their interests.

12.2 The World Social Forum was conceived as an international forum against neo-liberal policies and capitalist led globalisation build around the slogan: "Another World Is Possible". It seeks to provide a space for discussing alternatives, for exchanging experiences and for strengthening alliances between social movements, unions of the working people and NGOs. The first WSF was held in January, 2001, in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil. It was timed to coincide with the holding of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

12.3 In response to the call of the Second World Social Forum held in Brazil in 2002, the first Asian Social Forum was organised in Hyderabad from January 4 -7, 2003, which was participated by several mass organisations and social movements including the trade unions. CITU, together with other central trade unions and all India federations, took active part in the deliberations in various seminars held on this occasion on topics such as privatisation and disinvestment, globalisation and labour rights, financial sector reforms, impact of globalisation on the working class, communalism and its impact on workers, impact of globalisation on unorganised sector. The Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU, which was part of the Hyderabad organising committee, actively associated with this event. The ASF provided a forum for an open dialogue among the movements opposed to imperialist globalisation and religious sectarian violence and committed to democratic values, plurality and peace.

12.4 During the third World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre from the 23rd to the 28th of January, 2003, the International Council of the WSF mooted a proposal to hold the World Social Forum, 2004 in India. After a series of consultation meetings, it has since been decided to hold the WSF 2004 in India from the 16th to 21st January, 2004 and the venue will be Mumbai.

12.5 All organisations, movements and individuals who affirm their adherence to the WSF Charter of Principles and the WSF India Policy Statement and commit themselves to work towards broadening the arena of struggle against the imperialist globalisation, communalism, casteism and patriarchy and for world peace can come together in the efforts to carry forward the WSF process in India. The WSF India, while preparing for holding the World Social Forum 2004 in Mumbai in January next is also preparing for State level and sectoral processes to bring together all those who are keen on broad basing the struggle against imperialist globalisation.

12.6 The thematic areas for the WSF 2004 include: Imperialism in the 21st century – threats to freedom, economic self-reliance, sovereignty, peace and liberty of nations and individuals, confronting the challenges; Intolerance and sectarian violence – ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, linguistic and gender dimensions; Debt, Development, Trade, Finance and Investment - human rights and welfare vs. markets and profit; Democracy, mass and social movements, alternatives and strategic alliances and working together; Ecology, Art, Culture, Media, Knowledge, Education, Health, Energy and Social Security – Conservancy, Plurality and Diversity, Universal access vs. commercialisation.

12.7 CITU is actively associating with the WSF process in India. Maharashtra CITU will have to take special initiative for organizing the event at Mumbai along with others. Steps are already being taken in that direction and some leading comrades in the State have been identified for being associated in the concerned committees. The trade unions are also jointly planning to organise several activities under the caption 'Labour in WSF 2004'. The General Council should deliberate and decide the steps to ensure effective participation and mobilisation by the CITU unions in WSF 2004 at Mumbai and related activities.

13. ELEVENTH CONFERENCE OF CITU

13.1 The 11th all India conference of the CITU will be held from 9th to 13th December 2003 at Chennai. The General Council has to consider and decide on certain important issues relating to holding of the conference and also some issues to be taken up in the conference itself. CITU secretariat had discussed these issues in its meeting held on 28-29 June 2003 at Bangalore and decided to further discuss them in the General Council meeting for finalisation.

13.2 AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

13.2.1 The need for amendment to the constitution of CITU is felt on two issues.

13.2.2 Firstly, the CITU constitution provides for holding of at least two Working Committee meetings and one General Council meeting every year. Experience shows that it becomes practically impossible to maintain the schedule and sometimes we had to hold the working committee meeting formally for just one hour prior to the General Council to meet the constitutional obligation. Many comrades expressed dissatisfaction over such a ritualistic exercise. ***The Secretariat discussed the matter at length and decided to propose for a constitutional amendment in the forthcoming conference to provide for holding of "at least one meeting of General Council and one meeting of the Working Committee in a year."***

13.2.3 The CITU Secretariat also discussed the need for a thorough review of the rate of subscription that is being collected by the affiliated unions and for an upward revision of the same. Many unions, it is gathered, are still in the era of 25 paise subscription per month (or Rs. three per year). Even that is not being collected regularly, as is reflected in the extreme fluctuations in the membership of the unions in the intervening years between two conferences. There is urgent need for the State Committees and industrial federations to make a serious review of the entire process of membership drive being taken up by the unions in the State, including the scope of upward revision of the subscription fees.

13.2.4 Secondly, an upward revision of the affiliation fees of CITU also becomes necessary in view of the fast rising expenditure/obligations of the CITU centre such as responsibilities in united movements, education and research programmes, helping the weaker States etc. Some comrades suggested that different rates of affiliation fees should be collected for different sections, based on the pay-levels of the workers in the organised and the unorganised sectors.

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13.3 DELEGATION TO CONFERENCE

13.3.1 The CITU Secretariat discussed the proposal made by some members to reduce the size of delegation to 1500 to facilitate better organisation of the conference. One important factor in deciding the number of delegates to the all India Conference is to ensure adequate representation of women, smaller unions and actual workers in the State wise delegations. Any reduction in the number of total delegates should not adversely alter the representation of these sections.

13.3.2 In view of above, a drastic reduction in the number of total delegates may not be possible immediately. However, for the forthcoming all India conference, the delegation may be decided at the rate of 1 delegate per every 1500 members or part thereof. (As against one for 1250 members, the norm adopted for the 10th Conference). This might result in the total number of delegates being around 2200 for the 11th Conference.

13.3.3 As regards the representation of women workers in the delegation, a minimum percentage of 15 should be prescribed for all States; in States where the membership of women is more than 15%, it should be raised to 20 per cent.

13.3.4 State Committees should also ensure that the delegation to the all India Conference has a proper mix of whole timers and actual workers. It is observed that the proportion of the actual workers in the delegation to the past conferences had been quite inadequate which requires visible improvement.

13.4 SIZE OF THE COMMITTEES

13.4.1 It is proposed that the size of the the CITU Secretariat, Working Committee and General Council to be elected in the All India conference should be as under:

- * Office-bearers: to be decided afterwards
- * Working Committee: 125 + Office-bearers
- * General Council: 300 + Working Committee

13.4.2 The representatives from each State in these Committees can be decided on the basis of membership strength proportionately. Also, we have to ensure that the Working Committee will have representations from all the States.

13.4.3 There always remains some uncertainty over finalisation of the number of delegates to the Conference. For every Conference we decide and prescribe specific deadlines for the affiliated unions to complete submission of E Form return copies and remittance of affiliation fees. But, several unions persist with the practice of sending them just on the eve of the Conference demanding that they be considered for the purpose of deciding the entitlement of delegates. State Committees also do not actively discourage such practice and at times they advocate such delay in submission of annual returns and affiliation fees. Hence, it becomes difficult to decide the exact number of delegates even a fortnight before the Conference. This is posing quite a few problems to the host committee. Unless State Committees fully cooperate in complying with the datelines specified and make them non-violable, we cannot remedy this situation. Last meeting of the CITU Secretariat has already decided that the submission of annual returns and affiliation fees to centre should be completed prior to the General Council meeting. The General Council may now consider extension of one month further to ensure completion of sending the annual returns and affiliation fees for the year 2002 by the States, latest by 31st August 2003.

13.5 ELECTION PROCESS

13.5.1 We have to organise the elections in the Conference in a more systematic manner. If we know the State-wise details of the membership sufficiently in advance, we can decide in advance the number of members in the General Council and the Working Committee from each State. If the State Committees can be informed about the same well in advance, they can also plan more systematically and propose the list of General council and Working Committee members from their States sufficiently early. This would enable us to give a printed list of General Council members in advance and also to save a lot of time by circulating the list of General Council members instead of reading it out. Comrades also can be given sufficient time to consider the panel proposed for election. This will enable us not to make a mere ritual of holding elections.

13.6 DOCUMENTATIONS, TRANSLATIONS ETC

13.6.1 The CITU Centre had been trying to make available the Conference documents to the State Committees well in advance for the purpose of translation and giving them to the delegates so that they have enough time to read them. State Committees often complain that they do not get adequate time for translation/ making copies and the delegates do not get them prior to the Conference. Some State Committees translate the documents only selectively i.e., only some part is translated and some other left out. Much of these problems can be addressed if the documents are prepared and circulated giving adequate time for the State Committees for the translation/copying work. This time the CITU Secretariat has decided a time-frame for preparation and finalisation of the Conference documents so that they can be sent to the State Committees latest by first week of November, for translation into local languages and circulation to the delegates.

13.6.2 The Conference deliberations are generally in English, though the delegates who opt to speak in Hindi or other languages are accommodated with provision for translation. Time is also allowed for translation of speeches into vernacular languages for the benefit of those delegates who do not understand English. But, sometimes, due to paucity of time, translation is some times skipped in respect of speeches of President, introduction of report/ summing up of the debate by General Secretary and while proposing or seconding resolutions. Even when translation is allowed, the time allocated is a mere 2/3 minutes for translating a 10/15-minute speech. Apparently, not much justice can be done by such translations.

13.6.3 It is, therefore, proposed to make serious efforts for making arrangements for simultaneous translation in Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. This may help in better time management during the Conference and also make the deliberations more meaningful for the non-English knowing delegates. Technical aspects of such arrangements, including the cost factors, should be examined in depth by the CITU Secretariat.

13.7 COMMISSION DISCUSSIONS

13.7.1 We have made Commission discussions on various policy issues as an integral part of our Conference for quite some time now. This has enabled hundreds of delegates, who would have otherwise ended up as mere onlookers during the entire Conference sessions to actively participate in the discussions. The CITU Centre had followed up such Commission discussions by bringing out the papers discussed in the Commissions as separate publications, which received wide acclaim from various quarters, including those from international fraternity. Yet, several weaknesses have been noticed even in this respect.

13.7.2 The cumulative total of participants in the various Commissions during the Conference had been much below the total number of delegates to the Conference revealing substantial absenteeism. The number of participants in each of the Commissions differs vastly, indicating that there is an uneven distribution of delegates. This is the result of leaving it to the delegates to decide individually as to which Commission he/she would attend instead of collective decision by the State delegation. We must seriously consider changing this practice.

13.7.3 There is also the weakness in ensuring proper presentation of the conclusions of the Commission discussions during the subsequent plenary of the Conference. Most importantly, there is not much of planning even – not to speak of implementation – of follow up activities on the Commission discussions. At the CITU Centre, there is no information on how many of the State Committees had taken efforts to reach the Commission papers to the rank and file of the CITU by translating them into the regional languages. If the sale of English/Hindi publications of Commission discussion papers were to serve as an indicator, we cannot draw any healthy conclusions. Very little attention seems to have been paid to make this an instrument of educating the CITU cadres on policy issues. We should overcome the weaknesses in this regard by careful planning and coordination.

13.7.4 For the ensuing Conference at Chennai, we should decide the number and subjects of the Commissions. We should also find ways to make the Commission discussions a much more rewarding exercise. Secretariat discussed this aspect in details and decided that the commission discussion will be held on six subjects. The CITU Secretariat also short listed subjects as: 1) International affairs-Imperialist war mongering and peace via-a-vis globalisation; 2) Unemployment; 3) Working Women; 4) Social Security; 5) WTO issues; 6) Child Labour; 7) Attack on Labour rights. The General Council has to finally decide on the subjects.

13.8 RESOLUTIONS

13.8.1 Another aspect of our Conference activities relates to presentation and adoption of resolutions. These have assumed the character of being just a ritual. Very few delegates take interest to go through the resolutions even when circulated before hand and make interventions by sending amendments or suggestions in writing revealing least interest in the matter of resolutions. Though the resolutions invariably end with some call or the other, not much of follow up activities is in evidence after the Conference. But, there is always unremitting pressure from the delegates to include many issues for consideration and adoption as resolutions. We must deeply ponder over these aspects and evolve an appropriate process to make the 'resolutions - part' of the Conference more lively and utility oriented. It is also proposed that instead of the usual practice of formation of Resolution Committee in the conference, the General Council itself can appoint a Resolution Committee and prescribe a time limit for preparing the Resolutions. It is also proposed that the delegates should send written amendments to the resolutions, if required, within a specified time in the conference, without waiting for their placement.

13.9 PRE-CONFERENCE 'JATHAS'

13.9.1 During the run up to the all India Conference, we had been planning for conducting countrywide campaigns by way of 'jathas'. There is a lot of enthusiasm generated in the process. For those who had led these campaigns in the past, it had been a very rewarding experience in terms of the response from the mass of the workers and ordinary people. But, quite a few shortcomings had been noticed in the past in organising such 'jathas'. These relate to planning and organising, deciding the routes, timings, preparing campaign materials such as pamphlets for free distribution and booklets for sale, reception at the venue of Conference, honouring the comrades and volunteers who took part in the

'jathas' and the like. It is essential that we overcome these shortcomings, while planning for similar campaigns for our ensuing Conference. The State Committees should mobilise sufficient resources for the 'jathas'. There is need for better coordination between different State Committees also. The General Council should discuss this aspect and the State Committees of the concerned regions should start coordinating with each other during this General Council session itself so that General Council can draw an outline plan for the preparation of countrywide pre-conference 'jathas' which may be concretised during the intervening period. The programme of 'jathas' should be drawn in such a way they reach Chennai latest by 8th December evening.

13.9.2 The State Committees hosting the Conference have also been in the habit of holding seminars or public meetings, staging cultural shows, and organising exhibitions alongside the Conference. Many a time, such schedules clash with the programme of the Conference. It had also been our experience that sometimes the Conference venue and the delegates themselves are turned into the seminar venue and audience. On such occasions, if a section of the delegates also choose to desert the venue, the seminar becomes a poor show. The cultural performances are held without a respectable audience. We should decide whether these exercises should be planned during the Conference dates or whether such programmes can be staged as some sort of 'curtain raiser' events a few days prior to the commencement of the Conference or altogether in a separate place during the conference.

The delegate fees will be Rs. 600/- per delegate for the 11th Conference of CITU.

13.10 7TH ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF THE AICCWW

13.10.1 The seventh all India Conference of the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women will be held at Mumbai in October 2003. The total number of delegates will be 250 from outside Maharashtra. The State-wise number of delegates will be decided by the AICCWW meeting to be held on the 28th July at Cuttack itself. All the State Committees of CITU should ensure that the delegates are sent as per the quota. The delegate fees will be Rs. 200 per delegate.

13.10.2 All the State Committees should also hold their State level Conference/Convention of Working Women prior to the All India Conference - preferably prior to the CITU State Conferences - and form State level Coordination Committees.

14. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

14.1 Since the last Working Committee meeting in Hissar increasing number of comrades have participated in the international trade union programmes. This has, indeed, helped us in forging deeper understanding of trade union movements worldwide and building closer fraternal relations with the TU organisations of other countries.

14.2 W.R. Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU, participated in the 2003 World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil from 23-28 January, 2003. Raising the resounding slogan of "Another World is Possible", the forum was joined by almost 100,000 participants, including delegates, observers, mediamen, professionals and social activists from all over the world.

14.3 A Soundarajan, Working Committee Member and Ranjana Nirula, General Council Member of CITU went to Iraq on 1-8 March 2003 as a part of a Solidarity Delegation comprised of left parties and mass organisations at the invitation of Association of Friendship, Peace & Solidarity with Iraq.

14.4 The Second World Conference of Oil, Gas and Refinery Trade Unions hosted by CITU was held

in Kolkata from 8th to 10th March, 2003. The International Organising Committee for the conference consisted of CITU from India, CGT National Union of Chemical Industries from France, Union of Mediterranean Oil Workers Organization from Libya and International Energy and Mines Organisation from Paris (France). 124 delegates from various countries including India participated in the Conference. It was, indeed, no easy task to host international conference of such magnitude. However, the Reception Committee made excellent arrangements.

14.5 Jyoti Basu, Vice-President of CITU, delivered the inaugural speech and Ram Naik, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas addressed the inaugural session as the Chief Guest. Mohammed Amin, Minister of Labour, West Bengal, delivered the valedictory address. The conference adopted a declaration drafted jointly by representatives from India, France, Libya, Greece, Norway and the IEMO, which raised 12 demands and resolved to widen and strengthen further, the unity of oil, gas and refinery workers and their trade unions all over the world to fight against the machinations of hegemonism and the TMCs, and to broaden co-operation and solidarity among the TUs of oil industries. The conference decided to launch the International Forum of Oil Industries Trade Unions. An open session was held after the conference to condemn the US threat to attack Iraq.

14.6 Hemalata, Secretary, CITU, represented the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) in the South Asian Regional Conference of Women Trade Unionists organised in Kathmandu by the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) from 15-17 March, 2003. The theme of the conference was identifying common gender agendas for a better South Asia. 31 women trade union activists from Nepal, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka participated in the programme. Representatives from KAD (women workers union of Denmark), International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), Union Network International (UNI-Aplo), World Confederation of Labour (WCL), Committee for Asian Women (CAW), Zenroren from Japan and Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) from South Korea also took part in the conference. The Country Director of ILO in Nepal and some other ILO specialists were present. The Conference unanimously adopted a Declaration which called upon the trade unions to increase participation of women in the TU activities. A task force consisting of one representative from each invited union from South Asia was formed and GEFONT was asked to coordinate its activities.

14.7 K. K. Divakaran, General Secretary, All India Road Transport Workers' Federation, attended the 6th National Conference of Independent Transport Workers Association of Nepal (ITWAN), affiliated to GEFONT, held in Kathmandu on March 22-24, 2003. CITU's participation in the conference further promoted the friendly relations between the Indian and Nepalese transport workers.

14.8 P K Gurudasan, Secretary, CITU, was nominated to attend the 47th National Congress of CGT, France, held in Paris on 23-24 March 2003. However, he could not attend the conference at the eleventh hour, due to some problems of local movements in Kerala.

14.9 T.K. Rengarajan, Vice President, CITU, attended the National Congress of Socialist Workers Union, the trade union wing of the Janatha Vimukthi Perumana (Peoples' Liberation Front) in Sri Lanka. The congress was inaugurated on March 31, 2003. During his stay in Sri Lanka Rengarajan visited Colombo, Anuradhapur and Kandy and met several important trade union and political leaders.

14.10 Prasanta Nandi Chaudhury, General Secretary, West Bengal State Electricity Board Workmen's Union, affiliated to CITU, attended the 2003 May Day Programme organised by the Cuban TU centre, the CTC. On his way back he visited some European countries, including France and held discussions with functionaries of CGT-affiliated unions of electricity workers.

14.11 Tapan Sen, Secretary, CITU, attended the 91st session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva from the 2nd to 19th June, 2003, as one of the Advisors from the workers side. He met a number of trade union functionaries from various countries attending the ILO conference and exchanged views with them on issues related to working class movements in various countries. He personally handed over invitations for the forthcoming 11th CITU conference. Sadhan Kanjilal, General Secretary, Forward Seamen's Union affiliated to CITU also attended the 91st session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva as a member of the WFTU delegation. Sukomal Sen, working Committee member of CITU, also attended the ILO conference on behalf of the Trade Union International of Public and Allied Employees and addressed the Plenary session of the Conference.

14.12 P.K. Ganguly, Secretary, CITU, participated in a seminar held on 2nd June 2003 on 'Scrapping Ships in Asia and the Liability Regime', organised by the International Institute for Asian Studies, and Leiden University, Amsterdam, Netherlands, in cooperation with Greenpeace International, an NGO engaged in environmental protection. The one-day seminar was followed by a study tour of the participants to Greece for three days, where they visited the ship-breaking centres. Ganguly, along with other participants, also met the Ministers of Environment and Transport at Netherlands and also the Greek Maritime Minister besides meeting the prominent ship-owners' companies in both the countries to convey the message of the seminar. Ganguly presented a paper on "Scrapping Ships in Asia" in the seminar.

14.13 Jibon Roy, Secretary, CITU, represented the organisation at the 8th Ordinary National Congress of the Brazilian Trade Union Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT), which was held at Sao Paulo (Brazil) from June 3-7, 2003. CUT is the biggest trade union centre of Brazil with a membership of 6 million workers. During his stay in Brazil, Jibon Roy held discussions with CUT leadership on bilateral relations. He also met a number of trade union functionaries from various countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America and exchanged views on issues related to working class movements in those countries. His participation in the CUT programme made positive contribution in forging friendship and solidarity between our two TU organisations.

14.13 Bishnu Mohanty, General Secretary, Orissa State Committee of CITU, participated in South Asia Regional Workshop on Labour Management Relations and Code of Conduct held in Colombo on 7-12 June 2003. The Workshop was organized by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES). About 39 TU activists and NGOs from the region attended the workshop.

14.14 Chittabrata Majumdar, Secretary, CITU, attended a meeting of SIGTUR Regional Coordinating Committee held in Perth (Australia) on 7-11 July 2003. M.K. Pandhe, who is also a member of the SIGTUR RCC, could not participate due to pressing engagements. The meeting deliberated on the practical details for the next SIGTUR congress, to be held at Sao Paolo, Brazil.

15. CHANGING WORLD SCENARIO

15.1 The situation in the world is changing very fast. The globalisation has now come home to roost. The working class of the world is realising through their own experience in day to day conditions that the policy of globalisation shall continue to bring more and more miseries to them. The other toiling sections of the society too have witnessed brutal attacks on their living conditions. The worldwide euphoria prevalent about globalisation is no more visible now.

15.2 The ICFTU, which was inviting representatives of the World Bank, IMF and WTO to their meetings to explain various aspects of globalisation, is now compelled by the situation to appreciate that these

agencies work against the interests of the developing countries. The former Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz, has vividly exposed the World Bank prescriptions, which according to him hit the interests of the developing countries, adversely impact the working class and mass of the people all over the world.

15.3 It is very important to note a very significant development against globalisation in the developed countries. The pinch of imperialist globalisation is increasingly felt by workers in these countries. The employers in the advanced capitalist countries are threatening the workers that they would shift their factories to EPZs if they do not accept wage cut. Workers in several undertakings have been forced to accept wage cut to prevent such shifting of the factories. Recently, even a strong union like IG Metal of Germany had to organise a strike to oppose reduction in hours of work and consequent reduction in wages.

15.4 The rate of unemployment has reached alarming level due to structural adjustment programme, downsizing manpower and closure of industrial establishments. The rate of unemployment in Spain has reached 23 per cent. According to an ILO Study, this rate of unemployment is going to stay for quite some time.

15.5 Cut in social security benefits has provoked several strikes in Europe in the recent past. In France, for example, several one day strikes were organised during June this year, in which over 1 million workers participated. Massive demonstrations were held throughout the country and the entire country was practically paralysed. Similar industrial actions have been reported in many other countries in Europe against cut in social security benefits. Accumulated discontent of the workers, who could not be seen in the past, has now started reflected through series of mass actions. A 2-million strong demonstration was held in Rome against globalisation, which also indicates the new wave of militancy coming among the European workers. In most of the capitalist countries, massive demonstrations of the workers against globalisation have taken place in the recent past.

15.6 On the question of war on Iraq, powerful demonstrations were held throughout the world, in which lakhs of workers participated. Even the people in the USA held big demonstrations in all major cities against President Bush. In Germany, 70 cities witnessed big rallies against war on Iraq. In UK unprecedented mobilisation of people reflected the strong resentment against policies pursued by Tony Blair Government on the issue of war on Iraq. Never before such a big mass mobilisation was witnessed in the world against war. When no weapons of mass destruction could be found in Iraq, popular reaction among the people peaked.

15.7 Latin America as a whole is in turmoil. The developments in Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina etc. have given a good rebuff to the US machinations. A wave of protests against the US imperialism swept entire Latin America. Even in countries like Mexico, the popular sentiments against globalisation were clearly visible. The Central American countries witnessed very popular discontent against the World Bank dictates and domination in the policy formulation of the respective countries.

15.8 The successful conduct of WSF at Sao Paulo last January 2003, where people assembled from all over the world, underlined the need for the progressive forces to work together to defeat the policies of globalisation.

15.9 Working class and the people in Asia, Africa, and Australia have intensified their struggles and resistance to capitalist exploitation, which is powerfully emerging in all the continents.

15.10 Though the coordination among all the movements against globalisation has not yet become widespread, the world is heading towards that. The response we have got in two international conferences held in India at our initiative shows that working class and the trade union movement in the world desires that effective coordination should be developed to fight back the depredations of the capitalist onslaught.

15.11 These movements are potentially advancing and can take the shape of popular global upsurge if properly planned and coordinated by the organised trade union movement. Indian working class is in the forefront amongst the working class struggles, going on all over the world, against the policies of imperialist globalisation. The pioneering role of CITU within the country enjoins upon it the responsibility to involve in the global initiative as well.

16. FORWARD TO MORE POWERFUL AND LONG-DRAWN STRUGGLES!

Comrades,

16.1 Since 1991 we have been conducting several struggles and mass actions against the policies of the Government of India. We have also organised eight nationwide strikes engulfing larger and larger sections of workers.

16.2 The strikes were the outcome of nationwide campaigns against the economic policies of globalisation. Several local, industry level and State level actions were organised prior to the nationwide strike actions.

16.3 These strikes reflected the growing unity among the working class. In each consecutive strike, newer and newer sections of workers participated. Many organisations, which were not part of the united movement earlier, joined the strike. Even trade union leadership opposing the strike could not prevent their ranks from participating in the strikes.

16.4 The capacity of the Government and the management to break the strike was dwindling in each strike, in view of the determination of the workers. Workers were coming forward spontaneously to join the campaign for the strike action. Even officers in several undertakings were coming forward to canvass support for the strike action.

16.5 Increasing participation of workers from the strategic sector of the economy gave these strikes a capacity to paralyse the economy to a certain extent. Public sector workers as well as Central and State Govt. employees, port and dock employees, defence employees and financial sector employees participated in good strength, which had a big impact on the strike action.

16.6 In several undertakings, all-in-unity of the workers at the undertaking level could be achieved irrespective of affiliations, which resulted in making the strike cent per cent successful. It reflected a growing urge among the working class at local levels to resist the capitalist offensive.

16.7 The massive character of these strikes received international acclaim. Foreign Press and electronic media covered these strikes well. The trade union actions were quoted to say that MNCs were hesitating to come to India due to the repeated strikes, who are pressurising the Government of India to check the 'menace' of such countrywide action and preserve "industrial peace" in India.

16.8 However, without undermining the success of our fight against the Fund-Bank dictated economic policies and the misrule of the BJP-led NDA Government, we must not fail to objectively identify our

weaknesses and failures. The vast masses of unorganised sector of the working class could not be sufficiently drawn in the vortex of strike action. The intensity of the strike was not even in all parts of the country and in some pockets the strike was very weak. The reformist unions in some parts of the country exerted their influence, which adversely affected the impact of strike.

16.9 A sizable section of the working class is still getting confused due to misleading capitalist propaganda about the economic policies. This section thinks that the path of globalisation is inevitable and cannot be fought effectively. It feels that we have to work within the framework of globalisation, reversal of the policies is, perhaps, not possible and hence try to minimise the damage to the working class. We have to effectively expose this conspiracy and confusion. Our organisers, who have better exposure to the grass root level workers must continuously update themselves with the persistently increasing world wide struggles against the imperialist globalisation.

16.10 Our campaign must be enriched and convincing with proper facts and figures that the euphoria spread at the time of launching of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation has vanished. The mantra of 'market economy' has inevitably failed to address the ills of the capitalist economy. On the contrary, it has pushed the market to the yoke of severe ever elongating stagnation. Such failure has made the international finance capital desperate and furious. Therefore, the imperialist onslaught against the developing countries is increasing. World peace and integrity is really under serious attack. The conflict between labour and capital is increasing.

16.11 Such assertion of our movement is strengthened by the denunciation of the philosophy and policies of market economy. Wherever, World Bank, IMF and WTO meetings take place, popular demonstrations in large numbers oppose the policies of globalisation. The massive demonstration at Evian in Switzerland in front of World Economic Forum - a gathering of financial tycoons from all over the world - witnessed the rising discontent amongst the working people, even in the advanced capitalist countries.

16.12 We have not yet been able to involve non-working class strata of the society in our action programmes, though these sections also were hit hard by the policies of globalisation. We have not been able to build up a powerful propaganda machinery to reach these strata so that they also understand the dangerous character of the policy of globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation. This creates hurdles in converting TU struggles into popular mass movements against the onslaughts of MNCs and capitalists class within the country.

16.13 We have to overcome all the shortcomings that have cropped up during the last 12 years, so that our struggles will be intensified and become more effective instruments of class struggles.

16.14 We have also to address the growing feeling among the workers that our programmes are becoming repetitive. Given the severity of the offensive of the ruling classes against the working class, the mass of the workers desire some militant action programme that would bring more pressure on the Government to change its anti-people economic policies. The Government is also characterising the strike action as an annual ritual. We must address these aspects of the weakness of our movement, as otherwise, we may have to suffer from erosion in the confidence and enthusiasm of our rank and file cadres in pushing forward our struggles against the policies of the Government.

16.15 Learning from the rich experience we have gained during the last 12 years of struggles against the policies of imperialist globalisation, we must plan our future programme of action that will effectively address the ground reality. We must ensure that our strategy succeeds in instilling greater enthusiasm

and confidence in our cadres, inspire the working class and create confidence in their minds for further actions and at the same time can mount effective pressure on the Government to change the policies.

16.16 One day strike is no doubt an effective weapon to draw attention of the ruling class to the growing opposition among the working class against the economic policies of the Govt. But to create an impact on the economy, the perspective of long drawn action programme needs to be properly developed by us. We need to convince the trade unions to accept this perspective so that our struggle can attain newer height for a better impact on the ruling classes in India.

16.17 In our perspective for a long drawn action, we must keep in mind the role of the strategic sectors in paralysing the capitalist economy. The major sectors can be identified as follows:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| a) Energy Sector | : | Coal Mines, Oil & Natural Gas Industry and Power Sector |
| b) Financial Sector | : | Banks, Insurance and other Financial Institutions in Public and Private Sectors |
| c) Transport Sector | : | Water Transport, Air Transport, Road Transport and Railways |
| d) Communication Sector | : | Tele Communications and Postal Services |

16.18 If the workers in these sectors can be mobilised for long drawn simultaneous actions, the major operation of the economy is bound to come to a standstill, thereby compelling the Government to give up their deliberate indifferent attitude towards the democratic movement of the workers opposing the suicidal policies. It will force the ruling polity to take cognisance of the action programme. At the same time, the other sections of the working class can be brought in action along with them for a longer period.

16.19 The pioneering initiative of the workers in the crucial sectors of the economy combined with the movement of the working people of different other sectors, particularly in the unorganised sector, can produce desired result of the fight against the Fund-Bank-WTO dictated policies imposed on our country. The huge numerical power of the workers in unorganised sector confronting crude exploitation due to the hostile policy measures of the Government deserves our special attention. Without the participation of the workers of this sector, no struggle of the working class can attain the desired dimension.

16.20 Such a strategically structured, well-prepared, long drawn, united action of the working class is the need of the hour. The deepening deterioration in all segments of the economy resulting in increasing sufferings of all sections of the people is the direct consequence of the ever growing pro-imperialist tilt in the policy perception and persuasion of the BJP-led NDA Government. It is imperative to add a new strategic dimension to the on going anti-globalisation fight in our country.

16.21 Today, the pressure of the World Bank and the IMF is much more on the Government of India than our pressure. This hard reality of the present situation cannot be ignored by us. Therefore, a long drawn action, in which strategic sectors will play a major role, should be planned by the united movement of the working class.

16.22 As a preparatory stage for all strategic sectors coming in for a long drawn action, sector-wise actions may have to be organised. All these sectors are earmarked for privatisation by the Government. Hence, possibility of sector-wise as well as concerted action is very much needed and possible.

16.23 It is extremely necessary that other sections of mass organisations like Kisan Sabha, Agricultural Workers Unions, the organisations of students, youth, women, teachers, lawyers, service sector employees, scientists, artists etc. should also be mobilised for direct action on their own demands, which are also directly or indirectly related to the policies of globalisation. The working class has to play major role in bringing together all mass organisations so that a powerful people's movement can be generated in the country to defeat the policies of the NDA government.

16.24 It would be important for the CITU to independently launch vigorous campaign on our own platform so that the concept of long drawn strategic struggles is accepted by all. The length of the struggle has to be decided by the consciousness of the workers all over India. In our enthusiasm, we should avoid making adventurist mistakes, which will only help the Government to resort to repressive measures.

16.25 The General Council should seriously consider this aspect of making our struggles more powerful. To achieve the identified strategy, it is of utmost necessity to strengthen the united movement both at sectoral as well as State and National levels. Powerful unity for pursuing struggles is an essential requirement to push forward the fight to achieve desired result - immediate and ultimate. We have also to take steps to establish and strengthen close co-ordination among our own trade unions functioning in these strategic sectors. Our initiative and steps in bringing together our own trade unions pertaining to the different strategic sectors, noted above, shall herald a new phase, enabling our unions to effectively play their role to bring other trade unions for the sector-wise joint movement on a massive scale.

16.26 Two key organisational tasks, which must always receive our priority attention are consolidation of our organisational strength and unleashing our independent activities, with the definite purpose of contributing to fortify the united fora and intensify the struggles. It is under this condition, we have to pay special attention to strengthen our organisation and overcome all weaknesses pointed out in our Bhubaneswar document.

16.27 I am sure the General Council will be able to guide the CITU in effectively leading the working class for more powerful actions to defeat the onslaught of the capitalist class.

Greetings to all of you!

M K Pandhe
General Secretary

RESOLUTIONS

ON CONDOLENCE

This meeting of the CITU General Council, held at Cuttack from 24-27, July 2003, pays its respectful homage to all the leaders, cadres and activists of the working class and democratic movement, who passed away in this period since our last working committee meeting at Hissar.

This meeting of the CITU General Council, held at Cuttack from 24-27, July 2003, deeply condoles the death of Com. L.B. Gangadhara Rao a veteran leader of the communist movement and former President of All India Agricultural Workers Union. Com. LBG, as he was popularly known, displayed high degree of courage and heroism during Telengana armed struggle and spent several years in Jail and underground during the freedom struggle. The meeting pays respectful homage to the departed leader.

This meeting also condoles the death of Com. Nandeswar Talukdar, a veteran CPI(M) leader of Assam, Com. K. Muthaiah, a freedom fighter and a communist leader of Tamilnadu, Com. Sudhangshu Dasgupta, an educator and a stalwart of the Communist movement in West Bengal, a veteran Kisan leader from MP. Com. Dorilal Tihaiya, Com. Jagmohan a veteran communist leader of UP and leader of Agricultural workers, Com. Prasanna Panigrahi, Vice-President of Orissa Kisan Sabha and Com. Satyendra More, veteran CPI (M) leader of Maharashtra among others who left us during the intervening period since last working committee meeting. The meeting pays its homage to all the departed leaders.

This meeting deeply condoles the death of Com. Lakshmi De, member of the CITU General Council and leading figure of left and democratic movement in West Bengal, Com. E.K. Menon a veteran TU leader of Kerala and CITU General Council Member, Com. S.A. Thangaraj, Veteran leader of the democratic and TU movement in Tamilnadu, Com. Anjali Kumar Ghosh a veteran leader of the working class movement in Bengal, Com. Jagatpal Singh a leader of the agricultural workers of UP. The meeting pays respectful homage to these departed leaders.

This meeting expresses deep shock at the passing away of Com. K. Adinarayana a veteran leader of the Central Govt. Employees. Com. Adinarayana played a leading role in organising movement of the Postal Employees in the country. CITU pays its respectful homage to the departed leader. This meeting also pays homage to Com. Tarakeshwar Chakraborty General Secretary AIBEA, Com. Indradeep Sinha, veteran CPI leader and leader of the Kisan movement in Bihar and Com. Ashutosh Banerjee President UTUC (LS), who passed away during this period. This meeting also condoles the death of noted Bengali poet Sri Subhas Mukhopadhyaya and pays its respectful homage.

This meeting deeply condoles the death of Com. Walter Sislu a veteran leader of the African National Congress and Com. Meir Vilner, veteran Communist leader of Israel. The meeting pays its respectful homage to these departed leaders.

HOMAGE TO MARTYRS

This meeting of the CITU General Council, held at Cuttack from 24-27, July 2003, remembers with respect the courageous sacrifice of all those leaders, cadres and activists of the trade union, peasant, agricultural labour, youth, students and women's movement who laid down their lives and 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 against casteist and communal forces

his meeting of the CITU General Council, held at Cuttack from 24-27, July 2003, expresses deep anguish at the ghastly murder of Com. Ashok Kumar, leader of Parvati Hydel Project (HP) by the employer contractor-gangster nexus and a CPI(M) leader murdered in Purulia by Jharkhand party. The meeting offers respectful homage to the above leaders as also to other martyrs of the democratic movement in Tripura, Bengal and elsewhere in the country who have been killed by the terrorist outfit and political goons during the recent months and sends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members.

AGAINST PRIVATISATION OF NALCO

This meeting of the CITU General Council, held at Cuttack from 24-27, July 2003, records its total opposition to the nefarious move of the central Government to privatise the NALCO.

The PSU has an excellent record of all round efficiency despite hostile policy of the NDA Government. It has in its credit 100% capacity utilization and has been producing quality aluminum at lowest cost of production in the world. Turnover, profit and dividend payment has been increasing over the years. The commissioning capital outlay of NALCO was Rs.2,408 crore. The authorized capital is Rs.1,300 crore out of which Rs.644.31 crore is paid up. However, the current market value of the asset of NALCO is estimated at Rs.15,000 crore. NALCO is thus a revenue earning national asset. It is contributing immensely towards the economy of the state of Orissa. The contract and casual workers apart, the PSU has on their roll 6,644 permanent employees. There is absolutely no valid justification for selling off a top of the line company like NALCO.

It is atrocious that the Vajpayee Government has shown audacious contempt to the recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee on Petition for continuance of NALCO in public sector. Moreover, the State Government of Orissa have communicated their opposition to privatization and above all massive united movement have been conducted by the workers and officers of NALCO and top of all by the people of Orissa against the privatization move. But, the General Council notes with grave annoyance that so much is the obsession and obstinacy of the Vajpayee Government for privatisation that all these had no impact on it.

This meeting congratulates the struggling people of Orissa and the workers and the officers of NALCO for the united anti-privatisation fight and the success so far attained in stalling the privatisation move and assure full support to the forthcoming movement. General Council directs the CITU unions and appeals to the trade union movement of the country to act in solidarity to stop privatisation of NALCO.

AGAINST TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT'S DRACONIAN MEASURES

This meeting of the General Council of CITU, held at Cuttack from 24-27, July 2003, unequivocally condemns the Tamil Nadu Government, headed by the AIADMK Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha, for the draconian measures resorted to against the employees and teachers during their recent 11 day strike.

The Tamil Nadu Government had armed itself with a lawless law in the name of the Tamil Nadu Essential Services Maintenance Act (TESMA) 2002, which itself is a draconian law. For the first time since the Act was enacted, the Government invoked its stringent provisions and detained the leaders of the JACTTEO-GEO and COTA-GEO, two federations of staff and teachers' unions, at midnight on 30th June, 2003. This was a preemptive move to prevent the indefinite strike called for from 2nd July. The Government threatened that the union functionaries arrested for inciting the strike would be soon suspended from service and if convicted under the ESMA, which provides for a maximum of three-year imprisonment or a Rs. 5000-fine or both, would be dismissed. But, the employees bravely responded by commencing the indefinite strike a day in advance. The strike by the employees and teachers was against the Govt's retrograde move of downsizing and drastic curtailment of pension and other benefits. The Government then came up with an ordinance giving itself the summary power of dismissal en masse, without any application of mind and without giving the employees an opportunity to be heard. The ordinance, which amended TESMA (Section 7), provides for treating any absence from workplace after the promulgation of the Ordinance as "deemed participation" in the banned strike irrespective of the actual reason for such absence. The ordinance was given retrospective effect from 23rd April itself. Midnight arrests of employees and their leaders continued and the figure crossed 2200. Summary dismissal, without even giving individual notices, of around 2 lakh employees, was resorted to in a brazen display of authoritarianism. The Government was intent upon crushing the strike by any means.

The Government did not pay heed to the sane advice of the High Court, which ordered release of those arrested and reinstatement of the dismissed, with a corresponding move on the part of the employees to call off the strike. It challenged the order of the single judge and went on appeal before the Principal Bench of the same High Court. The High Court judgement upholding the plea of the State Government on jurisdictional issue has come as a rude shock and caused deep disappointment not only among the employees but also among the people in general. The Court's order to release arrested employees on bail was nothing more than a relief that could be granted by any judicial magistrate. The judgement has not addressed even the issues raised by the Judges themselves in the course of the hearing.

The refusal of the Tamil Nadu Government to permit the employees to report back to work and the arrogant attitude towards the plea for restoration of normalcy by engaging the unions in talks, all smack of a high and mighty stance. The working class cannot remain a mute spectator to such onslaught by a State Government against its own employees. This meeting notes that the arrogance and highhandedness of the Jayalalitha Govt of Tamilnadu as reflected in its vindictive designs against the striking employees and teachers bear an ominous portent not only for the trade union and labour rights but also for the democratic rights and institutions as well.

Even at this stage the Government of Tamil Nadu will be better advised to roll back its vindictive measures and initiate the process of dialogue to find an amicable solution to the issues at large.

This meeting calls upon all sections of the workers and democratic forces to stand firmly in solidarity with the struggling employees and teachers and unitedly resist the authoritarian incursions into their fundamental rights and defeat the ESMA and the related Ordinance in Tamil Nadu.

COMBATING THE OFFENSIVE OF COMMUNALISM

Imperialist globalisation and communalism are the twin major challenges confronted by the working class in our country today. Imperialist globalisation has led to the resurgence of right wing, reactionary and communal forces in several parts of the world. Communal offensive in our country has assumed unprecedented proportions after the BJP came to power at the Centre, as has been demonstrated by the communal carnage let loose by it for electoral advantage in Gujarat.

For the working class, the fight against communalism is a fight for protecting the unity of the class against communal disruption. In addition, as the most advanced, most conscious and most organised class, the working class has a special role and responsibility in fighting communalism and protecting national unity. But unfortunately, the working class in our country is yet to address this issue with the seriousness that the situation demands.

CITU RAISED THE BANNER OF STRUGGLE

The CITU has always been aware of the serious threat posed by the communal and other divisive forces to the working class and national unity. The major policy resolution dealing with this matter adopted by the foundation conference of CITU as far back as in 1970 showed the great insight the founder leadership of CITU had into the real nature of these forces. It has clearly mentioned the fascist potentialities of the communal and divisive forces and the imperialist complicity in their nefarious activities. It has called upon the working class to fight against both of them with due seriousness.

Almost all the conferences of CITU, the meetings of the General Council, and the Working Committee, have noted the communal developments of the time and urged the working class, particularly the units and affiliates of the CITU, to undertake the struggle against the communal forces as per the demands of the situation. The 8th conference of CITU held at Patna in March 1994 had discussed the problem of communalism and the tasks facing the trade union movement in a Commission and approved a paper, which was published as a policy document. The paper discussing the latest communal situation, adopted by a Commission in its 10th conference held at Hyderabad in December 2000, was also published. But in spite of these repeated discussions and adoption of documents, we cannot claim that we have exerted all our energies to put these resolutions into practice.

Gujarat holocaust, which has been an ominous portent of what might be coming up elsewhere in the country with all its implications, is a sharp pointer to the inadequacy of the role of the working class and the secular forces in fighting this menace. Instead of going into detailed discussion on the nature of communalism and its historical development in the country in this paper, we shall mainly try to explore the methods used by the communal forces to penetrate the working class and the practical ways to combat them.

SPREAD OF COMMUNAL IDEOLOGY

It is a matter of regret that in several instances, including the Gujarat carnage, workers of one community have indulged in killing the workers belonging to another community. One of the reasons for this is the historical character of the development of the working class in our country and the weakness of the trade union movement. A large section of the working class in our country is yet to gain class consciousness and is swayed by communal forces. During the colonial and early post independence periods, the hold of communalism was limited to certain urban centres, drawing its support from the petty bourgeoisie, feudal landlords and big traders. The communal forces today are concentrating on bringing the 'lower classes'- the tribals, dalits and other sections under their influence. During communal riots these sections are deployed to carry out the attacks. Most of the participants in communal riots and most of the victims of communal violence are also the poor. The notion of 'us' and 'they' which did not exist among the poor earlier, is immediately instilled in their consciousness after a communal riot and a communal divide is instantly established.

In addition to this, there are several other aspects of the present situation, which provide a fertile soil for the growth of communal influence among the working class.

Imperialism has been consistently encouraging communal and religious fundamentalist forces world wide, in its bid to protect its dominance and prevent united opposition to its hegemonic policies. US imperialism supported the Taliban regime to oppose the erstwhile liberal democratic regime in Afghanistan, and continues to support communal forces all over the world. But unfortunately, the anti imperialist consciousness among the people in general and the working class in particular, in the era of globalisation has been low. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the set back to Socialism in Europe, there has been an erosion in peoples' faith in socialism in the present Uni-polar world. This has again been utilised by the right wing reactionary and communal forces.

The serious unemployment situation particularly in the post globalisation period has been causing frustration among the youth, who fall easy victims to the communal propaganda and become their reserve army. Along with this, the criminalisation of society has a profound impact on all aspects of socio political life in the country and provides a breeding ground for the spread of communal hatred. Unfortunately, several so called 'secular forces' have chosen to toe the line of 'soft Hindutva' in their quest for votes during elections and thereby helped the further growth of communal ideology.

THE VANGUARD ROLE OF THE WORKING CLASS

In spite of this, there have been instances where workers, particularly the CITU cadres have played an important role to protect the victims during some countrywide communal riots though we cannot assert that we have done enough to fight communalism at large and to curb its influence among the working class. The positive feature which we must keep in mind is that the Indian society, including the Hindu society is a pluralistic one.

In organising the struggle against communalism the trade unions have to concentrate on weeding out communal ideas and feelings from the consciousness of the section of workers themselves, who have fallen prey to the communal ideology, and organise them as a bulwark against communalism capable of effective intervention in other spheres.

COMMUNALISM: AS MEANS TO POLITICAL POWER

Communalism of both the majority and minority varieties seeks to utilise the religious feelings of the

people and to convert it into communal ideology portraying the 'other' as the 'enemy'. Both feed on each other and aim at dividing the people on religious lines and disrupt class unity. But because of the capacity of the majority communalism to influence larger sections of the people, and its political wing BJP's present status as the ruling party at the Centre, it poses a far greater threat today.

The objective of the RSS, rooted in its fascist ideology, along with the Shiv Sena promotes the majoritarian communalism and seeks to establish a 'Hindu Rashtra' based on 'Hindutva'. Its present political wing, the BJP, has managed to come to power at the Centre and in some States by spreading communal hatred. It has used this power to penetrate into all the institutions of the country, the bureaucracy, police, military, judiciary etc the dangerous portents of which were again demonstrated in the State-sponsored communal violence in Gujarat and in the judgement in the Best Bakery case. Through this it wants to control the entire socio cultural life of the country with Hindutva as the dominating ideology.

The RSS and its various outfits like the VHP and the Bajrang Dal etc appeal to the religious sentiments of the people and present a distorted version of religion and the teachings of the religious personalities whom the people hold in high esteem. This is done in a way that the religious ideas and the spiritual aspects are sought to be converted into religious fundamentalist ideas and communal hatred. The communal forces utilise this skilfully to whip up communal passions. The issues of Ram Janmabhoomi, Kashi, Mathura, Bhojshala, cow slaughter etc, have all been used for political gains. The BJP leaders themselves have admitted that Ram Janmabhoomi has nothing to do with religion.

The ingenuity of the RSS and its various outfits should not be underestimated. They utilise not only religious but also the cultural practices of the people to propagate communal ideas and conduct a hate campaign against the minorities. Bhajans, various religious rituals, group-pujas in offices and factories on certain days of the week, and even yoga classes, naturopathy sessions and morning walkers' clubs are utilised as means and covers for the spread of communal ideology.

The commission paper of the 10th conference noted that Communalism is "a political doctrine which makes use of religious cultural differences to achieve political end". This definition draws our attention to the political aspect of communalism. For last two three decades communal forces of the majority community represented by the Sangh Parivar with RSS as the central and guiding force and BJP (earlier Jana Sangh) as its political force has been almost continuously on the ascendance in the political life of the country. The BJP, forging alliance with a large number of extremely opportunist smaller regional parties under the name of NDA is running the Government at the Centre since the last more than four years. It is BJP and BJP alone that calls the shots in the NDA and because of its overwhelming strength it has been able to smoothly carry out its communal designs in various aspects of national life with a view to thoroughly communalise them. The major front for communal activity during the last three decades has been the political front: the major objective was to come to power by hook or crook. With the general elections drawing near they have now raised the slogan achieving of two-thirds majority to enable them to carry on their communal agenda without even the slightest opposition from the allies.

'NATIONALISM' – A CAMOUFLAGE

Along with religious sentiment, the majoritarian communalism takes the advantage of camouflaging communalism as nationalism. For this they present distorted versions of historical facts and prop up false "national heroes". It is a familiar tactics for the communal forces to falsify history and other school textbooks, to make them instruments to create communal consciousness and make it a weapon for

acquiring power and sustaining it. This has a close resemblance to fascism.

COMMUNAL MODUS OPERANDI

It is also most important for us to note that it is not just for the last three decades that they are propagating Hindutva, but during these decades their project for coming to power has become visible. RSS has been making this propaganda since its foundation in 1925. We must not forget what is not easily visible, since its earliest days it has not only been carrying on communal propaganda but has been building up a wide network of organisations of various kinds, Shakhnas of RSS, innumerable schools for children, 'Vanavasi Kalyan Samitis' for the tribal people etc. However, it is during the past decades that there has been a new spurt in this activity particularly when they shared power in the Janata Party Government. Besides its own outfits, which, among them, have division of labour, the RSS people participate in all sorts religio-social activities, institutions, and movements; sometimes they themselves initiate such activities, organise social service, they come to dominate them, establish relation with people and earn their confidence and respect. This is the method they generally adopt to gain access to people with religious consciousness to mobilise electoral support, to instil communal consciousness in them, and to engineer communal violence. All these have been described in details in the voluminous published literatures. It is extremely important for secular activists to get acquainted with the modus operandi of communal forces in order to effectively combat communalism.

While there is no dearth of general information in published literature regarding modus operandi of communal forces, there cannot be any doubt that it varies from area to area and from sector to sector to be in accord with the varied conditions prevailing in respective areas and sectors. To draw up effective plan for intervention, secular forces have to know the specific form in which communal activity is carried out in specific areas. As far as trade unions are concerned what we are miserably lacking in is the knowledge of the specific form, if any, of communal activities among the working class. No doubt the workers are largely covered by communal activity carried out in general. It is well known that for mobilizing the workers in their support the RSS had set up their trade union centre, the BMS. It was one of the first subsidiaries of RSS. Some elements of RSS ideology is preached from trade union platform itself. The BMS conference adopted resolution for building Ram Mandir. We have to seriously examine if in our anxiety to forge unity with the BMS as part of building a broader working class unity, we have neglected our task of exposing the communal aspects of its activities. Trade unions must carry out survey in different areas and sectors for detailed information of communal activities carried out among the workers.

FASCISTIC CHARACTER

To explore effective means for the trade unions to combat communalism it is important to briefly take note of some new features related to present day communalism. The BJP led Government at the Centre is now pursuing in full measure the project of monopoly capital which in its turn is providing full fledged support to them. Secondly, its acquiescence in relation to imperialism is no secret. Their govt is firmly wedded to the policy of liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation sponsored by imperialists through IMF, World Bank and WTO and upheld by our monopoly capital. Thirdly, the Sangh Parivar's political programme and social ideological outlook is as much fascist as its method to achieve its ends. The commission paper of the 10th conference has rightly stressed that "The magnitude of the danger posed by communalism today cannot be gauged", unless the fascist character of the communal forces is properly realised.

We shall commit a grave error and fail to formulate correct strategy for fighting communalism if we

look at it as communalism pure and simple apart from the above characteristics. Recognition of this fact leads us to the conclusion that struggle against communalism, the struggle against the anti-people economic policies pursued in the interest of monopoly capital and imperialism, and the struggle for democratic rights are part of one and the same struggles to be fought on different fronts with their own specificities.

SHORT TERM TASKS

In the Commission Paper of the 8th conference, we considered short term tasks for 3 specific situations and also the long term task of eradicating communalism. Specific situations are (1) when tension is high but violence has not yet broken out, (2) when violence has erupted and (3) when violence has subsided. The possible manner of effective trade union intervention has been discussed in the commission paper; there is no need for repetition here. It has been correctly stated in the paper that "It is very important to intervene when outburst of violence is about to take place and when it has already taken place. But that does not take us far in wiping out communal viruses.....our basic strategy for the long term objective of wiping out communal virus should be sustained political and ideological campaign in all possible forms..." These three phases are only parts of an ongoing process of communalisation, seeds of which are sown by the communal forces. The intervention during these phases of the process is the most important of our secular tasks.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY

The Commission Paper has stated, and rightly so, that the objective of wiping out the virus of communalism "is not easy to accomplish". In a country materially backward where remnants of pre-capitalist relations are still present backward consciousness also prevails widely. There is a lack scientific outlook and prevalence of obscurantist, irrational ideas. Consequently, faith prevails upon reason. Can there be a more fertile ground for quick sprouting and growth of communalism than this? At the same time however, it will be a mistake to conclude that this backward consciousness automatically gives rise to communalism in the sense we use the term. It is evident from the more or less peaceful relations prevailing in rural areas even at a time when cities and suburbs were burning. Seeds of communalism are sown by communal forces for political purpose. But once these seeds sprout it is not easy to uproot them.

Fortunately, we have a modern sector with modern industry and liberal education. We have a vast section of population who are not influenced by communal ideas; among the working class too, there is a considerable section that belong to this category. This section has to be consolidated and a force has to be built up out of them, equipping them properly for the struggle. There is a numerous section in society who is under the influence of 'soft communalism'. One section among them honestly feels they are secular, but unwittingly entertain some of the ideas propagated by Sangh Parivar. The other section of this category consciously believes what the Sangh Parivar propagates but normally does not like violence. When there is outburst of violence, they sometimes encourage it and even participate in it. The last category comprises those are convinced active communal force, the activists of the Sangh Parivar. All these categories are to be found among working class also.

We have earlier noted the methodology of communal project. The main weapons the Sangh Parivar uses are lies and deceit, misinterpretation of religious teachings, misinformation, falsification of history, etc. The secular task is to free the minds of the people and the workers from the 'knowledge', which is false and the 'understanding' which is wrong. Because of social-psychological background, it is easy to communalise people but decommunalisation is not that easy. For this, it is necessary to

undertake the following tasks - (1) Proper categorisation (2) Identification of the category to be targeted (3) draw out what false information has created what wrong understanding (4) patently and tactfully help them to have correct knowledge and right understanding. Here we need not discuss all the misinformation, misinterpretation and falsification resorted to for communalisation of peoples' minds. Already there is some literature produced at political level. We should bring out some comprehensive publications refuting all the falsehoods of the communalising propaganda. One of these points which demands mention is the relationship with Pakistan.

While the communalists have succeeded to a large extent in converting the elementary religious consciousness of the people including the working class, into a 'communal consciousness', we should endeavour to win over such sections of the masses by converting it into a 'tolerant religious consciousness' as a first step to bring them over to a 'secular consciousness'. For this we must pay proper attention to the social issues of the people and encourage social reform movements. Our trade union activities must also include issue related to the social oppression of the minorities and the other so called 'lower classes' of society and we must strive to mobilise all our members, including those belonging to the majority sections and the so called 'upper castes' on these issues, in order to attract the minorities and socially oppressed sections in our fold.

While carrying on propaganda against communalism, we must take care and exercise caution not to hurt the religious sentiments of all communities. Our campaign must be in a language which can be understood by the people and must take their level of consciousness into account.

Caste oppression is one of the issues with which majority communalism can be countered. The 'Chaturvarna' ideology of the Sangh Parivar is based on the orthodox brahmanical perspective which perpetrates social exploitation of the so called lower castes- the BCs, SCs etc. Though some caste based parties have formed opportunistic alliances with the BJP, caste is a basic identity related issue which has the potential to be used to combat the communal offensive and wean away the majority of the workers from their influence.

Communalism has thrived by bringing divisive issues to the centre stage of the political debate, and diverting the attention of the people from the real issues like unemployment, poverty, rising prices, sickness, closures, self-reliance of the economy and the various other fall outs of the imperialist globalisation policies being pursued by the BJP led Government. The Congress, whose economic policies are no different from those of the BJP, given its class character, also did the same to pursue its economic reform agenda. We must strive to bring the basic economic issues- the class issues – to the centre stage of the political debate. We must remember that communal and disruptive forces forge ahead, once the class struggle abates or takes a back seat. Hence we must concentrate on sharpening the class struggle.

Women, both of the majority and minority communities, constitute the most vulnerable targets of the communal forces. Women being considered as mainly responsible for observing the religious rituals in the family, it is easy for the communal forces to mobilise them on the pretexts of religious occasions and spread the communal ideology among them. The Gujarat communal violence saw a large number of women, particularly from the middle classes actively participating in the violence and encouraging their men to loot and kill. We must pay special attention to counter communal forces operating among women.

STRENGTHEN CLASS IDENTITIES THROUGH CLASS STRUGGLE

While, one deals with communalisation and decommunalisation of the working class, the question of

identity assumes importance. In society a person has multiple functions and an identity relating to each function. A person has a class identity – as a worker or peasant or agricultural worker etc. The same person may also identify himself or herself as a Hindu, Muslim, or a Christian, Sikh etc. The communal forces attempt to strengthen the religious identity and undermine the class identity and protect the interests of the exploiting classes by dividing the working class.

Only by strengthening the class identity can the communal identity be overpowered and secularism defended. This means full fledged development of class consciousness and this can be achieved by involving the workers in sustained class struggle and by constant education. A class conscious working class is the real bulwark against communalism. Struggle against communalism particularly in the present day Indian context is itself a form of class struggle and ultimate success cannot be achieved by separating them (what is true for the working class is also true for the peasantry).

UNITE ALL SECULAR FORCES

But while the working class should form the solid core of the secular front, the struggle should be most broad based. While one should not underestimate the forces of communalism, one should not overestimate it too. One should be objective in assessment. Even the election results so far do not indicate that everything is lost. There is a considerable section in our society which is firm against communalism. There is a vast section who voted for the Sangh Parivar not because they support communalism but on other considerations. Trade unions should take initiative to mobilise all such forces which include, among others, secular minded intellectuals. They have an important role to play in the struggle against communalism and the fascistic tendency of communal forces.

FIGHT ON THREE FRONTS

Thus the fight against communalism is to be carried all three fronts: economic, political and ideological. The fight on the economic front is the usual work of the working class and the trade unions and is being continuously carried out by them. But now that the communal forces are in state power and are adopting measures prompted by communal consideration, at the political level, it is an important task of the trade unions to join the struggle against such measures. In our Commission Paper of the Tenth Conference of CITU, we have already expressed our agreement with the definition of communalism as a political doctrine which makes use of religious and cultural differences to achieve political end. When the communal forces come to power by use of communal conflicts and use state power for furthering their communal project, the ouster of such forces should certainly be an indispensable task of the working class and trade unions.

TASKS FOR COMBATING COMMUNALISM

- 1) Strengthen the unity of the working class so that it overpowers religious communal identity. Intensive education campaign linked with sustained class struggle, covering majority of workers, is the strategic task.
- 2) Effectively counter the process of communalisation of peoples' consciousness by the communal forces by manipulating their religious consciousness and their spirit of nationalism. We must win over the sections of the working class affected by their ideology.
- 3) Literature dealing comprehensively with the various points of the mischievous communal propaganda should be brought out and methodology for campaign worked out. The form of campaign should

be worked out according to the situation.

4) Intensify the struggle against the anti worker and anti people economic policies of the Government. The fight against LPG and the fight against communalism are the same struggle on two separate fronts and are essentially connected.

5) Raise anti imperialist consciousness among the working class

6) Working class and the trade unions can and should effectively intervene at all the stages of communal strife- when communal tension has developed but is yet to burst out into violence, during violence, and also when violence has subsided.

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Paper finalised by the CITU Working Committee in its meeting held on 1-4 December 2002 at Hissat Haryana

UNITED STRUGGLES and ORGANISATIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

"Since the emergence of CITU in the trade union scene of India twenty three years ago, it has played an important role in building a united movement on common issues facing the working class. During this period the CITU came in the limelight as the foremost champion of the working class interest.

"The CITU consistently upheld the principle of class struggle and socialism and fought against ideologies inimical to these lofty ideals. Even at times, it was alone in taking certain positions, but it never gave up the struggles to protect the class interest of the workers."

These were the opening paragraphs of The Report on Organisation adopted by the CITU Working Committee meeting held at Bhubaneswar on 4-6 June 1993. Popularly known as the Bhubaneswar document, the report outlines the organisational approach of CITU.

UNITED MOVEMENT: VARIOUS PHASES

The exercise on uniting the trade union movement since the birth of CITU passed through various distinct phases. The first one had been in the form of United Council of Trade Unions (UCTU) in the face of pro-Govt. combine of some major trade unions under the leadership of the INTUC. Then, during the Janata Party regime, the phase of struggle against the Industrial Relations Bill 1978 could bring all the Central Trade Unions in the united platform for a certain period. Thereafter, the National Campaign Committee of Trade unions was formed with all the central trade unions and industrial federations, except the INTUC in 1981. The subsequent period also saw the consolidation of the countrywide united platform of the public sector workers' movement. Later, the BMS opted out of the united platform and then came the formation of Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions in the nineties to fight against liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. Presently, we are witnessing in the current phase a bigger unity at the industry level actions, involving the INTUC and BMS as well. At the national level also, these two central trade unions are occasionally joining the united programmes with other trade unions, despite vacillations.

The CITU emerged from its foundation conference with the slogan "Towards Unity and Struggle" and emphasised the urgent need of building unity of the working class in the struggle against exploitation and for defending the trade union and democratic rights of the workers and the people.

But, immediately after the foundation of CITU, the ruling classes made hectic efforts to isolate the CITU within the trade union movement itself. The INTUC, AITUC and HMS joined to form the National Council of Trade Unions (NCTU) in 1971, with the blessings of the Govt. of India and its Labour Minister, R. K. Khadilkar. The NCTU took a line supportive of the anti-worker policies of the then Congress Govt. at the Centre. The CITU took initiative to bring all other trade unions and industrial federations to form a common platform - the United Council of Trade Unions (UCTU) - to defend the working class. The UCTU launched united countrywide struggles on various issues facing the working class and later against the emergency rule. In the process, the pro-Govt. NCTU formation became defunct. Later, the HMS formally disassociated from the NCTU.

The historic twenty-day long strike by the railway workers in 1974, braving all victimisations, repressions and atrocities, had been the most important event of united working class action in this phase. The National Coordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle (NCCRS), which led the strike, emerged as the broadest industry-based platform of unity for action of the railway workers, involving also the major central trade unions except the INTUC, at that point of time. The railway strike of 1974 had not only reflected the massive unity of the railway workers, irrespective of affiliations, but also had far-reaching impact in reorienting the united movement of the entire working class as a whole and also on the then political development.

SUCCESSIVE PHASES

Since then, the exercise for unity and united actions of the working class had gone through various phases, with the platform of united struggle getting widened in every successive phase. As noted earlier, the Industrial Relations Bill 1978 witnessed countrywide united resistance by all the central trade unions, including the AITUC, INTUC and BMS, on a wider platform of unity. This phase culminated in throwing the Bill into the dustbin.

The INTUC deserted the united movement after the Congress came back to power at the Centre. But, the efforts to forge a united platform of struggle of the working class continued even thereafter. The National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions (NCC) was formed from a massive all India convention at Mumbai in June 1981, which comprised all the Central Trade Unions except the INTUC, besides numerous major industrial federations. It succeeded in repulsing a number of attacks on the rights of the workers till late eighties. Notable was the historic countrywide general strike on 19th January 1982, at the call of the NCC. This was the first powerful nationwide industrial action of the working class in the annals of the Indian Trade Union movement. On that occasion, the joint statement issued by B. T. Ranadive and P. Ramamurthy, President and General Secretary of CITU, congratulated the workers for the successful united strike action and noted: "Braving the barbarous repression let loose by various Congress (I) ruled States through arrest of our 50000 workers under NSA, police lathi-charge, firing and the attacks by Congress (I) hoodlums, in which several workers died, millions of workers have come out in the strike and thus had created a history in the annals of the trade union movement in the country."

CPSTU MOVEMENT

The Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) also emerged in mid-eighties, joined by all the public sector trade unions, affiliated to various central trade unions, except the INTUC, besides several independent unions to fight against the anti-PSU conspiracy of the then Congress Govt. led by Indira Gandhi. The CITU played an important role through countrywide independent campaign against the conspiracy to denigrate the public sector by the Central Government. This created the necessary

condition for the formation of CPSTU. The CPSTU, through various united struggles, became the united platform of public sector workers and was recognised as the consistent champion of the public sector and the rights of its workers..

Subsequently, towards the end of eighties, the BMS disassociated itself from the CPSTU. Despite that, the CPSTU could successfully rally the mass of the public sector workers - including many of those having allegiance to the INTUC and BMS - in countrywide strike actions. In fact, the united campaign launched by the CPSTU in the recent months created such a situation at the grassroots level that BMS had to join the countrywide strike in all the PSUs on 16th April 2002.

SPONSORING COMMITTEE OF TUs

The economic policy, hitherto pursued by the ruling class, took a quantum rightward shift since 1991, moving away from self reliant development to imperialist driven neo-liberal globalisation. Following the introduction of the economic policy of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG) at the dictates of the World Bank and IMF in 1991, the united movement of trade unions entered an altogether new phase. As the INTUC and BMS preferred to stay away from the united movement against the LPG policies, all other trade unions joined in the countrywide strike action on 29th November 1991. This paved the way for the formation of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions. Except INTUC and BMS, all the Central Trade Unions joined the Sponsoring Committee along with other major independent all India federations of the employees in Central and State Govt.s, defence, pharmaceuticals, fertilisers, bank, insurance and other industries, representing an overwhelming majority of the employees of those sectors. This was a further widening of the united platform of struggle.

During Nineties, the Sponsoring Committee played an important role in unleashing a series of countrywide actions, including strike actions, against the LPG policies. With the initiative of the Sponsoring Committee, the mass organisations of the people from other walks of life - the peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth, women, lawyers and other professionals - were drawn to the united struggle against the disastrous economic policies.

The National Platform of Mass Organisations (NPMO) was formed at a massively attended all India Convention in New Delhi in 1993. The NPMO did play an important role in activating all the mass organisations, covering all segments of society, in unleashing campaign and agitation. Thus, the entire decade of nineties witnessed not only a number of general strikes and bandhs, but also numerous sectoral strike actions in banks, insurance and other financial institutions, by the State and Central Govt. employees and also by the unorganised sector workers as well, besides other mass fronts. Moreover the struggles for revival of sick industrial units like NTC, IISCO and many others saw almost total unity of all the unions in the concerned sector. The atmosphere created throughout the country by the campaign and agitation from the platform of Sponsoring Committee and NPMO was such that even the leadership of INTUC and BMS, though staying away from the united movement at the national level, could not come out publicly in support of the LPG policies, despite being ideologically wedded to it. Nor could they restrain a major section of their followings from joining the united countrywide struggle. This was instrumental to a considerable slowing down of the pace of implementation of the policies of liberalisation during Congress and United Front regimes.

UNDER NDA REGIME

After BJP's coming to power at the centre, a new situation emerged. For the first time, the country's governance had been taken over by a rabid communal party controlled by the RSS, a fascist outfit,

which posed a severe threat to the secular fabric as well as to democratic set up of the country. At the same time BJP led Govt embarked on a more vigorous and desperate pursuit of the LPG policies, paying no heed to the public opinion reflected by the united trade union movement and other mass organisations. The onslaught of privatisation and attacks on the working people assumed new dimensions. This set the backdrop to more vigorous forms of resistance by the toiling masses from 2000 onwards.

The year 2000 started with a five-day strike in port & docks, more than a month long strike by the State Govt. employees in Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, and Bihar and a ten-day long united strike by the electricity workers and engineers of UP. The subsequent period also witnessed a number of continuous strike actions by the workers of BALCO, transport workers in AP and Tamilnadu and the State Govt. employees of Kerala. There had also been a number of all India strike actions by the postal, telecom, bank and insurance sector employees and coal miners.

All these sectoral strike actions from 2000 onwards revealed a common feature. Almost all the workers of all affiliations have joined them. All the trade unions in these sectors, including those affiliated to INTUC and BMS, had sponsored most of these strikes, thus reflecting the all in unity of the workers.

For the first time in the post-liberalisation regime, this situation also forced the central leadership of INTUC and BMS to join the struggle against the LPG policies, with a call for countrywide joint demonstrations on 24th July 2001 and to prepare for countrywide strike. Massive successful bandhs were observed in Gujarat and Maharashtra on 16th and 25th April, 2001, respectively.

Though the joint conventions held in all the States of the country, preceding the 24th July joint demonstrations, endorsed the countrywide general strike proposal, the strike call could not materialise in 2001, due to opposition from the INTUC and BMS. It is only after clear-cut position taken by the constituents of CPSTU and Sponsoring Committee to go ahead with the public sector strike on 16th April 2002, the BMS agreed to join the countrywide strike in the PSUs. Despite opposition of the INTUC leadership to the strike call, the INTUC unions in Port & Dock and some other industries came forward openly in support of the strike. Not only that, in some of the oil companies like the BPCL and HPCL, all the unions - including Shiv Sena and INTUC unions - jointly went in for a three-day countrywide strike from 16th April 2002.

Another important feature of the developments in the recent period is that in solidarity with the public sector strike against privatisation on 16th April 2002, in many States viz., AP, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, etc, all the trade unions had jointly called for a general strike, which was responded to by the workers of both the public and private sectors in a big way.

EXPERIENCE, LESSONS AND TASKS

The three decades long exercise of united trade union movement throws up certain concrete experiences.

During the period following emergence of CITU, our efforts for rallying the workers in the struggle against the policies of the ruling classes could draw the major sections of the trade union movement, away from the clutches of class collaborationist pro-Govt. approach inside the trade union movement.

In the subsequent period also, firm assertion of the line of united trade union action against the policies led to widening of the united platform. The anti-liberalisation struggle also could take-off only after

a sustained campaign from early 1991 by the CITU exposing the real face of the policy of liberalisation itself. Still, there was serious reluctance even among many left trade unions for giving a strike call. The CITU took a firm stand of going ahead with the strike single handedly, even if other left trade unions did not come forward to join. Only after this, the first countrywide united strike against the liberalisation policies could be called on 29th November 1991. This strike resulted in the formation of Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions, as noted earlier. The decade-long movement by the Sponsoring Committee created conditions for the INTUC and BMS also to join the anti-liberalisation struggle from 2000 onwards.

Same is the experience even in respect of industry level actions. CITU's independent strike action in coal industry for three days in 2001 paved the way for subsequent all in united action by the coal miners against the policy of privatisation and other issues. The united resolve of the coal workers reflected in the preparatory campaign for a seven day strike in the coal mines on 5-11 August 2002, forced the Govt. had to come forward for negotiation and to agree for keeping the privatisation move in abeyance, albeit temporarily.

Similarly, the CITU took the initiative for united struggle against the anti-worker pension scheme. This struggle including countrywide strike action in 1996 could draw active support of the mass of the workers irrespective of affiliations, despite the opposition of all other major central trade unions. Many industry level unions affiliated to those very central trade unions also joined, thus manifesting a near total unity in action at the grass root level.

This experience underlines the fact that for achieving broader unity for action, it is always essential to pursue the line of united struggle and to insist firmly on "unity for struggle only". By compromising on struggle, such unity cannot be achieved. Unity, without a vision of struggle, is futile and has no meaning.

It is true that more grievous manifestation of the impact of the LPG policies from 2000 onwards created a favourable situation for all in unity in the trade union movement. But, favourable conditions alone cannot lead to united actions, unless there is proactive effort to canalise the resentment and the spontaneous urge for resistance in the appropriate direction. In the absence of such efforts, onslaughts and manifestations of the crisis can lead to demoralisation and frustration. Here lies the importance of conscious efforts for developing united countrywide trade union action.

CITU INTERVENTION AND INITIATIVE

Secondly, intervention by the CITU had played an almost decisive role in deciding the united programmes of action at the national level during mid-seventies onwards. But, during the post liberalisation period, when the united struggle had to focus much more on basic policy issues, rather than on economic demands, we had to confront with more vacillations even among our allies in the Sponsoring Committee, not to speak of the INTUC and BMS. At a later stage, particularly during 2001, the issue of involving BMS and INTUC was often used by many of our allies for not going in for militant countrywide actions, even in the face of the aggravating situation. This illustrates the depth of the influence of economism and reformism on the trade union movement, particularly when the basic class issues are coming to the fore. The vacillation was also due to the ideological offensive carried on through media and other means to generate a kind of fait accompli or the TINA (There Is No Alternative) syndrome among the ranks within the trade union movement.

The united struggle against globalisation at its present stage must, therefore, be accompanied by

projection of the alternative policies for development. This is of tremendous importance to counter the TINA syndrome being propagated by the media and the imperialist lobby. We have to make vigorous and conscious effort to develop a common understanding among the trade unions, as much as we can, on such alternative policies for development. It may not be possible for having such unified understanding on alternative policies with all the trade unions; but our serious effort in that direction can unify the major sections of the trade unions, particularly at the grass root level, in the present situation. We must take up that work of preparing a document on alternative policies for development on a priority basis for campaign amongst our ranks and among the common workers.

FIGHTING THE FORCES OF DISRUPTION: COMMUNALISM AND CASTEISM

Moreover, the rise of communal and divisive forces in the socio-political scenario in the late eighties has posed a serious challenge to our efforts for unifying the working class and the toiling people in general. We have seen how the tempo of countrywide militant struggle against the LPG policies, built up through a million strong mobilisation of workers in Delhi on 26th November 1992, could severely be damaged by the situation created by demolition of Babri Masjid by the sangh parivar outfits. Again, during the span of last few years, particularly from 2000 onwards, all the major trade union centres came together on a single platform at the national level on a number of occasions to oppose the LPG policies, paving the way for countrywide all-in-united action. But, we have seen as to how the RSS pulled the strings from behind to sabotage such a possibility by keeping the BMS away from the united platform. It has been noted that, at regular intervals, particularly when the ruling BJP combine is facing electoral rout in different parts of the country, owing to its anti-worker, anti-people policies, the communal forces led by the sangh parivar outfits act desperately to disrupt the developing unity of not only the workers but also the society as a whole. The recent genocide and ethnic cleansing carried out in Gujarat under Modi and its aftermath has also placed a formidable challenge to the trade union movement.

In fact, we must take note of the peculiar situation that has emerged since late nineties. The vigorous pursuit of the LPG policies by the BJP led Government marked a qualitative difference from its earlier phase, both in terms of speed and character. It was more committed to policies dictated by imperialism. Simultaneously, the BJP led regime pursued the heinous communal agenda, exposing the real face of communal fascism. The mounting resentment among the people and the working class against the grievous impact of the LPG policies and resultant isolation of the ruling polity is sought to be countered and neutralised through most ugly, inhuman communal machinations and carnage in the society. These forces have been aiming at a communal polarisation. The occasional rhetoric indulged in by the RSS outfits against the LPG policies is nothing but a ploy to occupy both the space of opposition and governance and thereby confuse the people.

We should view with concern the inroad of this communal ideology within the ranks of the working class and also our weakness in fully combating the same. The trade union movement, along with other mass organisations, had on occasions taken up campaign against communalism; but that remains thoroughly insufficient, both in terms of mobilisation, regularity and consistency. This weakness has to be overcome, with conscious independent initiative at all levels of the organisation, to expose the communal-disruptive forces and defend the unity of the class.

In this context, intensification of the working class struggles and militant mobilisation of the class against the pursuit of the agenda of imperialism in the economic policy front by the forces of communal fascism in governance has to be taken up much more seriously. At the same time we have to take conscious initiative to combat and expose the forces of communalism. Both these struggles must be

carried on simultaneously, aiming at broadening the unity of class in the field of struggle. The unification of the class and defeat of the disruptive forces can be best achieved through sharpening of the class struggle only. Fight against the communal disruptive forces must be construed as an organic part of the working class struggle.

Problems arising out of casteism have also posed a severe challenge to the working class unity, weakening the trade union movement. This is a problem inherited from the old feudal socio-economic order. The Indian bourgeoisie pursued a capitalist path of development in the post independence era, in compromise with the feudal interests. It perpetuated the caste system and the social oppression associated with it. That is why, even today worst form of caste repression exists side by side with the so called modernity infused by the capitalist way of development. However, since late eighties, there had been a greater assertion by the down-trodden sections and oppressed castes. This assertion is also getting reflected in the socio-political arena. This is a positive development and its democratic content needs to be nurtured and integrated with the mainstream struggle against the exploitative regime.

Interested quarters, guided by 'vote-bank politics', are making hectic efforts to confine this growing assertion, against social oppression and injustice, within the narrow confines of the respective caste, to channelise the same towards caste based polarisation. This is to keep the downtrodden sections detached from the common democratic struggle against the very root of this oppression and injustice. This also is having its reflections in the trade union movement in a big way, particularly in the areas where the democratic movement is very weak. Such caste-based polarisation was witnessed during the secret ballot held in various industries, much to the detriment of united struggle of the working class. The task before the working class movement is to make conscious and consistent efforts to channelise the growing assertion among the oppressed castes towards class-consciousness. This makes it incumbent on the trade union movement to take up the cause of social justice and lead the struggle against social oppression on a priority basis.

The policy paper of CITU adopted in its tenth Conference noted the task in clear terms. It says, "While exposing the casteist ideology and along with it, the futility of caste based compartmentalization, the working class movement must also with all seriousness, throw its weight against all social oppression and atrocities and all discriminatory practices against downtrodden masses, from its class platform....In order to draw the oppressed masses on to the platform of class struggle, unshackling them from various caste based formations, the class-platform needs to establish its credibility as true champions of these oppressed people."

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

Herein lies the crucial importance of the independent ideological campaign and organisational initiative by CITU. This is of utmost importance to create widest possible awareness about the policies and to popularise the need for united struggles. This process will expose the forces of disruption, both at the top and at the grass-root level, and also effectively facilitate united actions.

The CITU Policy Paper on "Imperialist Ideological offensive" adopted in its Tenth Conference had noted: "The working class must have a politics, a clear vision about the exploitative character of capitalism, and how to advance the struggle, in stages, towards putting an end to the same. Otherwise, they will succumb to the imperialist ploy to limit trade union activities within the confine of economism, derailing the working class movement from its struggle against capitalism." The absence and/or obliteration of such vision in our movement hinders the prospects of taking the united struggle against

globalisation to a militant height; rather it results in showing indulgence to the trend of reconciling with the policies of globalisation itself. Without our conscious and consistent effort to generate awareness among the mass of the workers on the urgent need to sharpen the class struggle against the capitalist system itself, the united struggle of the working class will not be able to take us towards effective political intervention for change of policies.

While pursuing the united struggle, we have to carry on, among the rank and file, a conscious campaign that the struggle against the policies of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation will be a long drawn one. And the working class has to ensure broadest mobilisation of masses in the struggle. Our united action may not always give immediate results; sometimes frustration may generate even among our ranks, if we do not raise their consciousness on the long drawn character of the present day struggle.

Intensive grass root level independent campaign is crucial to create conditions from below, with the common workers mounting pressure on the reformist trade union leadership to join the united platform of action. Equally important is the independent initiative by the CITU to ensure widest mobilisation for effectively implementing the united action programmes in the respective sectors.

It must also be noted here that our independent campaign as well as the initiative to implement the united action programmes must go beyond the ritual, as is witnessed now in most of the States. For generating adequate pressure on the Government to reverse their policies, the action programmes must acquire a massive and all embracing dimension. But, we must admit that till now our mobilisation, even from the united platform, is yet to take that dimension.

We must also not lose sight of the fact that vast sections of the unorganised sector workers are yet to be brought under the fold of trade union movement. Despite repeated attempts, only a very small section of the unorganised/informal sector workers could be organised in trade unions. The LPG policies are further resulting in the proliferation of this unorganised sector side by side with contraction of the workforce in the organised sector. In the post-liberalisation economic regime, the capitalist class is using informalisation of the workforce as an instrument for intense exploitation. Permanent workers are being replaced by contract and casual workforce. Labour laws are also sought to be amended to suit this process of informalisation.

In this background, the task of organising the unorganised/informal sector workers and also the contract/casual workers within the organised sector has become crucially important before the trade union movement for effective unification of the toiling class and to ensure militant mobilisation against the policies. The movement in the organised sector should take serious initiative in this direction with utmost priority.

At the present stage the damaging impact of the policies of globalisation is becoming more visible among the vast sections of the population, besides the working class. It has caused serious unrest and all round resentment among the workers and the people. This situation enjoins upon the CITU the task of further broad basing the platform of struggle by involving, more actively, other mass organisations as well in the militant anti-globalisation struggle. The task of activating the NPMO and such other broader platforms, by involving the mass organisations of agricultural workers and poor peasants, along with the students, youth, women and others, has assumed tremendous importance. It would create more favourable and compelling ground for broader trade union unity also.

Further, there are certain issues, which can draw all the sections of population in the joint platform of

mobilisation and struggle. The present draught conditions aggravating the miseries of the peasants and the agricultural workers call for joint initiatives by the trade unions and the organisations of Kisan and agricultural workers. Unemployment problem is another such issue. Initiative has to be taken by us for mobilising of all the trade unions and mass organisations on this issue. This exercise must commence with activating our mass organisations to hold a massive all India convention for right to work and against unemployment.

REACHING OUT TO ALL WORKERS

Thirdly, it is noticed that despite many successful united countrywide actions, where the initiating role of CITU was widely recognised, the CITU's base could not be expanded noticeably in many areas. Rather, many States witnessed a stagnation or decline, particularly during the last decade. Why this is so?

It must be noted that the pursuit of the line of unity and struggle gave our organisation tremendous benefit during the seventies and eighties. During this period, CITU expanded in almost all the key industries and all the major all India industry wise federations under CITU - in Steel, Coal, Construction, Transport, Waterfront, Electricity etc. - were formed, bringing the CITU to the forefront of the working class movement. Our consistent initiative in developing united struggles and forthright stand in defence of the rights and interests of the workers, clearly manifested in all the joint forums, was key to such developments.

Often there has been a complaint that the central leadership of the other constituent organisations of the united platform do not intimate or seriously pursue the united action programmes among their constituent units at the grass root level. This may be true on most occasions. But this also unfolds an opportunity before us to carry the message of united action to all the workers - including the followers of other organisations. This, in many places, we refuse to appreciate. In fact, we should utilise the united call for action as a passport to approach the workers belonging to other unions.

Capacity of our activists to approach the ranks of other organisations and involve them in united action is extremely limited. In many demonstrations, we find that some of the constituents do not bring their following, which is resulting in weaker mobilisation of united strength. Hence, we have to train our cadres to approach the ranks of other organisations to participate more actively in joint programmes. This helps in further organisational consolidation of the trade union movement itself. Our work suffers from serious shortcomings in this respect.

Our cadres should be in a position to reply to the points raised by rank and file workers of other organisations so that confusion prevalent in their minds can be cleared through discussions. The ranks of other trade unions have great potential to pressurise the leadership to take a positive attitude towards united struggles of the working class.

Building a powerful unity of the workers is also a process of struggle. To intensify the class struggle, we have to launch a powerful struggle within the trade union movement. Sustained campaign against anti-struggle policies within the trade union movement is an integral part of our struggle to build a united movement of the working class.

Our rank and file and cadres are often passive in their approach. How to make our cadres more effective in playing their role in building united movement from below is a crucial question that we have to deal with today.

The Tenth Conference of the CITU has clearly identified the weakness - rather reluctance - on the part of our organisations at industry level to plan and fully reach the entire workforce in the concerned industry, both during our independent campaigns and joint programmes, as one of the major defects in our functioning. In many places, we fail even to reach our membership in entirety. Many unions in major industries prefer to communicate with the workers through circulars/press statements instead of reaching them directly. This frustrates the very purpose of our initiative in united trade union activities and deprives us of the organisational gains from our initiatives. Without conscious efforts on our part to reach the mass of the workers, irrespective of affiliations, with our campaign, neither effective unity of the class can be built up, nor gains of united struggle be consolidated organisationally.

THE MOVE FOR CONFEDERATION

While working for the unity of the trade union movement, we must constantly keep in view our objective of building a Confederation of Trade Unions to further consolidate trade union unity, achieved through various struggles. In the scenario of prevailing multiplicity of trade unions and mounting onslaughts against the working people, a tremendous urge for unity is developing among the workers, which must be taken note of. It further got reflected in the all in unity developed in many industries in the struggle against sickness and for survival of the industry and formation of numerous "Save Committees" in several industrial units. Despite differences in perception still persisting among the leadership of various unions, more and more coordinated and concerted action among the industry wise federations of different affiliations is becoming a reality in many important industries, like Port & Dock, Coal, Electricity, Oil etc. All these reflect the increasing urge among the common workers for a single united platform for the entire workforce.

These are no doubt positive developments. But, we must also note with concern that not only the present multiplicity of trade unions continues, but more and more trade union centres are also mushrooming, with every new political formation. Such a scenario has also led to alarming multiplicity of unions at the industry level, in some cases exceeding more than 50 unions even in localised factories, employing few thousand workers. This has severely eroded the bargaining capacity of the workers, both at the industry level and at the national level. This has also resulted in attempts by vested interests to marginalise the working class movement on the political scene, undermining its capacity to politically intervene in the situation.

Formation of a confederation at a national level cannot be achieved unless all participants accept it. There are still differences on the proposal for a confederation among the central trade unions, from both extremes. Therefore, we may have to work out various intermediate forms of organisational consolidation to bring trade union movement closer.

TOWARDS TANGIBLE MOVES FOR UNITY

The AITUC and HMS have also been coming forth with the talk of a united trade union platform of a more 'permanent nature'. The experience of talks on merger held between AITUC and HMS has shown that there are several hurdles in the way of merger of central trade unions at the top. Presently the ICFTU has sponsored a move for merger of the INTUC and HMS. The outcome of such efforts has to be watched.

There are objective realities, which are to be taken into account when we consider the formation of a single national trade union centre in India. The effort for organisational consolidation should begin

from below to achieve a long lasting result. Moreover, formation of a single trade union centre can be thought of only after and through the process of several united struggles of nationwide character, which will create condition and generate confidence in the minds of activists of different organisations and area of apprehensions and differences is reduced to the minimum in the course of powerful struggles.

Our experience has shown that lower level unity is more easily realisable. Such united actions and coming together will strengthen the regional and State level united actions and the need for coming closer organisationally.

The Bhubaneswar document has already laid down the guideline for our work: "The effort for unification of unions and federations at plant or industry level in many places... would ultimately create ground for formation of confederation at national level. Again confederation of trade unions at national level would also pave the way for one union in one industry in a wider scale in the long run."

The CITU should thus consciously explore possibilities of combining multiple unions at unit level into one union to make it more effective. By developing closer coordination with other unions at unit level on common issues, ground may gradually be created for such possibilities. Conscious effort to develop joint working arrangements with other industry-wise federations in various industries is also an important task in this direction. Wherever possible, we should take initiative in formation of one single industry-wise federation, which would ensure democratic functioning of the organisation and maintain its loyalty to defend the interests of the working class in the struggle against capitalists.

The post-liberalisation regime, with the unleashing of severe attacks on the working people, has created a favourable situation for unity in the trade union movement. The exact form the unity exercise may take may vary from place to place, depending on the composition, level of consciousness and the concrete situation obtaining. The concerned CITU committees will have to decide on it, in consultation with the State Committees. But the exercise must continue at all levels for further organisational consolidation of the unity achieved through struggles.

Side by side, independent ideological campaign among the mass of the workers should also be continuously undertaken from the CITU platform.

STRENGTHENING OF CITU

Our efforts to build a powerful unity and consolidation of the organisational unity of the working class cannot materialise unless we build a strong CITU. Our membership strength is extremely small, compared to the size of the working class in India. Its growth is slow in several States, while it is stagnating in others. The hectic drive for downsizing the workforce has also resulted in some erosion in our membership base. Our expansion in newer areas is much below the mark. The scope for enhancing the membership of the existing unions is also not fully utilised. Our target of increasing membership to 40 lakhs has not yet progressed much. Unless we make strenuous efforts to enhance our own organised strength, our capacity to intensify the united movement of the working class will be greatly affected.

The Bhubaneswar document, adopted in 1993, has charted the roadmap for carrying our organisation to required height both organisationally and ideologically. This is yet to be taken seriously enough at all levels of our organisation, although successive conferences, working committee and general council meetings had made efforts to review its implementation and identify the shortcomings. Unless our leading committees take conscious, consistent and continuous initiatives to implement the document

at their own level and to monitor its implementation at the ground level, such lapses cannot be overcome

In this connection, our organisational weakness in many major and strategic industries needs to be taken note of. Without a strong CITU base in all major and strategic industries, we cannot generate effective pressure on the Government for a change in policies. Nor the united action programme can make mount such a pressure on the reluctant reformists in the Government.

There is urgent need to improve the level of consciousness and improve the capability of our cadres and members, which can be achieved only through intensive programme of education at all levels.

OUR ROLE IN UNITED STRUGGLES

The role of the State Committees, District Committees and industry wise federations assumes greater importance in strengthening the united movement and consolidating the organisation of the working class.

Though some of the State Committees have played an important role in State level movements, bringing all trade unions together for common actions, we cannot claim this to be true in the case of all the State committees. The same is the case with our industry wise federations and District Committees.

One of the major shortcomings prevailing at all levels of the organisation, right from the Centre to grass root level, is that we do not seriously review the programmes and decisions we take at different level and identify the lapses. This serious lapse is breeding lack of seriousness and also a ritual approach in all our activities at all levels. Non-receipt of proper reports from most of the State Committees is the direct outcome of such trend. This is also affecting our taking up the issues promptly with other trade unions, for drawing up appropriate programmes of united action and effective pursuit of our organisational decisions and understandings in the joint forums. We can afford to continue with these shortcomings only at our peril.

If the growing responsibility of the CITU Centre in the organisational consolidation of the TU movement were to be tackled effectively, the resources and personnel of the CITU need to be strengthened. The improvement of the existing functioning also assumes importance. Without the effective cooperation of the State Committees and Secretariat Members this cannot be achieved in the near future. We should seriously consider means of achieving these tasks, in order that we can play our role more effectively.

This question of unifying the working class movement assumes special importance since objective conditions in India is becoming more and more favourable. We are yet to fully utilise it to meet the challenges of the situation more effectively. Though the united movement is advancing on the whole and our activities are improving at all levels, the sweep and widespread character of the struggle requires to be strengthened qualitatively to defeat the capitalist offensives. We have to pool our experience gained in the struggle so that we will be able to play our role more effectively in the present situation.