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THE WORKING CLASS

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CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Comrades,

At the outset let me express our grief and agony about those who had suffered the worst natural calamity that has befallen our country after independence, which occurred in Maharashtra. Two villages, Latur and Khillari were wiped out and it is estimated that around 50,000 people lost their lives and severalthousands were maimed, orphaned made destitutes overnight. We pay our homage to those who are dead and share the grief of those who lost their dear ones. The CITU organisations have taken steps to ollect relief funds and send it to the Maharashtra Chief linister's Relief Fund. Considering the magnitude of ie tragedy, whatever is done is insignificant and all ıose who have not contributed in this gigantic task ıould do so without any delay.

During this period many of our leaders and cadres ave lost their lives. I pay our homage in their herished memory and send our heart felt ondolences to the bereaved families.

APITALISM - CRISIS DEEPENS

Comrades, at Bhubaneshwar I have dealt at ength on the continuing recessionary trends in the developed capitalist societies of the world and their attempt to shift the burden of the crisis on to the working class. The trend is not only continuing but in many cases is on the increase.

In the EC countries unemployment rate has increased to 12% and it is expected to further increase in the next year. The total unemployed is 17 million today and is expected to cross 20 millions by the middle of next year. It is graphically put by economists that the number of unemployed in the EC is equal to the population of Belgium, Denmark and Ireland, The British" economist" on December 3 captioned Germany as a sinking ship and the recession which is haunting Germany can only be equated with the crisis of 1930s. The German trade unions were planning a nation wide strike against the job reduction . They have been forced for a compromise with the employer and signed an agreement with the Volkswagen AG, the biggest auto-producer of Germany.As per the agreement the working hours is reduced to 28.8 hours instead of 36 hours ie 4 day week with a reduction of 10% wage in order to save 37,000 jobs out of a total workforce of 1 lakh. This agreement will come into force from the 1st of January 1994. But, however, the company has again threatened that they will reopen the issue of surplus labour in the next year.

In France, the rate of unemployment crossed 12% in September to reach a total of 3.28 millions. In Britain situation is further worsening. The attack against the workers welfare amenities in the name of de-regulation of social spending is on the increase. Another suggestion is made that Papa and Mama should take leave for 3 months per annum without pay alternatively. The 4 day week proposal is not acceptable to the British capitalist. Japan, the second mighty economic power in the world is also facing problems. The recent bank crash and the stock market crash with its continuing swoops and faintaings spells disaster for Japanese economy. 60% of the Japanese corporations are planning severe job cuts and according to estimates 2.35 million workers are surplus in these corporations and their jobs are under threat. In the U S A too the official unemployment rate is continuing at 6-7% inspite of the economy showing some signs of improvement.

In Spain the unemployment rate is 23%. The Spanish workers are planning to have nation wide action against the plan of reduction of employment. In France the successful strike by Air France employees which has become a catalyst for trade unions across Europe. In Belgium the workers are on the move against Job cuts. On November 26 there was a successful strike and the country is facing strikes every Friday and it was planned to have December 10 a nation wide strike when Belgium hosts the European Communities summit meting at Brussels. The high-tech areas of world capitalism.

TECHNOLOGY - FOR WHOM ?

American workers resistance against the govt policies are on the increase. The govt signed NAFTA agreement through which they can shift many industries of US to Mexico which was stoutly opposed by the American trade unions, though they could not stall the agreement from passing. This is the developing situation in the high-tech economies of the developed capitalist world. In order to cope with the developing crisis, further introduction of higher technology is sought to be the remedy. But the consequences is that the employment again will shrink. Here we are witnessing the contradiction between the ever increasing productive forces unleashed by the technological revolution and the obsolete production relations. Technology under capitalism is being used mainly for increasing profits and strengthening the capitalist monopoly power. The contradictions between the enormously strengthened productive forces on the one hand and the obsolete relations of production on the other have become even more visible from the impact of the on going crisis. Over production, stampede for markets, revival of protectionism, jobless growth and impoverishment on a global scale, increase in social tensions, criminal tendencies, terrorism and all round sense of gloom and pessimism are what capitalism offers even today instead of peace and new sense of optimism about man's own destiny, on the strength of the new technological possibilities that have opened up. Therefdre, comrades, it is abundantly clear that under capitalist system the benefits of modern technological revolution cannot be utilized for the betterment of the lives of the majority of the population. The answer is only one, to fight against the capitalist system which hampers the development of productive forces which can be used for the better progress of humanity. It is evident that capitalism is not the answer for human progress.

NEW AWAKENING

I do not wish to cover the whole international developments today because of paucity of time. Only I wish to point out certain happenings which needs our attention. The Russian President Mr. Yeltsin who has been elected under the constitution used his military might against those who wanted to protect the very same constitution. The members of parliament who were trying to uphold the constitution and rule of law who were camping inside the parliament building were attacked brutally by the military forces and many of them were killed in the confrontation under the orders of Mr. Yeltsin and temporarily Yeltsin could defeat those who wanted to protect democracy in Russia. The awakening of the Russian people against Yeltsins policies are on the increase and it is gathering strength among the Russian people. The new election which is proposed to be held under the so called Yeltsin constitution this month will decide the fate of Yeltsin regime. However, the resistance against the economic and other policies of surrender before American imperialism. In the recent elections held in Canada and Greece the people have voted against ruling party since their policies which resulted in increased unemployment and impoverishment. Therefore, they have elected new governments which promised better lives for the people. In the recent elections in Poland, former communists were elected to power. The recent municipal elections in Italy shows the same trend. The people of the Western countries and the former USSR are slowly realizing that the bourgeoisie system is decadent and the fight against it is slowly gaining momentum in different ways.

Another important point to be noted is the adoption of the Cuban resolution by the United Nations General Assembly on 3rd of November 1993. This is the second time that the U.N. opposed the blockade against Cuba by the USA. Last year 59 nations supported the resolution while only 4 voted against it, including the U S A. This time 88 nations voted in favour of the resolution and again only 4 including the USA against the resolution. After the collapse of the Soviet Union due to the U S blockade Cuba had to suffer very much in the areas of food, medical imports and markets for Cuban exports. Cuba has lost 40 million dollars. Still Cuba is continuing the fight against the American imperialism and is earning international sympathy and support while USA is getting isolated. The courageous people of Cuba are not going to submit to US blackmail. They deserve all support in their heroic struggle.

American pressure to subjugate the Peoples Republic of Korea in the name of destroying their nuclear capabilities against which the DPRK is putting up a stiff resistance. Here again again we see the US arrogance which needs to be condemned.

A mention may be made here in passing about the Chinese economy. The average growth achieved by them for the last several years is around 12%. They have opened up certain areas and specific industrial sectors for foreign investment and collaborations. This is helping them to have international market access and upgradation of technology according to them. With comparing diverse developments we have to remember that they have built a strong infrastructural and industrial base at least 3 times than that of India before this opening up process. They are almost keeping their socialist base intact with their special characteristics. Out of the 44 billion dollars foreign investment they had from 1979 to 1993, 80% has come from overseas Chinese.

However, while noting this advances, we have to study more about the Chinese experience.

Comrades, the outstanding event of the recent period which nobody can forget was the historic agreement arrived at on November 18 with Mr. D Clerk and Mr. Nelson Mandela agreeing for an interim constitution. It is envisaged that a democratically elected govt for South Africa will be established wherein the blacks and the whites will have equal voting rights and the apartheid system in Africa will come to an end. The transition executive taking over power ends the era of minority rule and the beginning of power sharing between black and whites as a prelude to a govt of national unity. The non-racial elections are scheduled to be held in April 1994. This is not only a victory for the ANC but a victory for the whole of humanity in so far as it dawns a new era of democracy in South Africa. We have to hail this victory and wish all glory to the people of South Africa. The lives of thousands who had to lay down their lives for democracy and for an end to apartheid system did not go in vain.

NATIONAL SITUATION

Comrades,

We have had our Working Committee at Bhubaneshwar from 4-6 June 1993 where we finalized our organizational report. Also we decided to prepare extensively for the success of the Bundh and strike call issued by the platform of mass organisations. Intellectuals, students, youth and organisations of women agricultural workers and peasants besides the trade unions - all worked hard to make it a success. Participation of these mass organisations on common slogans has given new impetus for the struggle, not only against the economic policies followed by the government but also against the compromising attitude being shown by them towards communalism. The disruption caused to the democratic movement due to the growth of communalism and the threat posed by them to national unity also came to the focus in the campaign. The response for the Bundh and strike was tremendous. The Bundh was total in West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala and Tripura as per press reports while in Tamilnadu, AP, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Punjab, it was near total. In Assam, UP, M.P, Gujarat Delhi and Haryana, the Bundh created considerable impact. In other states too the impact was felt in varying degrees. Nearly 2 crores of workers took part in the strike which was unprecedented in the recent history of the Indian trade union movement. I congratulate all those who participated in this massive action and the cadres and leaders who worked for the success of this movement. Inspite of this massive show of opposition the govt is continuing with their liberalisation and restructuring plans without any restraint.

The prices of essential commodities according to official figures has gone up to 8.5%. In reality the life of the people are becoming miserable due to the rise in prices of essential items of daily use. The Govts claim of reduction of the fiscal deficit is not being materialized and it is on the increase. Our external debt is now stated to be over 85 billion dollars i.e. around 2,65,000 crores which when Dr Manmohan Singh took over was only Rs.90,000 crores. This puts the country virtually in a debt trap.

RUPTURES IN THE MONOPOLIST CAMP

A section of big industrialists of the country too have expressed concern about the capacity of the govt to service such a huge loan liability, and said that the country is going towards a debt trap.

Many of these big industrialists who were all along praising the new economic policies of the govt saying that it was the only way to progress have now started criticizing these policies.

Now the famous "Bombay Group" of industrialists - the big industrialists of India have expressed concern about the complete liberalisation of import of capital goods into the country. They have said that the concessions being given to the capital goods imports to the country will ruin the domestic capital goods industry. Also they have gone on record that they may not be able to compete with the big foreign multinationals like General Motrors and IBM whose yearly turn over is more than the gross national product of India. Demanding "level playing ground", they have pointed out the difference in taxes between TNCs and Indian companies, the Govt's guarantee of 16% profit in dollar terms to the foreign multinationals in power and oil sectors etc. The standing conference of public sector enterprises have also demanded equal treatment for Indian and foreign companies. Thus a strange phenomenon is developing - that the govt of India should ensure "equal treatment for Indian firms like that of foreign companies".

TNCS ON A GRABBING SPREE

Since the FERA restrictions are removed and the TNCs are allowed to take more than 50% shares in the Indian companies they have started grabbing control over many of them with 10% to 15% shares participation. The following table will give us an idea as to where we are heading for.

MNCS WHICH ARE RAISING THEIR STATE IN INDIAN VENTURES

	From	To	Parent Co's Base
Kinetic Honda	28.56	51	Japan
Maruti Udyog	40	50.24	Japan
Ashok Leyland	39.5	51	U K
Digital Equipments	40.03	51	USA
Colour Chem	40	50.52	Germany
Corn Products	40	51	USA
Cadbury India	40	51	UK
ABB	36.8	51	Sweden
Alfa Lavel	39.92	51	Sweden
Indian Shaving Products	40	51	USA
P & G	40	65	USA
Indian Sweing Machine	40	51	USA
Bata India	40	51	Canada
AKG Acoustics	39	51	Austria
Schenick Avery	40	50	UK
Madura Coats	40	51	UK
Sesa Goa	40	51	Italy
Glaxo India	40	51	UK
Nestle	40	47	Switzerland
LML & Piaggio	25.5	51	Italy
Carrier Aircorn	40	51	USA
PSI-Bull	40	51	France
Philips	40	51	Holland
Brooke Bond	39.58	49.9	UK
Lipton	40	51	UK
Pepsi Foods	39.89	44.35	USA
Indian Oxygen	39.76	51	UK
SRF-Nippondenso	26	40	Japan

PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE SLAUGHTER HOUSE

Thus the foreign multinationals have brought these firms under their control. In the power sector as well as coal sector foreign multinationals are invited by giving big concessions. In the oil sector these multinational companies who were packed up and sent out when the nationalization took place are ceremoniously being brought into the country. The Caltex, Mable, Shell, Oman Oll and other oil gaints are again back in India. The biggest public sector pharmaceutical company in the country, The Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd (IDPL) is awaiting liquidation before the BIFR, which will give the most notorious multinationals a free run of the Indian health care system, taking it out of the reach of the majority of our people. The resultant effect of all these I need not explain here. If power and oil becomes costly and controlled by TNCs interests it will go against our national progress and sovereignty. It is a foregone conclusion.

I do not wish to deal here with the frantic efforts which are being made by the Govt of India to implement the World Bank IMF directives to destabilise and privatise the public sector etc which are dealt with in detail by our general secretary. However I wish to invite your attention to the disastrous consequences of these policies - in the agricultural sector. In the name of curtailing the fiscal and budgetary deficits further drastic cuts are being imposed on fertilizer, water and electricity subsidies and the cost of all these are going to be jacked up. Directions are being issued to the state govts to raise electricity and water charges based on their actual cost. The fertilizer industry itself is sought to be destabilised and many are to be closed. This may bring in foreign companies in this sector which will virtually push up fertilizer cost to unbearable levels for large majority of our peasantry. This is not only going to ruin our peasantry at large, but also adversely affect our agricultural production - including food and slowly we are being pushed to become dependent on imports for our food needs too.

Therefore, comrades you have to redouble efforts to mobilize the whole of the trade union movement with the mass organisations of all sections of our people to intensify our struggle and launch for bigger and stronger actions for forcing the govt to change their ruinous course.

A FITTING REBUFF TO THE COMMUNALISTS

In the recently held elections to the State Assemblies of Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Mizoram, people in general have given their verdict against communal politics and the dangerous tactics of the BJP. They have faught the elections with the claim that they are going to capture power in all the states and this would be a prelude for them to capture political power at the centre. This dream has been shattered to pieces by the politically conscious voters in U.P where the elections were faught mainly on the temple issue. People have rejected their claim and voted them down. In Rajasthan too they have been made a minority, though they have come to power through horse trading. In the other 2 states, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh also they have been defeated. Only in Delhi, the newly formed state, they got majority due to the unpardonable sins committed by the Congress in the Delhi riots after Mrs. Gandhi's cruel murder. Thus the people of these states has given their verdict in favour of upholding the secular foundation of the country and its unity. Secondly the BJP is not to be underestimated. Thirdly the casteist elements came into the fore though using the social inequalities which is also dividing the people on the basis of caste and community. The social problems are serious and needs to be addressed to by progressive political parties and organizations. The scheduled castes and backwards are drawn into the mainstream together with the other sections in the fight against the social evils. These should not be left to casteist parties alone. This can be effectively done only through the fight for economic mobilization of these sections which should include the fight for radical land reforms and better wages and amenities for the agricultural labour. The trade unions should take initiative for drawing these sections of the people in collective mass actions. However, the maturity exhibited by the people in the elections has to be appreciated.

GROWING JOINT ACTIONS

The ever widening joint movement of the working class against the govts offensive deserve our special attention. Besides all India general strikes in several industries and factories, workers are getting united to fight back the various offensives of the employers and the government. The unity shown in the September7 all India steel strike by all the trade unions is a pointer. The strike by central govt employees for wage revision and other issues were also faught on the basis of building unity of different trade unions though the gain which they have attained not seizable. However, the policy of wage freeze propagated by the govt has been given a rebuff. The united strike of the Tamilnadu transport workers and the Kerala Road Transport Workers are other examples. The 5 lakh Kerala state govt employees also had a joint united fight and have got concessions from the Govt. Against closures and sickness. Unity is being exhibited in all sectors of industry. The latest is that the unions of the employees of HMT have formed a Save HMT Committee including officers. In the case of FACT and Cochin Ship Yard also the very same has happened. All the trade unions and the officers associations came together in order to protect their industry and employment. Besides in many public sector industries the workers, employees and officers though organized in different unions are coming together to fight back the offensive. In the NTC mills efforts are on to take a united stand for the revival of the sick units and to have a common approach. The govt had declared its intention to throw out 90,000 workers from the NTC mills out of a total of 1,35,000 workers. However, this sector also needs our attention. The latest is the united strike by the 6 lac postal employees. These developments are to be noted and needs our special attention.

When the crisis comes it is only natural that those who are affected are coming together to counter the offensive. But at the same time in the working class movement the new element of trade union unity is coming to the fore together with the exposure of the class policies of the govt in power and many who were backing those policies are also coming in the open to oppose them. In many of these united movements, the CITU is playing a vital role in mobilizing the entire class for the workers' cause. The situation demands that the CITU should take appropriate steps for organisational cohesion. The organisational report adopted by the CITU correctly highlighted this point and decided to approach all the trade unions for the formation of a Federation of Trade Unions. This has special significance in the present circumstances. Therefore for widening and strengthening unity, factory level, industry level, state level and national level approaches has to be taken up seriously by the CITU. It is our task to build stronger trade union unity and cohesion to fight back the offensive of the govt and employers under World Bank dictates.

As we know the economic policies of the govt is surrendering our economic freedom by allowing the foreign multinationals to dominate our economy which brings in broader sections.in conflict with the government and therefore the possibility of broadest unity is also developing. In these spheres the CITU should actively intervene and see that the unity of peoples is brodend and strengthened.

Our organisational report stressed about the importance of taking up the cause of unorganized sector workers on which we have already taken some steps. However, since the new policies have allowed the big companies to enter the field, in the small scale sector many industries are finding it difficult to carry on their business and closures and lockouts are increasingly taking place against which we have to take suitable steps. The recent all India Beedi conference highlighted the plight of the beedi workers numbering over 60 lakhs throughout the country. Majority of them are women. They are not even given the minimum wages prescribed and in many states no proper minimum wages is not even declared. They constitute 11% of the total unorganized workers of India. Therefore, comrades, this section of the workers are to be brought into organization by taking suitable steps by the state committees of CITU. The new all India committee formed for the beedi workers have chalked out a plan of action which must be taken seriously by our comrades.

The decision to have an all India convention of sick industries to formulate an action plan to fight back the govt offensive was taken. This must also be taken up immediately.

Comrades, we are going to hold our Eighth Conference from 8-12 March, 1994 at Patna. We have to prepare for the success of the conference while taking all steps for stronger and mighter actions for defeating the attacks against the working class and our people.

CITU Working Committee Meeting Denounces Govt for Signing Dunkel Draft:

Calls For Countrywide Agitation

☐ P K Ganguly

The Working Committee of the CITU Held at Guwahati from 13 to 15 December denounced the Narasimha Rao Govt for deciding to sign the Dunkel Draft to conclude the GATT agreement. In a resolution on the economic policy of the govt and the immediate task of the trade union movement, the meeting expressed serious concern over the government's total insensitiveness towards the deteriorating situation in the country and the growing mass opposition against the IMF prescriptions ;and going ahead with implementation of the policies culminating into acceptance of the retrograde Dunkel proposals. Members after members condemned the supine attitude of the govt and called for countrywide agitational plans to mobilise all sections of people to intensify united actions to fight and defeat these policies. The meeting reiterated that the Dunkel proposals postulate the most dangerous provisions to undermine the economic and national sovereignty of the country. In short the draft calls for no restrictions on foreign equity participation, no restrictions on areas of investment, no licensing, no export obligations to fund imports; free import of components and intermediaries, no obligation to use locally available products and raw materials and above all to repeal all laws and policies that put restrictions on free entry and functioning of the multinationals giving equal treatment with the Indian sector. The meeting further pointed out that though the three strategies under the Dunkel Draft viz Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) are inter linked and orchestered to enable the multinationals to have full control over the Indian economy and create a new imperialist regime, the TRIPS singularly constitutes one of the worst forms of neo-colonial exploitations. By this they want to amend the intellectual property rights of India including the Patent Act and take the country to the pre-independence days by forcing it to be a member of the Paris Convention on Patents of 1883. This will result in a process of complete de-indigenisation and de- industrialization of the country by handing over both agriculture and industries including the service sector and the financial sector to the multinationals. The meeting appealed to all trade unions and mass organizations irrespective of affiliations to unitedly intensify action plans to safeguard the national sovereignty.

The meeting started after flag hoisting by the President, E Balanandan on the martyr's memorial. Com Sasha Kamal Handique, Chairman of the Reception Committee delivered his welcome address. A condolence resolution was moved from the chair on Com.Achinda Bhattacharya and other leaders who died during the period. Another condolence resolution was moved on martyrs and on the people who died due to the devastating earthquake in Maharashtra. Com.Balanandan then delivered his presidential address.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Com.M K Pandhe placed the report of the General Secretary. He set in motion the next phase of countrywide movement by assailing Narasimha Rao Govt's policy which with its implementation posed an ever growing threat to the nation's sovereignty. The report stated that one after another the govt of India had accepted all the conditionalities of the World Bank and IMF culminating in the signing of the Dunkel Draft which has caused real danger to the national sovereignty. He pointed out that during this period of the economic reform the manufacturing sector had showed a stagnant character of growth while in some sectors there has been actual decline in production. The per capita consumption of the industrial goods had declined indicating increase in the poverty level of mass of the people in India. Regarding exports, he said, they have actually declined in terms of dollars. They stood at 18.1 billion dollars in 90-91,but was reduced to 17.9 billion dollars in 1991-92. As a result of devaluation of Rupee, the loot by the advanced capitalist countries had increased phenomenally. India had to sell its products at low prices in order to boost exports and export more to earn less than the previous year in terms of dollars. Since the advanced capitalist countries are in dire need of markets, he pointed out, they were selling goods to India by resorting to dumping. The govt is unable to assert its right against it.

He further referred to the new trade block (NAFTA) which pointed to the growing trade wars amongst the advanced countries and their dictating terms to the third world countries. He pointed to the growing sickness in the private sector industries which recorded a figure of 4,70,000 but under pressure of IMF the Govt was creating an atmosphere that sickness has become a feature in the public sector only, as it has embarked on a path of privatisation. He said that the logic of market economy always strengthened the growth of monopoly houses at the cost of small scale and traditional industries. Closures and sickness had aggravated the unemployment situation in the country. The govt failed to protect even the existing jobs. Further under pressure of World Bank, the govt had taken a move to amend the labour laws to put a halt to the organised trade union movement which is opposing the economic policies. He dealt with the diabolical plan of privatisation and subversion of our self reliant economy by dismantling of the public sector, disinvestment and opening up the core sectors to foreign investment and called for further consolidation and development of united struggles. He referred to the privatisation issue of IISCO and hailed the united struggle of the trade unions which had included INTUC and BMS also in the common fight.

He severely assailed the role of BIFR. The public sector units referred to BIFR were actually meant for liquidation or privatisation. In the hearing of cases the BIFR was openly advocating the policy of the govt and advocating the case of closures of these sick units without considering the genuine revival plans given by the unions. All this was done as per the pressure of World Bank which called upon the Govt to give the power of liquidation to the BIFR ,so as to expeditiously deal with the sick PSUs. The Goswami Committee report was in tune with this World Bank recommendation to hasten the process of winding up the sick PSUs. In this respect the report referred to the Exit Policy and the so called National Renewal Fund which was constituted by taking a contribution of 500 million dollars from the World Bank to implement the policy of closure and dole out the workers to increase the rank of the unemployed.

He made a review of the 9th September Bundh which demonstrated the massive unity of the working class, the peasantry, youth, students, women and other professional groups in the bundh. Preceding the Bundh, on 19th August the court arrest programme was the most massive witnessed in the country in the recent period.

Simultaneously he pointed to the unity of the mass organisations to resist the growth of the communal forces which were trying to disrupt the united movement against the economic policies. The report drew pointed attention of the delegates to the demolition of the Babri Masjid on 6th December by the BJP, RSS, VHP combine, which signified a qualitative change in the national situation showing the aggressive character of the Sangh Parivar to impose a fascistic Hindu Rashtra in the country, tearing apart its secular fabric and Constitution. The report called for intensified action against these twin dangers to safeguard the economic sovereignty of the country as well as its unity and integrity.

The report referred to the struggle of the unorganized workers and their first ever countrywide strike on 14th July last under the banner of CITU in pursuance of a 22 point charter of demands. It also referred to the mobilisation of the different sectors of the unorganised workers and pointed to the recent All India conference of the beedi workers under the banner of CITU at Canannore. He called for increased mobilisation of the workers in the different sectors of the unorganised industry who had participated in the Bharath Bundh in large numbers.

The report elaborated the experience of trade union unity during the recent struggles and called for further consolidation so as to achieve the objective of the CITU for the formation of a Confederation in the country to effectively and unitedly meet the new challenges. He referred to the activities among the working women and called for further improvement in this area including Anganwadi women The report specifically drew attention of the comrades on the organisational report prepared by the CITU and called for implementation of the various aspects and tasks at all levels of the functioning of the CITU from the centre down to the union levels. He also briefed about the growing international relations of the CITU and the exchange of visits between CITU with various other international trade union organisations.

Concluding his report Com Pandhe called for further development of united movement of the workingclass and other mass organisations. In view of the deteriorating situation since the 9 September Bharath Bundh and the signing of the Dunkel Draft he called for further intensification of mass actions under the banner of the National Platform of Mass Organisations and invited suggestions from the delegates. He also briefed about the forthcoming 8th Conference of the CITU which was to be held at Patna from 3rd to 7th March and called for gearing up of organisational machinery to make the conference a grand success.

DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT

26 comrades took part in the discussion on the report. The delegates narrated their experience of the 9th September Bharath Bundh and the 19th August court arrest. They elaborated their experience of trade union unity and cooperation with other mass organisations.

They further narrated their growing experience with the implementation of the new economic and industrial policies, closures, joblessness, offensive of VRS and attack on he organised movement. While pointing to the progressive dismantling of the public sector units, they also pointed to the growing incidence of sickness in the private sector units as well. Several delegates pointed out that the CITU and the Sponsoring COmmittee must convene national convention to look into the problem of sickness in the private sector also. While fighting the economic policies, they said, equal emphasis has to be given to defending the public sector, its continuing contribution to the economic growth and other positive factors to counter the govts propaganda against it and also to the growing sickness in the private sector and its worthlessness to contribute to the growth of employment and national economy.

Since during the deliberations the Govt was signing the Dunkel draft, almost all the delegates pointed to this surrender of the Govt and called for mounting opposition to it. Many delegates suggested that the Dunkel Draft should be focused as the most retrograde part and summary of the entire imperialist sponsored economic policy which is being imposed on India and several other third world countries.

While fighting the economic policy, the delegates put equal emphasis to fight the communal forces as well, because according to them when the mass organisations required to consolidate their unity to safeguard the economic sovereignty of the country, these communal forces under the Sangh Parivar with their fasistic slogan of Hindi Rashtra tried to disrupt the class unity of the workers and the unity and integrity and the secular character of the country.

COUNTRYWIDE JATHAS AND MARCH TO PARLIAMENT SUGGESTED

So while standing at such cross roads, the delegates suggested massive mobilisation of all sections of the people and the patriotic sections and the secular democratic forces to fight the economic policies and the communal forces in the next phase of movement to start within the earliest possible time. They suggested countrywide Jathas to mobilise the peasantry, agricultural workers and point to the dangers posed to them from the Dunkel proposals particularly and to mobilise the workingclass, students, youth, women and the common people against the ill effects of the new economic policy. They pointed out that with growing closures and unemployment each family was getting affected. And the common people have to be mobilised against such anti-social and anti- national activities of the govt. According to their suggestions the Jathas should be organised jointly by the mass organisations under the banner of the National Platform of Mass Organisations from village to towns, from district to cities to culminate in the state capitals and from state capitals from various points of the country to Delhi to culminate with a massive rally at Delhi before the Parliament.

RESOLUTIONS

The meetings adopted several resolutions vis on struggle of Haryana State Employees, greetings to the postal employees strike, on maternity benefit to working women, on South Africa, on the victory of Left Front in Tripura, on the proposed New Industrial Relations Law, on the New Economic Policy and the immediate task of the trade union movement.

Comrade Pandhe replied to the debate, accepting the various proposals given by the delegates. He welcomed the proposals for countrywide jathas as the next phase of the movement and assured that it will be placed before the National Platform of Mass Organisations. He called for gearing up the organisational machineries as per the task laid down by the CITU so as to carry forward the movement successfully. The report was adopted unanimously.

Com.Balanandan summed up the deliberations with a stirring call to move forward for the next phase of countrywide action and further for the success of the 8th Conference of the CITU. He congratulated the Assam State Committee of CITU and the volunteers for organizing the meeting successfully.

PUBLIC MEETING

Later on a public meeting was held in the Judges Field. Workers converged at the ground from various parts in processions. About 10,000 workers attended the public meeting. The public meeting was presided over by Com Sasha Kamal Handique MLA, President of the State CITU and addressed by Com. E Balanandan, M K Pandhe, Vimal Ranadive, Amal Ghosh Dastidar, Subhas Chakraborty, Udhav Barman MP and Nandeshwar Talukdar.

Working Committee Meeting Of CITU
Guwahati 13-15 December, 1993

Resolution Against The Economic Policies and on The Next Phase of Movement.

This Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Guwahati from December 13-15 denounces the Narasimha Rao Govt for deciding to sign the Dunkel Draft without any amendment. It is reprehensible that the Govt of India signed the draft despite massive opposition by the trade unions and all the mass organizations and other patriotic and democratic sections of the people and despite the note of caution given by the Standing Parliamentary Committee in the Ministry of Commerce.

Signing of the Dunkel Draft was the culmination, leading to virtual surrender of the country's economic sovereignty to the imperialist agencies, the process of which started with the formulation of the new economic policy dictated by the IMF.

The statement made by the govt that the free trade system as formulated in the Dunkel Draft to conclude the Uruguay Round of GATT talks will benefit India, is a hoax and totally unfounded. Access to the markets of the industrially advanced countries is the principal carrot which is being used by the advanced capitalist countries in the GATT. This is to blackmail the third world countries and trap them into the neo-colonial net of exploitation by an imperialist regime through a growingly unequal trade,where the intellectual property laws must conform to those of the imperialist countries and to achieve this objective the third world countries must remove all constraints on foreign investment and services including amending and repealing the domestic laws to facilitate the surrender of their sovereignty to the multinational corporations.

It is the world wide experience, particularly in the third world countries that with the increase in so called free trade, poverty has certainly not been eliminated, on the contrary it has been increased. The actual sufferers are the common people, the workers and the peasantry. It is therefore, that the workers and the farmers in the European and other countries went on massive demonstrations against the Dunkel Draft. The workers in America, Canada and Mexico also resorted to direct agitational actions against NAFTA, another free trade agreement where Mexico particularly was at the receiving end.

So far as the Dunkel Draft is concerned, the three strategies viz Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) are inter-linked and orchestered to enable the multinationals to have full control over the Indian economy including the agriculture, financial and services sector. The TRIPS singularly constitutes one of the worst forms of neo-colonial exploitation. They want to take the country back to the pre- independence stage by overall amendment of the Indian Intellectual Property Rights including the Indian Patent Acts and make India a party to the Paris Convention on Patents of 1883. This will result in a process of complete deindigenisation and de-industrialization of the country. It will increase the prices of drugs by even 200 to 300 times. Since multinationals will have control over our agricultural produce, this will adversely affect the public distribution system also and cause further spiralling in the prices of all essential commodities.

During the period of nearly 3 years of the economic reforms, prices of all commodities have been rising unabated creating insurmountable miseries to all sections of the people, particularly the rural poor. Closures and sickens have increased from nearly 3 lakh to 4.7 lakhs units particularly in the private sector during this period. This has affected tens of thousands of workers. Dismantling of the public sector and privatisation have been going on at a faster pace while the shares of profit making public sector units are being sold out at extremely low prices, 98 sick PSUs are awaiting for liquidation at the BIFR. Under pressure from World Bank, the BIFR has been given liquidatory powers to wind up the sick PSUs, the implementaion of which has also started, which will affect about 10 lakh workers. The SICA is being further amended to make BIFR a fast track machinery for liquidation in line with the Gowsami Committee's recomendations. Similarly the banking and financial sector and the insurance sector are also being pruned to facilitate entry of the multinationals and give them dominance over this vital sector of national economy.

The recent clearance issued by the Govt of India to five private power projects raises important issues of public interest, as these ar the first private power projects being cleared under the new policy framework. With 16 per cent guaranteed return on equity and covering all exchange variation risks.The crucial issues in the above clearances is the cost per unit that the State Electricity Boards will have to pay the power companies and the resultant price of electricity to the different categories of consumers, the economic costs to the various sectors of the economy as a result of massive price escalation of electricity prices or alternatively the consequences of uncovered deficits on the fiances of the State and Central Governments. The guarantees and terms being offered to private investors, both domestic and foreign are not being extended to public owned utilities like the NTPC and State Electricity Boards. Besides, the foreign power companies are asking for sovereign guarantees which the Central Government has given. This implies that if the State Electricity Boards are not able to pay the private power companies, the Central Government will have to make the payments from the Consolidated fund, or - as is more likely - deduct these payments from the plan assistance provided by the Centre to the States. The result would be a drastic cut in the total resources available to the States for social and economic expenditure. Once this type of an agreement is approved for the power sector, pressures for similar guaranteed returns in other areas of infrastructure investment are certain to arise.

The condition of the small scale sector, the traditional industries and organised sector also deteriorated steeply during the period because of the infiltration of the monopolists into these sectors. The meeting congratulates the workers of the unorganised sector of industries for their first ever countrywide strike on 14th July and their participation in the Bharath Bandh against the economic policies.

While the country under the new economic reforms is already burdened by a negative trade balance, the GATT agreement will further widen the trade imbalance. The foreign debt during this period despite tall claims by the govt have increased from Rs.90,000 crores to a staggering Rs 2,65,000 crores.Thus India is virtually in a debt trap. According to the economic review 1992-93 itself the per capita external debt amounts to 82 dollars (about Rs.2,624/-). Unemployment has grown from 34 million to about 38 million during this period.

Despite the above progressively deteriorating situation in t he country in all aspects, the govt is showing complete insesitiveness to the realities. It has further remained totally inconsiderate to the growing mass opposition to these polices which was reflected by the two countrywide strikes, the massive rally at Boat Club and the 9th September Bharat Bundh. On the contrary it has been adamantly implementing these policies under direct supervision of the IMF.

The meeting warmly congratulated the workers and the trade unions and the organisations of the peasantry, agricultural workers, women, students,youth and other professional workers for their growing resistance to the call of the Platform of Mass Organisations to oppose these policies. The meeting congratulates them for their protest action from December 3 to 9 against the Dunkel Proposals. The meeting also congratulated the workers and trade unions in the steel industry including the INTUC and BMS for coming together in the massive united strike against privatisation of IISCO. The meeting congratulated the trade unions and workers for their efforts to wage united struggles against these policies in other industries like fertilizer, coal, textiles, road transport, oil, financial sector,etc. It called upon them to further consolidate the unity achieved through these struggles and intensify the agitations through concrete action plans so as to further mobilise into these action plans the common people from the rural areas to the urban sectors.

The meeting calls for organising jathas by all organisations independently as well as jointly starting from the rural areas to the state capitals and countrywide jathas from the state capitals to culminate in a massive rally before the Parliament at Delhi as early as possible. The meeting appeals to the National Platform of Mass Organisations to take action plans accordingly as the next phase of movement.