

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

Shanti Ghatak Nagar, Hissar (Haryana)

1- 4 December, 2002

DOCUMENTS

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AGENDA

1. Condolence Resolution
2. Confirmation of minutes of the meeting of the working committee held at Bangalore on 24-26 August 2001
3. Presidential Address
4. Report of the General Secretary
5. Finalisation of the special discussion paper on "United Struggles and Organisational Consolidation of the Trade Union Movement"
6. Disaffiliation of the Unions which have not paid the affiliation fee for the year 2000
7. B T R Memorial Fund
8. Resolutions
9. Any other subject with the permission of the Chair

M.K. Pandhe
General Secretary

TIME TABLE

01 DEC 2002	11.00 A.M.		Mass rally
02 DEC 2002	09.30 A.M.		Flag hoisting
			Homage to martyrs
02 DEC 2002	10.00 A.M.	TO 01.30 P.M.	Condolence
			Welcome address
			Presidential address
			Gen. Secretary's report
	03.30 P.M.	TO 08.00 P.M.	Discussions
03 DEC 2002	09.30 A.M.	TO 01.30 P.M.	Discussions
	03.30 P.M.	TO 08.00 P.M.	Special discussion
			On united struggles
04 DEC 2002	09.30 A.M.	TO 02.00 P.M.	Resolutions
			Credential report
			Summing up
			Concluding address
	04.00 P.M.	TO 06.30 P.M.	Seminar

(Daily Tea Breaks for 30 minutes from 11.30 A.M. and 5.30 P.M.)

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

Shanti Ghatak Nagar, Hissar (Haryana)

1- 4 December, 2002

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dear Comrades,

Our Working Committee is meeting today in Hissar (Haryana) seven months after the General Council held at Siliguri on 22-25 April, 2002 . We have witnessed very serious developments nationally and internationally during this period. A detailed assessment of the national situation and the activities of the CITU during this period is dealt with in the General Secretary's report. Therefore, I am confining myself to bring before you certain issues mainly connected with international developments.

During the period under review, the hegemonistic drive by the imperialist forces, led by US, over the entire world, both political and economic and military fronts got demonstrated with greater arrogance and aggressiveness. At the same time opposition from the people against such aggressionist policies through out the world including in the home-lands of the imperialist forces are becoming louder and louder manifesting increasing isolation of the imperialist forces.

THE WAR ON IRAQ

The US imperialist ploy to impose war on Iraq and the accompanying developments exposed the gravity of the situation. After two months continuous wrangling in the Security Council a unanimous resolution has been adopted considerably modifying the original resolution placed by the United States. The original US resolution envisaged the unfettered right of the US to attack Iraq without referring to United Nations in the event of any kind of non-compliance UN resolution on the inspection by Iraq (as per US interpretation) on its weaponries. This has been opposed by Germany, France, Russia, China. Except Britain, no other member of the Security Council has supported the US proposal and the resolution has to be modified. As per the modified resolution, Iraq is required to immediately allow weapon inspectors to the country and declare a comprehensive list of its weapon programme within 30 days i.e., by December 8. The inspectors are to report to the Security Council within 60 days after the commencement of their work and the Security Council is required to take a stand after the receipt of the same.

The Iraqi Government has openly declared that they will abide by the UN Resolution and co-operate with the weapon inspectors' team in all possible manners. The leader of the Weapon Inspectors team Mr. Hans Blix and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Mr. Mohamed Elbaradei visited Iraq and had discussions with the Government officials. They have expressed satisfaction about the discussion and their willingness to cooperate with the team Thus the US plan of immediate attack against Iraq could be averted although for the time being

However, the United States is still trying to find out an alibi for attacking Iraq and the danger of war is very much there. After the recently held NATO summit, Mr. Bush threatened Iraq to face "serious

consequences" in case they fail to present full list of all the weapons of mass destructions they possess before the date line of 8th of September. This shows that the US is at work to find out an alibi for attacking Iraq without waiting for the full two months period suggested in the UN resolution and to wait for the decision of the United Nations. They are in a hurry.

It must also be noted that the hot pursuit of US war plan against Iraq is not the so-called possession of "mass destruction weapon" by Iraq which nobody believes. The fact is that the United States want to bring under their control Iraq, the second oil rich country in the world.

THE US BLUE PRINT FOR GLOBAL AGGRESSION

The US aggression on Iraq is not something an isolated event. It is part of the comprehensive game plan of the US imperialism to establish dominance on the world. U.S. President Mr. George Bush has come out with a new blue print for global aggression named 'National security strategy of the United States'. In this document it is claimed that "United States can start preemptive strikes anywhere in the world which supposedly pose a threat to United States" Some of the revealing features of the said US national security strategy of global dominance are:

- ☐ "Nuclear weapons can be used in a limited war"
- ☐ "The United States reserves the right to police and punish and annihilate with overwhelming force nations and people that it deems 'enemies of civilization' —
- ☐ "Preventing the emergence of a rival state power - be it friend or foe."
- ☐ "A Unilateral, go-it-alone posture is preferred over multilateralism."
- ☐ "International law, treaties and obligations that limit the US's ability to act in a decisive manner, wherever and whenever, are to be ignored."

The above clearly shows that the United States is out to impose their domination over the world using their military might which to day exceed the rest of the world's total. It elevates the danger of aggression, militarism and war to an entirely new level.

As per the above the United States do not recognize any existing law including that of United Nations. They do not recognize free statehood and national boundaries. The US imperialism will be the final dictator of everything in the world. The political and economic implications of this needs elaboration which I can not do now. Only I must submit that US imperialism is driving the world to barbarism making democracy and freedom a mockery.

Therefore, the total democratic and freedom loving people world over including the working class must realise the danger of American imperialism today.

THE ISOLATION OF THE US

But the development particularly since the onset of the new millennium also signals increasing opposition to such hegemonistic design of the imperialist forces. The open declaration of US plan for attacking Iraq and the preparation they have made for the same had attracted biggest people's protest throughout the world which has no parallel in the recent history. In the United States itself there were big protest demonstrations in almost all the major cities during September and October. All over Europe too, big protest rallies and demonstrations were held saying "no to war". In Italy, 5 lakh people participated in the protest demonstrations. In Japan, Britain, Australia, and other countries of the world the peoples protest were unprecedented.

Not only in the Security Council, the United States is also facing isolation even among the many countries which were their supporters earlier. Almost all the Arab countries rallied against American war plan against Iraq. The ardent supporter and ally of United States, Saudi Arabia asked the USA to call back their forces from its soil and threatened to cancel the lease for US military base. Even, Kuwait, the victim of Iraqi aggression has also opposed the move to attack Iraq.

The NATO summit held in Prague in the third week of November admitted seven more countries of Eastern Europe which were part of erstwhile Soviet Union and expanded NATO with 26 countries. It decided to create a "rapid deployment force" under NATO control for distant military operations. It also declared that they will stand united in backing the UN efforts to rid Iraq the weapons of mass destruction. But here too, the U.S. attempt to get their approval to go to war against Iraq without UN Security Council sanction failed due to the strong opposition from France and Germany.

THE BRAZILIAN ELECTIONS

The increasing isolation of US imperialists is also evident from recent political developments in the Latin American countries, much to the dislikings of the US administration. Despite US threats, Cuba could not be isolated from its Latin American neighbourhood, rather stout determination of Cuba to oppose the US design is being deeply respected by the Latin American people. The victory of Lula da Silva the candidate of the workers party and the left alliance in the Presidential elections held in Brazil on October 27 is another historic event. The Lula's workers party and their alliance got 61.5%(72 millions) of the votes polled compared to 38.5% for its rival. Brazil is the largest Latin American country having a population of 17 crores and its economy is considered to be eighth largest in the world. Lula himself was a worker and became a trade unionist and the leader of the workers party.

This big victory of Lula is a blow to United States policy of imposing the free trade zone in Latin America. The newspapers have commented that this reflects the big disenchantment of the people of Latin America against World Bank led globalization. The New York Times admitted that Lula got the votes of millions who were harmed by the so-called free market reforms.

THE FAILED CONSPIRACY AGAINST VENEZUELA

The Venezuelan development also signals blowing of the wind in different direction against the US design of dominance in the region. The reactionary conspiracy planned by CIA to dethrone the popularly elected President, Hugo Chavez from power in Venezuela the second largest state in Latin America through a military take over has been squarely defeated through the direct intervention of millions of people rallied against it in which a section of the military too joined. Thus again Mr. Chavez has been brought back to power in Venezuela. The US tried to repeat the Chilean event of dethroning Salvador Allende in Venezuela, but miserably failed. The people did it. But the US agencies are still active to destabilize the Venezuelan Govt and situation of chaos is being sought to be created within the country in various ways to pave the way for another coup. The people of Venezuela are also trying to combat the destabilizing forces through consolidating the mass organization and democratic forces in the country. They are in urgent need of solidarity support throughout the world.

The policies which were being persuaded by the Chavez Government after assuming power was very much against US policies, especially against American Oil monopolies. Chavez government wanted to nationalize their oil resources. It was keeping good relations with Cuba and supplying oil to them at reasonable price. This enraged the USA.

The political scenario in Latin America will have larger implications. Brazil, Venezuela and Cuba coming closer will be a challenge to United States domination in Latin America and will have larger implications.

THE WORLD ECONOMY

The world capitalist economy today is facing troubles world over and the recessionary scenario is still continuing. The latest victim of the World Bank, IMF policy is Argentina which is in serious crisis. The attempts to bail out Argentina by the world Bank is still not yielding results the situation is further worsening.

The total capitalist ethics is under a question mark due to the increasing bankruptcies of the big multinational corporations being sought to be covered up by fraudulent accounting manipulations which in turn resulted in total loss of hard earned investment of millions and millions of middle class small share holders, the shareholders confidence is in the decline on the published share market values. A detailed examination of these questions can not be attempted now. The capitalist cartels and monopoly corporations are exposed to the core that they adopt "cut throat methods" for amassing profit which of course is the single prerogative of capitalism.

Recently the London Economist spelt out some problems being faced by the capitalist system a portion of which I am quoting for ready reference.

"During the year 2001, the total global marketable wealth i.e. all assets traded in the financial market such as shares and bonds fell by 4%. The number of households with at least \$250,000 of marketing wealth dropped from 39 million to 37 million. The recession that has set in wiped out almost 20 lakh jobs. The sudden collapse of Enron has shaken the faith in the integrity of corporate America."

As I told you that the U.S. economy is not showing any substantial growth. The US federal reserve has slashed the interest rates by another half a percent and the rate is lowest since the last 40 years, hoping to stimulate the economy, its impact is yet not seen. While the Bush Administration has pushed up the defence budget to sky high levels by 355 billion dollars, the overall deficit in the current financial year has gone up to 165 million.

The Census bureau review of September 24th said that more than 1.3 million people in 4 lakh families were added to the ranks of the 'officially poor' in 2001, bringing the total to almost 33 million.

The Census Bureau released another report after a week which revealed that the number of Americans without health insurance increased by 1.4 million last year, now stands at 41.2 million, 8.5 million of them are children under age 18. According to the report, more than one-fifth (21.3 per cent) of poor children and 30.7 per cent of all poor people were without health insurance during 2001.

More than one million unemployed workers have run out of regular state provided unemployment benefits and the extended federal benefits passed by Congress last March.

Personal bankruptcies are at all-time highs, with more than 1.5 million individuals filing for bankruptcy in the 12-month period ending in June 2002, while more workers faced for closure on their home mortgages than at any time since 1972 etc.

The story of other developed countries are not quite different. Everywhere employment is not increasing,

job- killings are very much on the rise, plus ruthless cutting of wages and privileges of workers are under attack- against which resistance is developing in different forms including massive strike actions.

THE INCREASING WORKERS PROTESTS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The increasing opposition to the imperialist aggressionist policy all the world over is not an isolated phenomenon. This is also accompanied with the mounting and widening protest against their economic policy of neoliberal imperialist globalisation sought to be imposed on the people through the World Bank, IMF, WTO and other multilateral agencies. The reveling feature of such events since the onset of the new millennium

Is that the waves of strikes and struggles, mighty militant demonstrations of the millions are sweeping the developed countries as well.

BRITAIN

More than 12 lakh municipal employees went on strike in Britain shutting down schools, libraries, museums and leisure centres in their first such national strike since 1978. The 24-hour strike in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was joined by thousands of school maintenance workers teaching assistants, cafeteria workers and other support staff.

The strike by underground workers protesting against privatization, brought the traffic to a jam in London.

ITALY: STRIKE AGAINST JOB LOSS

Lakhs of workers staged demonstrations across Italy on October 18th as the country's largest union CGIL held a one-days strike over the government's economic policies. Air, rail and public transport systems were affected as an estimated 2,50,000 union members marched through the streets of Milan and similar rallies were held in more than 100 other locations across the country. CGIL says that it called the strike because Berlusconi government's economic policies and restrictions on trade unions could result loss of about 2,80,000 jobs.

WAVES OF STRIKES IN EUROPE

The Air Traffic Controllers across Europe resorted to strike action against European Union's plans to hand over the industry to private sector. Workers in France, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Hungary joined the strike. In France, pediatricians and other medical professionals, Air France, Paris Metro works, and nurses struck work.

SPAIN

The trade unions rejected the government's plan to alter unemployment benefits which include penalizing workers who refuse a new job- of any sort, at any pay-offered within 50 kms of their homes. In spite of opposition from the unions, the Spanish government imposed the harsh measurers through a decree even as the unions called for a 24-hour general strike. On May 19, nearly 2,00,000 anti-globalization demonstrators had marched and rallied in central Madrid. On May 20, there was a 24-hour strike against the labour reforms by millions of workers - the first general strike in eight years.

I do not wish to list here more actions of the workers around the world including United States. Suffice to say that the mood of the workers are changing and they are engaged in more strikes and protest

actions everywhere. The ICFTU had to come out against World Bank dictated policy of globalisation.

On the whole, the international arena is witnessing increasing and widening struggle and mobilization against the imperialist drive to establish their economic and political hegemony over the globe in the face of desperate attempt of the imperialist powers, the US administration in particular to push through their aggressive and arrogant policy regime, both on economic and political front. The Worldwide demonstration against US aggression policies also has been voicing loud opposition against the economic policy of globalisation signifying greater comprehensiveness of the surging anti-imperialist struggles, both in quality and dimension. Our movement must take note of this positive changes in the world scenario along with the forthcoming challenges.

Comrades,

I do not wish to explain further the developments in the international arena. Our General Secretary covers all the national developments and issues being faced by the people and workers and their struggles. Therefore, I need not add anything to it; but a mention needs to be made about the selling spree of public sector companies, which are making huge profits and strategic sectors of economy and sought to be handed over to the Indian monopolists and their foreign collaborators for a song which is not only against the worker against the people and against the nation as a whole. The struggle against these in different areas of the country are assuming new forms attracting larger support from the people of the locality belonging to all political parties. The simple strike battles of affected workers alone cannot put a stop to this.

We must take note of the fact that, in the background of mounting opposition against the policy of privatisation, differences are developing among the ruling parties itself about the sale of oil companies, coal-mines etc,. We had to take serious note of the changing mood of the people, the latest we have witnessed in Orissa. The protest against NALCO privatization is the case in point. The people together with the workers came to the street and obstructed those bidders who came for bidding NALCO shares which made them flee from the scene. In Salem Steel Plant of Tamilnadu, similar incident of resistance had taken place earlier. It is also reported that in the case of fertilizers and chemicals in Cochin, Kerala the trade unions belonging to all political affiliation have decided not to allow those who are coming to take over the factory even using physical obstruction. Therefore comrades, it is necessary for us to get ready to use all methods including massive physical resistance to stop these privatization of public wealth for a song which is anti national and anti people.

Before I conclude, I wish to bring to your notice the seriousness of Gujarat Assembly elections which is to take place on December 12th. Narendra Modi and his fascist gangs want to capture power by all means including by threatening the minority population even by organizing physical attacks. If they are allowed to capture power it will pose serious danger to Indian democracy. Therefore I need not say the importance of defeating them by the united opposition of the secular democratic parties. The CITU and the working class in the state must play a leading role in this effort.

Lastly let me refer to you once again the nature of imperialist offensive, which I have referred to earlier. The signals are very clear. An imperialist suzerainty is sought to be imposed, over the world. This situation force me to remind you what was said by Rosa Luxemburg hundred years ago that the choice before humanity was "either socialism or barbarism". I think this is the time for us to raise the same in loudest possible voice.

Dear Corrie,
Thank you!

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

Shanti Ghatak Nagar, Hissar (Haryana)

1- 4 December, 2002

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Comrades,

Several important developments having far reaching significance have taken place in our country and abroad, after our meeting at Siliguri (W. Bengal) on 22-25 April 2002 in the CITU General Council. Many of these developments have great relevance for the working class and the people of our country.

Comrade Balanandan in his Presidential address, has dealt with the International developments in detail and hence I do not propose to deal with them. I will, therefore, confine myself with national developments and review our activities during the intervening period.

The dangerous consequences of the policies pursued by the BJP-led NDA Government are being seen by the people in clear light from their own experience. The pro-BJP euphoria that was dominating the media reports has now withered away and the national press has become increasingly critical of the policies of NDA Government. Repeated electoral defeats faced by the BJP and its allies have created frustration among their cadres, which is resulting in growing contradictions within the NDA camp.

WORST DROUGHT SITUATION

The year 2002 witnessed a serious drought situation which could be seen from the report of the Meteorological Department that 301 out of 523 Districts were affected by deficient rains. It has been officially admitted that 13 States were worst affected viz. U.P, M.P, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra, Karnataka, Orissa, J&K and Tamilnadu. Starvation deaths have been reported in the States such as Orissa, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. On an average, seeds could not be sown in more than 30 to 35 percent of the cultivable areas in respect of almost all crops, and much of the already grown crops got severely damaged, as admitted by the Union Agriculture Minister.

The Financial Express dated 22nd September 2002 reported a decline in acreage of Kharif crop: "paddy is lagging behind in area coverage by 57 lakh hectares (1h) as compared to previous year. This year area coverage under coarse cereals is less by 54 1h. ... Area coverage under oilseeds is less by 13 1h. ... The total area under pulses has shrunk by 17 1h and that of cotton by 12 1h."

But, the NDA Government practically remained unconcerned about the miserable plight of the major section of the population. Estimated cost of relief work measures, as placed before the Central Government, worked out to be Rs. 17,000 crore! However, only a pittance of Rs 700 crore was sanctioned for drought as relief package. Recently the package has been hiked to Rs. 2000 crore and loan/ interest recovery postponed. These are nothing more than a cosmetic relief. Though the FCI godowns have stocks of about 60 million tonnes, the Government has not come forward with any concrete 'food for work programme' to give genuine help to the drought affected people.

The severe drought stretching over a widest region of the country has multiplier effect on the miseries

of the rural folk. The rural poor are greatly suffering due to serious draught situation, while in some parts of the country near famine situation is prevailing. The peasants and agricultural workers movement in India has been campaigning for effective relief measures to the affected people. However, the required help is not forthcoming from the Government of India.

The Prime Minister has appealed to the opposition political parties not to use the draught situation politically. However, he is not taking any positive and timely measure to take up the relief measures seriously.

The food scarcity will be strongly felt in the country in the near future. Already media has reported migration of rural masses in search of work and livelihood.

The working class will be adversely affected by the acute scarcity and it has to make a common cause with the rural masses. The CITU unions should come forward to express solidarity with the kisan and agricultural workers movement in their legitimate struggle for food security. The starving peasantry will massively rally in the movement to compel the NDA Government for effective measures and our unions must join them wholeheartedly. This will be an important step in developing worker peasant alliance in the forthcoming period.

TENTH PLAN AN ELECTION GIMMICK!

Though the Planning Commission has finalised the 10th five year plan and the Cabinet has approved it, the whole exercise has been done with an eye on the forthcoming elections. Several economists have already expressed doubts about achieving the target of 8 per cent rate of growth during the next plan. In the first year itself, the growth rate has been less than 5 per cent. The draught situation is likely to result in a further reduction of one per cent in GDP. It will mean that in the rest four years of the plan, the growth rate must be nearly 9 per cent, which is next to impossible to achieve.

When the economy is facing acute recession and the rate of growth is slowing down, expecting 8 per cent growth within the frame work of present policies of NDA is not going to be accomplished. Though the Tenth Plan document gives a blueprint of bright future, it is just a mirage.

The plan frame has given special emphasis on labour law reforms and labour flexibility. The emphasis on downsizing of manpower and right to hire and fire is also there.

Regarding the resources, the plan document has placed the target of Rs. 78,000 crore by sale of public sector undertakings. It means the disinvestment policy will be implemented more vigorously. Though the Minister for Disinvestment, Arun Shorie had expressed his apprehension about achieving this target due to controversies within the NDA, the Government is likely to go ahead with the policies of disinvestment non-chalantly.

The plan envisages a bigger role for the MNC's and foreign capital, others more concessions to big business houses in the matter of taxes and visualises additional burden on the poor people. It talks about more emphasis on development of power sector and hopes to spend about 3,50,000 crore rupees. There is no likelihood of fulfilling the target by any standard. The NDA Government has converted the entire planning process into a hollow shell.

Our trade unions have to campaign to explain to the working class the dangerous proposals made in the plan, which will result in more attacks on the common people and worsening of their working and

living conditions.

UGLY FACE OF COMMUNALISM

India witnessed the worst form of communal fascism. In the name of *hindutva* ideology, the rich cultural heritage is tarnished, while unity and integrity of the country is threatened in the most perfidious manner. What happened in Gujarat in the last ten months has brought down the image of India all over the world. Here is the case when Chief Minister of a State Government openly initiates a hate campaign against the minorities and justifies communal carnage and ethnic cleansing. His characterisation of relief camps as child breeding centres has shocked every one. His so called gaurav yatra was a campaign to sow hatred against minorities in Gujarat and his speeches were most provocative.

The Election Commission rightly deferred the election on the ground that conditions were not normal in the State of Gujarat. The BJP's idea of using communal card misfired when Supreme Court verdict upheld the decision of the Election Commission. The VHP and Bajrang Dal called the Election Commissioner as Christian and anti-Hindu. VHP's International Secretary Togadia literally spat venom during his speeches and utilised Godhra issue to rouse communal passions among Hindus. VHP and Bajrang Dal threatened the minorities with a view to prevent them from voting during the election.

The Election Commission has since fixed 12th December as the date of elections in Gujarat and prohibited communal hoardings and VHP yatra. The Narendra Modi, though for the record took action to stop the VHP yatra, in practice he did everything to abet the communal campaign of VHP and Bajrang Dal.

Though Vajpayee and Advani from the centre were trotting about holding free and fair polls in Gujarat, they are secretly encouraging the likes of Modi and Togadia to carry their *hindutva* agenda without any hindrance.

The BJP should not be allowed to return to the power in Gujarat, if the advance of communal forces are to be prevented in the country. The success of BJP in Gujarat elections will pave the way of aggressive communalism in other parts of the country. Therefore, all the secular forces in Gujarat must come together to give one to one fight in the State so that this communal virus is not allowed to have its way in Gujarat.

In Gujarat, the left forces are, unfortunately, not having a strong presence. Yet they took the initiative to suggest the secular forces ensuring one to one fight against the BJP. However, the attitude of the Congress as well as some opposition parties has not helped in ensuring such united fight, which could have resulted in the rout of the BJP, particularly when the internal wrangling in BJP over allotment of tickets have surfaced. The Congress Party being the major opposition party in the State politics, it has to play a major role in rallying the secular forces to defeat BJP. The NDA allies are fighting independently, which also would help the secular forces to defeat the NDA combine. The democratic, secular and peace loving people of Gujarat should come forward to inflict a humiliating defeat to BJP and frustrate its communal designs.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

With the term of President KR. Narayanan coming to an end on 24th July 2002, a proposal to have him continue in office for a second term was mooted by the opposition parties. From its own narrow divisive political angle, the BJP hurriedly ruled out that option. Afterwards, even the consensus candidature of

Krishan Kant, which was conveyed to the opposition by the Prime Minister himself was negated. The BJP decided to field the Maharashtra Governor P.C. Alexander as its candidate. However there was no unanimity over this even in the NDA. The BJP again changed its stand and proposed the name of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who allowed his name to be utilised by a communal party. Surprisingly, the Congress Party supported his candidature, due to its own compulsions. Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadhav also supported his candidature and breached the people's front.

The Left parties decided to oppose this move and, therefore, put up Lakshmi Sahgal as the candidate. She was associated with CITU and trade union movement for a considerable period. Her campaign all over India created a good impression in centres she visited and the role of Congress and Samajwadi Party was exposed before the eyes of the people. Though Abdul Kalam was elected, her campaign posed certain valid national issues before the people.

In the election for the Vice-President's post, the BJP candidate was the former BJP Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Shekhawat, and even secular parties in the NDA supported the move despite his communal background. The Congress Party put up Shinde from Maharashtra. Shekhawat won the election with a comfortable margin, due to cross voting by some opposition M.P.s.

These elections were utilised by the BJP to have their chosen ones in the two top constitutional posts.

INSTABILITY IN BJP-BSP COMBINE IN U.P.

The opportunist alliance between BJP and BSP in U.P. has now come home to roost. The internal conflicts within the BJP and BSP parties have grown due to inability of the Mayawati Government to provide ministerial berths to all disgruntled elements. Several MLAs have come out openly and demanded holding of the Assembly Session. The Mayawati Government lost its majority in the Assembly, despite all efforts by the BJP leaders to patch up the dissenting factions. The Governor of U.P., known for his RSS background, refused to convene the Assembly session. Mayawati Government resorted to every manouvre, including foisting criminal cases on MLAs, who turned opponents and arresting them.

The Legislative Council elections established clearly that the BJP-BSP combine was in minority and their candidate could win only because Congress Party remained neutral. The political instability in U.P. is growing with the BJP-BSP combine is increasingly finding it difficult to keep their flock together.

With growing dissidence in U.P. within BJP the Mayawati Government may collapse any moment under its own weight. The U.P. developments will have repercussions all over India and is likely to render the NDA Government at the centre more vulnerable.

J & K ELECTIONS

The elections in Jammu and Kashmir gave a big jolt to both the National Conference and BJP. The Abdullah Government, despite its attempt to rig the polls, could not get majority of seats in the Assembly but only emerged as the single largest party. The BJP lost heavily and its strength in the Assembly came down from 8 to only one. The RSS and BJP campaigned for the proposal to trifurcate J & K on communal lines, which was totally rejected by the electorate. Incidentally, the U.S. imperialists have been advocating a similar proposal as a solution to Kashmir problem.

The CPI (M) increased its tally of seats won from one to two and a group of 8 MLAs formed a common

forum in the State. It also contributed to the Government formation process in the post election situation. This development had created a favourable impact in the political situation in J & K.

The Congress and PDP, after protracted haggling came to some understanding and Mufti Md. Sayeed has become the Chief Minister for the first three years, while Congress will occupy the chair for the next three years. A Common Minimum Programme had been drawn up. But, it did not contain the autonomy as one of the policy measure. However, formation of the Government was an important and favourable development.

KAVERI WATER DISPUTE

During this period, the dispute over sharing of Kaveri river water led to a great deal of tension between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The drought situation affected both the States and it was the duty of both the Governments to come to some understanding over distress sharing of water to meet the situation. Karnataka, however, refused to release water even after the directive of the Supreme Court. The Chief Minister, S.M.Krishna, undertook a *padayatra* further rousing chauvinist sentiments. Ultimately, he had to express regret and agree to release water.

The Government of Tamil Nadu also resorted to ignite chauvinist passions over this issue. Tension between the people of these two states got aggravated. Most of the political parties were backing their State Governments. Most of the political parties in the State also sided with the respective Governments, unmindful of the divisive impact on the ground. It was gratifying to note that the CPI (M) was the only exception, which took a common stand in both the States and sought to moderate the tempers on both sides.

India has plenty of water resources to meet the national requirement. However, there was no systematic water management during the last 55 years of independence. The area with irrigation facility has only increased from 19 to 24 per cent of the cultivable land. With development of more irrigation projects and proper distribution of water, the country can enhance agricultural production. Central planning, however, has failed to meet this requirement. The solution to such water disputes lie only in development of more hydro-electric projects, accompanied by proper arrangements for rehabilitation of the affected people.

25 YEARS OF LEFT FRONT GOVERNMENT

The completion of 25 years by the Left Front Government in West Bengal was a matter of rejoice for working class of the entire country. No other State Government could show such a remarkable stability and achievement.

The Left Front Government had been adopting pro-people policies and fighting for alternative policies at the national level. It never implemented the draconian laws such as TADA and POTA. It was the first Government to pass a Bill in the legislature providing for secret ballot for trade union recognition. The land reforms introduced there had given land to actual tillers and increased agricultural productivity in the State. The Government, despite limited powers, had adopted several measures giving relief to the people. Its scheme relating to social security for the unorganised sector has been welcomed all over India.

As a result of economic policies of globalisation pursued by the Central Government, the entire country is facing severe economic crisis. It has repercussions in W. Bengal as well. The financial position of the State Government has become critical and several measures are being taken by the Government to meet the situation. Com. Md. Amin, in his speech in the last ILC meeting, expressed full support of the Govt. of West Bengal to the trade union struggles. He also opposed the policies of globalisation and privatisation. This created a good impact in the conference.

Refusal of the Central Government to give any assistance for revival of sick industries has created a grave situation in major industries in the State. The Government had to tackle these problems facing heavy odds. On the one side, it has to develop the State economy. At the same time, legitimate interests of the workers are to be protected. It is only through dialogue and co-operation between the Government of West Bengal and the trade unions that a Common approach can be evolved and alternate policies worked out.

The CITU State Committee in West Bengal is trying to grapple with the situation and defending the interests of the workers in a period of crisis. Being a largest trade union in the State, it is playing an important role in unifying the working class in the State through joint movements on common issues facing the working class.

RISING TIDE OF MASS STRUGGLES

The period since our last meeting of the CITU General Council has witnessed a rising tide of mass struggles all over the country. A detailed reference to the struggles and activities on the trade union front is being made later in this report.

But, here one aspect of the present situation deserves mention.

The present situation is marked by repeated attempts by the ruling class and their representatives in the ruling combine in the Government at the Centre to mount unprecedented onslaughts against the people. But, on the other side, the masses are also not prepared to take these attempts lying down. They are rising unitedly and unleashing struggles - sometimes sporadic and spontaneous - against the onslaughts. This upsurge has to be consolidated and further developed, as it is only through powerful resistance struggles pressure can be exerted to force a change in policies. It is time for the working class to act concertedly mobilising all other sections of the masses.

ON ECONOMIC SITUATION

The report placed in the last meeting of the CITU General Council referred to the trend of terminal decline in growth rate witnessed in all sectors of the economy, consequent to the decade long liberalisation policies. It noted: "all the sectors in the industry witnessed a consistent decline in the growth rate throughout the year 2001-02." And in the agricultural sector also, the report mentioned about a positive growth rate in 2000-02 preceded by a negative growth in previous two consecutive years, rendering the positive growth a mere expression of numbers and not at all an improvement in reality. During the subsequent period, the situation has aggravated further.

INDUSTRIAL DECLINE

Since April 2002, the happenings in the economic front during the first six months of the current financial year confirm the same declining trend ridiculing all talks regarding recovery signals in the

economy being made by the Govt. officials and their hired economists.

* The index of industrial production during April-June 2002 witnessed a negative growth on the average as compared to immediately preceding quarter (January-March 2002) by around 12 points on the average.

* During the four month period from March 2002 to June 2002, the production performance in basic-goods sector declined by around 10 points, capital goods about 48 points, consumer goods by 35 points, consumer durables by 49 points and consumer non-durables by 32 points as measured by index of industrial production.

* In the mining & quarrying, manufacturing and electricity sector representing the foundation of the industrial economy declined by 16 points, 19 points and 17 points respectively during the same period. (RBI Bulletin, October 2002)

* The gross domestic capital formation as a percentage of GDP steadily declined from 25.3% during 1991-95 to 23.4% in 1999(RBI Annual Report, 1999-2000) and the concerned growth rate dipped from 11.1% in 1995-96 to 2.0% in 2000-01. (Economic Survey, 2001-02).

* Contribution of the private corporate sector in gross domestic capital formation as percentage of GDP has consistently declined from 6.4% in 1998-99 to 5.9% in 2000-01, while the public sector's contribution has increased from 6.4% to 7.1% during the same period. (RBI, Annual Report 2001-02)

NEW MONETARY POLICY

In the above background, the recent declaration by the Reserve Bank of India to lower the interest rate further, stated to be for encouraging investment in the real economy, is destined to fall flat. Similar lowering of interest rate in the past few years has not led to any notable increase in domestic investment; rather the investment scenario in the last five years is one of consistent decline in the growth rate of domestic investment. In 2001-02 itself, the Indian corporate sector's investment declined by 11.2% as per a survey conducted by Economic Times of 200 large companies in the private sector (4-11-2002). Rather the net effect of further dose of reduction in interest rate will be a disincentive for the people to save through nationalised banks and other savings instruments floated by the Government. This will also generate downward pressure on the interest rate on provident fund and other savings of the workers and the common people in general, leading to huge loss in their lifetime savings. On the other hand, this will enable the Govt. to access the bank money at a cheaper rate and also reduce the cost of interest burden on the Govt.

Not only that, the entire perception of the Govt's credit policy being pursued through nationalised banks, along with lowering of interest rates, as an instrument for encouraging investment has proved to be absolutely fallacious. In reality, despite lowering of interest rates in successive years, the expected growth in investment in the domestic economy did not take place with the banks remaining flush with funds. The interest rate regime and the orientation of the credit policy of the Govt. should have been addressed with a comprehensive approach and with clear sectoral-prioritisation, to serve the real purpose of fuelling employment generating investment in the economy. The Govt. of India's policy is just moving in the opposite direction, which stands exposed by the appraisals made by the RBI itself.

The RBI Bulletin (October 2002) while analysing the performance of 1242 private companies noted that the interest burden of the bigger companies (with paid up capital of Rs 25 crore and above) got eased by 3.4% in 2001-02, whereas in the smaller units the interest burden and cost remained much higher. Even a recent study on Indian investment climate by Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has admitted that real interest rate for small and medium enterprises are on the much higher side. We must note that these smaller units generate comparatively more employment and exports and worsening

of their financial condition is bound to have negative effect on production, exports and employment. The same RBI bulletin also observed that the interest burden continues to be higher in the industries like iron & steel and allied products, engineering, electrical machineries, industrial chemicals, sugar, textile, rubber, construction etc., ranging from 52% to 132%. All these sectors are mostly run by the Indian companies and are also major employment providers. On the other hand, interest burden in the industries like drugs and pharmaceuticals and information technology - mostly dominated by the foreign multinational companies - was light being at 17.6% and 4.1% respectively. In this background, the privatisation of Indian banking sector is going to worsen the situation.

KELKAR REPORT ON FISCAL REFORMS

Added to the above is the disastrous recommendation of the Vijay Kelkar Committee on fiscal reforms, which has prescribed drastic curtailment of the tax rate for the higher income strata, the corporates and the MNCs. Despite the hype over hiking of income tax exemption limit to Rs 1 lakh, withdrawal of provisions for all tax rebates on savings and housing will more than neutralise the illusory benefit and result in a higher tax burden on the salaried class. A study on the impact of the Kelkar recommendations, if implemented, as published in the *Business Line* dated 9th November 2002 shows that the burden of income tax on the lower strata of the organised sector workers even up to an annual salary of Rs. 4 lakh will increase to the extent of even 280% within the next three years period and the higher income strata is going to get a heavy dose of tax relief. Besides, acceptance of such disastrous recommendation by the Govt. will discourage household savings, which has significantly contributed to gross domestic savings, thereby domestic capital formation as well. This has consistently been growing over the years, in contrast with declining investment growth rate by the private corporate sector.

Ironically, despite dismal contribution of the corporate sector, both domestic and foreign, to country's economy, the Kelkar Committee has recommended liberal concessions for them by way of abolishing wealth tax, capital gains tax, minimum alternate tax and reduction of corporate tax. It has also recommended reduction of corporate tax for the foreign companies, whose contribution to capacity building or employment generation is almost nothing.

In essence, both the monetary policy and the fiscal-reform initiative of the Govt. are aimed at diverting the huge household savings towards the speculative stock market, in favour of the international finance capital and the Indian corporates. Workers and the people are the worst sufferers.

AGRICULTURE

During the period under review, the agricultural economy has further worsened with widespread drought situation. The Govt. remained totally unmindful of its miserable consequences.

It has already been noted that the positive growth in food grains production during 2000-01 is no actual improvement in the context of absolute decline witnessed in the previous two years. Secondly, the policy of complete liberalisation in agricultural import, coupled with reduction of input-subsidies, has led to rise in input cost for agricultural production, leading to depressed agricultural prices. This is further aggravated by the drastic slow-down of procurement by Govt. The worst sufferers are the landless agricultural workers and the marginal farmers, who are facing widespread joblessness and starvation. Rural unemployment has touched all time high with the extent of job-availability going down to less than even 100 days a year and the agricultural wages getting reduced to a pittance, to the level of Rs 10 or 12 a day in many places.

OVERALL DECELERATION

The real situation in the industrial economy, which remained the principal target for so called reforms since 1991, can be best described by quoting the Economic Survey (2001-02) itself. The Survey noted: "The industrial slowdown is widespread covering all broad sectors such as manufacturing, electricity, and mining and all end use based groups such as capital goods, intermediate goods, both durables and non-durables. The slowdown in domestic and global demand appears to be the major factors. ... This is reflected by low level of prices for manufactured goods in 2001-02. However, given the relatively low level of external sector for the Indian economy, domestic demand and supply side factors have played the key roles for industrial slowdown."

The agricultural sector has, of late, become the target of globalisation. The same trend of slow-down, depressed prices and increased cost of input, reduction of subsidies, proliferation of imports etc. resulting in widespread unemployment, depressed level of wages, and deepening poverty daunts this sector. A trend of gradual reverse transfer of land to big landholders either in the form of leasing out or complete sell-off is setting in. Increasing dominance of MNCs in the agro-trades is another ominous symptom signalled by the policies of globalisation in agriculture.

The collapse of the prices of the manufactured goods in domestic market is having its natural reflection in the price indices, although the rising prices of essential commodities for daily living offer no solace to the common people. This demand recession reflects the fast eroding purchasing power of the mass of the population, which in turn is putting the recessionary pressure on the economy. Thus, the all round decline has become perpetual. Similar is the claim for improvement in the poverty situation made by the Govt. Even the World Bank estimate noted the households below poverty line (living at less than one dollar a day) to be more than 470 million (47 crore). The mounting stock of food grains along with starvation deaths in various parts of the country exposes the utter bankruptcy of the policies of economic liberalisation.

It is universally accepted that the demands constraints, fuelled by the deepening poverty, increasing joblessness and squeezing commodity market, have been the main reason for low investment and the recession in the economy. Yet, successive budgets and accompanying measures have deliberately not addressed the demand side problems but concentrated on supply side management to please the corporate lobby, both Indian and foreign. Lavish give-ways and concessions have been showered on them, which yielded no result in reversing the depressed market and recessionary environment. The World Bank – IMF driven policy is aimed at perpetuation of the recessionary situation, which benefits the international finance capital most in firming up its grip on the economy of the developing countries. The game plan is to demolish the manufacturing base of the country's economy and acquire control over the natural resources and infrastructure through acquisition of indigenous companies. The main objective of such economic exercises is designed to facilitate larger transfer of resources from the mass of the populace to the capitalist-landlord class, in a stagnating economy. The ruling polity of our country, quite consistent with their class position, has succumbed to such nefarious, anti-national, anti-people designs.

EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH SCENARIO

The policy approach of the NDA Government has led to a grave distortion in the economy. Despite decline in industrial growth rate, the profit margins of the corporate sector are showing a steep rise. The financial results of 1,145 companies for the quarter ended in September 2002 show a whopping 55 per cent jump in net profit on the back of an only 14 per cent rise in sales. (*Business Standard*, 1-11-

02).A *Financial Express* study of 1238 firms revealed that though their total sales improved in 2000-01 by 17% compared to last year, their profit before tax has increased by 18% and the net profit (after tax) went up by 21.8%. Even in the first quarter of the 2001-02, in the background of further deterioration and slowdown, 692 big companies could increase their net profit by 23% despite a measly growth in their sales by mere 4.5% (*Economic Times*, 30-07-2001).

Despite decline in the growth rate of labour force from 2.29% per annum during 1988-1994 to mere 1.03% per annum during 1994-2000, employment growth rate slumped more sharply from 2.43% to 0.98% during the same period. In the 1990s, the employment growth was never more than 0.8%. In the ultimate sense, the employment growth rate has already turned negative, if the downsizing, both forcible and voluntary, being vigorously practiced in the corporate sector is taken into account. As per an estimate, more than ten lakh jobs were lost in the organised sector alone in the process of 2001-2002. In central public sector units alone, four lakhs jobs have been axed out in the last few years. One lakh ten thousand jobs were lost in the banking sector. Some ten thousand jobs have been lost in the IT sector alone during last one year. Added to this, is the announcement made by the Union Finance Minister regarding reduction of manpower in Central Govt dept.s at the rate of 2% per annum, courtesy the recommendation of Geethakrishnan Commission (Expenditure Reform Commission). As per a recent report, more than 9000 jobs have been lost already in the Central Govt. dept.s after submission of the Report and another 17000 central govt jobs have been targeted to be axed by the end of the current fiscal (*The Financial Express*, 16-08-02).

The Economic Survey (2001-02) noted that in the agricultural and mining & quarrying sectors, representing a substantial part of the unorganised sector employment, total employment got reduced in absolute term by around 50 lakhs and 4.3 lakhs respectively during 1993-94 and 1999-2000.

POLICY OF BANKRUPTCY AND DISTORTION

Despite most liberal concessions and tax holidays granted for private participation in infrastructure projects, in two successive budgets, the private corporate sector did practically nothing. In fact project investment by private sector showed a negative growth in the last fiscal as well as in the first quarter of the present fiscal year, as observed by the *Business Line* (19-07-2001). And now they are shouting at top voice for more Govt. investment in construction and other activities. To quote the FICCI Secretary General, "Many large infrastructure projects have not been able to take off due to poor financial position of the state Govt, which are constitutionally required to contribute in the Central Govt. assisted projects" (*The Financial Express*, 9-07-2001). He suggested the central Govt to come forward to fund those projects and generate a "multiplier effect" on the economy and expand the domestic market and purchasing power to address the problems of recession.

TASK OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

Hence the task of employment generation requires that the whole direction of the economic policy regime be changed. Even the Special Group appointed by the Planning Commission, chaired by S P Gupta, had to record: "the group views that to reach country's development target both in output and employment, in a viable and equitable fashion, several major changes from the past economic policies and launching of innovative pro-employment programmes will be needed in the immediate future..." The Special group also observed: "if experience of the late nineties are extrapolated, i.e., repeated in future, then India is going to face increasingly higher incidence of unemployment, with an ever increasing gap between the demand for jobs and supply of job opportunities."

Referring particularly to small and medium scale units, the Special group recommended: "Appropriate programmes and policies should be devised for suitable reallocation of capital in favour of labour intensive industries...to boost the growth..It will also have to be ensured that the rule of level playing field is applied for this sector." This sector is required to be given discriminatory patronage as against the large-scale sector, and also protection which the market-god cannot ensure. The present policies require a reversal in that direction also.

It is pertinent here to quote from the Overview chapter of the Report of the Special Group which says: "In the attempt to increase the labour productivity (in the unorganised sector), more emphasis should be on the growth of this sector rather than substituting labour by capital. Further, to improve the job quality and its security, major changes in the legislation will be needed regarding basic social security measures, working conditions, minimum wages and protection of labour interests." Unfortunately, the same Planning Commission, while talking loud about the target of 8% GDP growth, has finalised the tenth plan policy measures just in the opposite direction of what has been suggested by the S P Gupta Committee.

Despite all noise of 'excess manpower', it is a matter of records that our country is having one of the lowest Govt./public sector employment to population ratios in the world. In India, the ratio is two per thousand, much below the Asian average of 4.5 per thousand, whereas, in the developed countries, the ratio is six per thousand.

Simultaneously, change in the policy of thoughtless opening of the economy instituting and suitable regulatory mechanism is to provide for a level playing field to the Indian industries and protect them from unequal competition. Even in the present world scenario such measures are possible and again what is required is the political will to assert before the so called big brothers. The policy measures must protect our domestic industries, both in public and private sector from being marginalised by the unfair dumping by the MNCs.

Hence, there is an urgent need to develop struggles for alternative policies in the country. Such a change can be achieved through countrywide militant united struggle by the working class along with other sections of population against the policies with a firm determination not to surrender to the plead of irreversibility of the present situation being made by the Govt and various other agencies.

PRIVATISATION ONSLAUGHT AT ALARMING PEAK

The whole privatisation process has become an instrument of transferring public property to private hands for a song much to the detriment of the national interest and the industrial economy of the country in particular. And with the whole process, corruption is woven intrinsically. The very concept of privatisation of public sector units and more so the blue chip ones, in itself is a bankrupt corrupt policy perception, treachery with the nation and fraud on the people of the country. Therefore, we must intensify our fight against the onslaught of privatization.

The love and affection of the BJP-led NDA Government at the centre for the private business is exposed in the document published by the Ministry of Disinvestments – 'Understanding The Strategic Sale Agreement' As if the under valuation and other undue concessions granted while transferring the national assets to the private buyer for a song are not enough, provision has been made to pay cash 'reward' in the name of 'Post Closing Adjustment'. An unique scope has been created by the Government by providing for the buyer to grab money from the seller (PSUs) – "During the data room visits and the due diligence exercise by the Strategic Partner, the Strategic Partner gets the picture of the assets and

liabilities of the company as on a certain date ... The deal may actually close at a much later date ... In the intervening period the company has been functioning and the asset/liability position has undergone a change ...” The perception of the Government, in this matter, has got expression in the statement of the Disinvestment Minister Arun Shourie to the Financial Express on 07.03.02 : “This means that the government could actually end up paying private bidders to rid itself of loss-making PSUs .”

Now the concrete examples in this regard are many. Let us mention a few cases. The Paradip Phosphates Ltd. (PPL) has been purchased by the sole bidder Zuari-Maroc combine at a cost of Rs.151.7 crore against the reserve price of Rs.176 crore. Taking advantage of the ‘post closing adjustment’ clause, Zuari-Haroe has claimed an amount of Rs.190 crore from the Government. Thus, the net outcome of the privatisation deal is the private business combine got a PSU plus a cash gift of Rs.39.00 crore. In the deal of Modern Foods, the Hindustan Lever has received Rs.12.6 crore from the Government under the same consideration. The Sterlite Industries have claimed from the Government Rs.16.7 crore because, “the company’s auditors contend that the ... assets and liabilities were wrongly valued” ! Himachal Futuristic Communications, which has purchased the Hindustan Teleprinters Ltd has submitted a post-closure claim for Rs.55.5 crore. So also was the case of ITDC hotels deal where an amount of Rs.27.5 crore is being returned to the buyers. The latest revelation is the case of gross under valuation of the Centaur Hotel, Mumbai Airport. The Batra group bought the property with Rs.83 crore and sold for Rs.115 crore just within four months of the deal. Commenting on the deal a columnist has sarcastically noted, “ It is, of course, purely coincidental that the promoter of Batra Hospitality, Amri Lal Batra, is rather close to the RSS, the ideological parent of the ruling BJP. (Hindustan Times 19.11.2002).

The Tata Teleservices Limited (TTSL) acquired 25 per cent stake of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) from the Government at a price of Rs.1,439.00 crore. The Company further acquired another 20 per cent stake of VSNL through open offer at a cost of Rs.1,151.00 crore. Now with 45 per cent stake. The TTSL has been handed over the total management control of the telecom giant. VSNL is a classic example of pre and post privatisation asset stripping.

Immediately prior to privatisation, the Government compelled the VSNL to pay an abnormal 500 per cent dividend and mopped up Rs.741.00 crores against its 52 per cent equity holding. The amount of dividend for the remaining equity of 48 per cent worked out to Rs. 684.00 crores. Further, the PSU had to declare a special dividend of 750 per cent and pay to the Government an amount of Rs.1,111.00 crores. Here again the amount of dividend for the remaining part of equity worked out to Rs.1,025.00 crores. Thus, pre-privatisation stripping game took away an amount of Rs.3,561.5 crores from the reserve of VSNL. The post-privatisation asset stripping has already been initiated by the TATAs with the decision to take away Rs.1,200.00 crores from the reserve of VSNL. Such stripping step is only the beginning is apparent from reports in the press that, “VSNL is proving goldmine for the TATAs.” In the controversial May 28 meeting, the VSNL Board has approved the proposal to sale out part of the equity holding of VSNL with Intelsat and Immarsat, which is expected to generate an amount of Rs.1,000.00 crore for the company. The VSNL scandal has, once again, brought into light how the public sector companies are looted both overtly and covertly by the Government and the foreign and Indian private big business houses. Inferring from the TATA-VSNL episode it has been observed that in coming days, “we will see all other divested PSUs being stripped off their assets in the shortest possible time. They may end up dumped as sick companies.

The CPSUs have been contributing to the central exchequer in a big way on an ever increasing scale as against the reverse situation of ever increasing default of the private sector in this matter. The other financial manipulation apart, the ever-increasing defaulting track record of the private business in the

matter of payment of taxes and duties to the Governments and repayment of loans taken from the public sector Banks and Financial Institutions and the indulging role of subsequent Governments is too well known to the people of the country. The long run dangerous impact of dismantling the public sector in the matter of revenue earnings of the Government is a very important question the Government must answer to the nation. The Fund-Bank dictated policy of privatisation carried out by the NDA Government is nothing but frittering away of revenue earning assets and consuming the capital for addressing the fiscal deficit. This is what has been rightly termed as 'selling the family silver to pay the butler'.

In the year 2000-2001 the net profit earned by the PSUs is Rs.15,653 crore which is 18.17% per cent of equity share capital and 14.16% of return on capital employed which is no way inferior to private sector, if not superior in many cases. Compared to the previous year the net profit has increased by 9.22%. The total contribution of the PSUs to the exchequer on account of corporate tax, excise duty, customs duty and other duties, dividend and interest on loan etc. for the year 2000-2001 is Rs.60,977.97 crore. It would be worth-noting that the unpaid outstanding from the most favoured private sector on account of corporate tax, income tax, customs duty etc was more than Rs 60,000 crore. In the same year, the PSUs also generated gross internal resources to the tune of Rs.37,802.00 crore. (PE Survey, 2000-2001). Here it will be befitting to quote from an editorial note, "Not only can PSEs, therefore, match private sector companies (in performance), they can even do better over time. The chronically visceral critics of PSEs ought to now shed their tinted glasses." (FE,3.9.01)

Ignoring the shining records of and significant contribution to the Government exchequers by the CPSUs, the shameless pen pushers, serving the cause of big business houses, advocating dismantling of the public sector and making too much noise of imaginary efficiency of the private sector, better take lesson from the aforementioned efficient record of performance of the public sector in our country.

The Government has been repeatedly projecting the performance records of the comparatively weak PSUs to justify the privatisation policy. However, the interesting fact is that the recent past cases of privatisation and the ones lined up for the forthcoming period, are all consistently profit making cash-rich public sector companies. Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Ltd (IPCL) has been handed over to the Reliance Industries Ltd., (RIL) own by the Ambanies. While RIL has acquired the controlling share of IPCL at price of Rs.1,491.00 crore, at the time of privatisation the IPCL had an amount of Rs.2,946.13 crore as reserve and surplus. The Sterlite Group has acquired the equity and management control of Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL) at a price of Rs.445.00 crore and the PSU has a reserve fund of Rs.737.00 crore and estimated asset base of around Rs.10,000.00 crore.

The oil and petroleum sector is the most efficient and highest profit-earning sector amongst the entire Central Government owned industries in our country. Out of the top ten profit making SOEs, five are from oil and petroleum sector alone. These include ONGC, IOC, HPC, GAIL, BPC, In 2001-2002 the net profit of ONGC the No.1 navaratna upstream oil PSU has attained the landmark height at Rs.6,197.00 crore and has paid a dividend of Rs.1996.30 crore. The loan equity ratio of the company has come down to all time low of 0.14:1. Similarly, in the downstream sector – the leader is naturally the refining and marketing giant the IOC. The net profit of IOC for the year 2001-2002 has reached to Rs.2,886.00 crore against a turnover of Rs.1,14,864.00 crore and dividend paid to Government is Rs.856.53

The net profit after tax earned by BPCL in the year 2001-2002 is Rs. 835.72 crore against a total turnover of Rs.40,094.88 crore and dividend paid to the Government is Rs.330.00 crore and that of HPCL the net profit is Rs.788.00 crore against a turnover of Rs.45,287.00 crore and dividend paid to

the Government is Rs.340.00 crore.

Contrary to the publicity of the Government, privatisation of CPSUs almost invariably involves retrenchment of workmen both immediately before and after privatisation. To cite an example of pre-privatisation reduction of workmen, let us take the case of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL). These two PSEs have drawn plan to reduce the number of workmen by around 4,000. That aim of such reduction is to shape the PSEs slim to attract private buyers has been admitted by the Director of BPCL who said, "the VRS was part of ... efforts to cut cost and make the company leaner – a leaner organisation would attract better valuation." (Business Line 5.7.02). In fact ever, since the Government has launched the privatisation onslaught, the management of CPSUs, under orders from the Government have been reducing the workmen. The Labour Ministry note itself has mentioned, "during last ten years, the workforce in the Public Sector Undertakings has reduced from 2.3 million to 1.7 million". In BALCO, most widely noticed case of privatisation, several hundred workmen has been retrenched after privatisation. In IPCL 400 hundred workmen are being dislodged and further "Reliance has identified 2,000 excess staff at the Vadoda plant alone."

The suicidal drive of privatisation of the public sector units and more so the ones, which are contributing to the economic and industrial development of the country including generation of employment and regional development and working as a bulwark against the onslaught of the imperialist forces is bound to seriously impact the country adversely.

The international experience of the consequence of privatisation is very much shocking. The bankruptcy of the policy of privatisation has already started to surface glaringly in many countries in the world signalling a reverse process. The failure of the policy of privatisation is also evident from the increasing popular militant opposition across the globe - Seattle - Genoa-Doha- Washington and so on.

There are many examples spread all over the world to show the utter failure of the policy of privatisation. The irony is that the imperialist countries of the world – the USA, the UK and others are prescribing the wholesale privatisation for India and other developing countries disregarding the failure in their own countries. The claim and counter claim, the support and opposition apart, either we learn from experience or pay the price for the neglect. The people are definitely opposed to the suicidal policies. The question is to lead the opposition into massive action.

ATTACK ON LABOUR RIGHTS

The report placed in the last meeting of the CITU General Council observed in clear terms: "the Second National Commission on Labour, appointed by Govt of India without either proper consultation or due representation of the trade unions, had been mandated to recommend changes in labour laws in tune with the liberalisation policies." It also foresaw with certainty that the Commission is going to recommend a predecided text to ensure total liberty to the employers to "hire and fire", casualisation and contractorisation of the workforce and drastic curtailment of the trade union rights. The CITU along with other left trade unions had decided to boycott the Commission.

The Commission report has since been out. All the apprehensions voiced by the CITU have come true. The recent publication of the CITU has carried a detailed analysis of the disastrous prescriptions of the Commission report. The CITU committees should ensure widest possible circulation among the workers, irrespective of affiliations, to expose the vicious character of the report and the impending onslaught on labour rights.

The main thrust of the recommendation of the Commission is brazenly anti-labour designed to impose conditions of slavery on the working class. Most hypocritically, the Commission report has taken pains to elaborately narrate the negative impacts of the globalisation policies and its grievous and negative consequences on employment and employment-potential of the economy. But, it has chosen to recommend such measures to make those negative features permanently engraved on the economy and the society, fitting the working class of the country in the window of "labour market reforms". It is an irony that the capital market reforms as well as labour market reforms will only benefit the business class, corporates and multi national corporations and ruin the lives of the workers and the common people.

The anti-labour thrust of the concrete recommendations of the Commission are revealing from the following:

- Complete Freedom to 'hire and fire' and lay-off to all establishments irrespective of employment size.
- Complete freedom to employers to unilaterally change the service conditions of the workers including wages, workload, working hours etc by way of diluting the Provisions of section 9A of the Industrial Disputes rendering it practically ineffective.
- Unfettered freedom to contract out all kind of permanent jobs in the name of non-core jobs and also the core jobs subject to some spurious limitations.
- No to industry level wage boards
- No secret ballot for selection of bargaining agent/recognized union
- Unrecognised unions are deprived from almost all trade union rights to agitate and represent on collective issues.
- But, Secret Ballot a "MUST" for strikes with elaborate arrangements to virtually ban the right to strike. Open ended right to Government for prohibiting strikes.
- Punitive prescriptions for illegal strike with three days wage cut per day and deregistration and derecognising of unions.
- 'Go slow', 'Work to Rule' termed misconduct
- A façade of equating lock out to strike
- Curtailment of holidays
- '8 hour work day' concept tampered with
- Separate law for small industries with virtually no protection for the workers
- Supervisors irrespective of salary and employees in higher bracket of salaries to be thrown outside the purview of labour laws.

- Allow wide spread registration of Membership Based Organisations' of women workers under the TU Act, which in effect will divide the trade union movement on gender lines.

Though the Commission Report also contains some good words, But they are nothing more than expression of pious intentions, to preach but not to practice. They are mostly on extremely generalised terms giving room for the Government to interpret as per their convenience. Though a draft legislation for unorganised sector workers had been presented, the Commission seeks to take the unorganised sector workers out of the purview of all labour laws. At the same time, it has made a most hypocritical comment that the umbrella legislation can succeed only if it is integrated with other laws governing labour and the economy of the concerned sector.

The Commission also pleaded for comprehensive social security measures for all workers; but it recommended nothing concrete. However, the Commission chose to recommend concrete measures aimed at curtailing existing benefits under workmen's compensation and maternity benefit Acts to convert them into self contributory insurance schemes, besides unpacking of the services under ESI Corporation.

INDIAN LABOUR CONFERENCE

The 38th session of the Indian Labour Conference (ILC), apex tripartite forum in the country was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 28-29 September. The Standing Committee on Labour (SLC) had decided the other items of the agenda comprising impact of globalisation, disinvestments, problems of small-scale sector and social safety net. However, the Government unilaterally decided to include the Report of the Second National Commission on Labour as an additional item of agenda for the ILC. The Government move was to secure some sort of a green signal from the tripartite forum for a go-ahead on implementation of the Report of the Second National Commission on Labour. The CITU opposed this move.

The leaders of all the central trade unions decided to oppose the unilateral move of the Government to dispose of the Commission Report in just one plenary session lasting a few hours.

In a written note placed before the ILC, the CITU contended that It would not be possible to have an in depth debate on this report in the ILC. The CITU urged that a special tripartite session be convened for an exclusive debate on the Commission Report.

Yet, the Government placed the commission report for discussion in the ILC. The Prime Minister, while inaugurating the ILC, claimed that the Commission report had endorsed 'the broad thrust of for labour reforms envisaged by the Government' and asserted: "the Government is currently examining the recommendations of the Commission and will take suitable action thereafter. He also appealed to the trade union representatives to extend support to the Government's agenda on labour reforms".

Resistance to the Government agenda on labour reforms also came from the Labour Ministers of various State Governments, who voiced their concern and stiff opposition to any unilateral move to give legislative shape to the recommendations of the Commission.

The employers' side, while complaining that the report was not 'realistic' and sought to place 'unbearable burden' on the employers, however, exhorted the Government to initiate action on the report, even

before Diwali, overlooking the trade union objections. But ultimately, the Government had to yield and put on hold any action on the report and opted to have wider consultations again.

Even on issues of impact of globalisation and disinvestments, the trade unions were unanimous in condemning the policies of the Government. While the ILC noted what was held out as positive and negative impacts of globalisation, by the employers and workers respectively, three divergent views of the employers, trade unions and the Government were recorded on the disinvestments issue. The ILC underlined the need to take measures like simplification of rules and procedures in respect of SSI sector.

The ILC, however, reached unanimity on the urgent need to provide a social safety net to all workers. It recommended evolving a national policy on social security, setting up of a National Social Security Authority, annual allocation, by the Government, of 1 to 2 per cent of the GDP towards public expenditure on social security, ratification of the ILO conventions on the subject, functional and administrative integration of various social security institutions, besides several other measures. It is, however, doubtful whether the NDA Government would assign any priority to these conclusions.

We should realise the importance of the trade union unity manifested at the meeting of the ILC, which has immense potential for mobilising the mass of workers in the struggle to defeat the anti-people, anti-labour policies of the NDA Government.

At the same time, we should remember that despite the general unanimity of views reflected in the ILC, different shades of opinion are there among the trade unions, which cannot be wished away. The BMS note of dissent appended to the Commission report related only to the labour law portion, signifying acceptance of all the other parts. The INTUC has signed the report, without any dissent. Despite their opposition to the appointment of the Commission and its one-sided terms of reference, some trade unions did not stick to the decision not to cooperate with the Commission.

The Commission report is a declaration of war against the working class. It is but natural that the ruling polity, operating under the dictates of the international finance capital in the economic sphere, will be intolerant towards any dissent or opposition.* Hence, they cannot but decry militant trade union movement trying to build opposition to such anti-people policies. They are refusing to see the increasing spread of militant opposition to neo-liberal globalisation worldwide. They also seek to make the workers class subservient to the interests of ruling classes. Such intolerance had been voiced time and again in various forums - and the employers' platforms in particular - even before the Commission report was published. The Commission report will serve as a handy tool in their hands now. The whole exercise on labour law changes is a design to enslave the working class, aimed at making the vicious process of transfer of rights and resources from the mass of the populace to handful of individuals in the capitalist class smooth and hurdle-free.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance that the CITU should independently carry the campaign against the Commission recommendations among the workers to rally all sections of the workers in the struggle to repulse these attacks and defend the hard won rights of the working class. This meeting should discuss and chalk out our plan of action to carry out this most important task in the coming period.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF WORKERS

A massively attended National Assembly of Workers Against Anti-Labour Policies' was held at the

Talkatora Indoor Stadium in Delhi on 15th July, 2002. All the central trade unions had jointly organised the event. The Assembly unanimously adopted a declaration, a draft of which was presented by the Central Trade Union Organisations - AICCTU, AITUC, CITU, HMS, INTUC, TUCC, UTUC and UTUC.

The declaration reiterated the resolve of the entire spectrum of the trade union movement to resist the labour law reforms, privatisation of public sector, policies leading to job losses, unemployment and other anti labour measures of the government of India. The Assembly adopted an action programme as under:

1. 19th August, 2002 will be observed as a Day of Pledge for relentlessly carrying on the battle against the economic policies of the Govt. and a campaign for developing public awareness in support of the demands of the workers from 19th August to 24th August, 2002.
2. District level mobilization - 23rd to 28th September, 2002
3. State level joint rallies - 18th to 23rd November, 2002
4. Massive SATYAGRAHA in all the States - 8th January, 2003
5. March to Parliament on the 3rd day of Budget Session 2003.

The demands around which the campaign and action programme will be carried on were also outlined in the declaration. They are:

1. Halt to privatisation of profit-making and potentially viable public sector undertakings.
2. No changes in the Labour laws, including the Industrial Disputes Act and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act favouring the employers and against the interest of workers.
3. Restoration of quantitative restrictions on imports, the removal of which is much to the detriment of industry, agriculture and national interest as a whole.
4. No policies leading to severe aggravation of joblessness and unemployment and evolving nationwide employment generation policies and programmes.
5. Well thought out social security schemes including an unemployment insurance scheme.
6. Immediate enactment of comprehensive legislation for Agricultural workers.
7. Amendment of Payment of Bonus Act by removing all ceilings.
8. Restoration of 12% interest on the P.F. deposits.

The central trade union leaders meeting in Delhi on 28th October, 2002, decided to stage the March to Parliament on 26th February, 2003.

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, (BMS), which had joined the united actions by all the Central Trade Unions since May 2001 chose not to participate in the National Assembly. It may be noted that the BMS representatives had participated in all the preparatory meetings jointly with all the other central trade unions up to 22nd June, 2002. But, on 27th June, 2002, Hashu Bhai Dave, President, BMS, wrote to the other central trade unions that they 'do not intend to join the National Assembly and the programmes consequential to that in the coming months'. The letter, however, reiterated 'the BMS commitment to continue the joint struggles on the industrial level depending upon the need of the situation shall continue as was in the past'. The CITU reply to the BMS letter was circulated to the State Committees.

We had called for reports of the observance of these programmes. While some of the State Committees had responded, the CITU centre had not received detailed reports from most State Committees.

Comrades may please give a brief report on the implementation of these calls and also give their suggestions for the successful carrying out of the January 8 and February 26 calls.

ASIAN SOCIAL FORUM

The World Social Forum developed as a response of the growing international movement to neo-liberal economic policies being pursued in most countries and capitalist led globalisation. The World Social Forum was conceived as an international forum against neo-liberal policies and capitalist led globalisation build around the slogan: "Another World Is Possible". It seeks to provide a space for discussing alternatives, for exchanging experiences and for strengthening alliances between social movements, unions of the working people and NGOs. The first WSF was held in January, 2001, in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil. The second WSF held in Jan – Feb, 2002. The International Committee of the World Social Forum and the Brazil Organising Committee have decided that from this year (2002) onwards, the annual global WSF meeting will be accompanied by regional, continental, and/or thematic Forums across the globe. While the main WSF event will be held in 2003 January in Porto Alegre again, there is a proposal that the 2004 event shall be held outside Brazil. Though a final decision is yet to be taken on this, there is a possibility of holding the event in India in 2004.

In line with the WSF International Committee's call, the WSF in India is holding the Asian Social Forum (ASF) in the city of Hyderabad in India from January 2 to 7, 2003. In the World Social Forum process the ASF, 2003 is the first Asia level event to be convened with an understanding that Asian Social Forum event would be repeated over a period in all the sub-regions of Asia.

The ASF will provide a forum for an open dialogue among the movements opposed to capitalist led globalisation. The only criteria is that the participants are opposed to imperialist globalisation as well as religious sectarian violence, and have a commitment to democratic values, plurality and peace.

The Asia Social Forum 2003 will be organized around the identified six thematic areas.

- * Peace and Security
- * Debt, Development, Trade, Finance and Investment
- * Nation State, Democracy and Exclusion
- * Social Infrastructure, Planning and Cooperation
- * Ecology, Culture, Knowledge
- * Alternatives and People's Movements

The programme of the ASF will be: Opening Plenary on 2nd Jan. Conferences, Seminars, Workshops and Film Shows from 3rd to 6th and Closing Plenary on 7th Jan. 2003.

The CITU has decided to join the Asian Social Forum event. Along with the other central trade unions and fraternal all India Federations, a few seminars are being organised as trade union events during this period. Seminars will be organised on the following topics:

- * Against Privatisation and Disinvestment
- * Globalisation and Labour Rights
- * Financial Sector Reforms
- * Impact of Globalisation on Working Class and Building Global Resistance
- * Communalism and Impact on Workers
- * Impact of Globalisation on Unorganised Sector and Remedies

Our Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU is actively associating with this event and is a part of the WSF India Hyderabad Organising Committee.

The CITU Secretariat has requested all State Committees and Industrial Federations to arrange to send delegates for participation in the Asian Social Forum events, particularly the trade union seminars.

OUR ACTIVITIES AND STRUGGLES

The Siliguri General Council discussed our experiences in united struggles and decided that strengthening united struggles depended on our independent strength and activities. It gave a call for a national campaign week on eight immediate demands to be observed from 30th May, the Foundation Day of CITU, to 5th June and for a Protest Day on 6th June.

Most of the States have not sent reports on the observation of the programme. As per the information available at the CITU Centre, in Tamil Nadu most of the district committees conducted campaigns and observed the Protest Day. Van Jathas and auto rickshaw campaign was conducted along with distribution of leaflets, posters, group meetings etc. In Andhra Pradesh it was observed as 'Unity Week'. A massive day-long dharna was held in Andaman & Nicobar. A procession was held in Kanpur. But generally it was held in a ritualistic manner in many States.

The NPMO gave a call to conduct a campaign from 19th June to 4th July, against the offensive of the communal forces in Gujarat. Conventions, dharnas, workshops, processions, rallies etc. were held in many States, but the mobilisation was far beneath what the situation demands. On 15th May, joint rallies were held in all the districts in west Bengal. A massive procession was held in Kolkata, on the same day.

The National Assembly of Workers held on 15th July (dealt with in detail earlier) gave a series of calls starting from taking a pledge to fight against the anti working class policies of the Government culminating in a March to Parliament in February. In most of the States, workers took the pledge on 19th August, at the factories and offices. District and State level rallies were held in several States.

Besides these, several important struggles were held in many States and by the industrial federations, on the specific problems of the workers.

A massive demonstration of over 10,000 coal miners was held before the headquarters of the Coal India Limited at Kolkata on the 17th July and the notice for strike from 5-11 August was served, demanding withdrawal of the bill on privatisation of coal mines, closure of viable mines, and for restoration of the customs duty on imported coal. (The strike was later deferred, as the Government agreed not to push for passage of the relevant bill in Parliament.) The CITU union in Singareni collieries conducted a wide campaign for the proposed coal strike. Even though the strike was called off at the National level, the JAC gave a call for token strike on the 5th August. The CITU union continued with the indefinite strike. The strike was successful in spite of the limited strength of our union. Our stand against the sabotage of the other unions was appreciated by the workers.

The Fertiliser Workers Federation of India has launched a campaign against closure of the fertiliser units. Demonstrations were held in Barauni, Sindri, Durgapur, and Haldia and in front of the corporate office in Delhi. Rasta roko and Rail roko were held in Barauni, followed by district and then Bihar State bandh. In Sindri a huge demonstration was held in front of the DM's office in Dhanbad. Joint worker peasant conventions and solidarity demonstrations by the coal workers were held. In Durgapur and Haldia demonstrations were held in front of the factory gates. Joint Action Committees of workers, officers' associations and mass organisations were formed to steer the struggle.

The All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers gave a call for Rasta Roko, burning of effigies, and telegrams to the Human Resources Development and Finance Ministers demanding immediate release of the Government Order on the enhancement of honorarium and its implementation with effect from the date of announcement. In spite of the short time, thousands of anganwadi workers and helpers participated in each State.

The steel workers in Durgapur, Rourkela, Bhilai and Bokaro launched struggles against non payment of bonus. Strike notices were given. The contract workers in Durgapur could achieve a good wage settlement after the struggle. The IISCO mine workers in several mines went on a strike from 12th November demanding implementation of the agreement with the JBCCI and payment of bonus.

The plantation workers in Assam went on a strike in August on the issue of bonus.

The Conference of the All India Transport Workers Federation was held in Puri in July, 2002.

In Kerala, a series of struggles were conducted against the policies of the UDF Government by the workers from different industries. Around 10,000 cashew workers, under the leadership of CITU, AITUC and UTUC organised a rally in front of the Secretariat against DA freeze, amendment to the Gratuity rules reducing the gratuity etc. 7,000 of these were from CITU. Thousands of handloom workers, a large number of them women participated in the siege of the Secretariat on 12th July against the neglect of the handloom industry by the State Government. The coir workers also laid siege of the Secretariat on 12th August. The agitating toddy workers in Thrissur were lathi charged brutally by the police. The district observed a bandh against this. The head load workers went on a militant struggle against the bill which would deny them their rights to appease the traders and industrialists. All the trade unions in Kerala have unitedly opposed the WB, IMF, and WTO dictated policies of the State Government and observed a State wide general strike on 6th August 2002.

On August 9th, hundreds of CITU workers organised a militant demonstration at the NALCO head office at Bhubaneswar against the Government's decision to privatise NALCO. This was followed by demonstrations and rallies in the main places of production – Angul, and Damanajodi, in which all the trade unions participated. We took initiative to coordinate the struggle. All the political parties except the BJP were present in the convention organised by the coordinating body of trade unions on 15th September. The Orissa bandh on 19th September was a complete success. The militant demonstrations by the NALCO workers at Angul and Damanajodi prevented the private bidders from entering the towns. The left parties organised rail rook programmes. In the face of this intense opposition, the Government had to postpone its decision to privatise NALCO at least temporarily. A convention to bring the issue to national focus was organised at Delhi on the 27th November.

A big rally was held in Chattisgarh against the anti working class policies of the State Government on 19th June 2002. Around 2,500 out of which 70% were women participated in the rally. The forest workers had launched struggles against eviction from their source of livelihood. The Road Transport workers organised a big rally against privatisation on the 6th September.

In Tamil Nadu, a State wide court arrest programme was organised on 8th May on the problems of the unorganised sector workers. Around 35,000 unorganised sector workers from various industries like construction, handloom, beedi, power loom, auto rickshaw, fish workers etc courted arrest.

At the call of CITU Tamilnadu State Committee, around 35,000 workers including around 5,000 of women courted arrest in more than 100 centres on 23rd July, protesting against the ESMA enacted by

the State Government. Another 20,000 workers participated in the programme. Massive demonstrations were held on 30th July under the banner of the JAC, all over the State. A state wide joint campaign was conducted by the JAC of Trade unions, which culminated in a State wide general strike on 23rd October. The attempts at privatisation of the Salem Steel Plant are being resisted by the workers and their families. On 5th September the employees along with their family members formed a huge 'human chain' against the privatisation move. A fast was also organised in front of the State Secretariat on 25th September. The functioning of the State Coordination Committee has improved during this period. A rally of working women was organised in Chennai on 18th September, in which hundreds of working women from various sectors participated. A court arrest programme was organised in all the handloom centres of the State on 24th September on the issues of the handloom workers.

In Himachal Pradesh, a prolonged strike for 76 days was organised by the Himachal Hotel Mazdoor Lal Jhanda Union, against the termination of service of 16 workers of the Le Royal Hotel in Shimla. Workers from all the hotels in Shimla stood united and forced the management, which was initially adamant about not talking to the union, to agree to their demands. All the workers except one were ultimately reinstated.

In Himachal again, 4,500 workers of the Larji Hydro Power project went on a strike for 10 days, against denial of basic trade union rights. In spite of repression by the management and a labour department which connived with the management. It is significant that the workers from the other Hydel Projects in the State like Nathpa Jakhri collected Rs. 50,000 for the striking workers besides physically going there to help them in their struggle. Though the union was not affiliated to CITU, the CITU State Committee, other unions affiliated to CITU, the student and youth organisations supported the struggle, which ultimately forced the notorious management to agree to the demands of the workers.

The Village Servants in Andhra Pradesh had launched a successful struggle against the attempts of the State Government to transfer their services from the Revenue Department to the Panchayats. The series of struggles which started from local mobilisation and culminated in a massive rally at Hyderabad created confidence on the organised strength among the village servants, helped in making them aware of the character of the Government. The struggle was supported by collecting a struggle fund. This struggle helped in strengthening the union.

The Gram Panchayats and Municipal workers in Andhra Pradesh also conducted struggles against the privatisation and contractualisation policies of the State Government and for regular payment of salaries. After a series of local dharnas and Chalo Hyderabad programme, State wide strike was held on 13th August, which was successful in 18 districts. This strike helped us to be recognised as a State wide organisation of the Panchayat and Municipal Workers, a sector which was till now dominated by the AITUC. The India Cement workers succeeded in their struggle for trade union rights after a prolonged agitation of 13 months, including 20 days strike. Hundreds of workers and their family members participated in this struggle, braving brutal lathicharge in which around 100 women were injured.

In Uttaranchal, there was total strike in THDC, on 30th September, on the joint call given by CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, BMS, and Officers' and Supervisors' Associations. The workers resorted to mass hunger strike from 21st to 29th October and mass casual leave on the 30th of October. A general strike was again held on the 18th of November. The workers of Hotel Ganga View, Motor transport workers, Sugar Mill workers and Transport Corporation workers have launched struggles on their demands.

From the various struggles in the States it is evident that it is becoming increasingly difficult to ensure

even the implementation of the legal rights of the workers and prolonged and stubborn struggles are becoming necessary for this. Unless we increase our organisational strength and raise the consciousness of the workers on the anti worker policies of the Government it would be difficult for us to sustain the struggles.

UNORGANISED SECTOR

The NDA Government proposes to bring an "umbrella legislation" for the unorganised sector workers. The bill is not going to deliver the goods to the unorganised sector workers, as it is not going to address the vital issue of minimum wage. The National Commission of Labour has rejected the recommendations of its own Study Group, which had recommended the norms of the 15th Indian Labour Conference supplemented by the Supreme Court judgment on Raptakos Brett. Further, it has not suggested any measure to check the problem of hire and fire of the workers at the sweet will of the employers, employment earning guarantee, etc. It should be noted that when the Govt. has taken a move for labour reforms in tune with the needs of the globalised economy to the detriment of all sections of the working class, the vast sections of the unorganised sector cannot have any benefit from the fake 'umbrella legislation'.

In this background our organisational activities in the unorganised sector have to be geared up. We are lagging in this respect, both at the Central and State level. A meeting of the All India Coordination Committee was called some time back. But, it had to be postponed due to some all India joint programmes. Although we have to implement the forthcoming joint action programmes all over the country, yet keeping in view the programmes, a meeting of the all India coordination committee of unorganised sector should be called to review the situation and suggest action plans to the CITU Secretariat. In the developing situation it may also be necessary to consider convening an all India Convention of unorganised sector workers so that an all India movement can be launched. It is also necessary to reconstitute the Coordination Committee, reducing the number of members while ensuring representation from all the States.

It is deeply regretted that the decision of the Chennai General Council to form sub-committees in this sector have not yet been implemented by all the State Committees. This should be done without any delay in effectively deal with this grossly neglected problem.

ANGANWADI FEDERATION

The Fourth Conference of the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers was held at Puri, in Orissa, from 29th September to 1st October 2002. 384 delegates and observers from 19 States, i.e. from all the States where the unions are active, participated in the Conference. No representatives attended from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and from Gujarat. A rally was held on the first day, in which around 6,000, including around 1,500 anganwadi employees from Orissa, participated. The Orissa State Committee of CITU made good arrangements for the Conference.

The membership of the Federation increased from 85,287 at the time of the last Conference to 1,37,837, i.e. by more than 61%. The unions from Assam, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tripura, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh joined the Federation during this period. Efforts are also being made to register a union in Delhi.

The Conference noted that there was a large scope to expand the organisation, for which the help of the CITU State Committees is required. A 51 member working committee was elected.

The Conference gave a call to observe protest days from October 5-10 against the inordinate delay in releasing the Government Order on the enhancement of honorarium for the anganwadi workers and helpers, announced by the Government in the Budget speech. In spite of the very little time available, because it was 3-4 October by the time the delegates reached their States, the programme was successfully observed in most of the States. In Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, the anganwadi employees went on strike and sent telegrams to the HRD Minister from the project committees. In Andhra Pradesh around 10,000 anganwadi employees participated in the project level Rasta roko. In Punjab, Haryana, Assam, Jharkhand etc Rasta Rokos were conducted at the project level. Deputations were given in West Bengal and Karnataka.

In the first fortnight of November, effigies of the Government were burnt and telegrams were sent to the Finance Minister demanding that the enhancement be implemented retrospectively from the date of announcement. This was also observed in most of the States, with thousands of anganwadi employees participating in it.

ON ORGANISATION

In the sphere of organisation the on-going effort for bringing about improvement in the organisation and functioning of CITU at all levels through implementation of the Bhubaneshwar document is yet to create the desired impact. As a result of the discussion in the central workshop, in the General Council meeting and finally in the 10th conference of CITU some awareness has certainly created among comrades at different levels about the urgency of various tasks laid down in the document but it does not seem to have been actually implemented to the desired extent.

The 10th Conference decided that all the State Committees would organise workshop in the line of the central workshop on the basis of the Bhubaneshwar document as well as the document adopted by the central workshop with the thrust on the implementation of the former. Some state committees however organised workshops even before the Hyderabad conference. Several state committees organized the workshop after the 10th conference. Among the states which have already held workshops are West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. Tamil Nadu state committee held special discussion on organisation in an extended meeting of the state committee and also carried the discussion to district level as well. From this it will be seen that some of the state committees have not yet organised workshops. No report however has been received at the centre from the states which have held workshop regarding the impact they have produced on the state of the organization in their states.

It is extremely important, particularly in the contest of growing attack on the working class and the trade union movement in the country that the weakness of our organisation is quickly overcome. It is high time that the states which are yet to hold their workshop complete it immediately. In the case of state committees which have completed their workshop, they should make an objective assessment of the impact of their workshop in their meeting. All efforts should be made to complete this process fairly before the General Council meeting and send report to the centre so that we can have an overall assessment of the state of organization in the General Council. On the basis of the experience gained in the process the General Council may consider organizing another central seminar to deal with the problems experienced.

Comrades should make due preparation at State level so that a fruitful discussion on organisation with special stress on assessment of the progress of implementation of the tasks and the problems encountered may be possible in the General Council meeting.

SITUATION IN PUNJAB

As you are aware, during the 10th conference of CITU with great difficulty we sorted out the problem of delegation in Punjab. We could not finalise the members of the General Council and the seats for Punjab were kept vacant.

Having come across reports that a meeting was to be held on 9-10 November, 2002 at Shapur Kandi, near Pathankot in Gurudaspur District of Punjab and the same was termed as the "11th State Conference of Punjab State CITU", the CITU Secretariat issued a statement to the Press on 29th October, 2002. It said: "The meeting does not have the approval of the all India headquarters of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU). All the unions affiliated to the CITU in the State of Punjab were advised not to associate, in any manner, with the said meeting. However, it is gathered that such a meeting was in fact, held. This Working Committee meeting will have to consider the matter and take appropriate organisational decision.

WORKING WOMEN

At the time of the Siliguri General Council meeting, the lists of the unions with large number of women were given to the States, to help in identifying the unions where women's subcommittees can be formed. But there is no information about the formation of women's subcommittees in these unions.

The Cha Bagan Mazdoor Union, West Bengal held a session of women delegates as part of its 19th Conference, at Banarhat in Jalpaiguri. Around 135 women participated in the Conference. A new women's sub committee was formed in the session.

The Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU convened a special meeting of Working Women's Coordination Committee along with the District leadership of CITU to discuss the work among working women.

The 'Tasks on Organisation' adopted by the 10th Conference at Hyderabad called upon the State Committees to identify priority areas/industries where women work in large numbers and organise them on a priority basis, make the State Working Women's Coordination Committees functional, pay special attention to identify and train women cadres, and review the work among working women periodically etc. But whatever information is available makes it clear that very few State Committees have tried to implement this.

To discuss our difficulties in implementing the decisions taken on our work among working women and to take concrete measures necessary to improve our work, a meeting of General Secretaries/ Presidents of State Committees of CITU, the Secretariat member in charge of the Working Women's front and the women leaders of CITU has been called on 5th December at New Delhi. All the State Committees must ensure the presence of their representatives and implement the decisions taken in that meeting.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

During the period since the last meeting of the CITU General Council witnessed Increasing participation of CITU delegates in the international seminars and conferences and international visits by our functionaries. This has provided excellent opportunity to our functionaries to share experiences with other trade unions of the world and strengthen our united struggle against the anti-worker policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation.

W.R. Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU and Arpita Raut of Air Corporation Employees Union represented the organisation in the General Council meeting of Trade Union International of Transport Workers (WFTU), held at Damascus, Syria, from July 2-4, 2002. The Occupational Trade Union of Transport Workers, Damascus and the Trade Union of Transport Workers in the Ministry of Communications in Kuwait jointly hosted the Council meeting. Representatives from more than 15 countries attend the meeting.

Three CITU representatives from the Construction Workers Federation of India (CWFI), Debanjan Chakraborti (West Bengal), R. Singaravelu (Tamil Nadu) and Nagen Chandra Chutia (Assam) participated in the 13th World Conference of Trade Union International of Workers in Building, Wood, Building Materials and Allied Industries (UITBB) held in Larnaka City (Cyprus) from 4-6 April, 2002. Sixty delegates from almost 25 countries including took part in the conference. The conference unanimously elected John Sutton (Australia) as President and Jose Denis (Portugal) as General Secretary. Debanjan Chakraborti, General Secretary of CWFI was elected as Executive Committee Member of UITBB.

S.Dev Roye, Secretary, CITU participated in the meeting of the IEMO Executive Bureau held in London in the last week of May, 2002.

The 90th session of the International labour conference of the ILO was held at Geneva from 2nd to 19th June, 2002. Tapan Sen, secretary, represented the CITU as one of the Observers from the workers'side.

At the invitation of All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), a joint delegation of Central Trade Unions from India, comprising A.K. Padmanabhan, Secretary, CITU, Sukumar Damle, General Secretary, Maharashtra State Committee of AITUC and Shyam Sundar Hans, Working President of Delhi State Committee of INTUC, visited China for a week from August 20-26, 2002. (The BMS and HMS were also invited. However, the BMS declined to join the visit, while the HMS nominee, Shanti Patel, could not join the visit.) The delegation visited Beijing and Tianjin cities and witnessed the working and living conditions of Chinese workers in the post-WTO situation.

A four-member delegation of CITU led by its President E. Balanandan, comprising Jibon Roy, Secretary, CITU, Nilima Maitra, President, All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers & Helpers and Pramod Pradhan, President, Madhya Pradesh State Committee of CITU, visited Vietnam for a week from September 14 to 21, 2002. The delegation visited Ha Long Bay in Quang Minh province, Hanoi City and Ho Chi Minh's native village in Nghe An province. The delegation held discussions with the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) on issues of common interest. The delegation was also received by the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Ramesh Devkaran Danti (Rajkot, Gujarat) and Abhijit Kar (Kolkata, WB), activists of the Air Corporation Employees Union, represented the CITU at the World Conference against A&H Bombs-2002 at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, expressing solidarity and support to the world campaign against nuclear bombs. Local hospitality was extended by the Organising Committee in cooperation with the Japanese TU centre Zenroren.

The Second World Congress of International Energy and Mines Organisation (IEMO) with headquarters in Paris, was held in Kochi, Kerala, from November 15-17, 2002. Alain Simon, General Secretary, IEMO, paid a preparatory visit to Delhi on September 22-23, 2002 and held detailed consultations. The Congress was hosted by the CITU. About 75 foreign delegates from more than 20 countries

participated in the congress. Trade Union veterans like Arther Scargil, President, IEMO, Alain Simon, General Secretary, IEMO, John Maitland, President, International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union (ICEM).based in Brussels, also attended the Congress. From India almost 100 delegates from coal mines and electricity sector attended the Congress. In the elections to the executive bureau of the IEMO held at the conclusion of the Congress, the General Secretary of CITU, M.K.Pandhe, was elected as one of the two Co-Presidents of the IEMO.

The main theme of the Congress was "Energy for All". A national seminar entitled "Power Scenario in India in the 21st Century - prospects and problems" and an international seminar on "Energy for All" was also organised on this occasion. The seminars were addressed by a number of representatives of trade unions, employers and experts from public sector enterprises.

Tapan Sen, Secretary, CITU, participated in the International meet of Trade Unions and Social Workers in Brazil at the invitation of Institutio Mario Alves in cooperation with the Brazilian trade union. The meet was held at Recefi on November 15-19, 2002. During the conference, he met a number of trade union activists from Latin America and other continents and interacted with them on issues related to trade union struggle against imperialist globalization.

A Cuban goodwill delegation from the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People, led by (Ms.) Evangeline Seone Dominguez visited India in the second half of September at the invitation of National Committee for Solidarity with Cuba. The delegation visited Delhi and Kolkata. While in Delhi they met the representatives of CITU and other friendly federations and associations at the B. T. Ranadive Bhawan on September 19, 2002 and held discussions.

A number of film shows were also held on Cuba and DPRK.

The Second World Conference of Oil, Gas and Refinery Trade Unions is scheduled to be held at Kolkata from 11th to 13th March, 2003. A National Preparatory Committee with M.K.Pandhe, General Secretary, CITU, as Chairman and a campaign Committee chaired by Chittabrata Majumdar, Secretary, CITU, have been constituted. Both these committees have already started functioning.

ON MEMBERSHIP

The General Council Meeting at Siliguri had a special discussion on the organisational consolidation. It was emphasised that it can only materialise when we build a strong CITU. The Bhubaneswar document attached great importance to the task of expansion in terms of membership as well as to area and industrywise expansion. The task of drawing up "well knit plan" for expansion besides growth of membership in the existing field of operation therefore, has to be taken up on priority basis, if we are to achieve the 40 lakh membership target set by the 10th Conference of CITU and reiterated by the Siliguri General Council.

Simultaneously non-payment of affiliation fees and journal subscription in time by the affiliated unions and State Committees was another area of chronic weakness which was an impediment to the above and could not be corrected inspite of several discussions in the General Council/Working Committee meetings. Inspite of several reminders many of our unions did not clear their dues of year 2000 and many even prior, to that. The General Secretary's report in Siliguri General Council has noted, "You will appreciate that if an affiliated union does not fulfil the minimum commitment as per the CITU constitution and continue to default year after year despite repeated persuasion, it should not remain affiliated to CITU and we shall have to take a clear position in this respect". The CITU Secretariat,

therefore, had taken a decision to disaffiliate such defaulter unions, who are yet to clear dues upto the year 2000 and notices to that effect were issued to all such unions in September. Some State Committees and unions have responded and are clearing the dues. I seek the approval of the Working Committee to disaffiliate those unions, which have not responded at all.

State wise break up of membership as per Annual Returns submitted till 15th November 2002 is given as Annexure I. You will observe that payments for 2001 is also not complete, which should have been done by now. The State Committees should monitor this and see that by December 2002 submission of all annual returns along with payments to the centre is ensured.

GUJARAT EARTH QUAKE RELIEF FUND

As reported in Siliguri General Council meeting you will be happy to note that the School building and a community Centre, built through contributions for the earth quake victims of Gujarat, was handed over to the villagers in a function held on 7th November 2002. A township named Niruben Patel Gram of 150 tenements in the Maliya taluk of Rajkot district in Gujarat has become a model with all essential facilities. Out of a total collection of over Rs.25 lakh, the Japanese trade union federation, Zenroren, had contributed over Rs. 7 lakh. We intend to hold a function there during early 2003 and invite our Zenroren friends also.

This apart, we have also received Rs. 1,64,914.00 from Maharashtra and Rs.1,688.00 from UP towards Gujarat Riot Relief Fund. It is expected that other State Committees should also respond and help the people in distress as the State BJP Govt. has failed to provide adequate relief.

PROPOSAL FOR CENTRAL T.U. SCHOOL

In the trust deed of B.T.Ranadive Memorial Trust, there is a provision for setting up a permanent school for education of trade union cadres in the country. Due to financial constraints, we are unable to pursue the proposal till now.

The task of educating our cadre up to local level is extremely important to effectively carry forward the CITU activities, particularly in the context of challenges faced in post-globalisation era. Com. B.T.R. had, on several occasions, expressed a desire to have such a school. However, during his life time it could not materialise.

You may be aware that the CITU has taken 4 single story flats in Ghaziabad. It is proposed to construct two more stories over it for such a school. It will include:

- o Two class rooms
- o Dormitory accommodation for 50 Persons including separate enclosure for women
- o Dining and cooking arrangement
- o Study room
- o Recreation centre
- o Residential arrangements for teachers etc.

It is estimated that the cost of establishing the school there, including construction, furniture and other equipments, will approximately be Rs. 50 lakh.

About 40-50 trainees will be selected at a time for one week training programme, for which a separate

syllabus and reading material can be produced. Necessary audio-visual aid and other modern training tools will also be provided. The school will mainly cater to the needs of the Hindi speaking and adjoining weaker States. For other States, separate need-based arrangements can be made.

The school can be named after Com. P.Ramamurti, the founder General Secretary of CITU, as a memorial for Com. P.R. The complex can also be called P. Ramamurti Bhawan. As had already been decided, the B.T.Ranadive Bhawan will house the research centre and a well equipped library.

If State Committees of the CITU can fulfill their quota of collection of BTR memorial fund, it may meet the requirement of the school complex as well. The collections up to 15th November 2002 towards BTR Fund are given as Annexure II. During the period after our General Council Meeting, we have received Rs.2 lakh from Kerala only.

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL

Two decades ago, the CITU General Council considered the question of nominating our representatives to the National Productivity Council. It was decided by majority not to join the council in view of its role in several industries.

However, there have been some changes in the situation and the CITU unions have often to negotiate productivity agreements with the managements. We also have to counter the employers' efforts to consider only the labour productivity and to ignore other aspects of productivity.

With introduction of new technology the rise in productivity and other related issues have to be dealt with by the trade union movement and need for a correct approach on the question is highly necessary.

Therefore, when the available members of the CITU Secretariat met, it was felt that the matter should be reviewed by the CITU. In view of the prevailing situation, we are of the view that we should join the NPC, and express our views to ensure that working class interests are properly defended. We have been given 2 seats on the NPC, which has 75 members representing various sections. This meeting of the Working Committee should decide the issue of our joining the NPC.

TASKS AHEAD!

With the NDA Government's determination to take the country under the umbrella of US imperialism, it is going faster to implement the globalisation doctrine in economic affairs and to make the country subservient to US designs.

Despite the clear cut game of the Bush Government to play between India and Pakistan, using both as pawns, the Vajpayee Government is wooing US imperialism. It is getting closer to the US, even in matters of defence security. Naturally, the NDA Government has not come forward to forthrightly condemn the US threat to Iraq. It did not condemn Israel, when it is attacking the people of Palestine. Indian Government is developing links with Israel in the matter of purchasing defence equipment. It is using the bogey of nuclear deal between Pakistan and N-Korea only to please the US masters.

In economic spheres, the Government of India is going with full swing with the so-called package of economic reforms and giving concessions after concessions to the MNCs and big business houses. It is determined to heap further economic burdens on the common people, resulting in growing incidence of poverty in the country.

Under these circumstances, there is urgent need to strengthen the mass movement against the retrograde policies being pursued by the NDA Government. Though our struggles are taking more and more militant forms, they are still not sufficiently strong to defeat the policies of the Government of India. If the policies are allowed to continue for the full five year term of this Government, then it would wipe out the entire public sector and hand over the economy to the monopoly capital - both Indian and foreign.

The CITU has, therefore, to take initiative to mobilise wider and wider sections of the working class in the struggle against these policies. Though the programme chalked out by the united trade union movement is at a lower key, these movements can be used as a stepping stone for bigger class battles and more powerful actions. We have to shoulder this big responsibility. The sentiment of the workers all over India is in favour of such a massive action. We have the capacity to create a favourable atmosphere for giving a call for a nationwide general strike, preferably during the next budget session of Parliament.

It is necessary to explore the possibility of organising a common long-drawn strike action by the working class engaged in financial, energy, transport and communication sectors. Such a struggle will have the potential to effectively paralyse the entire national economy, with the support and direct action by other sections of working class and mass organisations. It will also compel the Central Government to reverse these policies. The CITU has to work keeping this perspective in mind and prepare the working class for such a countrywide, long drawn, powerful action with solidarity support from other sections of the toiling masses. Mainstreaming the industry wise actions in such a common action will create sufficient pressure on the Government of India.

The struggle against communalism has also assumed serious importance since the virus has penetrated into the ranks of the working class. Castiesm also is eating into the vitals of the fighting working class and unless we fight in a determined manner against these forces, our struggle against the policies of the Vajpayee Government cannot be taken to further heights. The fast changing political situation also requires our intervention in all the developing popular movements. The BJP and RSS should not be allowed to take the country to suit their reactionary objectives.

We must remember that capitalism today is making ideological propaganda among the working class about the benefit of globalisation and a section of the working class is becoming a victim of such dubious propaganda. Hence, our unions must carry on intensive ideological propaganda among the working class, countering the capitalist propaganda and ideologically equipping the working class to fight bigger struggles against capitalism.

Comrades, we have to keep in mind that without a strong CITU organisation, we cannot initiate bigger movements. Our State committees, district committees and industry wise federations have to be more alert and active so that we prepare ourselves organisationally to meet the challenges of the situation. We are finalising our document on organisational consolidation of the united movement of the working class. I have no doubt that the fruitful discussion on this subject will help us to strengthen our organisation to build a powerful united movement of the working class.

We have to pay more attention to build worker-peasant alliance in the forthcoming period. The CITU, Kisan Sabha and AIAWU must come together to chalk out programme of movement to develop a powerful alliance, which will immensely strengthen our resistance to the economic policies of the NDA Government. We should soon arrange such a meeting so that this long neglected task is given proper importance in the days to come.

A favourable situation is developing internationally, with more and more workers coming forward to resist the policy of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. Massive demonstrations are being held in Europe, America, and Africa condemning the policies of globalisation and war preparations of US imperialism. Working Class initiative is visibly seen in these actions.

Let the Indian working class join the worldwide struggles against globalised finance capital. The CITU has to prepare the working class and the toiling masses of India for bigger class battles to defend the gains of TU movement and fight to defeat the evil designs of IMF-World Bank to subjugate the world to their dictates.

M K Pandhe
General Secretary

Long Live Working Class Unity!
Down with US imperialist's war preparations!
Long Live struggle against globalisation and privatisation!
We shall overcome!

State		Amount Received (Rs)		No. of Members	
Andhra Pradesh	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Assam	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Bihar	2034	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Chhattisgarh	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Delhi	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Gujarat	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Haryana	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
H.P.	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Karnataka	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Kerala	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
M.P.	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Madhya Pradesh	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Maharashtra	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Mizoram	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Nagaland	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Northeast	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Odisha	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Punjab	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Rajasthan	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Tamil Nadu	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Telangana	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
U.P.	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
West Bengal	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Y.S.	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Other	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00
Total	1883	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00	00 00 00

STATEMENT SHOWING STATEWISE MEMBERSHIP AS PER ANNUAL RETURN RECEIVED TILL 25.11.2002

Name of State	No of Unions 1999	Annual Returns	No of Unions 2000	Annual Returns	No of Unions 2001	Annual Returns
Andaman & Nicobar	7	1863	5	1613	--	--
A.P.	683	185168	619	158119	595	137676
Assam	83	45450	82	53914	67	3984
Bihar	17	20374	12	13831	3	3963
Delhi	69	48634	66	34735	51	17233
Goa	7	1319	5	1216	7	1168
Gujarat	20	13704	7	2886	4	1197
Haryana	18	35952	22	21671	15	3411
H.P.	30	9213	21	7989	24	12358
J & K	1	581	1	533	1	398
Karnataka	120	85938	99	580311	71	68627
Kerala	894	977563	758	871762	46	59708
M.P.	67	19614	47	13410	23	9673
Maharashtra	62	60944	58	62370	29	43761
Orissa	51	21816	46	22303	19	5887
Punjab	93	80649	100	85074	34	54307
Rajasthan	77	34387	47	26431	42	14536
Tamilnadu	411	266606	387	269331	274	191269
Tripura	33	59925	30	57550	27	67375
U.P.	77	18790	65	13330	32	6758
W.B.	974	1212162	791	957325	545	504747
Uttaranchal	32	8677	5	819	25	5907
Chattisgarh	13	20988	12	16521	9	9955
Jharkhand	15	55245	10	39169	2	6034
	3854	3285562	3295	2812213	1945	1279932

BTR Memorial Fund

Collection up to 15.11.2002

State	Amount Received(Rs)	Committed Amount (Rs)
West Bengal	58,67,615.00	1,00,00,000.00
A.P.	15,24,005.50	15,00,000.00
Assam	74,180.00	5,00,000.00
Bihar	77,522.00	8,00,000.00
Delhi	1,15,430.00	2,00,000.00
Kerala	33,42,500.00	50,00,000.00
M.P.	76,342.00	2,00,000.00
Orissa	36,813.50	5,00,000.00
Punjab	4,47,152.00	10,00,000.00
Rajasthan	3,00,615.00	5,00,000.00
Tamilnadu	5,62,580.00	30,00,000.00
Tripura	30,280.00	5,00,000.00
Karnataka	2,60,016.00	7,00,000.00
H.P.	13,756.00	2,00,000.00
Haryana	46,950.00	2,00,000.00
Maharashtra	2,61,182.00	10,00,000.00
U.P.	1,71,750.00	5,00,000.00
Goa	50,000.00	1,50,000.00
Gujarat	14,000.00	1,00,000.00
Andaman & Nicobar	5,000.00	
Individuals/Union/Fed.	7,70,451.00	
Bank Unions/Federations	5,24,114.00	
Insurance (AIIEA)	4,12,000.00	
AISGEF	6,31,670.00	
	<u>1,56,15,924.00</u>	<u>2,65,50,000.00</u>

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

Shanti Ghatak Nagar, Hissar (Haryana)

1- 4 December, 2002

RESOLUTIONS

CONDOLENCE RESOLUTIONS

COM. SURYANARAYANA RAO

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), deeply condoles the passing away of Comrade Suryanarayana Rao, Vice-President of CITU, at Bangalore on 1st July, 2002. Com. Suri, as he was affectionately called by all, was also the President of Karnataka State CITU. He made immense contribution to the development of the trade union movement and united struggles at both Karnataka State and at all India level. He was also a veteran leader of the left and democratic movement in the country and was a Central Committee member of CPI(M) and Secretary of its Karnataka State Committee. Drawn into the freedom struggle through the student movement he was jailed for 18 months and in the post independence period also he was jailed for leading struggle opposing emergency. In his death the CITU in particular and the working class in general has lost a leader whose void will be hard to fill. This meeting pays its respectful homage to the memory of Com. Suryanarayana Rao and convey condolences to bereaved comrades and members of the family.

COM. SHANTI GHATAK

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), records with deep grief the sad demise on November 1, 2002, of Com. Shanti Ranjan Ghatak, a veteran trade union, a former member of the CITU Secretariat for a long time, President of the West Bengal State committee of CITU, a senior member of the CPI(M) State committee and the former Labour Minister of West Bengal. Com. Ghatak played a significant role in the development of trade union movement in West Bengal in his early days. As a Labour Minister, with his clear vision and rational approach he handled many a labour dispute in West Bengal, most efficiently. This meeting pays its respectful homage to the departed leader and conveys condolences to the bereaved comrades and members of the family.

ON CONDOLENCE

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), pays its respectful homage to all the leaders, cadres and activists of the working class and democratic movement, who passed away during this intervening period since Siliguri General Council Meeting.

This meeting condoles the death of:

Com. Abul Basar, a member of the CITU General Council;

Com. D.D. Shastri, veteran T.U. leader and President of TUCC;

Com. Prankrishna Chakraborty, a legendary leader of the refugee movement in Bengal and a leading organiser of CPI(M) and

Com. Supriya Acharya a veteran leader of the women's movement in Bengal. We pay our respectful homage to these departed leaders.

This meeting expresses its deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of Sri. Krishna Kant, former Vice-President of India, Sri G.M.C. Balayogi, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and veteran Urdu Poet & lyricist Com. Kaifi Azmi and pay our respectful homage.

HOMAGE TO MARTYRS

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), pays its respectful homage to all those leaders, cadres and activists of the trade union, peasant, agricultural labour, youth, student and women's movement, who laid down their lives in the struggle championing the cause of the toiling people as well as against separatist, divisive and communal forces safeguarding the unity of the people and integrity of the nation. The meeting most respectfully, remembers the courageous sacrifice of these martyrs who have left an indelible impression on the democratic movement as a whole and will remain a constant source of inspiration in our fight against exploitation and against casteist and communal forces.

Draft Resolution:

ON DANGER OF COMMUNALISM

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), expresses its grave concern at the attempts of the VHP and its allies to keep the communal cauldron boiling in Gujarat to reap electoral benefits in the ensuing Assembly elections in the State.

The VHP wanted to undertake a Rath Yatra from 17th December carrying the pictures of the burning Sabarmati Express and the Akshardham Temple, up to 6th December and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the demolition of the Babri Masjid as 'Vijay Diwas'. The Election Commission however has rightly banned the Yatra and the State Government had no alternative but to implement the EC's orders. Though the VHP had to abandon its plan after enacting a drama of courting arrest, it now plans to carry out religio-political meetings at more than 100 temples in the State where the likes of Sadhvi Ritambara, Giriraj Kishore, and Praveen Togadia etc are set to let loose their oratory skills to rouse communal passions. The Working Committee of CITU earnestly demands that the Election Commission should be vigilant and prevent any action by the VHP, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena et al, to vitiate the atmosphere during the elections. Narendra Modi and Praveen Togadia have already set the tune with their intemperate and communal language against the Chief Election Commissioner, besides attacking all saner and secular voices and organisations.

During the last decade, the Sangh Parivar has used Gujarat as the 'laboratory' for its Hindutva experiment, wherein a systematic hate campaign against the minorities was conducted, through distribution of venomous leaflets, 'trishuls' etc. Several teams which have visited and studied the Gujarat situation, on the occasion of the Gujarat carnage, indicted the Gujarat Government of conniving with the perpetrators, while the Concerned Citizens' Tribunal headed by retired Supreme Court Judge

Krishna Iyer, has held that the post Godhra carnage in Gujarat was an 'organised crime perpetrated by the Chief Minister Narendra Modi and his Government'. In a blatant demonstration of double speak, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister chose to condemn the carnage in foreign lands while refusing to take any action against Modi. The CITU considers that it is the responsibility of all the democratic people to unite and defeat the communal forces in Gujarat in the coming elections to the State Assembly to be held on 12th December 2002.

Discontent against the economic policies of the BJP led NDA Government has been growing among large sections of the people as was evident from the series of reverses the BJP and its allies had suffered in the elections to several State Assemblies and local bodies. But the Government is not prepared to change its policies. Rather it is determined to go ahead with the same disastrous policies to satisfy the World Bank and the international and national corporate houses. In such a situation, the mounting resistance to these policies from a united working class will be sought to be disrupted by invoking communal passions. The VHP leader Giriraj Kishore has already warned the 'successful experiment in Gujarat will be repeated all over the country.'

The CITU has been warning of the serious danger that communalism poses to the unity and integrity of our country. The propaganda carried out by the forces of majority communalism encourages minority communalism and both in turn lead to disruption of the unity of the working class and the toiling masses of our country. The backward sections of the working class become susceptible to the divisive appeals of the communal forces. It is therefore the bounden duty of the trade unions to intervene to protect the unity of all the workers. CITU cadres have a special responsibility not only of protecting the unity of the working class but of saving the unity of the country as well. It is the experience of history that it is only the working class, along with the toiling sections of the society, which by its unity and consciousness can save the unity of a country. The working class must realise that the unity forged through their struggles on economic demands and against the economic policies of the Government will be reduced to nothing, if they fail to act as a class and intervene to resist the division of the people on communal lines.

This meeting calls upon all the trade unions, irrespective of affiliations, to consciously discharge this responsibility in the coming period and strengthen the unity of the working class and the people to fight and defeat the growing menace of communalism in the country.

Draft Resolution:

ON US WAR THREATS AGAINST IRAQ

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), vehemently denounces the USA for its move to unleash another devastating war on Iraq.

After the 11th September 2001 destruction of the World Trade Centre, the Bush administration has launched a belligerent drive for global domination in the name of fighting terrorism. It has prepared a document, namely "The National Security Strategy of the United States," which has clearly set the strategy of pre-emptive action against hostile states and terrorist groups, developing weapons of mass destruction. The policy is directed against those states specifically which oppose its hegemonistic drive. The Bush Administration has already branded Iraq, Iran and North Korea as the axis of evils. After the devastation of Afghanistan it has now targeted Iraq on the plea that it possesses weapons of mass destruction. In a brazen manner through State sponsored terrorism the USA wants to oust

Saddam Hussain and impose its own puppet regime.

The main objective of the USA is to control the rich oil resources of Iraq and the Gulf countries. Iraq specifically is the target because it has the second largest oil reserves in the world after Saudi Arabia, which are expected to last for over a hundred years, whereas USA's oil reserves can last only for about a decade more. Moreover, the bleak economic scenario in USA, for which George W Bush and his cronies have no answer has necessitated them to divert the country to a war situation and in the process taking the world to a dangerous conflagration.

With this sinister objective, the USA wanted to make a pre-emptive strike against Iraq with the support of its only ally, Britain. But the other three permanent members of the Security Council, viz, China, Russia and France opposed the USA's resolution for attacking Iraq and compelled it to go through the United Nations proposing amendments to the resolution. Although by virtue of a revised resolution, the USA has managed to get it approved unanimously by the 15-member Security Council, it does not empower the USA to launch attack on Iraq unilaterally. Although Iraq has accepted to allow the UN weapon inspectors in the country, the danger of US war on Iraq still remains a potential danger. It has to be noted that this is the second time that USA has forced the weapon inspectors in Iraq undermining its sovereignty. In their first venture till 1998 they did not find any weapons of mass destruction and had actually disarmed Iraq almost completely. But the nefarious imperialist designs of the USA have again brought the Middle East on the brink of war.

In the background of the growing aggressive role by the USA, this Working Committee of the CITU expresses satisfaction over the mounting anti-war demonstrations that are sweeping through the globe including in America and Britain. It welcomes the formation of the Committee Against War on Iraq on November 14, 2002 and holding of countrywide demonstrations in India to condemn aggressive designs of U.S. on Iraq.

This meeting calls upon all State Committees of CITU and affiliate unions to carry forward the struggle against the evil designs of the USA and participate in a massive way in all action programmes drawn by the committee in the forthcoming period.

Draft Resolution:

DEFAEAT BANKRUPT POLICIES AND DEFEND RIGHTS

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), notes with concern that the Prime Minister is never tired of asserting his Government's determination to aggressively pursue the disastrous economic reforms policies and also to carry out the anti-worker and pro-employer amendments in the labour laws. This is a challenge confronting the country's working people and their movement.

The dissenting voices heard from the Ministers and different constituents of the NDA over some of the impending disinvestment measures seems nothing more than a dialogue among the deaf. The Disinvestment Minister, with the full backing of the Prime Minister is set on course to privatise even profitable PSUs, like oil companies and NALCO. The Tenth Plan document targets Rs. 78,000 crore as proceed from sale of PSUs during the remaining four years of the plan.

The fiscal and monetary policy measures that have been in the air seek to heap bonanzas on the corporates - foreign and Indian, and miseries on the common masses. While the outright loot of the

nationalised banks by the big corporates is going on unabated with the mounting non performing assets reaching astronomical figures, the interest rates on small savings and Provident Funds of common public and workers are being deliberately suppressed, with the intent of diverting these to speculative stock market operations. Even after all these incentives the economy is stagnating, if not falling, resulting in further loss of employment, earning and growth of uncertainty all around.

With acute drought and starvation deaths haunting the rural poor, the Government has failed to come forward with any relief measures worth the name. It refuses to heed to the long standing demand for enactment of Central legislation for the benefit of agricultural workers.

The tall promise of creating one crore jobs every year has gone with the wind. On the other hand unemployment and joblessness is soaring on an unprecedented scale. Downsizing, retrenchment, contractorisation, outsourcing and closures of units are galore. The implementation machinery of the existing labour laws has virtually been dismantled and the employers are allowed to violate the laws with impunity. And the Government is all set to usher in the 'hire and fire' regime in the name of 'labour market regulation' courtesy the Ravindra Varma Commission report.

The working class has not witnessed such an onerous situation ever before during the last fifty-five years of independent India. The hostility of the present Government at the Centre towards the workers has had no parallel.

To carry out their unprecedented onslaughts against the workers with ease, the ruling polity with the help of their sangh parivar outfits is resorting to disrupt the unity of the workers and the toiling masses, with their divisive techniques. This is a blatant design to stifle the united resistance of the working class to the oncoming offensives.

This meeting calls upon the workers, trade unions and other mass organisations, to rally together, irrespective of affiliations, to take on the challenges and carry the struggle to defend our hard won trade union and democratic rights and defeat the bankrupt policies of economic liberalisation. While exhorting the workers and the CITU unions to make thorough going preparations, leaving no stone unturned to successfully implement the calls for country wide mass *satyagraha* on January 8 and the march to Parliament on February 26, this meeting calls upon them to raise the pitch of struggle to further heights and move forward to stage an all India general strike.

Draft Resolution:

GREETINGS TO HARYANA WORKING CLASS ON STRUGGLE!

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), congratulates the working class of Haryana for their militant struggles against exploitation and in defence of the rights of the toiling people braving severe repression by the employers and the State administration.

The trade union movement of Haryana has gone a long way to organise the workers of the unorganised sector in several State-wide militant struggles in the face of brutal repressive measures by the gangsters hired by the employers and the State administration. The struggle of brick-kiln workers, forest workers, gramin chowkidars and the construction workers, who are the worst exploited in the State. The CITU has played a crucial and leading role in defending the rights and consolidating the most downtrodden sections of the working people and the society. The united organised struggles of these vast sections of the unorganised sector workers have also helped the rural workers in various occupations in a big

way in getting organised and asserting their rights throughout the State.

The more than two months long strike by the stone quarry workers of Haryana is the most notable event in the recent past, which had not only united the workers but the entire rural masses in the adjoining villages. It turned out to be a peoples' movement against the contractors and traders. The struggle faced inhuman repression by the State police and the Govt. machinery like mass scale arrests including workers' children, ransacking and plundering of villagers' houses and house to house tortures by police. The top leadership of CITU, including the General Secretary of the State Committee, were arrested and detained for more than two months and severely tortured in custody. Through the process of struggle, the Pahar Khan Mazdoor Union was reorganised and consolidated and they are preparing for future struggle. This heroic struggle had also drawn widespread solidarity and support from various trade unions, employees' organisations and mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, women, students, youth and various political forces as well.

The struggle of the State Govt. employees in Haryana also represents the most organised and militant action of the democratic movement. The recent struggle against closure of a State Govt. undertaking could unite the entire section of the State Govt. employees irrespective of affiliations.

This meeting also notes with concern that the trade union movement in Haryana has to work in the face of extreme hostility against any trade union action, by the State Govt. machinery, which is acting practically at the behest of the employers. The industrial workers throughout the State, particularly in the industrial centers of Gurgaon, Sonapat, Panipat, Panchkula, Ambala, Hissar, etc., have every day been facing non-chalant violations by employers of labour laws, illegal terminations, non-payment of wages, whimsical closures and lock-outs *et al.* Any action of the workers and their unions opposing such illegal acts is being sought to be tackled by letting the police force against the workers. Braving such a situation, the working class of Haryana has been carrying on their struggles against the employers and also against the anti-people policy of both the State and the Central Govt.s. They have been playing a crucial role in organising the other sections of the unorganised masses. This meeting heartily greets the working class and the democratic movement in the State for their heroic role in advancing the cause of united struggle of the toiling people.

Draft Resolution:

AGAINST DULINA MASSACRE

This meeting of the Working Committee of CITU, being held from 1st to 4th December 2002, at Hissar (Haryana), denounces the dastardly incident at Dulina, in Jhajjar district of Haryana, where on the *Dussera* day, 15th October 2002, five persons - all hailing from the *dalit* community - have been lynched to death in open daylight by the VHP/Bajrang dal activists in active connivance with the police.

The victims, all licensed dealers in animal skins, were carrying skins of dead cows in a canter on 15th October 2002, when police intercepted them. It was reported that the police asked for bribe over which there had been some verbal altercation. Following that, the police took all of them into custody, along with the vehicle. Incidentally, the VHP/Bajrang dal have been carrying on a month long campaign, around the *Dussera* day, on "protection of cows (*Gomata*)". The police reportedly passed on the information of the arrest of five dalits with animal skin, following which a gang armed with lethal weapon, led by the local VHP/Bajrang dal activists arrived at the police chowki. The gang dragged the victims out from the police custody and beat them to death on the road, right in front of the police.

There is a further shocking revelation. It was also gathered from the local sources that the police beat

one of those five arrested to death, while they were held in custody itself. Thereafter, to escape from the criminal charge of custodial torture to death, the police informed the VHP goons to give it a colour of mob-violence, for which the four others had to lose their lives.

The administration and police in Haryana failed to immediately arrest the VHP/Bajrang dal miscreants responsible for the murderous act and initiating action against the police officials of the concerned police-outpost of the Jajjhar district. Emboldened by this callousness on the part of the Haryana Government, the very same miscreants had unleashed further offensives and created a scare among the dalits in the area. They also held the police to ransom, when the police, under pressure, had made some fake arrests.

The Dulina massacre is not an isolated incident. This is nothing but part of the aggressive *hindutva* agenda pursued by the *sangh parivar*, which condemns the *dalits* to the most inhuman and horrendous existence. For them the carcass of a dead cow is more valuable than the lives of human beings, if such humans happen to be *dalits*!

This meeting calls upon the whole working class to raise its voice against this scourge. The *dalits* constitute the most economically exploited and socially oppressed section of our class. Defending their lives and livelihood and rooting out the rank communal prejudice perpetrated by the hindu fundamentalist forces represented by the *sangh parivar* must be taken as a paramount task before the working class and the trade union movement, all over the country.
