

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

AHEMEDABAD

22nd - 24th DECEMBER, 1998

DOCUMENTS

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CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

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Ahmedabad
22-24, December, 1998

AGENDA

1. Confirmation of minutes of the meeting held at Chennai on 22.4.98
2. Presidential Address
3. Report of the General Secretary
4. Statement of Accounts for the year 1998 (Jan-Nov)
5. Verification of Membership of Trade Unions
6. Further programme of joint movement against economic policies and against communalism
7. Resolutions
8. Any other matter with the permission of the Chair.

M K Pandhe
General Secretary

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dear Comrades,

You know that we have held our general council, at Chennai on 22- 25 April 1998. In that meeting we took stock of the developments in the national and international arena and the continuing imperialist offensive. In this working committee, we have to review the work done and take note of the changes in different areas for the last ten months, and decide on the tasks to be undertaken in the coming period. Our General Secretary in his report will give the details of activities - and indicate about the future tasks on which we will have detailed discussions.

I am confining myself to bring to your notice, in the main, the developing world economic crisis and the recent political developments in the country and that too only in a concise form.

Before I proceed, I must make a mention about the important initiative we have taken to mobilise the trade unions and other mass organisations in the fight against the anti-national economic and other policies of the BJP led Govt. at the Centre. The August 12th convention of the National Platform of Mass Organisations held at New Delhi took a land mark decision for a planned agitation - culminating in an All India General Strike on 11th of December 1998 - after adopting a declaration and a 24 points demands charter.

The sweep of the successful campaign could rally large sections of the people in support of the action throughout the country. This is evident from the rallying of many political parties of the country in support of the strike. In Parliament too, members of many other parties other than the Left joined in dharna in support of the strike on Dec 11. The Parliament could not transact any business on the day.

Thus, the issues raised by the NPMO have assumed national focus. The success of the strike was unprecedented, the details of which will be found in the General Secretary's Report.

In the State Assembly Elections held in Rajasthan and Delhi, the BJP which was the ruling party, has been given a crushing defeat and in Madhya Pradesh too they have been defeated. With this people's verdict, the BJP have lost moral right to continue in power. Unprecedented price rise and absolute reactionary policy of attacking indiscriminately the minorities, muslims and christians besides their economic policies paved the way for their defeat. In the background of this defeat the support for the strike also increased tremendously.

WORLD IN RECESSION

Comrades,

You might remember that I have brought to your notice during our General Council meeting at Chennai, about the loss of confidence, being expressed by many capitalist ideologues and many industrial and financial managers- about the developing crisis and the very sustainability of the capitalist system itself. The experience of the last eight months is that the scenario is getting bleak and the World Bank itself has come out with the alarming statement that they cannot rule out the possibility of a World economic recession in the year 1999.

The Indian Express dated 4.12.1998 reproduced a report from the Wall Street Journal, some portions of which I am reproducing below:

"The Bank said (2.12.1998) on in its annual economic prospects that "there is still a substantial risk that the world economy will plunge into recession in 1999."

"The Bank said the recession scenario will come into play if Japan's recession worsens, investor

anxiety about emerging markets intensifies, private capital flows to the developing world dry up, and a large, sustained stock market correction - 20% to 30% - depresses growth in the U.S and Europe."

"Already, Brazil, Indonesia, Russia and 33 other countries in the developing world and former Soviet bloc are likely to see a drop in per-capita output which will grow at a mere 0.4% this year before resuming its usual pace of 3.5% after the turn of the millennium, the Bank predicted."

"Mr Stiglitz - the World Bank's Chief Economist said a major source of the crisis was the sudden exodus of foreign investment from Asian economies, a capital flight that then spread to other developing countries. Controls on such capital movements are among the most contentious issues in the debate over how to prevent further financial crisis."

"While the bank stopped well short of advocating limits on investors' ability to withdraw their money from a country, the report endorsed the use of taxes or other tools that discourage the inflow of short-term capital. Chile which, amid the global turmoil, has experienced relative stability in foreign- capital flows, essentially imposed taxes on short-term inflows, while allowing freer access for long-term investors."

"We have to take actions to mitigate that type of excess risk-taking," Mr Stiglitz said of the short-term emerging - market investments".

From the above it can be seen that the Bank itself is not confident that the World output will not plunge below 1% in the year 1999- and they themselves want to restrict the short term fund (i.e. speculative investment) into the country as part of globalisation - and that they want to restrict the same by imposing taxes or by other methods. At last World Bank has to come out against unbridled opening up of the economy. They have also said that the Japanese and the Third World economy does not register growth and that will depress the economy of US and Europe.

WORLD ECONOMIC SCENE

Now let me go a little further to explain the economic situation, from the official documents and the assessments being made by experts in some journals.

The World Economic Outlook, 1998 (VI), stated the following about the emerging crisis:

"Since the finalization of the May 1998 World Economic Outlook, the recessions in the East Asian emerging market economies, suffering from financial crisis, and in Japan have deepened. And the August crisis in Russia has brought a new wave of financial market pressure to many emerging market economies, especially in Latin America, and helped to trigger a sell-off in equity markets world-wide. Economic conditions in most industrial countries except Japan, however, have remained favourable, with growth moderating in some cases and strengthening somewhat in others; the adverse effects on overall activity of developments in Asia and emerging markets elsewhere have been relatively muted. The volume of world trade has decelerated sharply in 1998. Prices of oil have remained very weak, and nonfuel commodity prices have weakened further. Reflecting these developments, world output growth this year is now projected at 2 percent-that is one percentage lower than projected in May. Global growth is projected to recover only moderately in 1999, and the risks appear to be predominantly on the downside.

The real GDP development in selected countries and the rate of unemployment is given separately. (see box on page 5)

In 1997, average volume of trade growth was 9.4% but in 1998 it has come down to 6.4%. In advance capitalist countries it was 9.8% in 1997 but in 1998 it is 6.2%. In the developing countries in 1997 it was 10.8% but in 1998 it is 7.4%. So also the imports into the countries has also shown a decrease. The advanced countries had an import rate 8.6% in 1997 which has gone down to 6.8%

in 1998. In the developing countries , it was 12.1% in 1997 and it came down to 5.2% in 1998. The East Asian countries had a serious down fall in economy in 1998- a set back of 2% to 13% in the GDP. In the case of Indonesia the decline of GDP was 12.2% in the first half of 1998 compared with the same period in 1997. Unemployment tripled to more than 25 millions. People living below poverty line crossed 118.5 millions. Bankruptcies and insolvencies continue to take their toll. All the other countries of East Asia are also facing the same difficulties. In the Tracisian economies approximately 35% of the population is earning less than 25-30% of the average wage in 1994 as compared to only 8% in 1989.

	REAL GDP				UNEMPLOYMENT			
	1996	1997	1998	1999	1996	1997	1998	1999
Advance Economies	3.0	3.1	2.0	1.9	7.3	7.1	7.0	6.9
Major Industrial countries	2.8	2.9	2.1	1.9	6.9	6.7	6.4	6.5
United States	3.4	3.9	3.5	2.0	5.4	4.9	4.5	4.8
Japan	3.9	0.8	-2.5	0.5	3.3	3.4	4.1	4.3
Germany	1.3	2.2	2.6	2.5	10.4	11.5	10.9	10.6
France	1.6	2.3	3.1	2.8	12.4	12.5	11.8	11.2
Italy	0.7	1.5	2.1	2.5	12.1	12.3	12.1	11.8
United Kingdom	2.2	3.4	2.3	1.2	7.3	5.5	4.8	4.9
Canada	1.2	3.7	3.0	2.5	9.7	9.2	8.4	8.4
Korea	7.1	5.5	-7.0	-1.0				
Indonesia	8.0	4.6	-15.0					
Malasia	8.6	7.8	-6.4					
Thailand	5.5	-0.4	-8.0					
Russia	-5.0	0.9	-6.0					
China	9.6	8.8	5.5					
India	7.5	5.6	4.8					

The economic outlook published by IMF in September this year has given out that the World output growth this year would be at 2% lower than what was projected in May. Global growth would only moderately improve in 1999 and there is also possibility of a down slide. The real GDP of advanced economies is projected to be 2% in 1998 and it will further go down to 1.9% in 1999. With regard to United States, it was 3.9% in 1997 and 3.5%in 1998. In Japan it was 0.8% in 1997 and (-)2.5% in 1998 and in 1999 0.5%. Germany , Italy and United Kingdom have shown a slow increase. But, as stated earlier, the 1998 GDP of the world economy will be 1% down and the risk is there that it will go down further in 1999. If it will go down by one more point, then the world economy will plunge into very serious world recession, which according to the interim report of World Bank itself, cannot be ruled out. They have already stated that the trend is downwards. The IMF itself is facing a crisis due to lack of funds, for financing the Russian crisis which needs big financial support. Therefore, the United States has been approached by the World Bank to give them 18 billion more dollars for strengthening the fund position of the IMF.

THE UNIED STATES

The United States too is slowly going into recession, because their trade deficit is ballooning, as exports drop and other countries try to recover by selling more to the United States. The projected current account deficit, i.e. trade deficit will hit 290 billion dollars in 1999. It will double the

figure of 155 billion in 1997. Since March, manufacturing jobs have fallen by 1,52,000 and the consumer buying can be kept up only if the Americans spend their whole earnings to buy goods and services. The stock markets are fluctuating wildly and the Banks becoming tight in lending in the wake of receding world economy.

JAPAN

The Japanese real GDP growth as shown in the statistics is minus 2.5% in 1998. The expectation of a 0.5% increase in GDP in 1999, is doubtful to achieve..

The Japanese Government package of 50,000 million dollars to revive the banking system will not be sufficient to revive it. Many Banks are not willing to take the Govt. money fearing that they have to relax their lending system, and again put the banks in difficulties which will finally force them to heavy losses. The rate of bankruptcies of companies are on the increase in Japan. According to latest reports available, the insolvent Japanese companies left behind 25.5 billion dollars in debt - a surge of 371 percent from last year. Most of that was due to the massive collapse of Japan's Leasing Corporations which left debts of 18 billion. The number of bankruptcies in September total 1,544, up by 18% from a year earlier, for the six month ended Sep,30th. Bank-ruptcies totalled 10,034, i.e., up by 26.9% from the previous year. It is feared that if the big banks or the lending institutions fail, the Japanese economy will collapse.

According to the latest report, creditors noticed something new this year, that more than 1,00,000 people have walked away, abandoning their homes and identities in the dark of night and hiding in some distant part of this island nation. Many of those in hiding are hounded by loan sharks and cannot register their children's births for fear of being found by creditors. About 1.5 million people are on the verge of personal bankruptcy and suicides are on the increase. There is a glut of unsold cars and houses. Department stores are not moving merchandise fast enough to make profits. Housewives are cutting back on the use of electricity and even on the number of hours that their children go for after - school tutoring.

RUSSIA

The industrial production in Russia has slowed down by 60-70% and same was the state of the economy. The value of the Rouble has drastically come down and for a large number of workers wages are not being paid for months together. The new Prime Minister who has taken charge had to confront such a situation. He has introduced many restrictions for debt repayments and the outflow of capital to a certain extent. These steps are being opposed by the neo rich in Russia. For bailing out the Russian economy huge funds are required for which the World Bank too has resources constraint. The political developments in Russia, I do not deal with here.

CHINA

The repercussions of the crisis in Asia has also affected China's foreign trade. But it rejected the pressure from the West to devalue the Yuan and to liberalise the outflow of Foreign capital and economy was protected from the foreign speculators. The foreign investments in China is relatively long-term. They have sufficient foreign exchange reserves to meet any exigency. The Chinese economy too had to face the impact of the South and South East Asian economic melt down. However, the fastest growing economy in the world today is Chinese.

AFRICA

On the African Continent, where many of the poorest countries are in the grip of the IMF, millions of people are starving, social and economic conditions are deteriorating and unpayable foreign debts condemn whole populations to poverty, disease, and starvation.

Sub-Saharan Africa is one of most impoverished regions of the world with millions of people

attempting to survive on less than \$1 a day.

Mozambique spends \$107 million per annum on payment of interest on its debt approximately \$6.60 per person compared to \$2 on health and \$ 4 on education.

In South Africa, struggling to overcome years of apartheid, interest repayments are the second highest expenditure after education.

The IMF and World Bank "assistance" has focussed on exports as the focus of "development", such as replacing subsistence crops by cash crops. It has reached the stage where exports do little more than fund repayment of debt, much of which was acquired in the process of switching over to an export-oriented economy.

EUROPEAN UNION

Despite the nascent recovery in economic activity, unemployment has remained at over 11 per cent in France, Germany and Italy. Policies designed to cut fiscal deficits to 3 per cent or below in order to qualify for the third stage of monetary union continued to restrain growth in domestic demand, while high unemployment and weak real wage growth kept consumption down. The Asian crisis is expected to reduce both GDP and export growth in European Union by over 0.5% points. The introduction of the single currency, the euro in January 1999 is expected to provide some stimulus to domestic demand, when the 11 countries entering the third stage of monetary union will have a uniform rate of interest.

The current European Monetary System will cease to exist from January 1999 and be replaced by the new European Central Bank, which will be in charge of monetary policy in the euro zone. Since the new European Central Bank will be working in uncharted areas, it is likely to err more on the restrictive side.

With all these attempts, the economy is still moving in a slow pace and the unemployment rate is very high. The discontent developed among the working class and the people resulted in changes in political shape of Western Europe in general. With the victory of Schroder's social democrats in the German elections, all the major European countries except Spain are now controlled by the so called left of the centre parties. Though they have come to power mainly using the discontent among the people due to problem of unemployment and slow economic growth, still they are, in the main, following the policies of their predecessor Govts. However the people want change.

LATIN AMERICA

The recovery that has taken place since the Mexican crisis suggests that this dilemma is still present, as the payment position has continued to worsen, although the deficits now involve a higher proportion of capital goods in total imports than in the past. These difficulties have been compounded by the impact of the South Asian crisis on commodity and petroleum prices. The heavy reliance on private capital inflows to finance the growing payments deficits has meant that Latin American countries are still subject to the risk of contagion.

For the region as a whole, short term foreign debt is currently equivalent to 35 % of export earnings(ranging from 11 percent in Venezuela to 78 per cent in Peru among the large countries) and to 70 per cent of total reserves (ranging from 33 per cent in Venezuela to 154 per cent in Mexico). Prospects for 1998 as a whole will be crucially affected by developments in both the United States and Japan.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

"The ILO estimates that before the East Asian crisis the number of unemployed throughout the world was about 140 million people, in that they were seeking and were available for work but could not find it. By the end of 1998 this figure could rise to 150 million. In addition, about 25-30

% of the world's 3 billion strong labour force are underemployed, i.e. either working substantially less than full time but wishing to work longer and earning less than a living wage."

Currently in the European Union more than 80 million workers are unemployed. Moreover, the picture does not take into account the considerable number of discouraged workers who have given up hope of finding work, and involuntary part-time workers. A slight decrease is noted in unemployment in European Union. It is only 2.1 % in 1998 compared to 10.7% in 1997. In Japan too, the rate of unemployed has sharply increased now including all the developed countries, because of the economic stagnation.(World Employment Report 1998-99).

The Human Development Report 1998 gives the following alarming data. 100 million people are income poor in OECD countries; 37 million people are without jobs. Unemployment among the youth (age 15-24) is 32% of young women and 22% of young men. In France unemployed is 39% and 30% in Italy. Among the 17 industrial countries, the countries with most poverty are United States with 16.5% followed by Ireland and United Kingdom at 15.2% and 15 %respectively.

225 richest people have a combined wealth of over 1 trillion dollar, equal to the annual income of the poorest 47% of the World's people (2.5 billion). The three richest people have assets that exceeds the combined GDP of the 48 least developed countries. The 15 richest people have assets that exceeds the total GDP of Sub Saharan Africa. The wealth of the 32 richest people exceeds the total GDP of South Asia. The assets of the 84 richest exceeds the GDP of China , the most populous country, with 1.2 billion inhabitants.

The country with the biggest share of the world's 225 richest people is the United States, with 60 (combined wealth of 311 billion dollars), followed by Germany with 21(111 billion dollars) and Japan with 14 (41 billion dollars). Industrial countries have 147 of the richest 225 people (645 billion dollars combined) and developing countries 78(370 billion dollars). Africa has just two(3.7 billion dollars), both from South Africa.

I do not wish to deal with the class struggles breaking out in the South East Asia, the strike struggle of workers in America, Latin America and elsewhere in the world. The imperialist offensive is continuing in West Asia and in other areas.

However, the world economic situation as a whole is faced with a serious recession in the coming year which is going to be like that of the great depression of 1930s. The claim made by the big imperialist powers that they will build a crisis free capitalist society is shattered to pieces. Now many bourgeoisie economic pundits and journalists are profusely quoting from the Communist Manifesto about the inevitable collapse of the capitalist system.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Comrades,

I do not wish to go into the details of the national situation but only confine to the recent political developments. At Chennai, our General Secretary, in his report, has given the details of the BJP coming to power at the Centre in the last general elections and connected issues. It was known to all that the BJP had its own agenda i.e. the agenda of the RSS for building a so called Hindu Rashtra supposed to be based on the "Hindu Religion", that is to change the basic character of secular India.

THE COMMUNAL AGENDA IN ACTION

This has been amply proved by the events after BJP coming to power. As soon as they assumed power, the Sangh Parivar made a declaration that they are going to construct Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya. The UP government under the BJP was supporting this declaration. They have started making pre-fabricated structures in different parts of UP and Rajasthan. This is to be brought to Ayodhya for building the temple overnight. But when big protests came against it

from the democratic sections of the people, temporarily they had to shelve the idea.

The Maharashtra Government refused to implement the Srikrishna Commission Report on the Mumbai riots. The BJP-RSS hoodlums have started attacking the Muslims living and working in Mumbai alleging that they are illegal infiltrators from Bangladesh. They were actual citizens of West Bengal who were voters in the state. But all of a sudden, the Maharashtra Government has taken measures to forcefully take many of them to West Bengal without even informing the West Bengal government and sought to deport them to Bangladesh. This step has been taken without proper scrutiny of the situation and in their anxiety to create trouble for the Muslims who were working in Mumbai to earn a living. Because of the hue and cry in the Parliament and elsewhere and strong protest from the West Bengal government, this had to be discontinued.

The RSS, VHP and the Bajrang Dal continue their aggressive violent activities against the Muslims in different ways. In the case of Kashi they have formed a separate organisation to demolish the mosque adjoining the existing temple and to build a temple there. Of late in Karnataka in Chikkamagalur, the VHP planned an attack against the Sufi Shrine at the Baba Bundengiri hills. It was a common worship place for Hindus and Muslims. This also has been blocked by the strong intervention of the Karnataka Government. In Mumbai, the Shiv Sena is continuing the anti-Muslim tirade and they have strongly opposed the Pakistani cricket team visiting to play in Mumbai.

The Christian minorities are also targeted for attack by the Sangh Parivar by alleging that Christians are trying to convert Hindus. Their schools, churches, priests and nuns are attacked in many places where BJP is strong. In Gujarat state, where BJP is heading the State Government, in several places Christian schools were attacked. In Ahmedabad, in a school copies of Bible were burnt and the school buildings also destroyed. The rape of three nuns in Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh took place in September followed by the attack against a small nunnery in Haryana. In Mangalore, Karnataka also they have attacked Christian churches and priests. This provoked a big protest by the Christian community throughout India.

A new slogan has been coined by RSS to "Indianise and Nationalise" the education and culture in the country. Murali Manohar Joshi, the HRD Minister, has taken the initiative for inclusion of RSS agenda in the name of Indian culture in every course in the schools. This idea of inclusion of 'culture' in teaching curriculum was to introduce "India's invaluable heritage of the Vedas and Upanishads", compulsory in the curriculum from primary to the higher level courses.

In order to make it easier they want to change Article 30 of the Indian Constitution which gives the minorities freedom to run schools and to have freedom for practising their culture. Part of these was the attempt of Murali Manohar Joshi to have "Vande Mataram" and Saraswati Vandana to be compulsorily introduced in schools and at the beginning of official functions.

They have also prepared many text books distorting the history of India and praising many leaders of RSS to be compulsorily made as text books in the schools. The so called experts of RSS and Sangh Parivar have been planted in research and higher education institutions like ICHR, ICSSR and Institute of Advanced Studies. Thus, a serious attempt is being made by the government and the RSS to change the secular nature of India threatening the fundamental basis of Indian Unity.

THE NUCLEAR MISADVENTURE

The BJP government boasted that they have taken a bold initiative in performing nuclear tests in Pokhran on May 11 and 13th. They tried to develop narrow Jingoism claiming that India has become a nuclear power and our security is quite strong. However, the world reaction and the consequences of the step, as seen from the experience, is quite disturbing. Pakistan too had their nuclear tests soon after Pokhran, which proved that Pakistan also is capable of producing nuclear bombs. However,

the United States immediately reacted strongly against India and imposed sanctions in various areas. They have banned US supplies to various institutions-private and public-which according to them has direct or indirect links with nuclear research and missile technology development or other military obligations. They imposed ban on US companies to trade with these entities, numbering more than several hundreds, which include our electronic engineering science and technology institutions of various type. The Chairman of the Planning Commission had several rounds of discussions with Talbot, the American Government's representative for getting this sanction relaxed but still the United States is taking stiff position and demanding that the government of India should sign CTBT on dotted lines, should change the patent law to suit the WTO conditionalities, and in the economic field complete opening of the economy on the basis of World Bank dictates. This is the fall out of the Pokhran nuclear tests. By doing this India has lost international prestige among the comity of nations, which were always in favour of our strong and principled stand on nuclear disarmament without discrimination, while keeping our right to continue nuclear research and development for peaceful purposes.

However, the government is succumbing to the imperialist pressures in the matter of signing CTBT though some demands have been made which is a temporary time saving device. In the matter of patent law, amendment Bill is placed before Parliament. I need not explain here the provisions of the Bill which ultimately goes against our agriculture and industry and would lead to foreign Multinational domination in vital sectors of the economy including the pharmaceuticals.

The steps being taken in the economic sphere need no elaboration. The opening of insurance sector and complete privatisation of public sector industries including the profit making ones and the closure of sick industries etc. are known to us in detail, against which we have launched uncompromising struggle. But in the matter of insurance bill, the BJP stands terribly exposed. They were saying that the insurance sector should not be opened up to the foreign multinationals before they were coming to power. Now they made *volte-face* and want to give 40% participation for foreign multinationals and the NRIs.

Many sections of the ruling coalition have come out against the Bill including a large number of BJP MPs, though their dissent has been temporarily hushed up. However, it is very difficult to get this Bill passed in the house because of stiff opposition of the working class and several political parties. On Patent Law amendment also, which the BJP was opposing before coming to power, but now they are compromising their position in order to placate United States.

Here, we should not miss the point that the Congress (I) in Parliament did not oppose the economic policies of the BJP Government, their attempt to introduce the IRA Bill and the Patent Law Amendment Legislation - since they are the real originators of these policies. This also needs exposure.

STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND AFTER

The recently held elections for the four state assemblies, viz., Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram has given a square defeat to the the BJP. They are terribly exposed and the people in a big way have turned against them. In Delhi and Rajasthan they were the ruling party but now become a small opposition in the legislature. They were boasting about coming to power in Madhya Pradesh but could not succeed. In Mizoram, the Congress Party which was the ruling party, has been defeated in the election as a result of their misrule and the ethnic consolidation of the voters. The defeat of BJP in this election was the result of the policies they have pursued as narrated before, especially the attack against the minorities, attempt of Hinduisation of educational system. etc. and above all, the economic policy and the sky rocketing price rise of essential commodities like onions,

potatoes and other vegetables.

The ruling BJP coalition had no policy cohesion from the very inception. Each party was taking its own position on every issue of importance. Vajpayee was put into great trouble to keep them together. Now, after the defeat in the elections, the divergence of these parties have come to the fore and nobody can predict how soon the breaking point will come. However, it is not far off.

We have found that the peoples support for the general strike call of the NPMO on 11th of December was unprecedented. Therefore, the working class should see that the fight against the government and its policies has to be further strengthened.. Our working committee should discuss ways and means to intensify the agitation against the anti-national and anti-people policy of the government and chalk out a programme of action. Wider unity of the masses seen in the December 11th action should be taken note of and suitable measures to be taken for further widening it for a final assault against BJP rule.

Before I close, I wish to invite your attention to one or two things more. The efforts we have made for ensuring wider unity of the trade unions towards forming a confederation must be vigorously pursued. We have seen in the recent action that large sections of trade unions with different organisational political affiliations have enthusiastically joined the strike. This was not only the result of our propaganda but also the actual experience of the workers which forced them to join these actions irrespective of difference in outlooks. Therefore, it is opportune time for taking up this issue again with different trade union organisations. This should be done by us without loss of time.

The organisational strength of the CITU has shown some improvement in recent period as a result of our efforts. But this has to be continued with added vigour so that our independent strength can be developed, which will be the basis for building wider trade union unity.

Comrades, I have given a detailed account about the world economy with a purpose, even though many other aspects could not be covered. My attempt is to invite your attention to the greatest catastrophe the capitalist system is going to suffer in the coming period. According to the expert calculations of the capitalists themselves, the year 1999 will be a dangerous year and the prospect of a great depression is in the making like that of 1930s. So this aspect should go to every worker and the general public, so that the fight against the capitalist system itself comes to the fore.

Thank you.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Comrades,

Our country has passed through a series of important developments since the last meeting of the General Council held at Chennai from 22nd to 25th April 1998. When we met last, the BJP had just come to power through several unprincipled compromises. The Government which promised stability and good governance could not show any worthwhile performance before the people of India. Within a period of 9 months of its existence, the people in India have realised from their own experience the real face of the BJP led Government. The sharp deterioration in their working and living conditions expedited the process of their disillusionment and they are openly coming out against the policies of the BJP led government.

1.2 The hidden communal agenda of the government has threatened the secular fabric of the country and secular minded people are openly coming forward to raise their voice against the communal virus. It is necessary to review the developments in this period so that we can make correct assessment of the situation and chalk out programmes of action for the forthcoming period. The successful strike unitedly organised by the working class gives us sufficient encouragement to move forward against the draconian policies of the BJP led Government.

1.3 Internationally, the world economic crisis is getting aggravated day by day and the capitalism has proved its inability to tackle any social problem facing the common people. The package of structural adjustment programme, trotted by the World Bank and the IMF, has now proved to be utter failure and even the champions of capitalism have started expressing doubts about the validity of the package. All the hopes of the recessionary trends being shortlived had been belied now and the worldwide recession is going to stay for quite some time all over the world. The crisis has now become global and all pervasive, while attempts are being made to pass on its burden to the working class. The resistance by the trade unions is increasing and international cooperation is now taking a concrete shape.

1.4 The developments in the international arena have been reviewed in the Presidential speech and, therefore, here we confine only to some national developments and analyse them briefly.

2. WORSENING ECONOMIC SITUATION

2.1 Since last General Council meeting in April 1998, the economic situation in the country got worsened at a much faster pace under the stewardship of BJP-led Govt at the Centre. During this period, the budget placed by the Govt set the direction of all round decline in all sectors of the economy. The two major pillars of the economy, both industry and agriculture, witnessed sharp decline in growth rate, having its natural reflection on the livelihood of the common people.

2.2 On industrial front, during April to July 1998 absolute decline in production was marked in food products, cotton textiles, jute, wood products, leather, basic metal and machinery and equipments. From July 1998 onwards, all round decline in industrial production became sharper, thanks to hell bent effort of the BJP Govt to make bonanzas to foreign companies on the plea of attracting foreign investment. The growth rate of manufacturing sector fell to mere 1.2% in July 1998. Basic metals registered a decline of nearly 5% and machinery and equipment by 7.8%. With the assumption that in the latter half of the year the situation may improve to some extent, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) observed that industrial growth rate can hardly reach 4.5%, much below the budgeted target.

2.3 In agriculture as well, the situation turned more grave from April 1998 onwards. The agricultural output is expected to grow only by 1.2% during 1998-99 and the growth figure is positive because of the negative growth (decline) in agriculture by a hovering 4.5% last year 1997-98. And to be specific, the foodgrain production during 1998-99 is projected to grow by only 0.1% and per capita availability of foodgrains is expected to decline by more than eight kg per annum in 1998-99 despite consecutive good monsoons. This signals ominous trend of food situation in the country in the days-to-come and consequent reflection in price rise.

2.4 Phenomenal price rise of essential commodities during last eight months has surpassed all records exposing the bankruptcy of the policy of liberalisation being vigorously pursued by the BJP Govt. Prices of some of the items of daily use have increased even by 400%. The Govt remained so much unconcerned about the sky rocketting prices all these days that in spite of continuous and steep rise in prices of onion, vegetables, edible oil, pulses etc, from April onwards, they continued to allow export of onions and other agro products from the country in thousands of tonnes every month till October 1998, aggravating the shortage-situation to the advantage of hoarders and black marketeers. Irony is that while onion was exported at Rs 4/5 a kg, it had been imported from October onwards at Rs 20 per kg to meet the situation. The tackling of the price situation by the BJP Govt at the Centre clearly exposed their involvement with and sole concern for the wholesale traders, hoarders and black marketeers and a brazenly anti-people bias. As a result, more and more people have fallen below the poverty line. As per CSO estimates, poverty ratio increased from 29.10% to 32.95% during 1991-96 (or by 3.2% annually). Nearly 96 lakh people dropped below the poverty line every year. Real wages have gone down consistently during the period of liberalisation which got further aggravated owing to phenomenal price rise, promoted by the Govt of India during the last six months.

2.5 The BJP Govt's over enthusiasm for the liberalisation policy has been stated to be aimed at higher export growth and increase in foreign investment for which they have offered extra-liberal concessions to MNCs and Indian exporters. But the last six months' performance on both the fronts has drawn almost blank, exposing their tragic inability to manage the economy. The export in dollar terms marked an absolute decline during April-September 1998, by around 5 % despite increase in volume of export pushing up the trade deficit further. This means that by sending more materials abroad we are earning less and less. During April-September 1998 the trade deficit has mounted up on the average by 25% per month despite decline in imports and as observed clearly by CMIE, there is little prospect of improvement during the rest of the year 1998-99. As per their estimates, the current account deficit would be higher and net foreign capital inflow would sharply decline depleting the foreign exchange reserves from US\$ 26 billion to US \$ 21 billion. The Govt could not draw foreign investment as well. Non-debt foreign investment has fallen by 75% during April-Sept. '98 compared to last year.

2.6 All the sectors of the economy have marked a faster decline during the 9 months long BJP regime and MNCs could broaden their grip on Indian economy. The budget 1998 is directed towards the desperate exercise of pampering for the foreign companies and the Indian monopoly houses as their junior partners. As observed by 'Economic Times,' major multinational companies operating in India have already crossed the profit level of last year (1997-98) within first six months of the current fiscal year (1998=99) whereas the Indian companies are showing the opposite trend.

2.7 Govt has practically withdrawn itself from developing infrastructure and misled the people through budgetary declaration of setting up some institution/agencies for infrastructural development, with the assumption that those agencies would draw funds from private sector. As a result govt

expenditure on developmental activity got severely curtailed and practically stopped in many sectors. This has contributed to severe recession in the entire economy alongwith the phenomenon of increasing impoverishment due to price rise and growing joblessness. But, despite such curtailment in development expenditure, there has been no improvement in fiscal deficit situation and central Govt. net borrowings during April-Sept '98 has already crossed the budgeted target for the entire year by Rs.1082 crores.

2.8. Further, owing to liberalisation of import and concessions to foreign companies, deliberate indulgence and inaction towards dumping by the foreign companies on Indian soil, the entire manufacturing and capital goods sector have been put to severe difficulties. This has led to widespread closures, spread of sickness and sharp decline in profitability even in the erstwhile profit making industrial units.

2.9 The policies of liberalisation have hit hard the small scale industry which is facing extinction. The traditional industries such as cashew, coir, handloom, etc. are facing severe threat by fierce competition from the big business houses and MNCs. With the absence of nationwide marketing network and credit facilities, they are unable to maintain their existing market. Despite paying low wages to workers, the employers find it extremely difficult to compete with modern technology brought in by the big capitalists who, through advertising blitz, drive the products of traditional and small scale industries out of market. This process leads to severe unemployment among the workers.

2.10. One of the worst features of liberalisation has been the drastic reduction of jobs of the regular employees and increase in the jobs of the casual, temporary and contract nature. Moreover, the voluntary retirement schemes are reducing the regular jobs and converting the regular employees into unemployed or casual employees. This question assumes seriousness when the Government has declared that 45 lakhs of employees in public and private sectors are surplus in India.

2.11 In totality, the all round downfall has pushed the entire economy and the people in dire straits barring the Multinational Companies whose profitability is showing a upswing. Thus, the gameplan of the World Bank and IMF to convert the manufacturing economy of the country to a marketing centre for foreign companies with the active support of the BJP-led Govt at the Centre has fully unfolded. This is destined to take the country towards disaster.

2.12 While campaigning against economic policies of the Government we must link up the proposals put forward by the trade unions with the common interests of the people. Unless this is done it would not be possible to ensure the support of the common people in the struggle against the policies of globalisation.

2.13 It is also necessary to explain to the people how the present economic policies go against the interests of the country so that patriotic feelings of the people are aroused in our campaign. Since the patriotic sentiments are still strong among the people, this aspect should be given special emphasis which will make our propaganda more popular.

2.14 In the struggle against globalisation, the question of alternative policies should be more effectively focussed to convince the people that the capitalist globalisation can be defeated and alternative policies can be evolved to build a self-reliant economy in the country. In this connection, the question of genuine land reforms should be given special importance. The solidarity with peasants and agricultural workers' struggles for land should be strengthened. Last time we decided to have discussions with the leaders of the AIKS and AIAWU to work out concrete steps to build worker peasant alliance. We could not pursue the matter since the last General Council meeting. This aspect should be given priority in the near future so that this neglected task can be undertaken

without any further delay.

2.15 The question of working class championing the issues of all exploited classes should also be given priority in our campaign against the economic policies of the Government. This is necessary to make our movement more widespread and comprehensive in the forthcoming period.

3. ATTACK ON PSUs INTENSIFIED

3.1 The situation for the public sector has extremely been aggravated with the rabid anti-public sector policies pursued by the BJP-led coalition Government at the Centre. Given the experience of less than one year of governance, the anti-national budget and other policy measures adopted by the BJP-led government, it is crystal clear that they are out to privatise the profit making PSUs, close down the so called sick units, gift away the national assets to the Indian and foreign monopoly capital, through direct sellout and disinvestment of shares, send out lakhs of public sector workers in the name of VRS and other means - in short the public sector network, built over the years which served as the backbone of the country's self-reliance, is under total liquidation.

3.2 As on March, 1997 a total of 50 CPSUs had been referred to the Disinvestment Commission (DC). The DC has so far submitted seven reports covering 41 CPSUs. Most of the recommendations of the DC are for disinvestment of 74% shares thereby reducing Government holding to mere 26%. But one of the dangerous aspects of the recommendations of the DC is its prescription for 'Strategic Sale of Shares' as modality of disinvestment. The definition of strategic sale according to DC is, "sale of a substantial block of Government holdings to a single party which will acquire substantial equity holding up to 50% ..." (DC report, Vol.-I, page 38). Elaborating the concept further, the DC noted. "At that time (strategic sale) there will also be an agreement with such strategic partner that at a later date, within a stipulated period ... Government will disinvest its balance holding" (ibid Vol.-IV, page 6). It continued to say, "In order to assure the strategic buyer that Government will eventually withdraw from PSU, it is necessary that Agreement should spell out the timeframe for further dilution of Government share holding. However even at the time of initial induction of the strategic buyer, Government should entrust management control to him as already recommended (ibid. vol.-V, page 14). The DC has already recommended strategic sale of several CPSUs.

3.3 The BJP-led government is going ahead with their programme of disinvestment of shares of "blue-chip" PSUs like IOC, GAIL, CONCOR, VSNL, MTNL and both the Airlines. It is shocking to note that the Government has decided to off-load the shares of PSUs at a time when the stock prices all over the world including India are making a nose-dive. Selling assets in a depressed and declining market means distress-sale which facilitates transfer of wealth to private capital at a price much below their normal value. It is rather surprising that during the last one year period, the share prices, in respect of almost all the PSUs targeted for disinvestment in 1998, have declined enormously and the minimum extent of such decline is more than 20%. This demonstrates the doggedness of the BJP government to fritter away national wealth for the benefit of foreign and Indian private monopoly capital.

3.4 Ever since the introduction of the Fund-Bank dictated economic policy and accompanying attack on public sector in our country, the BJP-led government is the one to have decided to close down 8 central public sector undertakings. These are - MAMC, BOGL, CCIL, WIL, RIC, NBC, TAFCO and BPMEL. This government has also decided to close down 64 coal mines in West Bengal and Bihar. In the process, over 80,000 workers directly employed in these industrial units and coal mines will lose their jobs, besides the thousands who indirectly connected through ancillaries and other supporting industrial units. It is very important to note that the cost of closure of those 8

PSUs is more than the cost of their revival. As per statement of the Government, Rs.517 crores will be required to pay the dues to the workers numbering about 11,000. On the other hand, the additional fund required for revival of all these so called sick units, as per schemes submitted to the BIFR, is below Rs.300 crores.

3.5 That the move to close down the eight so called sick units is only the beginning and many more are in the offing is clear from the statement of Sikander Bakht, the Industry Minister of the BJP government that "government has decided to close down 11 terminally ill public sector undertakings." Further more, according to newspaper report, Mohan Guruswamy, Adviser to the Finance Minister, has stated that all non-strategic PSUs would be privatised in the next five years. "Guruswamy pointed out that already eight PSUs had been identified for closure. A process was on to initiate a strategic sale of seven other companies ... Another 23 PSUs had been identified for privatisation." (Financial Express, 4.12.98). The Government is hell bent on legislating the Bill for entry of Indian and foreign private companies in Insurance Sector. With the decision of the BJP government to allow 26 per cent equity participation by foreign companies in insurance sector, the swadeshi mask of the BJP has been torn to pieces. A proposal for total sell out of the Delhi and Mumbai airports is under active consideration of the Government.

3.6 As a process of restructuring, 11 excellently run PSUs have been categorised as Navratnas and another 97 profit-making PSUs as Mini-ratnas. And the host of restructuring measures suggested for them are not only aimed at "distancing them from the Government" but also take them to the vicinity of monopoly houses and multi-national companies before off-loading the shares to them. Incidentally, major chunk of those 108 PSUs (Ratnas !) are in the non-core group slated for 74% disinvestment and the rests being identified for off-loading of 49% shares.

3.7 Wide publicity is given that these 'Ratnas' are empowered with greater autonomy. Surprisingly such 'autonomies' are conditional that these would be available only after the Boards of Directors of these companies have been restructured by inducting so called 'professionals' and 'experts' to be selected by a committee called 'Search Committee' composed of only bureaucrats. Thus, the doors of the PSUs are opened wide for entry of representatives of monopoly houses and multinational companies in the name of 'experts' and 'professionals'. It is interesting to note that such non-official directors need not have the approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet nor any vigilance clearance.

3.8 Moreover, the 'autonomy conscious' DC has recommended that these PSUs should be exempted from the purview of the CAG and Parliamentary Committees. Can there be any further dangerous step to open the doors of PSUs for unchecked corruption?

3.9 It is not difficult to understand that in the name of 'Ratnas', the PSUs are pushed to the sole control of the bureaucrats and representatives of private capital, both indigenous and foreign. The strategy of the DC is that before disinvestment of shares, these PSUs should be partially privatised to attract private investors through the process of disinvestment. According to the DC, the steps which would help in value addition are; "corporate governance, managerial autonomy, professionalising the Board of Management and restructuring, where necessary." That real democratic autonomy can be best attained by effectively granting workers' participation in management is none of the concern of the DC or for that matter of the Government.

3.10 The orchestrated vilification campaign against public sector on the one hand and projection of the 'super efficiency' of private sector on the other, is not borne out by the facts and figures published by the government itself. Take the question of profit and loss vis-a-vis contribution to Government exchequer by public and private sector. A motivated propaganda has been carried out,

particularly ever since the introduction of the policy of liberalisation and globalisation, that loss and PSUs are synonymous. However, the fact is that in the last three consecutive financial years, the net profit by PSUs has been going up continuously. It was 12,000, 14,704 and 16,120 crore rupees in 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively. Here it is important to reiterate that majority of the loss making PSUs are the erstwhile sick units of private sector, taken over by the Government.

3.11 A comparative study of taxes and duties paid to the Central Government by the Central PSUs and private corporate enterprises shows clearly that private sector is no match to public sector in the matter. In 1994-95, the central PSUs paid to the Government an amount of Rs.26,400 crores by way of dividend, corporate tax, income tax, excise and custom duties etc. whereas in same year 2,085 private corporate enterprises have paid to the Government by way of taxes and duties only Rs.279 crores.

3.12 It is worthwhile to note that out of a total investment of Rs.2,02,027 crores, the PSUs have contributed an amount of Rs.37,497 crores to the Government exchequer in the year 1996-97 by way of taxes, duties and dividend. In terms of percentage the gross return on investment, in a broader sense of course, works out to 18.56%

3.13 The Internal Resource generation and financing the capital outlay by PSUs have been consistently increasing and at the same time budgetary support from the government to public sector has been declining. During the seventh Plan period the budgetary support was 39.7 per cent of the total plan outlay which went down to 12.7 per cent in the eighth Plan period. During 1996-97 it was lowest at 10.8 per cent of the Plan outlay of that year. The internal resource generated by PSUs during seventh Plan period was 32.2 per cent and increased to 43.3 per cent during eighth Plan period. It reached to 50.2 per cent during 1995-96.

3.14 The all round attack on the public sector industries by the BJP government, if not resisted by a powerful united movement, the public sector network of the country will be completely demolished. Such an eventuality is bound to severely affect the self-reliant economic growth, manufacturing activities, contribution to exchequer, employment generation etc. The country shall be turned a hunting ground for the multinational companies.

3.15 The public sector workers' movement, commensurate with the contribution of PSUs in country's economic development, has played an important role in the united movement of the working class in particular and the democratic movement in general. It must, therefore, take the frontline initiative to mobilise the entire people in the struggle against the disastrous economic policy of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation through countrywide united action to reverse the policy.

3.16 To oppose this dangerous policy of liquidation of the entire public sector, the CPSTU was activated and a national convention of the CPSTU was held in New Delhi on 11th August 1998. The convention reviewed the attack on public sector undertakings and decided to organise a nationwide movement against the measures proposed by the Government of India. It chalked out a phased programme of action culminating in 2 days all India strike of public sector workers on 10th and 11th December 1998. Some of the constituents of the CPSTU decided at local level to strike on 11th December only. In some centres the unions outside the CPSTU agreed to join, if it was only one day action. The CPSTU, therefore, agreed to have only one-day strike in the overall interest of achieving common action programme on the issues involved in the strike. The strike in public sector was, by and large, successful. Only in some centres it was partial due to lack of co-operation from some of the constituents of the CPSTU and opposition from the non-constituents in some others.

3.17 In view of the growing offensive against the public sector due to the keenness of the BJP

Govt. to sell out all the public sector in the name of meeting the budgetary deficit, the movement to save the public sector needs to be strengthened. The move to close down some units also needs to be resisted through direct actions.

4. ADVERSE CHANGES IN LABOUR LAWS

4.1 The BJP led government at the Centre is embarking on a series of changes in the labour laws, at the behest of the employers' lobby, without even holding any consultation with the central trade unions.

4.2 At a conference on labour management organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry on 11th December 1998, Dr L Mishra, Labour Secretary, told that "We have listed the changes that need to be carried out in these laws to bring about an alteration in the orientation of industrial relations." It is also reported that the changes in labour laws proposed by the labour ministry are awaiting Cabinet approval.

4.3 The changes proposed are in the Industrial Disputes Act, Trade Union Act, Contract Labour Act, Payment of Wages Act and a host of other industrial legislations.

4.4 The amendments being considered by the Government are expected "to make retrenchment of employees simpler, increase working hours from eight to twelve hours, legitimise deployment of contract labourers every where, and stringent laws for registration and recognition of the unions." The Union Labour Ministry has termed the existing labour laws as "antiquated" and also laid bare its intention to reduce so called "inflexibility" in labour market.

4.5 Besides, the Department of Electronics has suggested that working hours of women employees be extended, doing away with the restriction on engaging them on night-shifts. The Ministry of Commerce has also proposed that the export processing units should be totally exempted from labour laws. The Information and Technology Task Force had suggested that electronics units in the country should be permitted to run 12 hours shift. All these are under active consideration of the Government. It also suggested that employees should be given permanent status only after completion of 720 days of service.

4.6 The Government also proposes to curtail the scope for redressal of grievances by labour courts, by way of framing regulations to the effect that "only specific grievances" could be entertained by them. Another suggestion under consideration is to make provision for 'easy' termination of employees on grounds of 'indiscipline and poor work performance.'

4.7 There is also talk of overhauling the Bonus Act, to totally link the payment of bonus to productivity and relieving "industries running in loss" from "churning out bonus under the present Act". This means ending the concept of minimum bonus.

4.8 The Labour Ministry is reported to have "accepted the demands voiced by sections of the industry that they be allowed to outsource certain functions which is an international trend." This is clearly intended to by-pass the obligations imposed on the employers by the Supreme Court verdict in respect of contract labour in the Air India case. Labour Secretary, Dr L Mishra, has said that *the Ministry considered outsourcing of subsidiary and peripheral functions as legitimate activity*. The international trend that is sought to be legitimised in the Indian labour market is to perpetuate a 'core and periphery' arrangement by segmentation of workforce with only a small core of regular workers and a large periphery of non-regular workers.

4.9 That all these exercises are undertaken behind the back of the trade union movement, testifies to the anti-labour stance of the BJP led government. The Government, during the last nine months, has not bothered to convene the tripartite labour conference. Even a meeting of the Standing Labour Committee called during October 1998, was abruptly postponed and there is no sign of it being

held in the near future.

4.10 On the other hand, the Government had allayed the misgivings, obviously those of the employers, over the continuance of the National Renewal Fund (NRF), which has served only as a vehicle for retrenching workers under the so called "Voluntary Retirement Scheme." The Government has no sense of shame to admit that bulk of the NRF amount spent during the last five years was only to fund the VRS and as little as 10 per cent of actual expenditure under NRF was directed for non-VRS activities.

4.11 The CITU should mobilise the entire strength of the trade union movement to resist these unilateral and anti-labour amendments to labour laws. We should defeat the nefarious attempt by the Central Government to side-step the tripartite labour forum and to marginalise the trade unions by devaluing the role of labour as a social partner.

4.12. We should also be vigilant against attempts by a section of trade union leadership which succumbs to vascillations on these scores. This section has virtually capitulated to the TINA (There Is No Alternative) factor and seeks to compromise the trade union position on these matters. It even argues that trade unions should adopt a policy approach to bargain for better VRS instead of opposing the concept in principle and persuade workers to accept the same and reconcile to the situation of loss of jobs. The CITU unions should take care to explain to the workers the real meaning of VRS and caution them against allurements of higher compensation. Several case studies of VRS victims have revealed that they, once regular workers, have now been rendered destitute by VRS and forced to a life of penury.

4.13 Similarly, there is also an attempt by a section of trade union leadership to seek cosmetic changes in labour legislations but to go along with the employers' pipe-dream of deregulation of labour market. Naive arguments are advanced to justify casualisation of work-force, commending that trade union efforts should be aimed only at ensuring regulation and fair treatment of contract workers and not to seek abolition of contract system even in permanent perennial jobs. This, strangely, is held out as a panacea to overcome the low unionisation rate in the country.

4.14 This section of trade union leadership prevaricates in its approach to the NRF as well. Their approach aims at diluting the principled opposition of the working class and all out struggle against the policy of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation and making the trade union movement accept such policies as *fait accompli* and reconcile to the situation.

4.15 The fate of the working class in the crisis ridden East Asian economies which during their 'tiger' days, deregulated the labour market, is for all to see. Trade union movements in these countries are now gearing up to oppose the labour law relaxations and to demand amendments to protect the interests of the workers. Trade union movement in India should draw appropriate lessons from the experience of our counterparts in these countries and unitedly thwart legislative changes aimed at deregulation of labour market.

5. AMENDMENT OF INDIAN PATENTS ACT

5.1 The BJP Govt has decided to amend the Indian Patents Act, 1970. It is to be recalled that in the past, the BJP made vociferous opposition to the move of the Congress Govt to amend the Patents Act, both in the Parliament and outside. Its top leaders even signed an appeal to the then President and Prime Minister not to allow any amendment to the Patent Act and preserve the economic sovereignty of the country. But now having come to power, they have made a *volte face* and taken a decision not only to amend the Act to provide for Product Patent, but also to become a member of the diabolical Paris Convention on Patents, from the pages of which the Dunkel proposals on TRIPS were drafted.

5.2 If the Process Patent is changed to Product Patent it will have a devastating effect on our indigenous research and development. No new products can be introduced in the entire field of chemicals, pharmaceuticals and also agriculture to which the TRIPS have been extended. Prices of all essential and life saving drugs will escalate and the market will be flooded by banned, spurious, hazardous and irrational drugs.

5.3 Already the neo-liberal globalisation has entered the agricultural sector. Now with the Patent regime, the USA has developed a Terminator technology to produce Terminator seeds which cannot be stored and utilised. It will die after one season. Thus, the farmers will have to purchase seed from the MNCs every year at exorbitant prices. The end result of amendment of the Patent Act will be closure of our various national laboratories like ICMR, CDRI, CSIR, ICAR, etc. We have to oppose and fight against the amendment mobilising all other trade unions and mass organisations.

6. REVIEW OF THE 11TH DÉCEMBER STRIKE

6.1 The nationwide strike on 11th December 1998 received a massive response in most of the states. The countrywide campaign through holding of state level and district level conventions, holding of rallies on 30th November, holding of local rallies, circulation of several lakhs of copies of the resolution of the 12th August convention in different languages all over the country, etc., created good impact among the working class and other toiling sections of the people. The CITU Centre published two booklets in English and Hindi on unemployment and public sector to educate the masses on the issues involved in the strike. The CITU journals also regularly published campaign materials for the strike.

6.2 The popular discontent on the question of price rise and growing sickness and closure leading to job reduction was noticed all over India during this campaign. The economic policies pursued by the BJP led Government had added to the discontent among the people. Massive response from the common people to the *jathas* organised in different states was clearly visible.

6.3 The support given by political parties to the strike helped to convert the strike into state level or district level bandhs in several states. The CPI(M), CPI, RSP, Forward Bloc, DMK, JD, AGP, TMC, AIADMK, BJD, SP, RJD, RLD, NC, etc., immensely helped in organising bandhs; several other local parties also lent their support to the call. Thus, in W. Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Bihar and Assam, successful bandh was organised. In Bihar, despite High Court order, bandh programme was successful.

6.4 The strike action in different states received support from the organisations not formally a part of the NPMO. For instance, the national General Secretary of INTUC as well as West Bengal State Committee of INTUC openly campaigned, jointly with the NPMO, for the strike. In Port and Dock industry, all the 5 recognised federations, including the INTUC, jointly issued an appeal to the workers to join the strike. Several local units of the INTUC and BMS unions also joined the strike. The INTUC President in his statement opposed the strike but called for observance of a protest day with wearing of black badges on 11th December itself. Our campaign against economic policies created much impact on other TU organisations as well. The BMS organised a protest dharna before Parliament on 30th November opposing the economic policies pursued by the BJP Government.

6.5 Apart from the industrial workers, the participation of 60 lakh state government employees was a significant aspect of the strike. The central Government employees also joined the strike in good strength this time. The defence employees also actively participated in the strike action. Though the railway unions did not join the strike officially, the programme of *rail roko* was successful and many long distance trains could not operate on the day. In a large number of places, the people

squatted on the track and prevented train movement and road traffic was also blocked in several parts of the country.

6.6 The strike in banks and insurance industry was well organised. They held big rallies all over India. The bank officers' organisations extended moral support to the strike.

6.7 In coal mines, the strike in ECL and Singareni Collieries was near total, while in other coal companies it was varying between 70 to 80 per cent. In steel industry, strike in Durgapur Burnpur, Bokaro and Salem was successful, while it was partial in Visakhapatnam and Rourkela. In Central Marketing Organisation of SAIL, the strike was successful.

6.8 Despite opposition by Shiv Sena, strike in Indian Airlines at Mumbai was successful. In Calcutta, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore strike by Airlines employees was very successful.

6.9 Due to air show in Bangalore on 11th December, the HAL, ITI and some other unions organised strike on 14th December. In oil and fertiliser industries, there was mixed response to the strike action while in the unorganised sector, viz., construction beedi, powerlooms, handloom, cashew, coir and plantation, the strike was widespread. The anganwadi women all over India observed strike on the day.

6.10 In pharmaceutical industry, strike of Medical and Sales representatives was successful all over India.

6.11 In several parts of the country, the students observed the strike as per call of the SFI. In some parts, reports of road blockades organised by the students have been reported. In states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, UP and MP, the intensity of the strike was bigger than the earlier occasions. The organisations outside the NPMO also joined the action in several centres.

6.12 For the first time in the state of Manipur a good strike was organised. Strike was reported in several parts of Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh.

6.13 The strike of seamen in offshore oil installations and coastal ships was of great significance.

6.14. Some of the State Govts resorted to repressive measures to break the strike. The Haryana Government promulgated ESMA and arrested hundreds of activists on the eve of the strike. On the strike day also, the State government let loose a reign of terror. Yet, the strike was widespread in the state. In Bihar CCL area, the police and anti-social hirelings of the management attacked the CITU workers who picketed during the strike. Some workers were injured while some were arrested. In Visakhapatnam and Bhopal, the picketing workers were attacked by the police and forcibly removed from the gate to intimidate the workers. In Hardwar BHEL, the picketting workers were attacked and some CITU leaders suffered injuries. In Gwalior, 360 anganwadi women were arrested while picketting. In Guwahati, police, arrested about 100 workers. Arrests of activists and leaders in UP by Kalyan Singh's police have also been reported. Shiv Sena hoodlums resorted to terror tactics to obstruct the activists campaigning for the strike. In Delhi, in NOIDA area the striking workers were attacked by the police while the AICCTU demonstrators before the police headquarters were attacked by the police. In Rourkela, about 100 CITU leaders and activists were detained by the police during the strike period. These repressive measure, however, failed to cow down the workers who resorted to strike actions despite these police and gangster attacks on the picketters during the strike period.

6.15 The Left and opposition MPs in both the houses of Parliament raised the question of ESMA in Haryana. The firmness shown by the MPs in Parliament created a favourable atmosphere for the strike.

6.16 On the day of strike, the non-Cong, non-BJP opposition MPs staged a dharna for one hour

prior to the commencement of Parliament session. The MPs raised the issue of strike in both the houses and supported the demands of the NPMO. They gave slogans in both the houses of Parliament, opposing the economic policies of the government. The Rajya Sabha had to be adjourned for the whole day, while the Lok Sabha had to be adjourned repeatedly due to the voice of the people echoed by the MPs on the floor of the house. The action of the MPs in Parliament focussed the issues raised by the NPMO before the entire country. Despite adverse propaganda by Doordarshan and bourgeois Press about the strike and efforts to underestimate its impact, the same was clearly felt all over the country.

6.17 The international media took great interest in the strike and was keen to assess the impact of the strike all-over India.

6.18 The CGT France sent a message of solidarity for the strike action and welcomed the unity achieved by the working class during the strike.

6.19 The remarkable success of the strike has created a wave of enthusiasm among the workers. It is only through such massive struggle, the unity of the working class and other sections of the toiling masses can be achieved, and more and more people can be drawn into the fold of struggle and higher consciousness.

6.20 The favourable nationwide atmosphere created by the strike should be fully utilised to prepare for a bigger struggle against the World Bank-IMF dictated policies pursued by the BJP government.

6.21 Immediately after the BJP's humiliating defeat in Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the nationwide strike action has given a big blow to the anti-people policies pursued by the BJP-led government at the Centre.

7. EFFORTS FOR CONSOLIDATION OF TU MOVEMENT

7.1 Our efforts since the last General Council meeting has resulted in building a powerful united movement of the working class at national level. As we have seen, the growing discontent among the workers has helped us to bring organisations holding differing views on a common platform on pressing issues facing the working class.

7.2 This unity, however, needs to be further strengthened if organisational consolidation has to be achieved in the country. The confederation proposal mooted by our founder President, Com.B T Ranadive, is a correct step in that direction. However, unless there is a common agreement among all the constituents such an organisation cannot be formed.

7.3 The CITU has already clarified that the confederation is a step in the direction of ultimate formation of a single national trade union centre in India. The AITUC advocates immediate merger of central trade unions which may not be possible to achieve, due to several problems at different levels. Merger of trade unions can be achieved only after full mutual confidence is achieved and organisational guarantees are ensured to have democratic functioning of trade unions. Unions after merger should be loyal to the working class and be free from the influence of the management.

7.4 The six year old talks for merger of AITUC and HMS have not yielded any meaningful result and both of them continue to remain separate. There are genuine difficulties that are to be encountered if the merger is aimed at without creating a proper basis for it.

7.5 The confederation can only be an agency to pave the way for organisational unification of the working class. In an informal discussion, the AITUC leadership stated its preparedness for a time-bound confederation with a provision that the merger should take place within 3 years. Due to our engrossment in preparations for the nationwide strike on 11th December, we could not have further talks with the AITUC on the issue. There will be need for further talks between CITU, AITUC and

HMS to create a favourable atmosphere for achieving the objective of consolidation of Indian Trade Union movement.

7.6 While making efforts to continue dialogue at the top level, there is need to campaign among the rank and file workers the need for a confederation. There is tremendous urge for TU unity among the rank and file workers, which has once again been clearly reflected during the 11th December strike. We should utilise this atmosphere for a broad based campaign by all the unions throughout the country to create a favourable atmosphere for achieving this objective.

7.7. The organisational consolidation is necessary for further intensifying the TU struggle against the retrograde economic policies. More systematic preparations of massive struggle is possible if they are planned in an organised manner. Unfortunately, despite repeated emphasis in nationwide meetings, sufficient campaign has not been unleashed by our unions. We should overcome this shortcoming in our approach so that we can march in the direction of achieving all in organisational unity of the working class.

8. COMMUNAL AND CASTEIST DANGER

8.1 In the resolution "against communalism" adopted by the General Council at its meeting at Chennai, grave concern was expressed at the ascendance of extreme communal forces in our society and polity. Culminating in BJP's advent to power with the consequent threat of increased communal tension and strife, this, in turn, will seriously jeopardise the unity of the working people and the country. The resolution called upon the organised working class to undertake in right earnest a sustained campaign against communalism, take every possible step to preserve the unity of the class and mobilise all secular and democratic forces to meet the danger confronting the people at large.

8.2 Guided by the RSS, with its fascist communal ideology of "hindutva," the BJP had ventured on the path of mobilising support for coming to power on the crutches of heterogeneous political groups. They have now started a desperate attempt to institutionalise the RSS ideology, particularly in the field of culture and education.

8.3 The BJP has itself dropped down their Swadeshi mask, which they had been sporting to deceive the people in pre-election campaign. The erosion of their support base, as the election results have shown, is the inevitable consequence of their wrong policies and non-performance. In the face of this, the Sangh Parivar has again started whipping up communal frenzy of majority community.

8.4 It is also important to note that increasingly the industrial centres, where a considerable part of the workers are muslims and christians, are becoming the target of the communal forces.

8.5 To sum up, communalism today is not just a feeling in the minds of some people, occasionally leading to conflicts between communities. It is pursued by a highly organised group of people representing various vested interests. Vigorously pursuing the reactionary economic policies of liberalisation and globalisation, the forces of undemocratic political outlook and fascistic ideology of hindutva, have denied the composite nature of our culture and aim at subjugation of other religious communities. It should, therefore, be clear that fight against the disastrous economic policy and for democracy on one hand and fight against communalism on the other are integrally linked. The economic policies cannot be fought effectively without, at the same time, fighting against communalism. Nor can the fight against communalism be fought in isolation, that is, without carrying on class struggle.

8.6. At the same time, we cannot also forget our responsibility to the nation. As the most advanced and most organised section of society, it is the working class, which is most capable of uniting all-

secular forces in the society against communalism, to preserve national unity and the integrity of the country.

8.7 All our units will have to undertake the struggle against communalism with utmost seriousness. It should be noted that in the highly surcharged communal atmosphere, a large section of workers belonging to minority communities are adopting a passive attitude towards trade union activity. It is one of our major responsibility to take up their cause and ensure their safety and security in times of tension. This question demands special attention.

8.8. The danger of casteism is also looming large in the country today. Formation of trade unions on the basis of caste has come into existence in some parts of the country. Even in union elections the caste appeal has been reflected in several cases. Formation of unions of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes workers has been prominently seen in many parts of the country. The OBC outfits are also pursuing similar tactics. The failure of the trade union movement to effectively take up the cases of social oppression have to some extent contributed to the phenomenon. It has been observed that caste organisations have frequently been used by the managements to disrupt the trade union struggles. The dalit trade unions have also been making attempts to keep the dalit workers away from the trade union struggles on common issues facing the working class.

8.9 For further advancement of trade union unity and working class struggles, the CITU will have to pay special attention to educate the workers on the dangerous consequences of casteism and also to take up the questions of social oppression earnestly as a part of the trade union tasks. A correct approach on the question of reservation is also extremely important to win the support of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes workers. In an atmosphere of reduction of job opportunities in the country, this question is assuming special significance.

8.10 Because of the utter neglect and callousness of the Government of India, despite tall-talk of balanced regional development, many backward areas and regions are reeling under abject conditions, making the lives of the peoples there, mostly tribals, miserable. This has provided fertile soil for separatist and divisive forces to grow in these regions, over the years.

8.11 The BJP led government at the Centre had opened up a Pandora's box with its proclaimed decision to create three new states of Vananchal, Utharanchal and Chattisgarh. This has given a fresh impetus to the separatist militant outfits demanding carving out of more regions as independent states and escalating violent activities over the issue.

8.12 These developments are also casting a long shadow on the unity of the working class and trade union movement as well.

8.13 The grievances and aspirations of the people in the backward regions are genuine and they must be addressed to. But carving out separate and smaller states is no solution to the problem. Even if the smaller states are formed, they do not have much potential for growth and development on the basis of resources from within. They will be woefully dependent on the mercies of the government of the day at the Centre. Hence it is necessary that instead of creating new smaller states, the backwardness of these regions should be overcome by the Central Government drawing up appropriate plans for their development, allocation of funds on priority basis, and by formation of autonomous councils with devolution of adequate powers.

8.14 The objective of the BJP Government at the Centre is to derive political advantage as they feel that such smaller states will help them advance their narrow self-interests. The move for creation of smaller states will go against the long cherished and time-tested reorganisation of states on linguistic basis.

8.15 The CITU and our unions must address these issues with a clear perspective of maintaining

the class unity and realising the aspirations of these sections of people who have been victims of prolonged neglect by the Government of India. The CITU has a proud record of fighting against separatist forces and for safeguarding ethnic harmony. Several of our comrades have laid down their lives for upholding the unity and integrity of the country and facing the wrath of disruptive forces. We must, therefore, tackle the issues springing from the ill-advised move of the BJP government in this regard as well.

9. ON ORGANISATION

9.1 Implementation of the organisational tasks as laid down in our document is an ongoing process. Regular monitoring and review is, of course, an indispensable part of the process. But it was only four years after the adoption of the document that the progress of its implementation could be reviewed for the first time in the meeting of the Working Committee held in Shimla during Oct 1997. In that, even the Secretariat was handicapped. Reports called for from the state committees were not received from most of them. A discussion paper was prepared incorporating whatever information was available. However, the discussion on the basis of the document was productive. Apart from the points made in the document, much information about the state of the organisation and some vital points came up in the course of the discussion. All the points made in the document as well as those that came up in the course of discussion were reproduced in the report to the General Council meeting held in Chennai in April 1998. It will be useful to briefly recall those conclusions.

"On the functioning of the centre, it was noted that it still suffered from inadequacy of strength; further improvement in collective functioning was needed; more was needed to be done for improvement in the Hindi belt; the centre failed in making any arrangement for trade union education; it failed even to draw up a syllabus and prepare lecture notes for trade union class.

"As regards the states, it was noted that most of the states had initiated steps for implementation of the tasks laid down in the Bhubaneswar document. Some improvement was, of course, achieved in a number of states. But the overall position was far from satisfactory.

"Though there are 12 industrywise federations, reports were received only from 3-4 of them but review of functioning of the federations could not be carried out in the Shimla meeting of the working committee. A partial review was incorporated in the report to the Chennai General Council meeting, in which some of the weaknesses in their working were pointed out. It was stated that "all the industrial federations are required to seriously review the organisational situation in the light of the Report on Organisation at the earliest and send comprehensive reports to the centre, so that in future meetings we can come out with a more specific and objective review..."

"At the end of the discussion on organisation it was stated "...it is hightime we resume our work on streamlining the organisation with due seriousness.... gearing up of the organisation, the principal weapon in the hands of the working class for meeting any situation, has assumed paramount importance."

9.2 It is not intended to carry out a fresh review in the present meeting. In a subsequent meeting we shall hold another round of detailed review with adequate preparation. In the meantime, the State Committees and the Federations are advised to undertake their own reviews so as to provide the centre in time with necessary input for preparing over all review report to serve as the basis for

the proposed review discussion.

9.3 However, after the last General Council meeting there has been some progress in overcoming a major weakness from which the centre had been suffering for long. Two important comrades have recently joined the CITU centre—Ardhendu Dakshi, General Secretary, Steel Workers Federation of India from West Bengal; and Hemalata, General Secretary, All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers and Secretary of Andhra Pradesh State CITU. Ranjana Nirula from Delhi and Sindhu from Kerala student front had joined the centre earlier. There is, no doubt, that this will bring about improvement in the functioning of the centre. The work of the working women's front including that of Anganwadi, will specially get a boost, as the work which was being looked after by a single comrade from the centre, will now be shared by other able comrades. However, in view of the expanding sphere of our activity involving immense complexity, the centre is still in need of some more able comrades. We hope that the state committees will pay further attention to this matter.

9.4 Some organisational steps taken by the centre are as follows: A draft syllabus for trade union classes along with drafts of three lecture notes were circulated to the state committees and the General Council members at the Chennai meeting with the request to give their suggestions, if any, for improvement of the documents. Unfortunately no suggestion has so far been forthcoming. However, some more lecture notes are under preparation and will be circulated soon.

9.5 During the period following the Chennai General Council, a meeting of the leaders of the state units in Hindi belt was convened. All the concerned states were not represented. But the discussion helped to identify issues which deserve special attention. The comrades explained the nature of help they require from the centre. However, the long term issue common to all Hindi belt states, the issue of dominant influence of the feudal ideology remains to be dealt with in depth. The centre has undertaken the responsibility of organising a trade union school for Hindi belt comrades by middle of Feb. 1999.

9.6. As regards the journals, it must have been noticed that there has been visible improvement in form and considerable enrichment in content of **The Working Class** and **CITU Mazdoor** as well as **The Voice of the Working Women**. The circulation of the last mentioned has slightly increased. The centre hopes that our committees and readers of the journals will take the responsibility to improve them further by sending their criticism and suggestions. Also they should make serious effort to increase the circulation.

9.7 However, the centre is conscious about the weaknesses and shortcomings which are still persisting and will make all efforts to overcome them by fresh re-distribution of job among the comrades.

9.8. The importance of a good library and a research centre for trade union movement today cannot be exaggerated. The Bhubaneswar document has duly emphasised the need for setting up of a library and research unit. Space available in the present building is not adequate for full-fledged functioning of both. Provision has been made for them in the plan of BTR Bhawan. We have already started working on the library. We have been getting some important journals through subscription or as complementary. We are occasionally acquiring books, reports etc., besides a good collection of important publications. Chinese and North Korean Embassies have also presented a considerable number of books. We have started organising all the materials according to the principles of Library Science. We have already recorded about thousand books in the accession register, while the periodicals are yet to be taken up.

9.9 While undertaking review of implementation of the Report on Organisation, it is imperative

on the part of the CITU, at all levels, to pay serious and immediate attention to some of the priority tasks, repeatedly emphasised by Com.B T Ranadive, which we have incorporated in the same document. We extract some portions therefrom, which need no elaboration but demand our urgent attention:

UNORGANISED WORKERS

“As the data shows, the unorganised non-agricultural sector constitutes 5 crore and 66 lakhs of workers. Our weakness in this sector is most glaring. Though recently we have taken certain steps to organise the unorganised and recently we held a successful All India Convention in Calcutta our strength can be considered as symbolic. This strata is most exploited with appallingly low minimum wages and no job security. Big possibility of development of movement in this sector is clearly seen. It is high time the CITU should take up the work in right earnest on a priority basis so that this vast chunk of the working class is brought into the mainstream of the TU movement.”

YOUTH AND UNEMPLOYED

“Our neglect of working among young workers is costing us dearly. Wherever we have ignored this task the new worker is remaining away from the unions. Trade unions should take up the problems of young workers so that their involvement in union activity is further strengthened. We have been only debating the question of organising the unemployed young workers but we have not even commenced work in that direction. Huge strata of young unemployed worker is remaining outside the periphery of our movement. We should strengthen the campaign for Right to Work in cooperation with Student and Youth organisations.”

SC/ST AND MINORITIES

“Special attention to be paid to development of cadres among SC and ST workers and minorities, while arranging through them involvement of larger sections in the union activities. More efforts to bring to the leading position the promising cadres among these strata.”

WORKING WOMAN

“Despite repeated criticism in the CITU conferences and all India meetings, the working women's front shows utter callousness on the part of our leaders, unions and various committees. A major reason is the lack of seriousness among our unions to develop work among working women.

At the initiative of some state level committee, activities among working women in Insurance, Banks, and state govt employee have made considerable headway but our own affiliated unions are lagging behind in this regard. Without development of activities among our own class the working women's movement cannot be developed properly.

It must be admitted that the TU movement in general has neglected the task of fighting against social oppression of women. In several cases we find that even in charter of demands the special problems faced by working women are rarely mentioned. We have not seriously taken up the cases of sexual harassment of women workers during our agitations. At times our leaders and activists become victims of male chauvinism, while tendency is developing to look at problems of women somewhat contemptuously. Trade union movement must closely link itself with the women's liberation movement, if larger involvement of women in the TU movement.”

10 WORKING WOMEN

10.1 By April 1999, it will be 20 years since we formed the All India Working Women's Coordination Committee. It was formed with the purpose of bringing the large sections of working women, who are left out of the mainstream of the trade union movement, into the fold of CITU, and to develop working women cadres and leaders. Unfortunately, after 20 years, there is no significant change in the percentage of women membership in CITU and only a marginal increase in the

number of women leaders. Many states are yet to understand the importance of paying special attention to the need of organising working women, particularly in the background of the new economic and industrial policies which lead to more and more women entering the labour market in the unorganised sector.

10.2 The AICCWW call for Demands Day on 7th of August, '98 was observed in Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Unfortunately we did not receive detailed reports from any state except Bihar.

10.3 The All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers conference was held on 6,7,8 June 1998 at Bhopal. 287 delegates, representing about 73,000 members from 14 states, participated. The conference was inaugurated by E Balanandan. It elected a committee of 51 with Neelima Maitra as President and Hemalatha as General Secretary. As per the action programme taken by the conference, 10th June was observed as All India Demands Day with various action programmes. In September and October Relay Hunger strike programmes were held at district level in almost all the states. On November 17, state level rallies were held in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, etc.

10.4 The Federation has had major achievements in four states. In Andhra Pradesh, the government had issued an order handing over the Anganwadis to mothers' committees. After our agitation (a big *rasta roko* by over 20,000 employees), the government retracted that the order will not apply to existing projects. In Punjab, as a result of our agitation, the government withdrew its decision to close down 52 projects. The closure would have made 10,000 employees jobless. In West Bengal, the state government has increased the honorarium by Rs 200 for workers and helpers, and the ex-gratia by Rs 350. The honorarium has now become Rs 700 and 460 respectively. The Karnataka State Committee succeeded in getting summer holidays and reservation of 45% in promotion to supervisors, from the State Government.

10.5 A delegates' convention of the Samyukta Sangharsha Samithi was held on August 20 at New Delhi. 250 activists from all over India, representing 6 trade unions (including HMKP) participated. The convention passed a resolution to participate in the December 11 strike, along with other programmes.

10.6 A three day workshop for women trade unionists from industries in eight Hindi speaking states was organised by the CITU with ILO assistance, from 26 to 28 August 1998 in New Delhi. It was attended by 18 women from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, UP and Delhi. State level workshops are being planned in the near future in Haryana and Punjab. We have submitted a proposal to the ILO for an 18 month long education project, in which we will organise workshops for working women-trade unionists, all over the country. We plan to hold 3 regional, 18 state and 6 industry level workshops under this project.

10.7 A delegation of women trade unionists from Japan visited Chennai and Bangalore. The Tamil Nadu and Karnataka state AICCWWs organised their programme. A group of Swedish women trade unionists visited Delhi in October. The AICCWW and AIDWA had a joint meeting with them.

10.8 The circulation of the Voice of the Working Woman has gone up to over 2000. To make the journal more meaningful and useful for our activists and other working women, we need more reports from the states and unions. The Anganwadi union is the most regular in sending reports. If we can increase the circulation in the year 1999, and make the journal self sufficient, we can bring out a small bulletin in Hindi, for the Hindi speaking states.

10.9 Our work in the states must be reviewed, keeping in view the purpose with which we have

formed the coordination committee. Unless one comrade is given specific responsibility at the state centre for the work among working women, it will not be possible to achieve our goal of organising vast sections of the unorganised women workers in different industries, behind the CITU.

11. UNORGANISED SECTOR

11.1 In Chennai General Council meeting we had taken a decision that within six months, every state committee should form a sub-committee on the unorganised workers so that special attention can be given to develop activities. It was also decided that state committees should identify the industries in their states where unorganised workers are employed in large numbers and also the priorities so that they can devote to develop activities in those industries on a priority basis.

11.2 The CITU Centre issued a circular to remind the state committees to take steps to form such committees so that the matter can be reviewed by the Working Committee. However, many state committees have not responded to the CITU circular and we must consider, in this meeting, how to proceed further in the matter. As it was noted earlier, without having co-ordination of activities at the state level, the co-ordination at a national level does not take a meaningful shape.

11.3 The industrial relations in the unorganised sector are a state subject and state governments are dealing with the problems. Minimum wage are also fixed at the state level which vary from state to state depending on the organised strength of the movement.

11.4 This sector is also facing acute problems due to the new economic policies and the unorganised workers should be involved more and more in the struggles against these policies.

11.5 Due to lack of activities in all the states, the participation of comrades in the all India Co-ordination Committee also is not adequate. Thus, the nationwide movement to involve unorganised workers in our common movement is also getting adversely affected.

11.6 There is a need to increase the membership of CITU in the unorganised sector. The task of formation of unions in unorganised industries is going by default. Though some state committees have taken interest in the matter and have made progress in the field, we could not develop this in all the states and at a national level. This lacuna needs to be overcome. I hope the working committee members, while participating in the discussion, will consider this shortcoming seriously so that we can pay more attention to this subject.

12. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

12.1 The international relations of CITU are growing with the passage of time. A number of delegations have been exchanged between CITU and fraternal foreign trade union centres since the last Working Committee meeting at Chennai.

12.2 A three-member women's delegation from CITU consisting of Ranjana Nirula from CITU Centre and Bharati Som and Banhi Sikha Acharya from the Air Corporation Employees Union participated in the International Meeting of Women Trade Unionists at Havana (Cuba) from April 27 to May 3, 1998. Ranjana also represented CITU at the Preparatory Committee meeting held in Havana for the Second Conference Against Globalisation and Neo-liberalism which is going to be held at Sao Paulo (Brazil) in August 1999. The delegation participated in the May Day rally in Havana, which was addressed by Fidel Castro.

12.3. A CITU delegation consisting of M. Srirangan, Member, Tamil Nadu State Committee of CITU, R. Govindarajan, Jt Secretary, All India Insurance Employees Association, and P. S. Pillai, Jt Secretary, Bank Employees Federation of India, took part in the International Solidarity Affair 1998 organised by KMU at Manila (Philippines) from April 28 to May 9, 1998. They participated in a series of seminars and discussions and interacted with the participants from other countries.

12.4 Espaces Marx of Paris organised a four-day international meet entitled "Encounter for the

150th Anniversary of the Communist Manifesto" from 13th to 15th May, 1998, which was attended by 1500 participants including 21 from countries outside France. On this occasion the organisers published 12 volumes of 149 contributions from eminent persons, including CITU leaders M K Pandhe, Sukomal Sen, Chittabrata Majumdar and Jibon Roy, which discussed the historic significance of the Communist Manifesto. The encounter comprised 8 plenary sessions, 30 odd workshops and 2 final round tables. CITU was represented at the encounter by Chittabrata Majumdar, Sukomal Sen, K N Ravindranath, Jibon Roy, J Ballabh and Chaitali Roy. Chittabrata Majumdar was among the select few who were invited to address the inaugural session of the encounter.

12.5 A two-member delegation from the Cuban Institute of Friendship among the Peoples (ICAP) consisting of Chief of Asia Division, Corredora Morales Alicia E and Mackchaser Siveright, Specialist for Asia, visited India in the second week of June 1998. The delegation visited the CITU headquarters in New Delhi on June 11. It was received by the available members of CITU Secretariat. Both sides exchanged views on activities to further strengthen the friendship and solidarity between the people of India and Cuba. The delegation thanked CITU for its solidarity actions in support of socialist Cuba and in opposition to the savage imperialist blockade against Cuba.

12.6 CITU Secretaries M M Lawrence and V B Cherian led a 8-member delegation to the 1998 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Japan from August 2 to 9, 1998. Other members of the delegation were Natha Singh, M Rajangam, Swapan Kumar Ray, Debasish Dey, Tapan Kumar Pathak and Kalebu Komala Pudinarah. Natha Singh and M Rajangam also joined the Peace March from July 29. In the background of BJP led Indian Government policy of nuclear weaponisation, they received enthusiastic welcome from the Japanese people as they were the only marchers from outside Japan. They were even asked to lead the march holding the front banner till it reached Hiroshima. M M Lawrence addressed the conference and pledged CITU's support and solidarity with the worldwide movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

12.7 A 3-member delegation from the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) led by Do Due Ngo, Member of the VGCL Presidium and Director of Department of Culture and Ideology visited India at the invitation of CITU from the 20th to 23rd July 1998. The delegation also visited the CITU headquarters in New Delhi, for a discussion. It was received by E Balanandan, M K Pandhe, P K Ganguly, Ranjit Basu, W R Varada Rajan and S B Bharadwaj.

12.8 Following a 3-day workshop on the evaluation of Commonwealth Trade Union Council (CTUC) Project 1995-98 for India and Sri Lanka, which concluded in the first week of Sept 1998 and which was attended by CITU representatives, the CTUC Director Annie Watson and Sterling Smith made a courtesy call to the CITU headquarters.

12.9 CITU Secretary W R Varada Rajan represented the CITU at the international seminar organised by the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) in Colombo (Sri Lanka) from 14th to 16th October, 1998. Varada Rajan presented a country paper in the seminar and dealt with issues concerning labour, employment and productivity. 24 representatives from 15 Asian countries and 5 resource persons attended the seminar.

12.10 R Ramanathan represented the CITU at the International Conference of Aeronautics and Aerospace Employees and Trade Unions organised by the CGT, France. The programme was held at Paris from 28th to 30th October, 1998. 230 delegates from over 17 countries participated in the conference. The conference was held at a time when the air transport industry is undergoing a restructuring process due to globalisation with trends of cost cutting, loss of jobs, deterioration in working conditions, retrenchment and sub-contracting of permanent jobs.

12.11 Parsa Satyanarayana, Vice-President, represented the CITU and extended fraternal greetings

to the VIII National Congress of Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), which was held in Hanoi (Vietnam) from 5th to 7th November 1998. His week-long visit to Vietnam on this occasion provided a good opportunity to witness the progress of socialist Vietnam and hold fraternal discussions with the Vietnamese and other foreign TU leaders on issues of common interest.

12.12 The IX World Congress of TU International of Public and Allied Employees (TUIPAE) was held in Calcutta from Nov 4-6, 1998. The Congress was attended by delegates from 13 countries and 35 trade unions, which jointly represented a membership of 10 million workers. The congress was inaugurated by CITU Vice President and W Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu and was also addressed by CITU General Secretary M K Pandhe.

12.13 A seminar on the theme of "Globalisation of Economy and Its Impact on the Working Class" was held on the eve of the Congress, in cooperation with the ILO.

12.14 P Marimuthu, Secretary, TN State Committee and a member of the General Council of CITU, participated in a seminar on Labour Management Cooperation held in Japan for two weeks from Nov 9 to 20, 1998. The programme was organised by the Japan Productivity Centre for Socio-Economic Development to enable the participants to understand the dynamics of labour management cooperation in the context of Japanese experience. Marimuthu presented a country paper in the seminar.

12.15 Hemasari, a TU activist from the Legal Aid Institute, Bandung, Indonesia, and Nùrul Anowar, General Secretary, Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation and Coordinator, Workers Federation Centre made courtesy visits to the CITU centre in November 1998. These guests were received by available members of the CITU Secretariat, who held friendly exchange of views with them on issues of common interest.

12.16 A two-member CITU delegation consisting of CITU Secretaries P K Ganguly and Kali Ghosh paid a friendly visit to Bangladesh at the invitation of Jatio Sramik Jote-Bangladesh (JSJ-B) from Dec 7 to 12, 1998. The delegation attended the annual conference of JSJ-B on Dec 10 and 11 and held fraternal exchange of views with the host organisation.

12.17 A three member CITU delegation visited Egypt at the invitation of Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) from Dec 15 to 18, 1998 to participate in the centenary celebrations of Egyptian trade union movement. The delegation was led by CITU Vice President T K Rangarajan and included P A Samad, Secretary, Hinterland Seamen's Union and Soumen Mukhopadhyaya, General Council Member, Air Corporation Employees Union.

12.18 R S Rajendran, Vice-President, Construction Workers' Federation of India (CWFI) is going to visit Egypt in the second half of January 1999 at the invitation of General Trade Union for Building & Wood Industries Workers, Cairo.

12.19 The General Secretary of WFTU, Alexander Zharikov visited the CITU office on 13th December 1998 and discussed with the Secretariat members the proposal to hold the 14th World Trade Union Congress in Delhi during November 1999. This Working Committee meeting should discuss the steps we have to take to make the Congress successful.

13. ON VERIFICATION

13.1 A statement showing statewide membership as per the annual returns received by the centre (Annexure-I) presents a very depressing picture. It is a reflection of a very sad state of affairs which needs to be looked into quite seriously.

13.2 Our repeated circulars and discussion in the last meeting, regarding the ensuing fresh round of verification, emphasised the urgent need to submit annual returns for 1997 by the unions at the earliest. But, our state committees could not gauge the importance and failed to pay the required

attention to fulfil this important task.

13.3 Unfortunately, I have to mention that Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan have not responded at all to the circulars. Kerala, Tamilnadu and West Bengal are also yet to submit their returns in full. Anyway, excepting AP and probably Assam, all other state committees are required to submit the annual returns and affiliation fees, etc for 1997 in full within December '98 to enable the CITU to submit its claim as and when fresh round of verification of Central TU organisations is undertaken.

13.4 The date of the next meeting to finalise the details including date of reckoning is tentatively scheduled for January first week. It is likely that the cut off year for verification may be 1997. It is, therefore, necessary that the collected money and annual returns should be submitted urgently by the affiliated unions. All the state committees must ensure that the unions which are yet to submit their returns do it immediately and send us a copy along with affiliation fees.

14. COM BTR MEMORIAL TRUST

14.1 The construction work of BTR Bhawan is almost nearing completion. Currently, the plumbing work and the electrical wiring work is under progress. The interior designing is also ready but we have asked them to go slow. Reason - paucity of funds. We have been guarding against since long that work should never stop because of this reason. Appeals were made a number of times declaring even last dates by which the collections must be completed and remitted to the centre.

14.2 From the details of the collections received (Annexure-II) you can know the fund position. Out of a total collection of Rupees 1 crore 12 lakh, over 75 lakhs have already been spent. Remaining money will be spent anytime because the final bill for construction work has not yet been placed on us. It is a very sad commentary of the things happening. In spite of the fact that BTR fund issue is in the agenda of the meetings of all state committees, no serious effort appears to have been made in many of the states. Since long, we have not received any payment from the states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Punjab, Karnataka, Maharashtra etc. towards this fund. In fact, we have been receiving contribution from our fraternal organisations, like unions in Banks, Insurance, State Govt. Emp. Federation apart from Kerala and West Bengal, in trickles though, but continuously.

14.3 We are happy to say that an amount of Rs.50,000.00 as a first installment had recently been received from Indian Workers' Association, U.K. We thank them for this valuable contribution.

14.4 I appeal to you, once again, to take up the issue seriously, make immediate collections as per the quotas undertaken and remit the same, so that the work is completed in time and we are able to move to our own building on the next foundation day of CITU on 30th May 1999.

15. FORWARD TO INTENSIFICATION OF STRUGGLES

15.1 With a new situation developing in the country, we must strive our best to intensify the struggle against economic policies and communalism. Since the BJP Government is determined to hive off the national interests at the altar of the World Bank and the IMF, it is the duty of the working class and other toiling sections of society to rise against the threat to national self-reliance and to the secular fabric of the country. The BJP is out to destroy the rich cultural heritage of the country in the garb of obscurantist *Hindutva* ideology.

15.2 The BJP Government, during the last 8 months, has not taken a single step in favour of the working class. The united demand of the trade unions to amend the Payment of Bonus Act and remove its ceilings has not been accepted by the Government due to pressure of big business houses. The much awaited Agricultural Labour Bill has been washed off, again due to the pressure of the landlord lobby in the country. The nine year old Bill on Workers Participation in Management is still lying in cold storage and the Government has no intention to pursue it in Parliament, on the

plea that no unanimity has emerged on the question.

15.3 While these measures are not forthcoming, the Government of India is planning to amend and overhaul the labour legislations in favour of the employers' class which are directed towards stripping the working class of its rights and imposing the conditions of virtual slavery in the name of labour flexibility.

15.4 The BJP Government has also watered down tripartite consultations during its tenure. Most of the tripartite committees have either been made defunct or mere ritualistic.

15.5 The other toiling sections of the society are also having the same experience. Their working and living conditions are deteriorating very fast. With steep rise in prices of essential commodities and growing unemployment in the country, the life is becoming more and more intolerable to the common man of India.

15.6 Under these circumstances, we must take initiative in unleashing more and more powerful mass actions to resist these draconian policies. Without such a resistance, we will not be able to protect the living conditions of the people of the country. We must maintain continuity in our efforts to build greater and broadest mobilisation of people against the anti-people and anti-national policies of the government. The spontaneous enthusiasm shown by the people during the 11th December strike indicated preparedness of the masses to protest and resist these policies. We must utilise this opportunity to strengthen our struggles for a change in the policies of the Government.

15.7 We have not received full reports of the observation of 11th December strike and Bandh actions from all the places. After a proper review of the strike, we should also find out ways and means to chalk out further programmes of action so that the strength of our struggle is increased manifold and the BJP Government will find it difficult to ignore the powerful voice of the working masses.

15.8. The NPMO has termed the 11 December strike as 'heralding of a new phase of mass struggles which will be intensified further in the coming period.' It has also asserted its determination to pursue the demands for total reversal of the present disastrous economic policies and for a pro-people alternative by further sustained action programmes.

15.9. I request that members of the Working Committee, in their deliberations, give serious thought to this aspect of carrying forward the momentum unleashed by the general strike and give their comments, suggestions and proposals for future actions. This will help us to take up the matter when the NPMO will meet next, for a detailed review and further deliberations.

15.10 Let us prepare for the next round of massive nationwide resistance programmes to the policies of the Government which is ruining the destiny of the people of our country.

15.11 We can win if we are united and determined!

**STATEMENT SHOWING STATEWISE MEMBERSHIP AS PER ANNUAL RETURN
RECEIVED TILL 13.12.1998**

Name of State	Unions Submitting Returns			Position of Membership According to Annual Returns		
	95	96	97	1995	1996	1997
Andaman & Nicobar	7	6	3	1768(-)	2059(-)	718(-)
A.P	556	675	709	148990(14762)	191352(37043)	189951(36884)
Assam	86	74	66	40269(9770)	38247(9953)	37050(11482)
Bihar	29	8	3	82617(9000)	9425(74)	3448(7)
Delhi	51	60	30	52039(2220)	37532(1842)	25831(1079)
Goa	7	6	--	3529(199)	2583	-----
Gujrat	23	16	2	17185(1493)	11211(714)	1311(45)
Haryana	30	18	--	18370(3146)	18209(4410)	-----
H.P	21	23	15	4996(1922)	6002(2843)	1767(1)
J & K	1	1	1	602(9)	550(9)	572(12)
Karnataka	109	70	6	82311(21470)	52591(23728)	8896(650)
Kerala	844	776	194	731096(163485)	703821(178311)	238608(87137)
M.P	62	44	55	29726(3090)	27862(4300)	18661(3705)
Maharashtra	40	11	13	39662(8146)	15419(6943)	18182(1560)
Orissa	26	25	28	26985(3883)	20788(3942)	11932(2754)
Punjab	105	61	37	63361(685)	52619(97)	22194(163)
Rajasthan	63	43	14	32463(352)	31221(290)	6895(25)
Tamilnadu	432	398	24	228869(8049)	205546(21954)	14108(730)
Tripura	26	24	3	41667(5884)	36372(3018)	16790(2175)
Uttar Pradesh	--	62	36	28315(198)	27091(188)	11396(100)
West Bengal	964	833	572	1114767(101235)	1051982(73669)	372986(14795)
	3512	3234	1811	2784050(358188)	2542482(373328)	1007296(163304)

Year	Total Number of Unions Submitting Annual Returns	Membership as per Return
1983	1854	1890993
1984	2005	1575655
1985	1717	1716457(132536)
1986	2412	1844273(209348)
1987	2350	1680884(206482)
1988	2618	1919280(264507)
1989	3114	2425000(247388)
1990	2934	2095550(245060)
1991	2783	2088218(291228)
1992	3343	2381012(321620)
1993	3156	2371405(306344)
1994	3198	2470131(261980)

Figures within bracket indicates female membership.

BTR MEMORIAL FUND

STATEWISE BREAK UP OF RECEIPTS
(upto 15.12.1998)

	Name of the State Committee	Amount Received	Committed Amount
1.	West Bengal	50,37,615.00	1,00,00,000.00
2.	Andhra Pradesh	2,50,368.00	15,00,000.00
3.	Assam	50,680.00	5,00,000.00
4.	Bihar	62,502.00	8,00,000.00
5.	Delhi	1,00,930.00	2,00,000.00
6.	Kerala	26,42,500.00	50,00,000.00
7.	Madhya Pradesh	13,242.00	2,00,000.00
8.	Orissa	22,358.00	5,00,000.00
9.	Punjab	4,47,152.00	10,00,000.00
10.	Rajasthan	3,00,615.00	5,00,000.00
11.	Tamilnadu	4,62,580.00	30,00,000.00
12.	Tripura	30,280.00	5,00,000.00
13.	Karnataka	2,05,216.00	7,00,000.00
14.	Himachal Pradesh	7,726.00	2,00,000.00
15.	Haryana	13,150.00	2,00,000.00
16.	Maharashtra	1,11,182.00	10,00,000.00
17.	Uttar Pradesh	1,51,450.00	5,00,000.00
18.	Goa	50,000.00	1,50,000.00
19.	Gujrat	000.00	1,00,000.00
20.	Individual/Unions/Federations	2,04,094.00	000.00
21.	Bank Unions/Federations	3,21,149.00	000.00
22.	Insurance (AIIEA)	1,00,000.00	000.00
23.	AISGEF	6,31,670.00	000.00
	TOTAL	1,12,16,459.00	2,65,50,000.00

RECEIPTS SINCE 23rd SEPTEMBER 1998

78.	Alf Foreign Airlines Emp. Union	2,000.00
79.	Sri B Singh, Patna	100.00
80.	Sri Lambodar Jha, Patna	100.00
81.	Sri Arun Chandra Sinha, Nalanda	500.00
82.	Sri S P Mukherjee, Advocate, Patna	5,000.00
83.	Umesh Misra, Patna	50.00
84.	Chakradharpur Rail Div. Mazdoor	1,200.00
85.	B D Prasad, Bihar	100.00
86.	Sukumar Chakraborty, DSP Unit, Durgapur	501.00
87.	U P Menon, CITU Centre	3,000.00
88.	BEFI, Kerala	850.00
89.	Hindustan Steel Emp. Union, Durgapur	50,000.00
90.	FCI Employees Association, Kochi	2,500.00
91.	Indian Workers Association, U K	50,000.00
92.	CITU Centre (Collections till 15.12.98)	4,08,705.50
	Kerala State Committee	4,00,000.00
	Orissa State Committee	7,239.00
	TTK Prestige Emp. Union, Karnataka	1,466.00

5,24,606.50

Total Receipts upto 23.9.98 1,06,91,853.00
(October'98 issue Working Class & CITU Mazdoor)

1,12,16,459.50

DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

ON CONDOLENCE

This meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held at Ahmedabad on 22-24 December '98, offers respectful homage to all the leaders, cadres and activists of the working class and the democratic movement, who laid down their lives during the period since our last General Council Meeting at Chennai.

This meeting pays its respectful homage to Com. Dasrath Deb one of the founder of the Communist movement in Tripura and an acknowledged leader of the tribal people of Tripura. The meeting also condoles the death of Com. Chadayan Govindan, a renowned leader of the working people of Kerala and state Secretary of CPI(M). The meeting pays respectful homage to Com. P. Ramachandra Rao, Secretary of CPI(M) in Karnataka and a former CITU state secretary, who died while in Delhi. The meeting conveys its respectful homage in memory of Com. Pritish Chanda, President of UTUC (LS) and a leader of the Indian Trade Union movement.

The Working Committee expresses its deep anguish at the ghastly murder of a CPI(M) member of Bihar Legislative assembly Com. Ajit Sarkar along with 3 others in Bihar, by the landlord goons. The meeting also condemns the dastardly attacks sponsored by the contractor-authorities nexus killing the General Secretary of Bokaro Steel Mazdoor union, Com. Yadhav Prasad.

This meeting deeply mourns the death of Com. Madhu Guha, member of the General Council of CITU and a frontline leader and organiser of Jute Workers Movement in West Bengal and Com. K.I. Malabade, Vice-President of the Maharashtra CITU State committee and a militant leader of the powerloom workers of Maharashtra. The meeting pays its respectful homage to their memory.

The meeting also expresses its deep sorrow at the passing away of Com. P.G.K. Krishnan, founder leader of the CITU in Tamilnadu, Com. Palash Pramanick, a veteran activist in the Kisan movement in Bengal, Com. Chhaya Bera, a leader of the women's movement and a Minister in the Left Front Govt. of West Bengal, Com. Amirtendu Mukherjee, a freedom fighter and leader of the Communist movement in West Bengal and Com. Tarachand, veteran leader of the communist movement in HP.

This meeting deeply condoles the death of veteran journalist Sri Nikhil Chakraborty, renowned Hindi Literator Shri Nagarjun and Com. Nirmal Bhattacharya, veteran CPI(M) leader and former manager of P.D. & Loklahar.

The meeting pays its respectful homage to the memory of Com. Nguyen Van Linh former General secretary of the Communist party of Vietnam, who died recently.

This working committee respectfully recalls the determination and courage with which innumerable comrades of the TU and democratic movement have embraced martyrdom heroically confronting the heinous and dastardly attacks of landlord-management nexus. This meeting, in particular, expresses deep anguish at the barbarous police firing on innocent mine workers in Madhya Pradesh killing one. This meeting also condemns the murderous attacks on comrades of TU and democratic movement in West Bengal, Tripura and elsewhere by disruptive forces. The meeting pays respectful homage to the memory of these martyrs.

ON PRICE RISE

The meeting of CITU Working Committee, being held on 22-24 December 1998 at Ahmedabad, notes with serious concern the abnormal and unabated rise in prices of all essential commodities during last 8 months creating unimaginable hardship and pushing down the standard of living of the mass of the people.

In spite of galloping increase in prices every month since last April onwards, Govt of India continued to remain totally unconcerned and indifferent despite repeated protest from the trade unions and mass organisations and did not take any action.

Despite manifold increase in prices in onions, edible oil, pulses etc., every month during the spate of last eight months and visible shortage of those commodities in the market, the Govt of India continued to allow export of those commodities in thousands of tonnes every month. This, while aggravating the shortage further, facilitated the traders, hoarders and black marketeers to take advantage of the situation and reap fortuitous profit at the cost of hardship of common people. The recent price rise has also exposed the ills of thoughtless commercialisation of agriculture, leading to shift of cultivable land from production of food grains and other essentials to cash crop and uncontrolled export of the essential commodities starving the domestic population.

The Working Committee opines that the phenomenon of price rise of essentials is the natural impact of the economic policy pursued by the govt. The price rise of the primary products including essential commodities only benefits the big landlords, hoarders and traders, The actual producers of the commodities at the ground level are nowhere the beneficiaries. But the recent phenomenon of price rise at an abnormal pace, is also promoted by the hoarder friendly policy of the BJP Govt at the centre. This is not merely the impact of their economic policy, but also used as an instrument to oblige the hoarders and black marketeers lobby who constitute the support base of BJP. That is why no visible action was taken by the BJP Govt to arrest the price rise till November end when they ordered import of onion and put a ban of export, while not touching the hoarders and black marketeers. The Working Committee demands of the Govt to take strong action to curb hoarding and black marketeering, and also to strengthen and expand the public distribution system all over the country to ensure supply of essential commodities at subsidised prices.

The Working Committee also calls upon the working class and common people to unitedly struggle against the anti-people and hoarder friendly policies of the BJP Govt.

AGAINST PRIVATISATION

The meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held on 22-24 December 1998 at Ahmedabad, expresses grave concern at Govt of India's hell-bent move to sell out the public sector units. In the budget speech of 1998, the Union Finance Minister declared govt's decision to off-load 74% shares of all so called non-strategic PSUs. As per Govt's definition, non-strategic PSUs cover more than 90% of the PSU network comprising vital sectors like coal, steel, electricity telecom, etc of the national economy. In fine, Govt of India's aim is to wipe out the name of public sector in the industrial and service sector.

Moreover, it is curious to note that the BJP led govt at the centre has been announcing every

alternate day its resolve to disinvest PSU shares at whatever price available in the market. The Adviser to Finance Ministry has announced that within five years all the PSUs will be privatised. Although the stock market has been showing a continuous downtrend, and the share prices of many major profitable PSUs have gone down to abnormally low levels, and in some cases less than the face-value, the Govt of India is going on listing the shares of profitable PSUs for immediate sale. This means that the Govt is not only interested to sell the PSUs but is more interested to transfer national wealth vested with PSUs to private and foreign hands at minimal or negligible return in that process.

So far as the sick PSUs are concerned, Govt's design for closing down or selling out the assets have already come to light. It must be noted that the govt is determined to close down sick PSUs, even when the cost of revival is much less than the cost of VRS only on account of closure.

The Working Committee notes that the desperate bid to sell the profit making PSUs and close down the rest on the part of Govt of India, if not stalled through united struggle, would bring disaster to the national economy severely jeopardising the self-reliance and also employment potential of the country besides adversely affecting the workers.

The Working Committee calls upon the working class in general and the affiliated unions in particular to close ranks and build up united resistance against the conspiracy of the imperialist forces to dismantle the economic sovereignty of the country and mount opposition against the anti-national design of the Govt of India to privatise and dismantle the public sector network in the country.

ON PENSION SCHEME

The meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held on 22-24 December, 1998 at Ahmedabad, takes serious note of the resentment among and deprivation of the mass of the workers arising out of the Employees Pension Scheme 1995.

It recalls that despite all out opposition of CITU and mass of the common workers at the grass root level, the retrograde pension scheme, diverting a major part of the workers provident fund towards so called pension fund in lieu of meagre pension could be imposed on the workers only because of the support of other major central TUs to such disastrous design of loot.

The Working Committee notes that with the passage of three years after the introduction of the govt. pension scheme, the real face of the retrograde scheme stands thoroughly unmasked. Only a negligible percentage of pensionable persons could receive pension. The provision in the scheme regarding yearly review or evaluation of pension amount has not been implemented and even the decision for 4% interim relief, taken by CBT two years back has not yet been implemented fully. Those Central Trade Union leaders who supported the retrograde scheme have to admit in a joint meeting with the Labour Minister that they have been cheated.

The Working Committee also notes that govt. has been planning to take some more retrograde decision in the matter of pension scheme and they have communicated to the CBT that govt. is inclined to withdraw its contribution of 1.16% to the Employees pension scheme. Govt. has been consistently refusing to increase the rate of interest to erstwhile Family Pension Fund accumulation of Rs.11,000 crores, which is being presently enjoyed by the Govt. at a more 8.5% interest. All these developments establish with greater clarity the assessment of CITU regarding the Govt. pension scheme that the said scheme is nothing but a mechanism of loot of workers' savings.

The working committee notes that a large number of unions from all over the country, irrespective of affiliations have become parties to the case against the pension scheme pending in the Supreme Court. Furthermore, the anti-worker move of the govt. to withdraw its contribution from Pension Scheme and its unjust refusal to enhance the interest accruable to Family Pension Fund etc. have to be resolutely opposed and resisted. We must also build up opposition to another retrograde move of the Govt. to allow investment of Provident Fund and Pension Fund at their disposal to private sector bonds/securities thereby severely endangering the security of life long savings of the workers for the gain of big business and monopoly house.

The Working Committee resolves to carry forward its effort to build up broader mobilisation of workers, irrespective of affiliations, in the struggle against the retrograde govt. pension scheme and the anti-workers design of the Govt.

The working committee calls upon all its units to intensify the campaign among the workers exposing the ugly face of the govt. pension scheme and build up broadest unity in the struggle against Govt. designs.

AGAINST COMMUNALISM AND SAFFRON ATTACKS ON MINORITIES

This meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held on 22-24, December 1998, at Ahmedabad, views with concern the increasing attempts, over and over, by the forces of Hindutva, to push their hidden agenda, using the fragile coalition government at the centre under BJP leadership.

Several coalition partners and allies of the BJP expressed shock at the brazen manner in which saffronising of the education was sought to be surreptitiously pushed through by the HRD Minister of the Vajpayee Government. They were forced to join the opposition left and democratic parties to oppose the move. This confirms that the BJP Prime Minister swearing by the National Agenda for Governance and refuting the charges of implementing a hidden agenda is nothing but a naive attempt to hoodwink the people.

The henchmen of the Sangh Parivar are sneaked in, as a part of deliberate design to infiltrate into all wings of the Government and Government controlled institutions, using the BJP headed Ministries and departments. It is significant that only to facilitate such infiltration, all important Ministries, which would serve the saffron design, are retained by the BJP itself.

Ever since the BJP came to power at the centre, through unprincipled manipulations, at the centre, the majoritarian communalism has started emitting its fire, be it Baba Budangiri shrine, Ayodhya, Kashi-Mathura game plans, forced deportation of muslims from Maharashtra branding them as Bangladeshi, and what not.

Another disquieting aspect of saffron onslaughts is the well meditated attacks on the christian community, which has peaked in the BJP ruled state of Gujarat. Similar attacks had been reported in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka as well as Punjab. It is shocking to learn that violent incidents against Christians have assumed staggering proportions ever since the Hindutva forces came to power at the centre. Between 1964 and 1996, in a span of 32 years, 38 cases were reported. This went up to 15 in the year 1997 itself. In the eleven months upto

November 1998, the figure shot up to an alarming 90. Of these, 15 were in Gujarat alone, where 11 churches/chapels have been destroyed.

These attacks on minorities are pre-planned and organised by the various outfits of the Sangh Parivar.

The Minorities Commission, after investigations, has held the BJP government responsible for creating an atmosphere of insecurity for the minorities.

This Working Committee calls upon the working class and secular - democratic masses to be vigilant about the menacing inroads sought to be made by the communal hindutva forces in all spheres of our country's socio-political arena. This working committee urges all the CITU affiliates to fight the majoritarian communalism, in all its manifestations, condemn the fascistic attacks on minorities and come forward to protect the lives, belongings and unity of the people of all faiths without discrimination.

	Cash At Bank	50501.00	
	Bank Charges A/c	50501.00	
	Conveyance Exp. A/c	50501.00	
	CITU A/c	50501.00	
	Delegation Exp. A/c	50501.00	
	Elec. & Water Bill A/c	50501.00	
	Fixed Assets A/c	50501.00	
	G.C. Meeting A/c	50501.00	
	Loan & Adv. A/c	50501.00	
	Misc. Expenditure A/c	50501.00	
	Medical Charges A/c	50501.00	
	NP, Periodical & Book A/c	50501.00	
	Other Expenses A/c	50501.00	
	P & T Exp. A/c	50501.00	
	Phone Bills A/c	50501.00	
	Rent & Tax A/c	50501.00	
	Security Deposit A/c	50501.00	
	Sal. & Printing A/c	50501.00	
	Service & main. A/c	50501.00	
	Tel. & C.R. A/c	50501.00	
	Traveling Exp. A/c	50501.00	
	Vehicle Main. A/c	50501.00	
	Wages A/c	50501.00	
	W. Committee Meeting A/c	50501.00	
	Working Class (Dr.) A/c	50501.00	
	CITU Mazdoor (Dr.) A/c	50501.00	
	V.W.W. (Dr.) A/c	50501.00	
	CITU Meeting A/c	50501.00	
	Closing Cash in Hand	17500.61	
	Cash At Bank	50501.80	
			17,01,399.73

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT AS ON 30.11.1998

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AS ON 30.11.1998

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
Audit Exp. A/c	12075.00	Affiliation A/c	901394.20
Bank charges A/c	2210.00	Btr books sale A/c	1320.00
Conveyance Exp. A/c	36,794.00	Bank Interest A/c	9453.00
Delegation Exp. A/c	13703.50	Citu-ilo Women Train.	86585.00
Elec. & Water Bill A/c	66440.00	Cement Seminar A/c	660.00
G.C. Meeting A/c	12731.50	Donation A/c	95732.00
Misc. Expenditure A/c	9761.75	IISCO Meeting A/c	600.00
Medical Charges A/c	16731.40	Misc. Receipts A/c	5913.00
NP, Periodical & Book A/c	20093.10	NPMO A/c	17181.00
Other Expenses A/c	8345.00	Publication A/c	24615.50
P & T Exp. A/c	35227.50	Phone Collection A/c	5800.00
Phone Bills A/c	166460.00		
Rent & Tax A/c	9761.00		
Stat. & Printing A/c	56005.75		
Service & main. A/c	42713.00		
Tea & tiffin A/c	27894.75		
Travelling Exp. A/c	14827.50		
Vehicle Main. A/c	18826.50		
Wages A/c	334200.00		
W. Committee Meeting A/c	6667.00		
CITU Meeting A/c	8350.00		
Excess of Income over Expenditure	229435.45		
	11,49,253.70		11,49,253.70

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

BALANCE SHEET AS ON 30.11.1998

LIABILITIES		ASSETS	
<u>Funds & Liabilities :</u>		<u>Fixed Assets A/c :</u>	
General Fund A/c	2825599.42	As per last A/c	1698998.45
Amount b/fd.			
Add : Excess of		Add: this year	8000.00
Income over	229435.45		
Expenditure			1706998.45
	3055034.87		
<u>Special Fund A/c :</u>		<u>Investment :</u>	
As per last A/c		Fixed Deposit with	
	1369212.25	bank Of India	2133371.00
<u>Affiliation A/c</u>		<u>Security Deposit</u>	
Received in advance		As per last A/c	11585.00
from A.P. State	9995.00	Add: this year	2500.00
committee b/fd			14085.00
<u>BTR Trust A/c</u>		<u>CPSTU A/c</u>	
	207239.50		12087.00
Credit adjustment b/fd		<u>Working Class A/c</u>	
	8167.00	Balance b/fd (Cr. Bal.)	18848.70
Flat A/c Gaziabad flat		Add: Received this	63634.00
b/fd	348880.00	year	
		Less: Pay this year	88901.25
			6418.55
		<u>CITU Mazdoor A/c</u>	
		Balance b/fd	282162.00
		Less: Received this	13200.00
		year	
		Add: Paid this year	63839.75
			332801.75
		<u>V.W.W. A/c</u>	
		Balance b/fd	130000.00
		Less: Received this	1827.00
		year	
		Add: Paid this year	3651.00
			131824.00

			<u>Loan & Advances</u> <u>A/c</u>		
			As per last A/c	58340.40	
			Addition this year	16150.00	74490.40
			Cash in hand		17500.61
			Cash at bank		568951.86
		4998528.62			4998528.62

WORKING CLASS

Receipts & Payments A/c as on 30.11.1998

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
Opening Cash in Hand	14030.20	Binding exp. A/c	2329.00
Opening Cash at Bank	1055.43	Bank Charges A/c	340.00
Subscriptions A/c	37000.50	Conveyance Exp. A/c	746.00
Bank Interest A/c	897.00	Misc. Exp. A/c	1047.00
CITU Mazdoor (Cr.) A/c	400.00	Postage Exp. A/c	20445.00
Citu A/c	22.00	Printing Exp. A/c	58745.00
Spl. Working class Advt.	62500.00	Stationery & Printing A/c	4224.00
Sales A/c	371.00	Closing Cash in hand	1633.70
		Closing Cash at Bank	26766.43
	1,16,276.13		1,16,276.13